

**Minutes of the Town Council Meeting
held in the Council Chamber, Chantry Centre, CM11 2AP
on Thursday 10th November 2022 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Chairman: Absent
Vice-Chairman: Cllr M Mordecai

Councillors: A Adshead, L Clark, R Clark, M Dear, J Devlin, J Henshaw, M Moore,
K Mordecai, E Sainsbury, C Smith, G Talbot, A Talboys, M Thomas, J Tutton

Also in attendance: the Town Clerk

55. Apologies for absence

Cllrs J Clark, C May, M Roessler and D Spencer

56. Declaration of Interest with regard to items on the Agenda

Cllr Adshead declared a non-pecuniary interest in an item on the F&GP minutes concerning the blinds in the Centre.

57. Public Participation Session with respect to items on the agenda and other matters that are of mutual interest

None.

58. Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 28th July 2022

Members **(a)** received and considered the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 28th July 2022 and **(b)** approved the signing of the minutes as a true record.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2022 be approved and adopted.

59. Chairman's Report

Members received a written report from Cllr Clark on the various events she had attended since the previous meeting.

RESOLVED: information noted.

60. Committee Meetings

Members received and considered the minutes of:

(a) Planning Committee – Cllr Tutton, Chairman of the Committee presented the minutes of the meetings held on 9th and 23rd August, 6th September, 4th and 18th October and 1st November. A total of 79 applications had been considered, 19 of which were objected to.

(b) Health, Well-being and Environment Committee meeting held on 25th October 2022. Cllr Moore, Chairman of the Committee, presented the minutes and informed those present that the Christmas Lights will be in the High Street again this year. The replacement of the lamp columns is scheduled for January 2023.

Cllr Devlin said that following representations from members of the public he was proposing that the Christmas Lights are erected but not lit this year and that the cost of the electricity is donated to the Billericay Foodbank. If this motion was put to the vote he asked for it to be recorded. There was no seconder so the motion was denied.

Recommendation: that the Christmas Lights budget for 2023/24 is set at £20,000 with any funds remaining from this year's budget line to go to Ear Marked Reserves.

RESOLVED: that the Christmas Lights budget recommendation is approved.

The Countryside Walks leaflets have been reprinted and delivered to the Chantry Centre, and Skippers Ground Maintenance have had the contract to maintain Jim Shields and Festival Gardens extended for an additional year.

(c) Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 3rd November 2022. Cllr M Mordecai, Chairman of the Committee, presented the minutes.

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

61. Staffing Sub-Committee

(a) Members received and considered the minutes of the meetings held on 9th August and 2nd November. Cllr K Mordecai informed members that the new member of staff was fitting in very well and that it has been agreed to move to the 360 degree system for staff appraisals.

Cllr Roessler had identified issues with the building being left unlocked so moving the cleaning to the evening is being looked into.

Recommendation: to look at employing a caretaker who would undertake room set-up, DIY jobs and maintenance. This would future proof the running of the Centre so long term the running of the building is not reliant on the goodwill of members.

Recommendation: that the salaries budget for 2023/24 is set at £120,000.

RESOLVED: **(i)** that the recommendation to employ a caretaker is approved, **(ii)** the salaries budget recommendation for 2023/24 is approved.

62. Courses and Conferences

Members received and considered the following:

(a) details of forthcoming EALC courses.

Resolved: information noted.

63. Annual Review of Standing Orders

Resolved: that the Standing Orders are approved and adopted.

64. Notice of Conclusion of Audit 2021/22

Members received and considered the report from PKF Littlejohn.

RESOLVED: that the information is noted.

65. Interim Internal Audit

Members received and considered the interim internal audit report from Heelis and Lodge. Due to the increase of contactless payments for small items and receipts not always being available it was:

RESOLVED: (i) that a petty cash float of £100 will no longer be held in the office, all purchases will now be claimed via expenses, and: (ii) in all other respects the report information is noted.

66. New LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct

Members received and considered:

- (a) slides from Basildon Borough Council's training presentation.
- (b) The new LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct.
- (c) A new Register of Interests Form which is to be completed by each member and returned to the Town Clerk.
- (d) A guidance flowchart to assist members with determining the types of declarable interests.

RESOLVED: (i) that the Council adopts the New LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct, and; (ii) that in all other respects the information is noted.

67. Potential Winter Blackouts

RESOLVED: (i) any hires scheduled to take place during a period of power outage will be cancelled or rearranged, and (ii) hirers will be reimbursed/not charged for hire during these periods.

68. Civic Service

Members discussed whether this is a valuable Civic event and should be continued going forward.

Proposal: that the Council no longer holds an annual Civic Service.

Amendment to Proposal: that the Council does hold a Civic Service in 2023, and makes a decision about future services dependent upon how well this one is attended. Seconded by Cllr Thomas.

RESOLVED: that a Civic Service goes ahead in 2023.

69. Local Councils Award Scheme

Members were advised that the Steering group originally formed in January had not been able to undertake any work due to the pressure of workload in the office. Cllr Devlin said he was stepping down due to sitting on the Award accreditation panel. Following discussion it was:

RESOLVED: (i) that Cllr Thomas joins Cllrs J Clark and Dear on the Steering Group, and; **(ii)** the group will report back to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

70. UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Cllr Devlin gave members an overview of the fund as he is sitting on the group responsible for distribution of £1.2m within the Basildon borough. He informed those present that three business improvement districts (BIDs) have been set up – they are Basildon, Billericay and Wickford. It is not yet known whether any input will be required from the Town Council.

RESOLVED: information noted.

71. Billericay Town Council Formation Documents

The BDRA have asked whether the Town Council would like to receive the Council formation documents that are in their possession.

RESOLVED: Cllr Devlin will collect the documents and review them for inclusion in the Community Archive.

Cllr Moore drew member’s attention to an article in the BDRA newsletter “The Resident” stating that their actions had secured Sun Corner as an area for local people to enjoy in perpetuity. As this statement is factually inaccurate it was:

RESOLVED: that an article is placed in the next Town Crier to set the record straight and that the Town Clerk writes to the editor of The Resident asking for a correction to be printed.

72. Consideration of Items for Press Release/Social Media

Correction of BDRA mis-information.

73. Questions from the Press and Public

None.

The Vice-Chairman closed the meeting at 8.10pm

Cllr Clark Date.....
Chairman