

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF PARISH MEETING

MONDAY, 19 MARCH 2018 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Councillors S Rahman (Chair)
 C Palmer (Vice-Chair)
 D Bowater
 A Brandham
 C Chambers
 S Cotter
 K Cursons
 K Ferguson
 M Freeman
 S Jones
 F Kharawala
 T Morris
 C Perham
 G Perham
 E Wallace

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
 V Cannon, Head of Cultural and Economic
 Services
 I Haynes, Head of Grounds and Environmental
 Services
 C Cummins, Finance Officer
 S Sandiford, Head of Democratic and Central
 Services
 B Bodsworth, Events Contractor
 S Jewell, Best Bar None Co-Ordinator
 M Jahn, Committee Officer,

Members of the public: 0
Members of the press 0

1 WELCOME

The Town Mayor, Councillor S Rahman, explained the format of the meeting and welcomed all those present and thanked everyone for attending.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillor R Berry, Councillor S Cursons and Councillor A Dodwell.

3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 13 March 2017 were approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

4 TOWN COUNCIL

A presentation was given by Town Clerk Mark Saccoccio and Leader of the Council, Councillor Ewan Wallace, on recent projects undertaken by the Town Council, a summary of services and funding and an indication of future objectives. Councillor Wallace thanked the Mayor for his hard work during the year representing the town and fundraising for his named charities. Thanks were also given to the staff of the council for their good work, to the Committee Chairs and to all those who worked so hard for the benefit of the town. Although the statutory remit for the Town Council was relatively narrow, the Council went beyond that and remained committed to providing quality services and successful events for the Community efficiently and within budget.

The meeting was advised that the majority of funding for Town Council projects and services was obtained through the precept, collected by the local authority as part of the council tax charge. The precept had remained unchanged for the last six years, with the Town Council achieving increased efficiencies in order to continue to deliver services and projects such as the building of the Mausoleum, the continuing improvements to Linslade Recreation Ground, refurbishment of play equipment in Adams Bottom and Vimy Road and providing the Youth Promise Grant Scheme to support Youth Provision within the town. With the town growing, more provision for the youth of the town was very important and TACTIC offered these services by providing support, focused workshops within schools, Youth forum and a confidential service for young people if and when they needed help.

Residents were advised that the 21 Town Councillors were volunteers and an overview of the committee structure overseeing projects and services was given. In a typical year the Town Council would host approximately 60 meetings, with each committee having its own budget and the responsibility for how this would be spent. Continued improvements were being made to IT systems within the Council to improve how information was shared to the community, to streamline processes and to provide greater transparency to the public. The Council continued to support the Market providing 1:1 advice for traders, WENTA training on the use of social media platforms to enhance their business, new banners and canopy covers to help comply with new trader standards. Electronic signage would be installed in the near future at 3 sites within the town, the architectural lighting project had been endorsed by the Cultural and Environmental Services Committee and three shops had agreed to take part in the High Street Improvement Scheme led by Central Bedfordshire Council.

5 FINAL REMARKS

The Chair invited attendees to ask questions or make comments.

- Q. Thank you for the great work and 0% increase in council tax. Regarding the Market, does communication need to be improved, for example a manned Council Surgery Stall provided to hear Leighton-Linslade Town Council's opinions? Communications through social media, newsletter etc are much improved but the public would welcome the opportunity to engage with the Council via a market stall.
- A. The relaunch of the market was a delicate issue and a balance had to be achieved. The Council had to look at the big picture and ensure equality for all traders, regardless of historic arrangements which benefitted some individual businesses. Despite the improvements in communications through About Town, websites and social media, we accept that further improvements could be made with communications.
- Q. Would it be possible to approach large retailers like Tesco for grants to refurbish the Henry Finch Fountain in Linslade Recreation Ground?
- A. This would be considered and also the Council would consider encouraging community involvement with a crowdfunding approach.
- Q. There used to be wheelchairs available at the multi-storey car park provided by the Rotary Club but since the attendants have been removed they are no longer available. Are they no longer available?
- A. When Central Bedfordshire Council took the decision to no longer man the multi storey car park, there were no alternative options for storage of the wheelchairs. Sadly, they seem to have disappeared. The Council will be talking to the Rotary regarding this.
- Q. When the lifts are broken in the multi-storey car park could a sign be put downstairs at the entrance so people do not go up to the top before realising.
- A. Agreed that this should be the case.
- Q. It is good the TACTIC centre are renting out their premises, does the Town Council still rent the White House and are there any thoughts about buying their own premises?
- A. Town Council does currently rent the White House. Options for the future are being carefully considered at present but there is not a lot of suitable property available at this time.
- C. Comment – the condition of the paving in the town centre is dangerous and Central Bedfordshire Council are responsible for

repairs. Also when repairs are carried out by Anglian Water they do not replace bricks just tarmac over. The repair should be put back to how it originally looked within 2 years by the water company.

The Mayor ended the meeting by thanking all present for their attendance and for participating. Any further questions could be raised by contacting the Town Council by phone or email.

The meeting closed at 8.37 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 19 MARCH 2018.

Chair

18 MARCH 2019