

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Lichfield City Council held remotely via 'Zoom' on Monday 11 May 2020 at 6.30pm

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

APOLOGIES: Councillor M Field

1 CIVIC APPOINTMENTS 2020/21

Members considered the Town Clerk's agenda report detailing the recent legislative changes in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting impacts on the City Council's civic functions in 2020/21.

RESOLVED: *That the current civic appointments of Mayor (Cllr Mrs Deborah Baker), Deputy Mayor (Councillor Robert Yardley) and Sheriff (Dr Daryl Brown) be extended until the Annual Meeting of the Council scheduled for May 2021.*

2 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor and those in attendance reflected on those who have lost loved ones as a result of COVID-19, and the tireless work of local and national organisations who are working to support those in need or who are affected by the virus. The Mayor expressed her disappointment at events that had been cancelled despite all the hard work and preparation that various local bodies had put in to preparations. The Mayor also confirmed proposals to discuss with the Civic Officer the possibilities for virtual engagements to be carried out. **The Mayor informed members that her Chaplain and Cadet had confirmed that they too were happy to stay in post until May 2021 and that the Mayor & Sheriff's charities would remain the same for the forthcoming civic year.**

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None

4 COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED: *That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 2 March 2020 (Nos 112-122) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.*

5 MATTERS ARISING

None

6 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: *That the Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 6 February and 5 March 2020 be received.*

7 NOTICE OF MOTION

It was proposed by Cllr P Ray and seconded by Cllr M Trent that;

'In the context of the current Coronavirus pandemic, this Council resolves to set up a cross-party working group to consider measures that can proactively be taken by LCC to help revitalise our local economy and ensure the well-being of our community, providing City residents and businesses with the assistance and support that they need as the UK moves out of the current 'lock down' situation. This

council further recognises that the new working group will need to work closely with other local authorities, including LDC and SCC'

The motion was debated by members, Cllr M Warfield proposed an amendment to the motion which was seconded by Cllr Lax. The amendment was put to the vote and declared passed. The revised motion read:

'That in the context of the current Coronavirus pandemic, this Council resolves to work closely with other local authorities and bodies to consider measures that can proactively be taken to help revitalise the local economy and ensure the well-being of our community, providing City residents and businesses with the assistance and support that they need as the UK moves out of the current 'lock down' situation. This council can contribute both in terms of ideas and resources whilst seeking to preserve the traditions of the Council. At this time the most effective way to do this is to take an active role in the District Council's emerging Lichfield Place Board which is dedicating itself to this task.'

Cllr D Robertson proposed an amendment to include third sector organisations so that the motion would read '*...providing City Centre residents, businesses and third sector organisations with the assistance...*' This was seconded by Cllr Anketell and on being put to the vote was declared passed.

Cllr P Ray proposed an amendment that the following text be added at the end of the motion '*The representatives who attend the Lichfield Place Board will inform and consult with City Councillors*'. The amendment was seconded by Cllr H Ashton and on being put to the vote was declared passed.

The amended motion was put to the vote and it was:

RESOLVED: *That in the context of the current Coronavirus pandemic, this Council resolves to work closely with other local authorities and bodies to consider measures that can proactively be taken to help revitalise the local economy and ensure the well-being of our community, providing City residents, businesses and third sector organisations with the assistance and support that they need as the UK moves out of the current 'lock down' situation. This council can contribute both in terms of ideas and resources whilst seeking to preserve the traditions of the Council. At this time the most effective way to do this is to take an active role in the District Council's emerging Lichfield Place Board which is dedicating itself to this task. The representatives who attend the Lichfield Place Board will inform and consult with City Councillors.*

8 AUDIT COMMITTEE

Members considered the Minutes of the Audit Committee meeting held on 12 March 2020 and the report and recommendations of the Internal Auditor as circulated with the agenda. Cllr D Robertson queried why Boley Park CC did not appear on the Audit Plan as presented to Council; the Town Clerk confirmed that an Audit of Boley Park Community Hall was scheduled for this year and would appear on the next Internal Audit report [this is dependant upon the ongoing proposals for the City Council to become sole trustee of the Hall].

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Minutes and recommendations of the Audit Committee meeting held on 12 March 2020 are adopted (Members' particular attention was drawn to the recommendation for Council to adopt Appendices A,B,C and D as attached to the Minutes)***
- b) The report and recommendations of the Internal Auditor for the year ending 31 March 2020 as circulated with the agenda be adopted.***

9 APPOINTMENT OF LEADER/DEPUTY LEADER

Members considered the appointment of Leader and Deputy Leader for 2020/21 in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions.

RESOLVED: That the tenure of the Leader of the Council (Councillor Mark Warfield) and the Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor Mrs Gwyneth Boyle) be extended until the Annual Meeting of the Council scheduled for May 2021.

10 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

Members considered committee memberships for 2020/21 together with the Town Clerk's brief agenda report.

RESOLVED: The tenure of the existing committee members, Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen, with the exception of Cllr Anketell's appointment to the Grants Committee, be extended until the Council resolves to end this extension or the Annual Meeting of the Council scheduled for May 2021, whichever is the sooner.

11 MEETINGS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE (PAC)

Members considered the Town Clerk's report detailing the options for allowing the City Council to submit comments on planning applications during the COVID-19 restrictions. It was suggested that the decisions could be published in a similar way to the Minutes of PAC meetings in order to promote transparency. The Chairman of the PAC and Town Clerk confirmed they would be discussing a protocol for the submission and recording of planning related LCC comments at the earliest opportunity.

RESOLVED: That delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chairman of the PAC, the Leader of the Council and members of the relevant ward, to submit responses to planning applications (and any other matters that would ordinarily be considered by the PAC) to the relevant authority in the name of the City Council; this delegated authority to expire at either the first quorate meeting of the PAC held subsequent to this resolution, or the Annual Meeting of the Council scheduled for May 2021, whichever is the sooner. The council noted the difficulties in facilitating public access to this decision making process.

12 MEMBER ABSENCE – COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Members considered the Town Clerk's report confirming that recent legislative change did not appear to account for the existing rules regarding member absence, despite the increased potential for such absence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Cllr D Robertson encouraged all members to attend regularly wherever possible and also noted the democratic deficit that could result without this dispensation due to the restrictions on local elections until May 2021.

RESOLVED: A dispensation be given to all members who are absent from meetings for a period of six months or longer either directly or indirectly as a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic; this dispensation to expire by resolution of the Council to that effect or following the Annual Meeting of the Council scheduled for May 2021, whichever is the sooner.

13 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2020/21

Members considered the Town Clerk's agenda report regarding the potential for further disruption to the adopted calendar of meetings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESOLVED:

- a) **Delegated authority be given to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the relevant committee to vary meeting dates and/or to**

cancel scheduled meetings; the delegated authority to expire on resolution by the Council to that effect or at the Annual Meeting of the Council scheduled for May 2021, whichever is the sooner.

- b) The Council retrospectively approves the cancellation of the 2020/21 calendar year meetings scheduled to take place between 1 April and 11 May 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.*

14 YEAR END RETURNS AND DEADLINES 2019/20

Members considered the Town Clerk's agenda report, confirming that despite the extension provided to the statutory return deadline, the City Council was still aiming to submit the required information to the external auditor within the original timescale.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

15 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

RESOLVED: That payment of accounts be approved and confirmed as listed in Agenda Appendix 3 for the periods

- a) 1 January 2020 to 31 January 2020 in the sum of £99,974.11 General Account, and £860.85 Imprest Account*
- b) 1 February 2020 to 29 February 2020 in the sum of £86,596.40 General Account and £972.46 Imprest Account*

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.46 PM

MAYOR