

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Lichfield City Council held in Guildhall, Lichfield on Monday 13 June 2022 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors J Checkland (Mayor), J Anketell, H Ashton, D Baker, C Ball, G Boyle, D Dundas, J Eagland, M Field, C Greatorex, J Greaves, R Harrison, I Jackson, P Jones, A Lax, J Marks, T Matthews, P McDermott, C Rapley, D Robertson, A Smith, J Smith, M Trent, M Warfield and R Yardley.

APOLOGIES: Councillors P Ray and C Spruce.

15 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor detailed the events and functions that he had attended since coming to office, including civic events such as the Mayoral Service, Annual Town Meeting, Court of Araye and crowning of the Bower Queen, plus the opening of Bluebell Court, and the new Tesco Express store. The Mayor also highlighted his attendance at several events to mark the Queens's Platinum Jubilee, including the Beacon lighting at Lichfield Cathedral.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None

17 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED: *That the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 16 May 2022 (Nos 1-14) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.*

18 MATTERS ARISING

None.

19 PLANNING COMMITTEE (DELEGATED AUTHORITY)

RESOLVED: *That comments submitted to Lichfield District Council for the period 31 March to 26 May 2022 and made in the name of LCC via delegated authority, be received.*

THE MEETING ADJOURNED FOR PUBLIC FORUM

A member of the public addressed the Council regarding disputed car parking charges received from residents and visitors who had parked vehicles at facilities managed on behalf of Three Spires Shopping Centre. There were three main matters that the Council was asked to respond to:

1. Whether the Council supported the efforts of the community to raise awareness of this issue and to support those affected
2. Whether the Council would share information relating to this campaign through its publicity channels
3. Whether Councillors would support the Facebook Group by joining it, advertising it and supporting the volunteer effort.

Councillor D Baker replied on behalf of the Council, firstly stating that the City Council has no authority or responsibility regarding designated car parks in the City, but that the Council would support the actions of the group where residents have indeed been wrongly charged.

In answer to the second question, Cllr Baker confirmed that the City council would need to be careful as to what material it did share as it has no jurisdiction in the matter, but that general publicity may be appropriate subject to sight of such publicity and discussions with City Council officers as to its appropriateness.

Finally, Cllr Baker confirmed that, in regard to question 3, the question as put is to the Council as a 'body' and that 'body' cannot compel its individual members to support a particular cause. However, if individual members wished to support the cause they were at liberty to do so in ways that they felt appropriate.

THE MEETING WAS RECONVENED

20 AUDIT COMMITTEE

Members considered the Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 9 June 2022. In addition to consideration of the 2021/22 out-turn and associated matters, the Committee also made recommendations to Council regarding:

- the adoption of updated City Council Financial Regulations and Standing Orders following amendment to make them gender neutral, update legislative references and replace RPI with CPI as the preferred inflationary measure
- an updated Cyber Security Policy.

Councillor D Robertson highlighted the difficulties associated with 2021/22 budget setting due to the COVID pandemic but was pleased to see the Market function return to profitability. Cllr Robertson also highlighted that Guildhall costs were approximately £10,000 less than forecast in the 8 month summary, representing 1.2% of the precept. Cllr Robertson drew a parallel to the 1.5% precept rise agreed by Council for 2022/23.

Cllr J Anketell stated that he felt it surprising that the Leader of the Council was the Chair of Audit Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes and recommendations of the Audit Committee meeting held on 9 June 2022 be adopted and that:

- 1 The Report and Out-Turn Statement 2021/22 be received.***
- 2 The Council as Trustee of the Johnson Birthplace Charitable Trust make a payment of £12,936 from the Trust Funds to the City Council as the contribution to the expenditure incurred by the City Council in operating the Museum during the 2021/22 financial year.***
- 3 In respect of the External Auditor Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2022:***
 - a. The council approve the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1 of the Annual Return) and that this be signed by the Mayor and Town Clerk on behalf of the Council.***
 - b. The Council approve the Accounting Statements (Section 2 of the Annual Return) and this be signed by the Mayor on behalf of the Council***
 - c. The Council note the Annual Internal Audit Report section of the Annual Return***
 - d. The Council note the dates for the exercise of public rights - commencing on 15 June 2022 and ending on 26 July 2022.***

21 JOHNSON BIRTHPLACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes of the JBAC meeting held on 26 April 2022.

RESOLVED: *That the Minutes of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee meeting held on 26 April 2022 be adopted.*

22 SHERIFF'S RIDE WORKING PARTY

Members considered the minutes of the SRWP meeting held on 24 May 2022, which included suggested outcomes following the presentation on the future of the Ride by Townhouse Communications Ltd. In proposing the Minutes, Cllr A Smith gave an overview of the Working Party's progress to date and confirmed the four options that were under consideration; to abandon the Ride, continue with the reduced Ride held during COVID and also agreed for 2022, continue with the 'full' Ride with LCC funding, or to investigate options for reimagining the Ride for the 21st century with a view to attracting grant funding/sponsorship as a result. The minutes of the meeting confirmed the Working Party's preferred route was to seek external funding to repurpose the Ride, but in the event that external funding is not available, the reduced Ride as held during COVID was the preferred alternative - further significant direct funding from LCC was not considered appropriate.

Councillor C Ball proposed an amendment, citing recent communications with HS2 which indicate funding would be unlikely, and potential legal obstacles to the Council bidding directly into potential funding pots. The amendment proposed was to continue with the reduced Ride held during COVID for all future years in order to save costs and officer/member time in pursuing funding that may not be available. Cllr Robertson seconded the proposal.

Councillor C Greatorex spoke against the amendment, stating that as 'the City of festivals' the City Council should do all it could to maintain the spectacle of the Ride, to encourage local business involvement and to attract sponsorship, with 2023 being the 'rebirth' of the Ride.

Councillor A Lax asked Cllr Ball to consider withdrawing the amendment, with Cllr Ball offering to amend the proposal to allow it to be referred back to the Working Party.

Councillor A Smith stated that it was too early to admit defeat, the initial response from HS2 seemingly being a somewhat standard reply with further discussion necessary to establish the exact position and for the Working Party to reconvene once definitive answers and timescales were available.

Councillor J Smith stated that the minutes of the meeting were correct and that the proposed amendment had no basis.

Councillor D Robertson stated that the reduced Ride would save a considerable sum and should be the preferred way forward.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was declared lost (five members voting in favour of the amendment). The original motion was then voted upon and it was:

RESOLVED: *That the Minutes of the SRWP meeting held on 24 May 2022 be adopted.*

23 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Members considered the draft appointment of representatives on outside bodies at agenda Appendix 4.

RESOLVED: *Appointments on outside bodies be confirmed as indicated in the agenda report. [final appointments reproduced below]*

Outside Body	No of Reps	Period of Office	Current Appt Ends	2022/2023
Boley Park Community Hall Management Committee	4	1 Year	Jun-23	<i>Cllr M Warfield</i>
			Jun-23	<i>Cllr D Baker</i>
			Jun-23	<i>Cllr R Yardley</i>
			Jun-23	<i>Cllr J Eagland</i>
Boley Park Community Hall Trustees	4	Until retire or replaced	Until retire or replaced	<i>Cllr J Eagland</i>
				<i>Cllr R Yardley</i>
				<i>Cllr C Spruce</i>
				<i>Cllr M Warfield</i>
Bower Committee	1	1 Year	Jun-23	<i>Cllr J Greaves</i>
Curborough Community Association	3	1 Year	Jun-23	<i>Cllr D Robertson</i>
			Jun-23	<i>Cllr P Jones</i>
			Jun-23	<i>Cllr R Harrison</i>
Darwin Hall Community Association Trustees [and Company Directors]	4	Until retire or replaced	Until retire or replaced	<i>Cllr J Checkland</i>
				<i>Cllr S Pritchard</i>
				<i>Cllr I Jackson</i>
				<i>Cllr P Jones</i>
Dovehouse Fields Community Garden	2	1 Year	Jun-23	<i>Cllr J Greaves</i>
				<i>Cllr J Smith</i>
Dr Milley's Hospital	1	4 Years	Mar-27	<i>Cllr C Rapley</i>
Erasmus Darwin Foundation	1	1 Year	Jun-23	<i>Cllr G Boyle</i>
Friends of Samuel Johnson Community Hosp.	1	1 Year	Jun-23	<i>Cllr A Lax</i>
Friends of Lichfield Historic Parks Group	1	1 Year	Jun-23	<i>Cllr H Ashton</i>
Guild of St Mary's Centre Lichfield (Ltd)	1	1 Year	-	<i>Mayor in Office</i>
Johnson Council (non-voting observers)	2	1 Year	-	<i>Mayor in Office</i>
			-	<i>Sheriff in Office</i>
Lichfield District Arts Executive Committee [non-voting observer]	1	1 Year	Jun-23	<i>Cllr R Harrison</i>
Lichfield District City of Sanctuary	3	3 Years	Mar-25	<i>Cllr H Ashton</i>
				<i>Cllr D Baker</i>
				<i>Cllr C Ball</i>
LDC – Parish Forum	2	1 Year	Jun-23	<i>Cllr M Field</i>
			Jun-23	<i>Cllr J Marks</i>
Lichfield Camera Club	1	1 Year	-	<i>Mayor in Office</i>
Lichfield Conduit Lands Trust	2	1 Year	-	<i>Mayor in Office</i>
		4 Years	Jun-25	<i>Cllr G Boyle</i>

Outside Body	No of Reps	Period of Office	Current Appt Ends	2022/2023
Lichfield District Tourism Association	2	1 Year	Jun-23	<i>Museums & Heritage Officer</i>
			Jun-23	<i>Cllr J Marks</i>
Lichfield Rail Alliance, West Coast Rail 250, and all other rail related matters	1	1 Year	Jun-23	<i>Cllr M Warfield</i>
Mary Slater's Charity	2	1 Year	-	<i>Mayor in Office</i>
			-	<i>Sheriff in Office</i>
Michael Lowe's and Associated Charities	5	4 Years	15 July 24	<i>Cllr J Greaves</i>
			23 April 26	<i>D Greatorex</i>
			3 April 26	<i>P Hitchman</i>
			26 July 24	<i>Cllr M Warfield</i>
			5 July 23	<i>Cllr J Eagland</i>
Municipal Charities	4	1 Year	-	<i>Mayor in Office</i>
		4 Years	Oct-23	<i>Cllr P Jones</i>
			Nov-24	<i>Cllr J Greaves</i>
			Nov-24	<i>D Greatorex</i>
South East Staffs CAB	1	1 Year	Jun-23	<i>Cllr D Baker</i>
SPCA - Executive Cttee (nomination only – subject to election by SPCA)	1	2 Years	Sep-23	<i>Cllr H Ashton</i>
St Giles Hospice Local Government Friends'	1	4 Years	Jun-23	<i>Cllr J Anketell</i>
Support Staffordshire (formerly Lichfield and District CVS)	1	1 Year	Jun-23	<i>Cllr D Baker</i>
Twinning Association	3	1 Year	-	<i>Mayor in Office</i>
			Jun-23	<i>Cllr H Ashton</i>
			Jun-23	<i>Cllr J Greaves</i>

24 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Members considered the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 25 May 2022.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 25 May 2022 be noted.

25 GENDER NEUTRAL TITLES

Members considered the agenda report regarding the use of gender-neutral titles for Council business, but the retention of traditional forms of civic address.

Councillor M Trent welcomed the proposal, stating that on being elected a Councillor in 2019, one of his first discussions with the Town Clerk related to the manner in which Councillors were

addressed. While appreciating the argument for individual choice that has been in place at LCC since 2018, Cllr Trent stated that, in a wider sense, terminology matters and that opinions formed by residents as to the manner in which Councillors are addressed would assist in showing LCC to be a forward-thinking Council and may also play a small role in encouraging residents to become Councillors themselves.

Councillor G Boyle stated she felt it was a retrograde step, notably replacing Chairman with 'Chair'. Councillor D Robertson stated this was an unobjectionable change and a positive step for LCC.

RESOLVED: That gender neutral titles be utilised for City Council business, with the exception of traditional civic address.

26 OFFICERS' REPORT

Councillor C Greatorex spoke about the proposed plaque for Francis Barber, and the high number of visitors to the Guildhall prison cells. Councillor Greatorex also welcomed the repainting of the lines/signage on the cycle path/footway at Nether Stowe, and the chainsaw carving of an owl from the remaining trunk of a felled tree at the Borrowcop Gazebo, asking whether the carving could be stained and protected from possible vandalism. Finally, Cllr Greatorex welcomed the report into the condition of trees on the 'closed' Churchyard at St Michaels which is maintained by the City Council.

Councillor J Eagland highlighted the work carried out at Boley Park Community Hall, with new front and rear doors/screens and internal blinds. Cllr Eagland commended that an excellent standard of work was evident and that users were enjoying the improved facilities.

Councillor D Robertson also referred to the chainsaw carving of an owl at Borrowcop, asking whether the carved books on which the owl sits could be named, perhaps in honour of famous local literary figures.

The Mayor added that the Jubilee Market along Pool Walk was well attended and the event a success. The Mayor stated that both he and the Markets Officer were keen to increase the use of this area for Markets in the future.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

27 PAYMENT OF REGULAR SERVICE PROVISION BY DIRECT DEBIT

Members considered the current list of Direct Debits, together with a new proposed Direct Debit to Opayo for the rental of LCC card machines and the fees associated with those machines.

RESOLVED: That the City Council renews its resolution to enter into direct debit payment arrangements with those providers listed in the agenda report; the resolution to be considered for further renewal at the meeting of the City Council in June 2023.

28 GRANT REQUEST - USE OF CORRIDOR GALLERY, FRIENDS2FRIENDS

Members considered a request from 2021/22 Sheriff Mr Peter Hitchman that a grant be given to the value of £30 to Friends2Friends for the use of the Guildhall Corridor Gallery as part of their 10th anniversary celebrations, thereby allowing those monies to be reinvested in the charitable aims of Friends2Friends.

[At its meeting of 5 February 2009, the City Council resolved that no further 'free use' of the Guildhall be granted and that all applicants apply for a monetary grant to cover the prevailing hire costs instead]

RESOLVED: That a grant in the sum of £30 be awarded to Friends2Friends.

29 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

RESOLVED: That payment of accounts be approved and confirmed for the period 1 March 2022 to 31 March 2022 in the sum of £127,348.44 General Account and £672.20 Imprest Account.

30 EXCUSION OF 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.

31 STAFFING COMMITTEE

Members considered the Minutes and recommendations of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 31 May 2022. Members' particular attention was drawn to recommendations at Minute numbers 3,4,5 and 6, together with the additional information provided at Appendix A and B of the minutes.

RESOLVED: That the minutes and recommendations of the of the meeting of the staffing Committee held on 31 May 2022 be adopted.

32 DARWIN HALL

Members considered the Town Clerk's update regarding remedial work being undertaken at Darwin Hall.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.37 PM

MAYOR