

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough, on Monday 11 November 2013, at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillor Irmgard Parrott (In the Chair)
Councillor Malcolm Parish (Vice-Chairman)

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| Councillor Gillian Bardsley | Councillor Stuart Kinch |
| Councillor Owen Bierley | Councillor Angela Lawrence |
| Councillor Mark Binns | Councillor Malcolm Leaning |
| Councillor Nigel Bowler | Councillor Giles McNeill |
| Councillor Jackie Brockway | Councillor Judy Rainsforth |
| Councillor Alan Caine | Councillor Tom Regis |
| Councillor David Cotton | Councillor Di Rodgers |
| Councillor Stuart Curtis | Councillor Lesley Rollings |
| Councillor Chris Darcel | Councillor Reg Shore |
| Councillor David Dobbie | Councillor Lewis Strange |
| Councillor Richard Doran | Councillor Jeff Summers |
| Councillor Ian Fleetwood | Councillor Geoff Wiseman |
| Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan | Councillor Anne Welburn |
| Councillor Burt Keimach | Councillor Trevor Young |

Apologies: Councillor Ken Bridger
Councillor Jessie Milne
Councillor Roger Patterson
Councillor William Parry
Councillor Sue Rawlins
Councillor Mick Tinker

In Attendance: Manjeet Gill Chief Executive
Mark Sturgess Director of Regeneration and Planning
Russell Stone Chief Finance Officer
Alan Robinson Head of Central Services and Monitoring Officer
Phil Hinch Licensing Team Manager
Lesley Beevers Environmental Protection Team Leader
Dinah Lilley Governance and Civic Officer

Also in Attendance: Simon Hedison - Lincolnshire 4x4 Response
Andrew Fisher - Lincolnshire 4x4 Response

Also Present: six members of the public

60 PRAYERS

The meeting commenced with prayers by Councillor David Cotton.

Note Councillor Keimach joined the meeting at this point.

One minute's silence was then held for Armistice Day.

61 COUNCIL MINUTES 5 SEPTEMBER 2013 (Paper A)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 5 September 2013 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

62 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Gillian Bardsley declared a pecuniary interest in the second of the two motions as being a landlord.

Councillor Cotton declared a personal interest in Paper E, a number of churches having been victim of scrap metal theft.

63 MATTERS ARISING (Paper B)

The Council Chairman introduced the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 30 August 2013.

RESOLVED that progress on the Matters Arising Schedule, as set out in Paper B be noted.

64 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman of the Council

The Chairman noted that a list of her engagements had been circulated, however she highlighted two of the events:- the MacMillan Coffee morning held in the Guildhall had raised £430 and the chairman thanked all the staff who had been involved in such a tremendous effort. Secondly, the Chairman noted that she had attended the Best Kept Village Competition Awards Evening at Billingborough Village Hall at which West Lindsey had achieved awards in three of the five categories, which was worthy of a 'pat on the back' for all Parish Councils involved.

The Chairman then paid tribute to the late Councillor Underwood-Frost who had passed away on 16 October 2013. Several Councillors spoke warmly about their fellow Councillor, friend and colleague, noting that he had been a wonderful person to know and who had worked hard for the residents of Scotter and for West Lindsey as a whole. Councillors also paid tribute to the strength of his mother, Sally, and stated that support would always be available for her and Max. The Chief Executive echoed the sentiments of the Councillors on behalf of officers of the Council. A minute's silence was then held to remember Councillor Underwood-Frost.

The Chairman then invited Councillor Alan Caine to list some of the awards recently won by Caistor, which included CPRE Lincolnshire best kept small town, Gold Award East Midlands in Bloom and 6th in UK best Post Office.

Head of Paid Service

The Chief Executive described a recently held meeting of the MOD Round Table during which Wing Commander Turner stated that two years ago Scampton was destined for closure, however after having had £16m spent on it, the base now had a future. More resources were to be committed for other bases to save them from closure and the national work was to learn from decommissioning and reduce the impact on communities of any future closures.

The Council's top ten priorities had been agreed and a meeting had taken place with political leaders and officers, this would be a major milestone for the Council. Other issues currently being worked on included the budget and the Chief Officer structure.

The Community Assets Fund conference had taken place at the Epic Centre and had been attended by representatives of around 30-40 communities, whose commitment was impressive. There was a pipeline of 71 ideas or more devoted schemes which we help especially to prepare new national funding next year. The Big Lottery Fund was also planning to launch a Community Assets Fund of £150m next spring.

65 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from the public.

66 PRESENTATION - LINCOLNSHIRE 4X4 RESPONSE

Simon Hedison and Andrew Fisher attended the meeting to give a presentation on the Lincolnshire 4x4 Response Service. The organisation provided trained and insured 4x4 drivers and their vehicles for adverse conditions. They worked for organisations designated as "cat 1" and "cat 2" responders in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and NHS providers, and their services were utilised in any situation where emergency services need transport – typically in mud, flood and snow.

The Lincolnshire organisation was part of a national network and comprised 70 volunteers from all walks of life, who undertook regular training in many different aspects of rescue work. Close liaison was undertaken with the NHS, Red Cross and emergency services to provide support and rescue in adverse conditions.

Note Councillor Mark Binns arrived at this point of the meeting

Councillors asked a number of questions regarding training, sponsorship and geographical location of volunteers. The Chairman then thanked Mr Hedison and Mr Fisher for a very interesting and informative presentation, noting that it was hoped their emergency services would not be required again very soon.

67 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9

There were no questions pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 9.

68 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10

Madam Chairman.

One of our priorities for this period is health and wellbeing. Many of us, from experience know how difficult life is when one's health is impaired.

Recently I met with a gentleman who was promoting a relatively new scheme to help those who had suffered what is commonly known as a stroke. The leaking of blood in the brain can leave people with a varied range of incapacities with differing levels of severity. I as a sufferer in 2002, lost my ability to speak. Thankfully it returned twenty four hours later.

I was one of the lucky ones but there are thousands who have to live with the after effects for years, some being bed ridden for the rest of their lives. Usually it is the older generation which are smitten but we are tending to see the occurrence in an ever increasing number of younger people being affected.

Imagine, being immobilised by an event, living alone, unable to make a cup of tea, use the toilet and exist. What a lonely life it can be.

Other health conditions such as dementia, Alzheimer's, and Parkinson's all result in serious incapacities.

SING FOR YOUR LIFE. This is a scheme which brings sufferers together for the enjoyment of singing and sociability. The positive benefits of singing on our health and WELLBEING are well documented.

Some of the key findings are that it:- Provides excellent cognitive stimulation therapy.

Helps reduce stress & anxiety whilst increases energy levels.

Provides an inclusive activity (especially for those who are socially isolated)

Provides an effective reminiscence experience.

Provides an intergenerational opportunity.

All that is required is someone to organise a venue of which there are numerous in the town and someone prepared to give time to run the programme. Once established and proven it can be rolled out to places such as MARKET RASEN and CAISTOR. DISTRICT WIDE.

Equipment required is a SILVER SONG BOX. simply a karaoke machine with a difference.

These song boxes cost £ 1,680.00.

Chairman.

If venues and an organiser can be found to kick start a programme in Gainsborough. I am asking council if they would be prepared to invest in a SILVER SONG BOX. As this would be a significant investment and potentially benefit every community.

I propose each member of this council donate £50-00 of their councillor initiative fund towards the purchase of a unit. In doing so every member would be buying into the scheme to help sufferers regain some of what they had lost due to these illnesses.

I so move.

Councillor Jeff Summers

Councillors noted that whilst the project was an excellent cause to support, some Members no longer had money available in their Councillor Initiative Fund. Councillor Shore pointed out that Councillor Summers could not legitimately spend the Funds of other Councillors, and suggested that the motion be reworded to “invite” other Members to contribute and “in doing so would be buying into the scheme”.

Other suggestions included contacting Sound Lincs for further information and advice, or bidding for funds from the Community Chest. Some Councillors said they would be willing to donate more than the £50 requested. Councillor Summers informed the Council that the organiser of the scheme was present in the room with some of the equipment and Councillors were welcome to discuss the matter further outside of the meeting.

On being voted upon it was then **AGREED** that the motion be approved in principle, but that other options be explored and further negotiations take place at a later time.

Note Councillor Bardsley left the meeting for the following item.

Motion to the Chairman of Council.

The Gainsborough South West Ward has been identified as a priority area by this authority for past ten years. However despite a significant amount of financial resource by WLDC the success of tackling both the physical and social regeneration of housing has been extremely limited.

Over the ten year period there has been a huge increase of private landlords across the ward, which has further impacted on the local community in many different ways such as:

- Lack of tenancy management.
- Disrepair.
- Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Increase in drug and alcohol misuse.

The social issues are so significant that I believe a more radical approach is required, you will recall that I have raised this issue numerous times in the past.

Other authority areas have been successful in addressing similar issues faced by the South West Ward by introducing Selective Licensing Schemes for Private Landlords. The evidence is now clearly available to be able to measure the success rates of schemes in operation.

The social issues within the ward requires considerable amount of resources from numerous different agencies and stakeholders and following a recent walk about the ward with Alan Hardwick, The Chief Lincolnshire Police Commissioner and WLDC officers, he fully supported the proposal of introducing such a licensing scheme to identified parts of the ward.

Although there is a financial resource required to implementing a licensing scheme, important longer term savings could be achieved on the current resource wasted by the various agencies.

Chairman, I would like to 'move' that the relevant policy committee considers the implementation of a Selective Private Landlord Scheme for the Gainsborough South West Ward.

Cllr Trevor Young

The motion proposed by Councillor Young was welcomed by the Chair of the Prosperous Communities Committee.

“Section 80 of the Housing Act 2004 gives powers to local authorities to designate areas, or the whole of its area, as subject to selective licensing in respect of the whole private rented sector subject to certain conditions being met. These conditions are either, or both of, the following;

- The area is experiencing low housing demand
- The area is experiencing a significant and persistent problem caused by anti-social behavior and that landlords are not taking appropriate action to combat the problem. Thus in introducing selective licensing it would lead to a reduction in the problem.

Initial work has been undertaken by officers to explore the feasibility of a selective licensing scheme for the area, which has been discussed with and has the support of the Chief Executive. This would be developed alongside the wider regeneration and development work that is underway within the South West Ward and being led by the Localism Team.

Research undertaken in February 2013, as part of the empty homes project, indicates that the South West Ward experiences low housing demand in comparison to the North and East Wards of Gainsborough, surrounding villages, and similar towns such as Retford. Visual audits of the South West Ward and “days of action” initiatives have shown that anti-social behaviour in privately rented housing is prevalent with high numbers of absentee landlords.

In order to resource a selective licensing scheme the legislation allows local authorities to set their fees according to the costs incurred, which should not lead to

a profit for the Council. License fees currently charged across the UK range from £250 - £1250 per property for a five year license.

In Lincolnshire, Boston Borough Council is currently undertaking consultation on their selective licensing scheme, with a fee ranging from £490 to £800. Officers of the Council have already been in contact with Boston in order to aid the approach we may wish to take.

It is widely accepted that a selective licensing scheme would provide a wide range of benefits, such as:

- Improving the standard of accommodation in the private rented sector
- Improving the management of accommodation in the private rented sector
- Provide training and information for landlords in the private sector
- Reduction in number of empty properties and increased demand for housing as confidence in the market grows
- Opportunities to provide grants to improve the exterior appearance of properties

Additional benefits the scheme could deliver relate to reductions in anti-social behaviour, an improved street scene environment and a more vibrant and cohesive community. Alongside this economic benefits could be seen through increased local services and spend in the local economy.

As the Chair of the Prosperous Communities Committee I have requested an initial feasibility report to be developed and tabled at the earliest opportunity.”

The motion was then seconded and voted upon and it was **RESOLVED** that the matter be considered by the Prosperous Communities Committee.

Note Councillor Bardsley returned to the meeting.

69 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES (Paper C)

RESOLVED that in accordance with the provisions of section 16 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the wishes expressed by political groups, Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan be appointed to serve on the Council’s Planning Committee for the remainder of the 2013/14 civic year.

70 MEMBER NOMINATION TO SIT ON THE DISTRICT COUNCIL HEALTH AND WELLBEING NETWORK (Paper D)

RESOLVED that Councillor Malcolm Parish be appointed to the District Health and Well-being Network.

71 IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW LEGISLATION FOR SCRAP METAL DEALERS 2013 (Paper E)

The Licensing Team Manager presented the report and described the new Scrap Metal Dealers' Act which was to replace the 1964 legislation and be implemented fully from December 2013.

There had been a rise in the value of scrap metal, and subsequently a rise in associated crime. The matter had previously been poorly regulated, but the new Act had now received Royal Assent and needed urgent action. The Act would give authorities more powers to revoke licences if a dealer was considered unsuitable. In addition Local Authorities and Police had been given powers to enter and inspect premises.

The legislation created two categories of licence that operators would need to obtain, depending on the type of business, i.e. Site Licence or Collectors Licence, both of which must be accompanied by a fee.

The report listed a number of options, the preferred one being based on two officers visiting the site, twice per year throughout the duration of the licence (six visits in total). This was to ensure that licence holders and collectors had a clear understanding from the outset what obligations had to be met and so that officers could be reassured and satisfied that the site was being operated appropriately and in accordance with what the legislation and any guidelines required. The proposed fees for this option were set out as £1180.09 for a Site Licence, and £165.70 for a Collector's Licence.

The report also listed fees to be set for licence renewal and variations, some of which would be determined as part of the budget fee setting process in the near future.

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| i | Application to renew scrap metal site licence | TBC |
| ii | Application to renew scrap metal collectors licence | TBC |
| iii | Application to vary scrap metal licence change of licensee details | £23.00 |
| iv | Application to vary scrap metal licence change of licensed site | £43.53 |
| v | Application to vary scrap metal licence change of site manager | £43.53 |
| vi | Application to vary scrap metal licence site to collectors licence | TBC |
| vii | Application to vary scrap metal licence collectors to site licence | TBC |
| viii | Application for copy of licence | £10.50 |

Councillor asked questions and expressed some concerns regarding the policing and enforcement of the legislation, but generally welcomed the changes as being overdue.

The recommendation was then moved, seconded and voted upon.

RESOLVED that

- a) the fees and charges as set out above, be agreed to take immediate effect;
- b) delegated authority to be given to Head of Public Protection for the determination of all applications where the applicant meets the defined

- criteria, no objections are received and where there are no grounds for refusal;
- c) authority be delegated to the Taxi and General Licensing Sub-Committee for the determination of any application on which there would be grounds to consider refusal either due to the applicant not meeting the criteria or where objections are received, or where any revocation is to be considered.

72 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS PUBLISHED SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING ON 5 SEPTEMBER 2013.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Committee meetings published since the last Council meeting on 5 September 2013 be received.

The meeting concluded at 8.50 pm.

Chairman