

## Lichfield City Council

### Minutes of the Meeting of Lichfield City Council held in Guildhall, Lichfield on Monday 24 January 2022 at 6.30pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors R Yardley (Mayor), J Anketell, H Ashton, D Baker, C Ball, J Checkland, Mrs J Eagland, M Field, C Greatorex, Mrs J Greaves, R Harrison, A Lax, Miss J Marks, T Matthews, P McDermott, S Pritchard, C Rapley, P Ray, D Robertson, A Smith, J Smith, C Spruce, M Trent and M Warfield.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Mrs G Boyle, P Jones and I Jackson.

#### 74 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported on the engagements he has attended in recent weeks including several carol services, the wreath laying ceremony at Westminster Abbey with the Johnson Society and the Conduit Lands Trust AGM. The Mayor informed members that he had presented his Chaplain Rev Ian Hayter with a silver salver on behalf of the City Council to mark his retirement.

#### 75 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

Councillor D Baker declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 17 [minute 88] due to the proximity of her place of residence to the proposals as set out within the grant request. Councillors R Harrison and Mrs J Greaves also declared an interest in this item as members of LHCRT. Councillors T Matthews, C Spruce and R Yardley declared in interest in agenda item 10 [Minute 81] as acquaintances of one of the parties submitting a tender, the relationship stemming from an association with the 'We Love Lichfield' charity.

#### 76 COUNCIL MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** *That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 2 December 2021 (Nos 59-73), be confirmed, and signed as a correct record.*

#### 77 MATTERS ARISING

None.

#### 78 PLANNING COMMITTEE (DELEGATED AUTHORITY)

**RESOLVED:** *That comments submitted to Lichfield District Council for the period 3 November to 23 December 2021 and made in the name of LCC via delegated authority, be received.*

#### 79 MARKETS WORKING GROUP

Members considered the Minutes and recommendations of the Markets Working Group meeting held on 12 January 2022.

**RESOLVED:** *That the Minutes and recommendations of the Market Working Group meeting of 12 January 2022 be adopted.*

#### 80 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN IMPLEMENTATION WORKING PARTY

Members considered the Minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Working Party held on 12 January 2022, which

included the recommendation that £17,000 of CIL be allocated to the replacement of front and rear doors and surrounding frames and glazing at Boley Park Community Hall and a £210 CIL contribution be made to the infrastructure required to improve cycle parking at Darwin Hall and Curborough Community Centre.

***RESOLVED: That the Minutes and recommendations of the Market Working Group meeting of 12 January 2022 be adopted.***

#### **81 SHERIFF'S RIDE WORKING PARTY**

Members considered the Minutes and recommendations of the Sheriff's Ride Working Party meeting held on 13 January 2022, notably the recommendation that consultants be appointed to assist in the process of analysing and identifying a future for the Ride, with the preferred consultants and their costings as set out in the minutes. Councillor C Greatorex spoke at length on the content of the tender document, broadly supporting the ideas considered but expressing concerns as to some of the methodology. Cllr A Smith responded that the tender document reflected all items under consideration and that the Working Party would break down the various elements in due course and select proposals to progress. Councillor C Ball proposed that the recommendation to Council at Minute 18 be changed to remove the option for a reduced Ride in 2022, instead focusing solely on a repeat of the 2021 provision and thereby ensuring reduced cost. The proposal was seconded by Cllr D Robertson. Councillor J Smith spoke against the amendment, citing the reduced costs of any reduced Ride that may take place. On being put to the vote, the amendment was declared lost. The vote was then taken on the substantive motion and it was:

***RESOLVED: That the Minutes and recommendations of the Sheriff's Ride Working Party meeting of 13 January 2022 be adopted.***

#### **82 FEES AND CHARGES 2022/23**

Members considered fees and charges for the 2022/23 financial year. Councillor D Robertson proposed an amendment to the motion that Guildhall hire fees remain at 2021/22 levels for 2022/23, citing the subsidy given by the Council to the Guildhall and the desire to reduce such subsidy. It was felt that greater promotion of the building would enhance its popularity and that the splendour of the building justified the proposed costs. The proposal was seconded by Cllr P Ray. Councillor C Greatorex spoke against the amendment, citing the reduced number of attendees at many groups, the financial difficulties such groups had faced during COVID restrictions and the desire to provide good value community facilities for the residents of the City. Councillor A Lax commented that it would be impossible to predict if a rise in hire charges would translate to more income and that her preferred approach was to prepare a balanced budget based on current income. On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost. The vote was then taken on the substantive motion and it was:

***RESOLVED:***

- a) An increase of 2.5% be applied to the prevailing pitch fees for LCC's General Markets [to exclude the associated Service Charge]***
- b) Guildhall hire charges to remain at 2021/22 levels***
- c) No increase be applied to photocopying charges***

#### **83 FINANCIAL PROGRESS REPORT 1 APRIL TO 30 NOVEMBER 2021**

Members considered the 8-month financial summary report. Councillor Ball commended the Town Clerk and officers for a thorough report.

***RESOLVED: That the report be noted***

## 84 BUDGET ESTIMATES 2022/2023

Members considered the draft budget for the financial year 2022/23. An amendment to the substantive motion was proposed by Councillor D Robertson; citing the financial pressures on families due to a multitude of factors including energy price increases, general inflation etc, Cllr Robertson stated that a 0% change in precept [rather than the 2.5% increase proposed in the substantive motion] was possible by reducing the Sheriff's Ride budget and increasing the forecast income from Guildhall lettings which he felt was low in the draft budget. Referring to discussions earlier that day with the Town Clerk, Cllr Robertson stated that the Town Clerk had expressed concerns about the proposal. The Town Clerk confirmed this, stating that while he accepted the budgeted lettings figure could well be low, it was based on a relative lack of demand currently. The Town Clerk also expressed concern as to the appropriateness of picking one element for such change, while not considering other elements that could prove more costly than in the draft budget [such as the assumed 4% inflation rate and nationally agreed salary award assumptions] and the potential overall implications for reserves. The Town Clerk concluded by advising members that it was within their gift to resolve to allocate the additional costs from reserves, but cautioned that in doing so, any resulting loss in reserves would be compounded in future years, or lead to the requirement to increase the precept by a larger amount in the future to return to a balanced revenue budget from precept income.

Several Councillors spoke in favour of the amendment including Cllr Rapley who stated that an increase in the precept would send the wrong message to the electorate, suggesting the Council prioritised the Sheriff's Ride over residents' welfare. A view that was echoed by Councillor Ball saying that a 0% rise would send a signal to both Lichfield District Council and Staffordshire County Council that the City Council cared about the people of Lichfield. Councillor Ray also spoke in favour of the amendment stating it would prove that Councillors were listening to residents and that there was no need for the Council to build up its reserves. Councillor A Lax spoke against the amendment and referred to Burntwood Town Council's 4% increase and the controlling Labour Group's support of that increase. Councillor Greatorex agreed with Councillor Lax stating that the that the proposed 2.5% increase to the precept was less than inflation which is currently 5.4%.

Councillor Robertson called for a named vote on the amendment, the Town Clerk then asked each member in turn to state whether they were for or against the amendment or whether they wished to abstain. The voting is recorded below:

<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	<b>IN FAVOUR</b>	<b>AGAINST</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
Councillor J Anketell	<b>x</b>		
Councillor H Ashton	<b>x</b>		
Councillor D Baker		<b>x</b>	
Councillor C Ball	<b>x</b>		
Councillor J Checkland		<b>x</b>	
Councillor Mrs J Eagland		<b>x</b>	
Councillor M Field	<b>x</b>		
Councillor C Greatorex		<b>x</b>	
Councillor Mrs J Greaves		<b>x</b>	
Councillor R Harrison		<b>x</b>	

Councillor A Lax		x	
Councillor Miss J Marks		x	
Councillor T Matthews		x	
Councillor P McDermott	x		
Councillor S Pritchard		x	
Councillor C Rapley	x		
Councillor P Ray	x		
Councillor D Robertson	x		
Councillor A Smith		x	
Councillor J Smith	x		
Councillor C Spruce		x	
Councillor M Trent	x		
Councillor M Warfield		x	
Councillor R Yardley		x	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>

The Town Clerk confirmed the result, and the amendment was declared lost. There then followed a vote on the substantive motion, with the vote thereon reflecting the previous named vote. It was therefore:

***RESOLVED: The Council approve the budget estimates and report for the 2022/23 financial year totalling £934,928; and that the amount of precept for 2022/23 be set at £835,450.***

#### **85 REPAIR, RENOVATION AND SPECIFIC PROJECT PROGRAMME 2022/23**

Members considered the Repair and Renewal proposals to be funded from the Capital Reserve, including proposals for the Birthplace Museum, Darwin Hall and the Friary Clock Tower as detailed in the agenda report.

***RESOLVED: That the report be noted.***

#### **86 OFFICERS' REPORT**

Councillor C Greatorex commended officers that in spite of several staff changes and shortages the activities of the Council were carrying on as normal. The Mayor and Councillor Ball commented on the excellent work that had been carried out by the Open Spaces Officer in particular at Festival Gardens and Netherstowe. Councillor Trent thanked officers for an excellent report and was pleased to read that King Edwards school were now using the digital German Newspapers from our Twin Towns in their lessons.

***RESOLVED: That the report be noted.***

**87 SUBSIDY REVIEW – LICHFIELD ARTS AND LICHFIELD FESTIVAL**

Further to Minute 99 of the City Council's meeting on 28 January 2019, the arrangements between the Council, Lichfield Arts and Lichfield Festival are to be reviewed annually by the City Council. Members considered the current position and proposals for 2022/23.

**RESOLVED:** *Given inflationary pressures and the instability of utility prices, a 3% increase be applied to the licence to occupy rate for 2022/23; all other arrangements to remain unchanged for the reasons as set out in the agenda report. The matter to be reconsidered by Council at its January 2023 meeting.*

**88 LICHFIELD AND HATHERTON CANALS RESTORATION TRUST - GRANT REQUEST**

Members considered the Town Clerk's agenda report and the accompanying Grant request submitted by LHCRT, the written request following previous discussions and resolutions of the Council.

**RESOLVED:** *This matter be deferred until a future Council meeting for the following reasons:*

- 1. The Council is not yet in the position to recommend a specific sum for any works over and above those already being undertaken.*
- 2. More detail is required about specific elements of the proposed work; following a site meeting has been between the Town Clerk, ward councillors to assess the situation further; following this process ward members to return to Council with proposals for consideration.*

**89 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

**RESOLVED:** *That payment of accounts be approved and confirmed as listed in the agenda for the periods:*

- 1 October 2021 to 31 October 2021 in the sum of £127,048.57 General Account, and £483.59 Imprest Account.*
- 1 November 2021 to 30 November 2021 in the sum of £152,223.15 General Account, and £750.14 Imprest Account.*

**90 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** *that in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, by reason of the confidential nature of the business next to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the Meeting.*

**91 STAFFING COMMITTEE**

Members considered the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 18 January 2022.

**RESOLVED:** *That the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 18 January 2022 be adopted.*

**THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.05 PM**

**MAYOR**