

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
held in The Coach House, Crown Yard
on Thursday 26th September 2019 at 7pm

Present: Chairman: Cllr J Devlin
Vice-Chairman: Absent

Councillors: A Adshead, R Chapman, R Clark, M Dear, K Herlock,
M Moore, K Mordecai, M Roessler, D Spencer,
A Talboys, G Talbot, F Tomlin

Also in attendance: the Town Clerk

50. Apologies for absence

Cllrs J Clark, C Dyer, J Henshaw, L Mitchelmore, C Roberts, M Thomas and J Tutton, Borough and County Cllr Dr R Moore.

51. Declaration of interest with regard to item(s) on the Agenda

None.

52. Public participation session with respect to items on the Agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest

None.

53. Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 25th July 2019

Members received the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 25th July 2019.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting be approved and adopted.

54. Chairman's Report

Members received details of the events attended since the last meeting. These included Cllr Clark representing the Town Council at the funeral of Sir Freddie Sowrey, an interview for Basildon Hospital radio, Standards Committee at Basildon Borough Council and the EALC AGM and ECC/EALC joint conference in Great Dunmow.

Cllr Devlin mentioned to those present that next week it will be approximately six months before the closing of nominations for the local elections. As 2020 is an election year for the Town Council Cllr Devlin encouraged members to think about standing again as the Council needs at least 14 elected members to go for the Local Council's Quality and Gold Award schemes. He asked members to let the Town Clerk know if they intend to stand.

RESOLVED: Information noted.

55. Committee Meetings

(a) Planning Committee

In the absence of the Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman Cllr Devlin presented the minutes of the meetings held on 6th and 20th August and 3rd and 17th September 2019. Cllr Tomlin raised a point about whether the Town Council's comments on planning applications align with the BBC's approval/rejection of applications. He was advised that the Committee Clerk has a spreadsheet comparing the Town Council's responses to Basildon Council's decisions which is reviewed every six months. This can be circulated to councillors on request.

(b) Environment Committee

The Chairman Cllr Moore presented the minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2019. She informed members that an installation only cost is being sought for the Christmas Lights in 2020, Cllr Clark has requested help for the Festival of Remembrance to pack away after the event. Cllr Devlin proposed that the Chairman of Environment committee is empowered to organise helpers and offer them free tickets. Seconded by Cllr Adshead.

RESOLVED: that The Environment Committee Chairman, Cllr Moore can arrange for Festival of Remembrance helpers and offer free tickets for those willing to volunteer.

Cllr Moore also advised those present that the Christmas Lights switch on is 23rd November, and that the Mayflower Twinning Association has produced a listing of all 2020 events taking place in Billericay. Cllr Talbot requested that this be circulated to all councillors.

(c) Finance & General Purposes Committee

Cllr Adshead, Chairman of the Committee, presented the minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2019. He said that an advert in the Town Crier had generated interested in a Buy a Brick scheme for the new community building, and Cllr Devlin is coming up with a scheme proposal for the next meeting. Cllr Dear advised members that the Buy a Brick scheme had also been featured in the Essex Chronicle. The Chantry foundations are almost complete. Agreement on the technical drawings caused a slight delay but the steels are due at the start of October.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of all the above Committee meetings be approved and adopted.

56. Training Courses

Members received and considered the following:

(a) details of the courses being offered by the EALC throughout 2019. The 2020 courses are now available and the Town Clerk will circulate the listing.

RESOLVED : information noted

57. Best Practice Recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life's Report on Local Government Ethical Standards

(a) Members considered the revised wording of Best Practice 11 (in bold below) and were advised by Cllr Devlin that it has already been adopted by Basildon Council's Standards Committee. It is designed to make the council as a body take responsibility and to make a council accept that there is an issue.

Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council as a whole, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances (including where a complaint may be made against the Chairman).

The Complaints Procedure has also been amended by BBC and all members had received a draft copy of the Members Code of Conduct to review the proposed revisions and submit any comments to BBC by 2nd October.

(b) Members also considered a report from BBC detailing the implications of the Harvey v. Ledbury Town Council court case. This highlights a legal ruling that parish councils should not apply sanctions outside of a formal standards investigation, as they do not have the power to investigate and impose sanctions other than on the recommendation of the principal council.

RESOLVED: Information noted.

Cllr Devlin proposed that the Town Council agrees with the proposed revisions to the Joint Standards Committee's Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED: that the proposed revisions are approved.

58. EALC Initiative - Health & Wellbeing Committees

(a) Following discussion members felt that the Town Council already engages with the community with regard to health and wellbeing and brings people together with various events, e.g. Billericay in Bloom, Town Trail walks. Cllr Dear proposed that the Environment Committee is renamed the Health, Wellbeing and Environment Committee. Seconded by Cllr Herlock.

A vote took place. FOR - 6; AGAINST - 5; ABSTENTIONS - 2

RESOLVED: that the Environment Committee is renamed the Health, Wellbeing and Environment Committee.

(b) The EALC are looking for volunteer councillors to sit on their Health and Wellbeing Board. Cllr Devlin said that if no other members were interested he would put himself forward for the role.

59. Items for information

(a) Community Special Constables report on status of applications from Essex Police.

Resolved: information noted.

60. Consideration of Items for Press Release/Social Media

- changes during the Chantry build - encourage residents to "keep an eye out"
- New name for Environment Committee - list what the Council does to promote health and wellbeing within the Town.
- New walk leaders required for Town Trail in 2020.

61. Questions from the Press and Public

None.

Cllr Devlin closed the meeting at 8.05pm

Cllr Devlin.....Date.....
Chairman