

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough, on Monday 27 January 2014, at 7.00pm.

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

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| Councillor Gillian Bardsley | Councillor Burt Keimach |
| Councillor Owen Bierley | Councillor Stuart Kinch |
| Councillor Mark Binns | Councillor Angela Lawrence |
| Councillor Nigel Bowler | Councillor Giles McNeill |
| Councillor Ken Bridger | Councillor Jessie Milne |
| Councillor Jackie Brockway | Councillor Roger Patterson |
| Councillor Alan Caine | Councillor Judy Rainsforth |
| Councillor David Cotton | Councillor Tom Regis |
| Councillor Stuart Curtis | Councillor Lesley Rollings |
| Councillor Chris Darcel | Councillor Reg Shore |
| Councillor Chris Day | Councillor Lewis Strange |
| Councillor David Dobbie | Councillor Jeff Summers |
| Councillor Ian Fleetwood | Councillor Geoff Wiseman |
| Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan | Councillor Anne Welburn |

Apologies: Councillor Richard Doran
Councillor Malcolm Leaning
Councillor Sue Rawlins
Councillor Di Rodgers
Councillor Mick Tinker

Councillor Binns had given notice that he may arrive late.

In Attendance:

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| Manjeet Gill | Chief Executive |
| Mark Sturgess | Chief Operating Officer |
| John Rice | Interim Commercial Director |
| Russell Stone | Chief Finance Officer |
| Alex Reeks | Assistant Chief Executive |
| Alan Robinson | Head of Central Services and Monitoring Officer |
| Suzanne Fysh | Head of Development and Neighbourhoods |
| Dinah Lilley | Governance and Civic Officer |

Also in Attendance: Reverend Penny Green
David Lomas – Chairman – Remuneration Panel
Steve Leary - Team Leader, Admin and Recycling

Also Present: 2 members of the public

Several members of the Waste Services Team attended for minute 87

73 PRAYERS

The meeting commenced with prayers by Reverend Penny Green.

A minute's silence was held for the late Councillor William Parry

Note Councillor Keimach joined the meeting at this point.

74 WELCOME TO NEW COUNCILLOR

The Chairman welcomed the newly elected Member for the Scotter Ward, Councillor Chris Day.

75 COUNCIL MINUTES 11 NOVEMBER 2013 (Paper A)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 11 November 2013 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

76 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor David Cotton declared a personal interest in Paper C as his mother was a pensioner in receipt of benefits.

Councillor Owen Bierley declared a pecuniary interest in Paper F as he was the Chairman of the Taxi and General Licensing Sub-Committee, so would leave the meeting for consideration of the item.

77 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 17 January 2014.

Councillor Welburn affirmed that the letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons would be amended and ready for despatch in due course.

RESOLVED that the amended letter be sent to the Speaker.

Councillor Summers noted that he had not yet been able to contact the organisers of Songbox but would continue to try.

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

Note Councillor Binns arrived at this point of the meeting.

78 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman of the Council

The Chairman noted that the meeting was the last which would be attended by the caretaker due to his retirement. Thanks were expressed for all the support he had given over the last ten years and these were echoed by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

The Chairman also mentioned a good citizen who had recently assisted a Building Control Officer with an unsafe wall, an act worthy of public recognition.

The list of Civic Engagements had been circulated to all Councillors, and the Chairman particularly noted how busy she had been on Christmas day with visits to Care Homes, John Coupland Hospital, and lunch at Gainsborough House Community Centre, followed by a visit to the Gainsborough Fire Station.

Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council noted that the Civic Carol Service had also been an enjoyable event. He also wished everyone a Happy New Year in this first meeting of 2014. The Leader then reiterated the welcome to Councillor Chris Day.

The Leader then mentioned the Elswitha Quarter project which he described as 'dead and gone', to be replaced by a new focus on the town centre and riverside. A new working group had been formed along with input from residents, communities, stakeholders, partners etc. Terms of Reference were to be established and the work would be complex and detailed.

A Localism questionnaire had been circulated to all Councillors and a request was made to complete this.

The Leader then gave a brief résumé of progress on the Council priorities and requested Members' involvement in compiling next year's priorities. All Members had been asked to obtain views from residents and feed these back to the Member Forum.

Head of Paid Service

The Chief Executive began by congratulating Mark Sturgess on his recent appointment as Chief Operating Officer, and noted that John Rice and Jeanette McGarry were interim Commercial and Resources Directors respectively. These posts were ensuring that appropriate executive support was being provided.

A meeting had recently taken place with the local MP to discuss sparsity and rural funding, and discussion had taken place with the Director of Public Health on rural deprivation and health poverty. It was hoped that a conference could be held in the East Midlands.

The Chief Executive then issued an apology to Councillor Di Rodgers for an administrative error which had meant that she had not been invited to meetings of the Community Awards Panel. Assurance was given that the matter was now resolved and that Cllr Rodgers be nominated to sit on the Panel in 2014/15.

Work was ongoing to progress the 2014/15 budget through the Committee system and with further savings still to be made in future years, budget work remained a high priority.

79 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from the public.

80 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 9

As Councillors with the responsibility for the Middle Rasen area and with ward ratepayers living at the complex called Braemer Close, Middle Rasen and other similar accommodation with alarms in West Lindsey.

We understand ACIS have given notice to tenants that they can no longer provide the warden service from 1st April 2014 and we believe this conflicts with their role as the key housing provider for diverse housing provision in West Lindsey.

We believe the catalyst for this decision is that County Council supporting people funding is now focussed on greater support to vulnerable people and we believe ACIS can bid for this funding if they feel it meets their business objectives of providing housing to vulnerable people.

Chief Executive, these are residents of West Lindsey and our ratepayers. Council will realise time is of the essence and we urge you to use your powers to work with ACIS and the County Council in:

1. Ensuring that ACIS tenants have legal assistance in connection with their tenancies.
2. Do all to find a solution to maintain this service, which Lincoln and East Lindsey are continuing to provide amongst some of the areas affected like ACIS, yet have maintained a service; and
3. Ask Challenge and Improvement Committee to look at this service and also consider generally reviewing the role ACIS plays in West Lindsey and its service to tenants who are ratepayers of West Lindsey.
4. Identifying all the sheltered accommodation affected in West Lindsey.

Councillors Wiseman and Strange.

The Chief Executive responded stating that she had spoken to both LCC and ACIS. ACIS had held meetings with residents and compiled a list of FAQs. Two other organisations had been approached to provide a service but had deemed it non-viable. LCC had stated that the Well-being service met the needs of residents, however had agreed to meet with ACIS and the Chief Executive to explore further options. It was suggested that Councillors Wiseman and Strange be invited.

81 MOTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10

(a) Madame Chairman,

As you know I approached yourself and Councillor Caine some weeks ago with the idea of having an, In-Memorium Board in the Council on which to remember those councillors who sadly pass away while in service.

This of course has been brought home to us all in the past months with the sad passing of Chris and William. We have actually lost four councillors in little over a year.

My idea is that such a board would be similar to that which the Chairmen and Chief Executives names are placed, but with the dates of their service. I would make it clear I do not envisage this being for those former councillors who sadly pass away after leaving the council.

Those who pass away while in service are often working as councillors up to the time of their passing; this has certainly been the case with Councillors Sellars, Starkey, Underwood Frost and Parry, all of who were working almost to the end of their lives.

We have other names in the history of the Council as well, Councillor George Greenaway, and Councillor Keith Whaley to name two and there are perhaps others I am not familiar with, being before my time as a councillor.

I would therefore move, hopefully with the support of the Councillors that such a memorial board is investigated and costing obtained and the board be hung in a prominent place in the Guildhall.

Thank you Chairman,

I so Move

Councillor David Cotton

The Chairman of Council responded stating that costs were being worked on and the design and estimate would be compiled into a report for submission to the Policy and Resources Committee. It was noted that the list of names totalled 16 since 1974, when

West Lindsey District Council had been formed. It was suggested that it would be fitting if the board could be completed in time for the WLDC 40th anniversary.

RESOLVED that designs and costs for a memorial board be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

(b) Madam Chairman.

As the Independent representative on the Elswitha project group I am surprised I have heard of no progress or meeting since September.

In view of the void left by the demolition of the Old Guildhall I find this surprising.

To facilitate progress I would like to propose that the council invites any member, town councillor or interested party in the revitalisation of the town to a loose working group, similar to Councillor Welburn's Members Forum to explore and "flesh out" some ideas.

Once these ideas have been developed they can be presented to the town as part of an ongoing consultation.

Hopefully this council will have learnt from its earlier experience and this time endeavour to carry the community with it.

To this end I propose the council invites members, town councillors and others to join an "Elswitha forum" to move the project on.

I so move.

Councillor Chris Darcel

Cllr Darcel noted that the Leader's announcements had covered the subject matter of the motion. There was a necessity to realise funds from assets and raise aspirations, and all Councillors should have an input.

The Leader of the Council assured Councillor Darcel that acquisition management was being prioritised and that Terms of Reference for the working group would be established to ensure correct processes would be followed.

The Motion was not seconded.

(c) Madam Chairman.

It has long been the case that we have presentations by outside bodies as part of our council meetings. The object of this exercise is to keep members informed of what we are doing, what is available to council or ideas for exploration etc. I do recognise there are subjects which are best presented at council.

There appears to have been some concerns whether subject matter has been appropriate or relevant in some cases.

Madam chairman. I propose all future presentations at Council will be subject to consultation and joint approval with the Chief executive, leader of the council and chairman of the council. Thus demonstrating the process is councillor led. Chairman, this is an item which I feel we can resolve tonight with limited debate followed by a vote, subject to your approval.

I so move.

Jeff. Summers.

Councillor Shore proposed that an opposition Group Leader also be involved in any decisions about presentations. The amendment to the motion was then seconded.

RESOLVED that the Leader of the Council, the Chairman, the Chief Executive and an opposition Group Leader be consulted on future presentations to Council meetings.

82. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2014/15 (PAPER C)

The report was presented by the Head of Central Services who reminded Members that the previous scheme had been abolished in 2013. A review was to be undertaken annually. It was proposed to maintain the existing scheme and review this in a further year once a fuller picture emerged.

Brief discussion ensued during which the report was commended, and it was noted that, due to enforcement, collection rates were up by 30%.

RESOLVED that

- a) the report be noted
- b) the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for West Lindsey DC for 2014/15 as detailed in appendix C of the report be agreed.

83. COLLECTION FUND SURPLUS AND COUNCIL TAX BASE 2014/15 (PAPER D)

The Chief Finance Officer gave a brief introduction to the report which was an annual requirement to set out the declaration of the estimated surplus on the Council's Collection Fund at the end of March 2014 and how it was to be shared amongst the constituent precepting bodies. It also set out the tax base calculation for 2014/15. The tax base was a key component in calculating both the budget requirement and the council tax charge.

RESOLVED that:

- a) the estimated surplus of £779,000 to be declared as accruing in the Council's Collection Fund at 31 March 2014 relating to Council Tax transactions be noted;

- b) the Council uses its element of the Council Tax surplus in calculating the level of Council Tax in 2014/15, and
- c) the calculations of the Council's tax base for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix A be approved, and that in accordance with the Local Authorities' (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1993 (as amended), the tax base for each part of the Authority's area shall be as set out in Appendix B.

84. CORPORATE PLAN 2013 REFRESH (PAPER E)

The Assistant Chief Executive presented the annual report which sought to keep the Corporate Plan up to date. The Plan was based on ten agreed priorities and work was constantly undertaken to align project work with the priorities. The refreshed plan had been considered by the Prosperous Communities Committee, the Challenge and Improvement Committee and also the Policy and Resources Committee.

Members noted the usefulness of the document as a resource, particularly the leaflets, but sought to ensure that it 'stretched' the Council, rather than just listing what could be done.

RESOLVED that

- a) The Corporate Plan at Appendix 1 be approved;
- b) The Corporate Plan summary document at Appendix 2 be approved;
- c) The Corporate Plan leaflet version at Appendix 3 be approved.

Note Councillor Bierley left the meeting for consideration of the following item.

85. REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES FOR 2014-15 (PAPER F)

David Lomas, Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel, presented the report which was self explanatory, and thanked officers and Members for their assistance and input.

Members discussed the amended recommendation proposed by the Governance and Audit Committee and felt that this was inappropriate as it detracted from the independence of the Panel.

On the basis that staff had received a 1% increase in pay, some Members felt able to support the proposal for a Members' increase. It was noted that Taxi and General Licensing was a sub-committee not a full Committee, which was allowed a Sub-Committee Chairman's remuneration.

Note Councillor Strange left the meeting at this point.

Recommendation 1 was then moved and seconded.

A recorded vote was then proposed and seconded.

For: Councillors Bardsley, Bowler, Brockway, Caine, Curtis, Dobbie, Fleetwood, Howitt-Cowan, Kinch, Lawrence, McNeill, Parish, Parrott, Patterson, Regis, Summers and Welburn.

Against: Councillors Binns, Bridger, Cotton, Darcel, Keimach, Milne, Rainsforth, Rollings, Shore and Wiseman.

A total of 18 votes for and 10 against.

RESOLVED that the Members' Allowance scheme for 2014-15 as proposed by the Independent Remuneration Panel be approved.

Note Councillor Bierley returned to the meeting.

86 UPDATE ON THE WAY FORWARD FOR PLANNING POLICY IN CENTRAL LINCOLNSHIRE (PAPER G)

The Head of Development and Neighbourhoods introduced the report to Members stating that the situation was changing on a weekly basis. A Project Plan was coming forward and it was hoped that a Local Plan would be adopted by the end of 2016. Many areas of work had been identified and there was to be a Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee briefing the following week. Member involvement was sought and any ideas should be sent through to officers.

Discussion ensued on several aspects of the process during which Councillors were urged to be involved and to take part in training sessions. There had been problems, some due to lack of understanding, and some with the process. Questions were raised on the financial implications and assurances were sought on containment of costs.

The Head of Development and Neighbourhoods assured Members that there was to be a very different management regime than the previous one and that training sessions for Councillors specifically on the Local Plan work would be arranged in due course. Engagement with communities would take place following Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee meetings to establish the content and nature of the consultation.

There was an opportunity now to put things right and take a different approach.

RESOLVED that the information provided in the report be noted.

87 TO FORMALLY THANK THE WASTE SERVICES COLLECTION TEAM

The Council Chairman announced to the meeting that West Lindsey District Council Waste Services Team had won the award for the best team for the second year running, having come second the previous year. Several members of the team came into the meeting for Councillors to thank them for their hard work and achievement. Councillors echoed the congratulations and stated that they were very proud and thrilled.

Councillor Parrott invited the team to join her and the rest of the Councillors informally for refreshments after the meeting.

Councillor Keimach also expressed his thanks for a problem with pigeons which had been sorted effectively.

88 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS PUBLISHED SINCE THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING ON 11 NOVEMBER 2013.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Committee meetings published since the last Council meeting on 11 November 2013 be received.

The meeting concluded at 8.36 pm.

Chairman