

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24 JUNE 2021

PRESENT: Councillors Bannister, Chowns, Eakin, Harvey, Howells, Hughes, Knight, Manns, Morris, and Troy

ALSO PRESENT: Angela Price – Town Clerk
Councillor l'Anson _ Ledbury Ward Councillor

C376. TO ELECT THE TOWN MAYOR FOR THE 2021/22 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Councillor Harvey, as the outgoing Deputy Mayor and presiding in the absence of the outgoing Mayor, asked for nominations to the role of Town Mayor of Ledbury for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

Councillor Howells proposed Councillor Manns which was seconded by Councillor Eakin.

Councillor Morris proposed Councillor Bannister however Councillor Bannister declined the nomination.

Councillor Manns spoke in support of his nomination stating that he had over the years stood in for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's when they have been unable to attend events and he felt that this had given him an insight into what is required as the Civic head of the Council and advised that he would do his best in the role, should he be elected.

Councillor Harvey asked Councillor Manns whether, as one of the few councillors who had been on the council at the time of the Judicial Review, he had provided a response to the questionnaire sent to all councillors by the auditor undertaking the special audit on behalf of the council. Councillor Manns advised he had not responded to the questionnaire, as a result of his response Councillor Harvey advised that she did not consider she was able to support his nomination to the role of Town Mayor.

Councillor Knight proposed Councillor Howells for the role of Mayor, however Councillor Howells declined the nomination.

A vote was taken on the proposal that Councillor Manns be elected to the role of Town Mayor for the 2021/22 Municipal Year the result of which was 8 for, 1 against and 1 abstention.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Manns be duly elected to the position of Town Mayor following which Councillor Manns read out and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of office and took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

C377.

a. **Vote of thanks to outgoing Mayor**

RESOLVD: That a vote of thanks be given to the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Vesma, for all his hard work over the past year, noting that it had not been an easy year due to the Covid pandemic.

b. **Retiring Mayor's Response**

Unfortunately, the outgoing Mayor was unable to attend the meeting due to illness, however he had asked the outgoing Deputy Mayor to read out the following statement on his behalf:

"Many have commented on how unlucky I have been to have had my mayoral year compromised by the COVID disruptions. Whilst I completely understand why some may think that I most certainly do not. Serving my community through these tricky times has been the honour of a lifetime.

Much of what has been accomplished in the last year has been policy and procedural improvements behind-the-scenes. These activities don't make headlines or waves on Voice of Ledbury, but they do build foundations for a stronger future for the town.

I am grateful for the support of my colleagues on the council for voting for me as Mayor and who were so patient whilst I found my feet chairing meetings over Zoom. The standard of debate in Full Council meetings has been remarkably high in the last twelve months and we have made some really good decisions as a group.

Of everything that we have achieved, I think the creation of the new role of Community Development Officer may have the biggest impact in the long term. I believe that having a full-time member of staff whose primary purpose is to support local community groups and raise funds will forever change how the town relates to its Council. I am also very proud that we were able to promote from within - demonstrating the loyalty and talent of those who choose to work for us.

Some things, of course, did not go as well. I won't dwell on them now, but lessons have and will be learned.

I am grateful to Mrs Price and the team for their hard work and good judgement under exceptionally difficult circumstances. Each one of them is talented in their own right, but as a team they are a force to be reckoned with. I hope, when circumstances are different, that I will be able to work with them again.

I would like to thank my family for their endless support. COVID may have prevented the Mayoress and I from opening as many dog shows as we would have liked, but I could not ask for a more supportive and loving group of people to have by my side.

Finally, some words for whomever takes the mayorship this evening. Let service be its own reward; don't judge your success by how often you are in the paper or get bought a pint. Even when it might be unpopular in some quarters, quiet, respectful pursuit of your priorities as Mayor will win out. You have a great team behind you, and my best wishes for your success."

c. Vote of thanks to outgoing Deputy Mayor

RESOLVD: That a vote of thanks be given to the outgoing Deputy Mayor, Councillor Harvey.

d. Retiring Deputy Mayor's Response and closing remarks

Councillor Harvey stated that it had been a strange year as Deputy Mayor having spent most of it at home due to the pandemic. However, she considered the highlight of her year to have been providing support to the Ledbury Covid Support Group. She advised that this group had been at the forefront of the support groups in the County and that it had provided excellent affirmation community spirit and showed what Ledbury has to offer.

She also commented on the support that the Council had been able to give the Food Bank through the Pandemic and the work she had done with them, which had encouraged them to apply to the Council for additional funding support.

Councillor Harvey advised that the one and only event that she had attended had been the opening of the new Alms Houses run by the Buchanan Trust, which is based on the Bosbury Estate. She advised that the Trust had been set up to support retired and injured service veterans, providing places of refuge and rest for veterans.

She also advised that she had been able to support the Mayor on a number of issues behind the scenes, including the recruitment process to ensure that the Council has excellent staff to support it.

She advised that she had enjoyed her year as Deputy Mayor and wished whoever becomes her successor well for their forthcoming year.

C378. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Treanor, Vesma and Whattler.

C379. TO ELECT A DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR FOR THE 2021/22 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Councillor Manns nominated Councillor Phillip Howells, which was seconded by Councillor Knight.

Councillor Morris nominated Councillor Matthew Eakin; however, Councillor Eakin declined the nomination.

Councillor Bannister nominated Councillor Morris; however, Councillor Morris declined the nomination.

A vote was taken on the proposal that Councillor Howells be elected to the role of Deputy Town Mayor for the 2021/22 Municipal Year the result of which was 8 for, 1 against and 1 abstention.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Howells be duly elected to the position of Deputy Town Mayor following which Councillor Howells read out and signed his Declaration of Acceptance of office and took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

C380. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WRITTEN DISPENSATIONS

Councillor l'Anson thanked Councillor Harvey for all her work with the Ledbury Foodbank over the past year and congratulated the new Mayor and hoped that he has a great year in office. She also asked that the Cemetery Groundsman be given a special mention for all his work in the cemetery and around the town.

C381. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None received.

C382. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25 JUNE 2020

It was noted that agenda item C49 appeared to be repeated, and a question was raised as to whether the item 8 "Ledbury Food Group" should read Ledbury Food Bank.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That agenda item C49 be amended to show just 10 items in the list of Outside Body Representatives.**

2. That the Clerk investigate whether item 8 of agenda item C49 refers to the Food Group or Food Bank.
3. That the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 25 June 2021 be approved subject to the above amendments.

C383. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF COUNCIL HELD ON 22 APRIL AND 27 MAY 2021

RESOLVED: to note that these minutes had been addressed in an extraordinary meeting of council held on 23 June 2021.

C384. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR THE 2021/22 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Members were requested to approve the draft schedule of meetings for the 2021/22 Municipal year and also to give consideration to bringing forward the start time of all future Council and Standing Committees.

RESOLVED:

1. That all future Council and Standing Committees start at 7pm.
2. That the draft schedule of meetings for the 2021/22 municipal year be approved.

C385. TO APPOINT THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL COMMITTEES FOR THE ENSUING MUNICIPAL YEAR AND CONSIDER THEIR TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED:

That the Membership of the Council's Standing Committees for the 2021/22 Municipal year be as follows:

- a. **Planning Committee**
Councillors Bannister, Chowns, Harvey, Howells, Hughes, Knight, Morris, and Troy
- b. **Environment & Leisure**
Councillors Chowns, Eakin, Knight, Morris and Whattler
- c. **Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee**
Councillors Eakin, Harvey, Howells, Hughes, and Knight

d. Economy & Tourism Committee

Councillors Bannister, Chowns, Harvey, Howells, Hughes, and Morris

e. Resources Committee

To consist of Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairs of all Standing Committees (6 Members). If the Committee Chair is not able to attend a meeting they can request their Vice-Chair to attend on their behalf.

f. That the Terms of Reference be received and noted, and that they be considered at the first meeting of each Standing Committee and referred back to Council for final approval.

C386. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED: That Standing Orders be suspended to allow each committee to elect their Chair and Vice Chair for the 2021/22 Municipal year,

C387. TO ELECT CHAIRMAN AND VICEMAN OF THE COMMITTEES LISTED ABOVE

RESOLVED:

a. Planning Committee

**Chairman – Councillor Bannister
Vice-Chair – Councillor Morris**

b. Environment & Leisure Committee

**Chairman – Councillor Chowns
Vice-Chairman – Councillor Knight**

c. Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee

**Chairman – Councillor Eakin
Vice-Chairman – Councillor Hughes**

d. Economy & Tourism Committee

**Chair – Councillor Hughes
Vice-Chair – Councillor Chowns**

e. Resources Committee

**Chairman -Town Mayor – Councillor Manns
Vice-Chair – Deputy Town Mayor – Councillor Howells**

C388. REINSTATEMENT OF STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED: That Standing Orders be reinstated to allow consideration of the remainder of the business on the agenda.

C389. OUTGOING COMMITTEE CHAIR'S ANNUAL REPORTS

Councillor Manns commended Councillors Bannister, Harvey, and Howells on their work on the Bloor Inquiry.

Councillor Harvey responded by advising she had been made aware of land works at the Viaduct site which were of some concern as there are Sky Larks nesting on the ground on the site. She advised that Bloor had stated that these works were not being carried out by them and Councillor Harvey advised that she needed to investigate this further before reporting it, as it is a criminal act to disturb nesting birds.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the annual reports be received and noted, copies are attached to the minutes for information.**
- 2. That the annual reports be included on the Council's website.**

Councillor Knight left the meeting at 20.54 pm.

C390. TO APPROVE THE COUNCILS STANDING ORDERS (TO INCLUDE THE COVID-19 INTERIM STANDING ORDERS)

Councillor Harvey proposed that whilst Covid restrictions are still in place the Council continue with the agreed delegated powers process and holding informal, non-decision-making meetings via zoom, with any decisions from those meetings being taken by the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees. However, she suggested that should there be decisions that need to be taken beyond the delegation to the Clerk and Chairs then a face-to-face meeting should be arranged.

Councillor Morris proposed a counter proposal that face-to-face meetings be re-established and was advised that should Councillor Harvey's motion fall then Council would vote on his proposal.

RESOLVED:

1. That Ledbury Town Council continue holding informal, non-decision-making meetings until such time Covid restrictions have been lifted. Any decisions as a result of those meetings will be taken under delegated powers by the Clerk in conjunction with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees and reported to Full Council.
2. That the Standing Orders be approved noting the amendments within.

C391. TO APPROVE AND ADOPT THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

RESOLVED: That the Financial Regulations be approved noting the amendments within.

C392. TO NOTE THE COUNCIL'S CODE OF CONDUCT

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council's Code of Conduct be received and noted.
2. That a copy of the Member/Staff Protocol be sent to all councillors.

C393. TO APPOINT COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED:

1. That the following Members be elected as Outside Body Representatives for the 2021/22 Municipal year:

OUTSIDE BODY	2021/22
Age UK	Cllr Morris
Community Choir	Town Mayor (President)
Ledbury Carnival Ass	Town Mayor
Ledbury Community Ass	Cllr Morris
Ledbury Consolidated Charities	Cllr Eakin
Ledbury in Bloom	Councillors Bannister & Morris
Ledbury Stromstad Twinning	Town Mayor
Ledbury Food Group	Cllr Morris
Ledbury Children's Centre	Town Mayor

2. That the Clerk contact Councillor Knight to ask whether she wishes to continue to represent the Council on the following outside bodies.

Ledbury Carnival Committee
Ledbury Community Association
Ledbury Food Group

3. The Clerk to confirm whether no. 8 in the list is the Ledbury Food Group or Ledbury Food Bank.

C394. TO REVIEW THE ASSETT REGISTER

RESOLVED:

That the Asset Register be received and noted.

C395. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE COUNCIL'S INSURANCE COVER IN RESPECT OF ALL INSURABLE RISKS FOR 2021/22

RESOLVED:

That the arrangements for the Council's insurance cover in respect of all insurable risks be received and noted, noting that the Clerk will be required to obtain quotes for a new three-year insurance cover in 2021.

C396. CORPORATE PLAN

It was noted that all Standing Committees need to review the relevant sections of the Corporate Plan and consider their priorities for the 2021/22 financial year.

C397. TO DETERMINE THE COUNCIL'S CHEQUE SIGNATORIS FOR THE 2021/22 MUNICIPAL YEAR

RESOLVED:

1. That Councillor Harvey be removed as a cheque signatory.
2. That Councillor Hughes be added as a cheque signatory.
3. That it be noted that subject to the above amendments the following be determined as cheque signatories for the 2021/22 Muncipal year:

Councillors Eakin, Howells, Hughes, Manns, Morris, the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk once recruited.

C398. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: To note that the next meeting of Full Council is scheduled for Thursday, 29 July 2021 at 7.00 pm. Notification of whether this meeting will be a face-to-face or Zoom meeting will be dependent on the lifting of Covid restrictions.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm.

Signed Dated
(Town Mayor)