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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Lewes Town Council held on Wednesday 9th March 2022 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber, Lewes Town Hall

Present:

Councillor J Baah

Councillor M Bird

Councillor S Catlin (Mayor)

Councillor E Clarke

Councillor G Earl

Councillor R Handy

Councillor J Lamb

Councillor Dr W Maples

Councillor Dr G Mayhew

Councillor S Sains (Deputy Mayor)

Councillor R Waring

Councillor K Wood

In attendance:

Town Clerk

Committee Administrator

Communications Officer

116. Filming of Council Meetings Use of Social Media and Mobile Phones

The procedures were noted.

117. Apologies for absence

There were apologies from Councillors Herbert, Makepeace, Milner, O'Keeffe and Vernon. There had been no word from Councillor Burrows.

118. Members' declarations of interest

There were none

119. Question time

There were three members of the public present, and the following questions were asked.

Question 1.

To ask Maria Caulfield MP to propose to this Government a humanitarian scheme for Ukrainian Refugees to come to the UK to replace the limited and obstructive scheme currently in place requiring visas for the Family Reunion Scheme.

To oppose the Nationalities and Border Bill which will only serve to criminalise the vast majority of those seeking refuge and asylum in the UK and not provide the safety and refuge for those fleeing persecution and violence.

Answer:

This question is answered in 121.4 (9) in these minutes.

Question 2

To consider Lewes Town becoming a Town of Sanctuary under the Cities of Sanctuary scheme and or joining with the District Council to become a District of Sanctuary together with those community-groups who seek to provide a welcome to refugees and asylum seekers and value their contribution to the area.

Answer:

It was agreed to give delegated authority to the Town Clerk to approach Lewes District Council with regards to becoming a District of Sanctuary together with those Community Groups who seek to provide a welcome to refugees and asylum seekers and value their contribution to the area.

120. To consider Council's response to the Ukraine crisis:

120.1 Lewes Town Council is limited in what it can do about international events, we know our community will do all they can to support those in peril and displaced by the conflict and hope that East Sussex as a whole stands with us.

120.2 We also stand ready to support those organisations arranging support.

120.3 We will also do whatever we can to avoid purchasing items or services supplied from Russian companies and we urge all other local authorities and businesses to do the same.

120.4 Members considered the Town Clerk's oral report, and **it was resolved that:**

- 1) A Statement be posted on the Town Council website and other communications offering solidarity, sympathy to families and communities directly affected, guidance to the community on what they can do to help and how they can express their own feelings. Delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk to phrase such statements for Town Council communications in conjunction with the Communications Officer. Delegation be given to the Town Clerk to pay for a statement to be translated into Ukrainian and Russian.
- 2) The Council will act as a trusted signpost in directing public to safe, recognised, and appropriate charities encouraging our residents to support in any way they can ensuring that people are not overwhelmed with all the different options.
- 3) The Council will encourage Lewes residents to support refugees, especially when the Community Sponsorship Programme is confirmed by the Government.
- 4) The Council will purchase a Ukrainian flag and fly in solidarity (as often as is possible); fly blue and yellow banners from Chamber windows and keep a book of support at the Town Hall reception.

- 5) The Council will contact the British Red Cross to find out the best way of helping with donations, potentially having collection tins at the Town Hall reception.
- 6) Organise a “Mayor of Lewes Disaster Fund for Ukraine” and raise money on behalf of Lewes to send to the Government’s Disaster Emergency Fund, where it would be recorded the total raised by Lewes residents.
- 7) Council Members will encourage donations/support of all refugees in their place of work or with the organisations they connect with (as volunteers, trustees, outside bodies).
- 8) Offer free use of a stall at the Tuesday market that Charities could attend to collect financial donations and advise people how they can help
- 9) Offer Town Council facilities free of charge for the purposes of humanitarian aid regarding the crisis in Ukraine
- 10) Liaise with all local religious and humanist organisations for prayers for peace.
- 11) The Town Clerk write to the Lewes MP and ask that she urge Government to:
 - act decisively on the international stage and propose a humanitarian scheme for Ukrainian Refugees to come to the UK to replace the limited and obstructive scheme in place now requiring visas for the Family Reunion Scheme
 - condemn the oppression and subjugation of an independent country and support any action the Government can take to support Russian Peace Protestors
 - to raise the concern put forward at the Council’s meeting regarding the Nationalities and Border Bill that it will only serve to criminalise the vast majority of those seeking refuge and asylum in the UK and not provide the safety and refuge for those fleeing persecution and violence and ask the MP to oppose the Bill.
- 12) Encourage people to not forget about other causes during this difficult time, supporting “Humanity for all”
- 13) Town Council Members to sign the Local Government Association Statement endorsing a statement from the political leadership of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions which strongly condemns the multiple attacks and violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.
- 14) Post videos of the Vigil held in Lewes on 5th March on the Town Council’s Facebook page.
- 15) Delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk to explore banners or materials to make banners symbolising Ukraine and welcoming refugees to Lewes.
- 16) Delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk to approach Lewes District Council with regards to becoming a District of Sanctuary.

The meeting closed at 7:50pm.

TOWN MAYOR