

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Lichfield City Council held in Guildhall, Lichfield on Monday 23 January 2023 at 6.30pm

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

APOLOGIES: Councillors D Dundas and J Eagland.

A MINUTES SILENCE WAS HELD IN MEMORY OF DERRICK DUVAL, CITY COUNCILLOR FROM 1980 TO 1995 AND MAYOR IN 1982, WHO DIED ON 16 DECEMBER 2022

81 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported on the engagements he has attended in recent weeks including a service at St Peters and Pauls Church, and took the opportunity to remind members of forthcoming events in February including the Charity Valentines Sunday Lunch, Church service and Pancake Day Races.

82 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None

83 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 12 December 2022 (Nos 63-80), be confirmed, and signed as a correct record.

84 MATTERS ARISING

In relation to minute 70 concerning the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Working Party:

Councillor C Ball asked the Leader of the Council for an update as to the progress that had been made with the District Council regarding the lack of provisions for gypsies and travellers. Councillor M Warfield confirmed that Councillor A Lax is liaising with LDC on this matter and members would be updated accordingly.

In relation to minute 76 regarding City Centre Pedestrianisation:

Councillor C Ball asked if an apology could be sought from SCC regarding the lack of consultation regarding the trial pedestrianisation of the City Centre and sought clarification as to why it was not implemented on 1 January as originally stated. Councillor J Anketell stated that there had been a lack of proper consultation particularly with blue badge holders and that meetings regarding this matter had not been publicised. Councillor A Lax reminded Councillor Anketell that he had attend one such public consultation meeting held in the Guildhall. Councillor M Warfield agreed that an apology should be sought from Staffordshire County Council but noted that the trial pedestrianisation scheme falls outside the authority of this Council.

85 PLANNING COMMITTEE (DELEGATED AUTHORITY)

RESOLVED: *That comments submitted to Lichfield District Council for the period 3 November to 23 December 2022 and made in the name of LCC via delegated authority, be received.*

86 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 8 (2)

Councillor D Robertson asked the Mayor:

'Can the Council confirm the last meeting attended by former Cllr Pritchard on City Council business, the date that she would have vacated her position under clause 85 of the local government act 1972 if she not resigned on 6th January, and the number of meetings of this authority which were calendared on the dates between her resignation and the date which she would have vacated her position?'

The Mayor responded:

'Cllr Pritchard is recorded as attending a meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Working Party on 11 July 2022. The 'six month' rule under Section 85 of the LGA 1972 would therefore have taken effect on 12 January 2023 if no meetings had been attended. There was one calendared meeting between 6 and 12 January, that being the Markets Working Group held on 11 January.'

87 MARKETS WORKING GROUP

Members considered the Minutes and recommendations of the Markets Working Group meeting held on 12 January 2022. This included the recommendation that, utilising its powers under the Food Act Part III, the City Council create Markets to take place on:

- Sunday 19th March 2023
- Sunday 21st May 2023
- Sunday 16th July 2023
- Sunday 17th September 2023
- Sunday 15th October 2023
- Sunday 10th December 2023

And that the Council enter into an appropriate contract with The Vegan Market Company to provide these Markets. Councillor Spruce commented that the cross-party Markets Working Group was one of the most effective committees of the Council.

RESOLVED: *That the Minutes and recommendations of the Markets Working Group meeting of 11 January 2023 be adopted, to include the establishment of the Markets set out above under the provisions contained within the Food Act Part III.*

88 FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24

Members considered fees and charges for the 2023/24 financial year, namely Guildhall hire, Prevailing market pitch and associated hire rates, and photocopying charges.

Councillor D Baker informed members that the Town Clerk had been asked to monitor the number of commercial bookings of the Guildhall to determine if the pricing structure was deterring local businesses from using the building. Councillor D Robertson noted that income from hire of the Guildhall was better than expected and that a 5% increase in charges was

appropriate. However when set against the running costs it was clear that the Council heavily subsidised hire charges which he felt were still on the low side.

Being put to the vote the motion was carried. Cllr C Rapley abstained from the vote to increase Guildhall Hire charges by 5%.

RESOLVED:

a) That an increase of 5% be applied to Market Square/Pool Walk hire and the prevailing pitch fees for LCC's General Markets [to exclude the associated Service Charge], as detailed in agenda Appendix 2

b) Guildhall hire charges to increase by approximately 5% as detailed in agenda Appendix 3 Agreed

c) No increase be applied to photocopying charges and that photocopying charges be removed from future agendas as there is no longer a demand for this service.

89 FINANCIAL PROGRESS REPORT 1 APRIL TO 30 NOVEMBER 2022

Members considered the 8-month financial summary report. Councillor D Robertson noted the good financial controls in place at the Council and commended officers for their hard work, in particular the Town Clerk and Internal Auditor. Councillor Spruce endorsed Councillor Robertson's comments.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

90 BUDGET ESTIMATES 2023/2024

Members considered the draft budget for the financial year 2023/24.

A 0% increase in the precept was proposed. Councillor C Spruce and Councillor D Robertson stated that a 0% increase would be welcomed by Lichfield residents. Councillor D Baker stated that the effective management of the Council's finances had enabled the Council to reach a balanced revenue budget.

Councillor P Ray stated that he supported 0% increase this year but voiced concerns regarding the significant transfer of funds from the Council's reserves querying if the budget would be robust as he believed no inflation increase was included at a time when inflation figures are around 10%. *[Town Clerk's note – allowances for inflationary pressures are included within the draft budget as presented]*

Councillor C Ball queried why the 0% increase was not adopted last year as he had requested.

Councillor C Greatorex commented that market forces and circumstances were very different this year in relation to the cost-of-living increases and the war in Ukraine.

Councillor J Smith pointed out that over the last 3 years £221,000 has been spent from reserves and this cannot continue indefinitely.

Being put to the vote the motion was carried with abstentions from all Labour and Liberal Democrat members in attendance.

RESOLVED: That the Council approve the budget estimates and report for the 2023/24 financial year totalling £1,295,555; and that the amount of precept for 2023/24 be set at £860,670.

91 REPAIR, RENOVATION AND SPECIFIC PROJECT PROGRAMME 2023/24

Members considered the Repair and Renewal proposals to be funded from the Capital Reserve during 2023/24; the next stage of the Birthplace redevelopment project, and the significant redesign and replacement of elements of the Darwin Hall roof as detailed in the agenda report.

RESOLVED: *That the report be noted.*

92 OFFICERS' REPORT

Councillor C Greatorex commented on the first joint Carol service between the Chair of LDC and the Mayor and noted how well it had been received by those who attended. He went on to draw members' attention to the funding page for the reinstatement of the Johnson Bust on Bird Street. He also reminded members that the City Council has responsibility for many bus shelters around the City but that the bus service is disjointed, suggesting members may want to consult Leomansley Area Residents Association to determine appropriate locations for further bus shelters.

RESOLVED: *That the report be noted.*

93 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 2023/24.

RESOLVED:

1. *The City Council confirms its view that:*
 - a) *The current charges associated with the separate licences to occupy remain appropriate given the stability in market rent valuations, the charitable nature of both bodies and their positive impact on the City.*
 - b) *arrangements in regard to the hire of the Ashmole Room are appropriate.*
2. *The ending of the glass collection agreement be noted.*
3. *The City Council does not wish an inflationary increase to be applied to the prevailing charges for 2023/24*
4. *The City Council reconsiders this matter at its January 2024 meeting.*

94 COUNCILLOR RESIGNATION – LEOMANSLEY WARD

Members noted the resignation of former Councillor Sara Pritchard, and that due to the timing of the resignation there would be no by election called. Members also considered the appointment of a replacement for former Cllr Pritchard on the City Council's Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Working Party.

Councillor C Ball asked if the Leader (Cllr M Warfield) would apologise to the residents of Leomansley for the lack of representation as Councillor Pritchard had a poor attendance record at meetings. The Mayor pointed out that Leomansley residents have also been represented by himself, the Deputy Mayor and Councillor A Smith. Councillor Warfield reminded Councillor Ball that as Leader he had no executive power over members and it was a matter for the individual to apologise if they felt it was necessary.

It was proposed by Councillor M Warfield and seconded by Councillor D Baker that Councillor H Ashton replace former Councillor Pritchard on the Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Working Party.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the resignation of former Councillor Sara Pritchard be noted**
- 2. That Councillor H Ashton replace former Councillor Pritchard on the City Council's Neighbourhood Plan Implementation Working Party**

95 MAYOR'S BANQUET – MAY 2023

Members considered the Town Clerk's brief agenda report regarding the possible rescheduling of the Mayor's Banquet – though not the Annual Council meeting – due to its proximity to the date of the 2023 elections and the lack of opportunity this proximity provides for amendment/reorganisation should it become necessary.

Being put to the vote the motion was carried with one abstention and it was Councillor C Rapley

RESOLVED: That the Mayor's Banquet will be delayed by one week from 15th to 22nd May 2023.

96 DIRECT DEBIT PROVISION

Members discussed the appropriateness of adding Justice Security Systems Ltd to the City Council's list of companies with whom it has Direct Debit arrangements.

RESOLVED: The City Council approves the provision of a Direct Debit arrangement with Justice Security Systems Ltd, the provision to be added to the existing list of approved Direct Debits due to be considered at the June 2023 meeting of Council.

97 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

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

- 1 October 2022 to 31 October 2022 in the sum of £139,648.82 General Account, and £484.88 Imprest Account**
- 1 November 2022 to 30 November 2022 in the sum of £105,341.82 General Account, and £1,361.40 Imprest Account.**

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.20 PM

MAYOR