

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Lichfield City Council held in Guildhall, Lichfield on Monday 27 January 2025 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors C Pinder-Smith (Deputy Mayor) J Anketell, H Ashton, D Baker, C Ball, J Blackman, R Bragger, J Christie, J Eagland, K Farrelly, M Field, A Fox, C Greatorex, R Harvey-Coggins, A Hughes, P Knight, P McDermott, P Ray, A Rushton, J Smith, E Strain, M Warfield, B Watkins and R Yardley.

APOLOGIES: Councillors A Lax, J Marshall, E Strain and S Schafer, D Robertson (Member of Parliament for Lichfield, absent due to Parliamentary debate).

74. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Mayor commented that she and the Mayor had a restful Christmas and highlighted forthcoming events including the charity Ceilidh dance and International Women's day.

75. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None

76. COUNCIL MINUTES

Councillor C Greatorex highlighted an error at minute no. 67, Remote Attendance/Proxy Voting Consultation and asked that it be corrected to reflect that Councillors J Eagland, C Greatorex and R Yardley voted against the motion and Councillors D Baker and J Smith abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED: *That subject to the amendment set out above, the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 December 2024 (Nos 54-73) 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 6 December 2024 to 16 January 2025 and made in the name of LCC via delegated authority, be received.*

79. FINANCIAL PROGRESS REPORT 1 APRIL TO 30 NOVEMBER 2024

Members noted the eight-month financial progress report and associated explanatory notes.

RESOLVED: *That the eight-month financial progress report from 1 April to 30 November 2024 be noted.*

80. FEES AND CHARGES 2025/26 – MARKETS

Members considered the proposed fees and charges for 2025/26 as recommended by the City Council's cross party Markets Working Group. Councillor R Bragger commented that he had spoken to several market traders concerning market pitch fees and received positive feedback. He also commended Officers for their hard work.

RESOLVED: *That as per the MWG recommendations, Council confirms the market pitch fees, associated charges and Market Square/Pool Walk hire fees for 2025/26 as provided at Agenda Appendix 2.*

81. BUDGET ESTIMATES 2025/26

Members considered the draft budget for the financial year 2025/26. Councillor A Hughes commented that the budget estimates were both prudent and sensible with a modest increase in the precept. Councillor C Ball welcomed the increase in Grant Aid.

Following some discussion, the Town Clerk clarified that the draft budget reflected two increases:

1. A £3.32 (4.5%) precept increase on a typical individual 'Band D' property, as can be requested by Lichfield City Council through its budget setting process.
2. The 'Council Tax Base' increase (calculated by Lichfield District Council). This reflects the overall growth (or contraction) of housing in the City and is beyond the City Council's reasonable control. The increase for 2025/26 equates to approximately 1.5% of precept

The total increase requested in the draft budget was therefore 4.5% + 1.5% = 6%.

On being put to the vote the motion was CARRIED. Councillors D Baker, J Eagland, J Smith, M Warfield and R Yardley abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED: That Council approve the Budget Estimates and report for the 2025/26 financial year totalling £1,025,345; and that the precept for 2025/26 be set at £998,698

82. REPAIR, RENOVATION AND SPECIFIC PROJECT PROGRAMME 2025/26

Members noted the amount of £34,000 included in the draft budget for the continuation of capital works, funded from the City Council's capital reserves.

RESOLVED That the report be noted.

83. OFFICERS REPORT

Councillor R Harvey-Coggins commended Officers for their hard work over the busy festive period. Councillor C Greatorex noted the engagement of local school children in the Mayor and Sheriff's Christmas card competition and was pleased to see how successful the markets are.

Councillor J Smith queried the final cost of the Christmas Lights Switch On event; the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed a full report would be submitted to Council once all the relevant information had been gathered.

Councillor A Hughes reminded Members of the unveiling of the Daisy Shaw plaque on 7 March and Councillor J Christie commended the MHO for rejuvenating school visits at the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

84. 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 2025/26.

RESOLVED:

1. ***That the City Council confirms that:***
 - a) ***The current general arrangements associated with the separate licences to occupy Donegal House remain appropriate.***
 - b) ***Arrangements in regard to the hire of the Ashmole Room also remain appropriate.***
2. ***That the City Council confirms it wishes an inflationary increase of 2.5% to be applied to the prevailing licence charges for 2025/26.***
3. ***That the City Council reconsiders this matter at its January 2026 meeting.***

85. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Councillor C Greatorex queried the conservation cost of two paintings. The Town Clerk confirmed that this was for a painting in the Ashmole Room at the Guildhall and one located at the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum, the cost for the Ashmole Room painting in particular being much lower than earlier quotations received.

Councillor C Greatorex also queried the Valuation Office Agency fees and the cost of IT support. The Town Clerk clarified that the Valuation Office Agency fee related to a potential project in partnership with LDC that was no longer proceeding, and that LDC had refunded these costs in full to LCC. The Town Clerk advised that the current IT support contractor had provided a good service for many years and is a trusted supplier, but there is no formal contract so alternative providers could be investigated [*Town Clerk's note - part of the reason for the increased fees from the IT support provider is the additional security and other measures added to LCC email accounts and its systems following discussions at Audit Committee where it was suggested that additional precautions in this regard should be investigated and put in place as necessary. In addition, the forthcoming Windows 10 end of life had necessitated the replacement of some machines that could not cope appropriately with Windows 11*].

RESOLVED: That payment of accounts as detailed at AGENDA APPENDIX 6 be approved and confirmed for the periods:

- **1 October 2024 to 31 October 2024 in the sum of £121,274.80 General Account, and £560.81 Imprest Account.**
- **1 November 2024 to 30 November 2024 in the sum of £151,816.52 General Account, and £429.19 Imprest Account.**

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE DEPUTY MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.03PM

MAYOR