

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF ROYAL LEAMINGTON**  
**SPA HELD ON 13<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012 AT THE TOWN HALL, PARADE,**  
**ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA**

**Present:** Councillors Yvonne Moore (Chairman), Sarah Boad (present for Minute 34 only), Judith Clarke, Tim Crockford, Gurpreet Dulay, Bill Gifford, Balvinder Gill, Sue Ingleby, John Knight, Simon Lytton, Ann Morrison, Mota Singh, and Alan Wilkinson.

**Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roger Copping, David Greenwood and Amanda Stevens.

**In attendance:** Mr Ian Coker, (Head of Neighbourhood Services, Warwick District Council).

**28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations of interest were made:-

Councillor Bill Gifford:

Minute No. 29 (Pecuniary interest). Spouse is a client of Town Properties which has an interest in the former Library site.

Minute No. 30 (Non Pecuniary interest). Member of the Board of Leamington BID.

**29. PUBLIC FORUM**

The meeting was addressed by Mr C. Denwood of Bath Place Community Venture who wished to draw to the Council's attention a petition signed by over 1700 supporters and users of the former Library building.

He reminded the Council of the circumstances pertaining to the occupancy of the former Library building by the Community Venture following the fire which had consumed its former premises at Bath Place. The Library which had remained unused for approximately seven years had proved to be an ideal venue for Bath Place CV and since its relocation had become home to a variety of community groups and social enterprises. Bath Place was presently operating without any public subsidy and had developed a potentially viable business model based on its continued occupation of the old library building. This was now jeopardised due to the decision of Warwickshire College to dispose of the building to a developer which would result in the permanent loss of the old library as a public asset. The building had been provided for the people of Leamington and continued to benefit from a covenant which required that it continue to be used a public asset.

Mr Denwood emphasised that if the Old Library building was sold for re-development the activities conducted at Bath Place would potentially cease as there was no equivalent building in Leamington Spa which offered the same range of facilities and floor space. He commended the petition to the Council and urged members to lend their support to Bath Place Community Venture in its task of remaining resident at the Old Library.

The Council expressed its support for the work undertaken at Bath Place and it was noted that the Community Venture had received several significant grants over recent years to assist projects. The Town Council endorsed the continuation of the services to the Community provided uniquely at Bath Place but recognised that these may have to be provided at a different location in the future. The representatives of Bath Place Community Venture were thanked by Council for their presentation and wished a successful outcome in securing a viable home for future community projects.

Councillor W.L. Gifford having declared a pecuniary interest under the Council's Code of Conduct, left the meeting and took no part in the discussion on of the above item.

***Note:- The Petition was presented to the Council at the close of the debate and is placed on public deposit for two weeks at the Town Hall.***

### **30. OFF-STREET CAR PARK CHARGES AND REGULATIONS**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Ian Coker to the Meeting and invited him to outline the principal issues relating to the District Council's consultation on Car Parking Charges and Regulations for 2013/14. A Report (Report No. 5) had been circulated and a copy is attached to the signed Minutes.

Mr Coker explained that following detailed consultation with local business and resident groups, it had been agreed that the focus of car parking policy for 2013/14 would be on continuing to increase car park usage and as a consequence there would be no increase in charges. Further consultation would be taking place during the year to consider ways of improving the parking offer and issues such as the linear tariff and harmonisation of enforcement hours would be included. The agreed policy of rationalising both on street and off street charges would continue so that the tariffs were complimentary to one another. During the course of the current year, the appointment of some parking enforcement officers had been delayed but it was intended to move to a full establishment in order that they could fulfil the full remit of the Post, particularly securing the operational integrity of pay and display equipment.

In answer to questions from Members of the Council, Mr Coker explained that the variable message signs were directed at providing information on numbers of spaces rather than pricing information as this was considered to be the primary information required by customers. Directional signage to the Town centre from the Car Parks was placed at the primary exit points in each case. Initial discussions with Leamington BID had indicated that if its mandate was renewed contributions could be made to directional signage for the entire vehicle parking area.

With regard to car park charges at Old Town car parks, these were set at half the rate elsewhere in Leamington and were reflective of the respective levels of usage. The option of introducing pay by phone/mobile device was under consideration though this method presented difficulties in terms of the charging policy levied by the County Council for on-street parking. Mr Coker was thanked for his presentation and left the meeting. Following further discussion, it was

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that the proposals for off-street car park charges and regulations at Leamington Spa for 2013/14 are welcomed;
- (ii) that the Town Council endorses making car parking policies more reflective of the need to enhance the shopping offer and promotion of the Town as a vibrant retail destination;
- (iii) that priority is given to enhancing directional signage to the Town Centre from all the off-street car parks; and
- (iv) that the Report is noted.

Councillor W.L. Gifford having declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Council's Code of Conduct, remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting on the above item.

**31. ANNUAL RETURN OF ACCOUNTS AND AUDITOR'S REPORT**

The Town Clerk reported that the Council's Auditors had completed the Audit of Accounts and Annual Return and had given an unqualified opinion. The report of the Council's Internal Auditor had also been submitted and was enclosed as a Report (Report No. 6). The Internal Auditor had concluded that the Council's financial records were in very good order and that the Council was given regular opportunity to review the budget.

The Council noted the Internal Auditor's recommendations regarding the Guru Nanak Dev Trust and the option of a simple accounts package to assist with financial administration. It was noted that the Guru Nanak Dev Trust had met on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012 and arrangements agreed for developing a more expansive role for the Charity in partnership with other faith and community groups.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that the report of the Internal Auditor is noted; and
- (ii) that the suggested acquisition of an accounts package is not pursued at the present time.

**32. WARWICKSHIRE PENSION FUND – AGM**

The Council noted that the Annual General Meeting of the Warwickshire Pension Fund would be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2012. Councillor David Greenwood, the Council's representative at the Meeting on previous occasions had indicated his availability to attend on this occasion.

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Greenwood represents the Council at the meeting of the Warwickshire Pension Fund on 23<sup>rd</sup> November and in the event of his unavailability Councillor Dulay substitute.

**33. MINUTES OF COUNCIL AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

- (i) Planning Committee – 5<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> July and 16<sup>th</sup> August 2012

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meetings of the Planning Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> July and 16<sup>th</sup> August 2012 are received.

- (ii) Policy and Resources Committee – 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2012

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2012 are received.

- (iii) Cultural and Community Committee – 30<sup>th</sup> July 2012

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cultural and Community Committee held on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2012 are received.

- (iv) Council – 12<sup>th</sup> July 2012

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2012 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**34. ACCOUNTS**

A schedule of accounts arising for payment since the last meeting was circulated and a copy is attached to the signed Minutes.

**RESOLVED** that the Schedule of Accounts is approved for payment.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and ended at 7.40 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....