

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA
HELD ON 12th NOVEMBER 2020

This meeting was held remotely in accordance with the provisions of the Coronavirus Regulations 2020

PRESENT: Councillors Susan Rasmussen (Chairman), Janet Alty, Navdeep Atwal, Alan Boad, Sarah Boad, David Brunson, Will Bryce, Mubarik Chowdry, Judith Clarke, Bill Gifford, Jennifer McAllister, Louisa Radice, Susan Rasmussen, Amanda Stevens and Nick Wilkins.

Stephen Marks (Town Clerk)

There were no members of the public present.

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Amy Evans.

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations were made:-

Cllr S Boad – declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Warwickshire County Council.

Cllr B Gifford declared non-pecuniary interests as a member of Warwickshire County Council and Warwick District Council.

Cllr A Boad declared an interest as a member of Warwick District Council, specifically in relation to item 6. Cllr A Boad did not take part in the discussion on item 6.

59. PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

60. COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR FORUM

Cllr S Boad advised the Council that:

-WCC will be delivering a leaflet to every house in CV31 and CV32 postcodes this week, relating to Covid support.

-Some WCC services were being amended following the new national Covid restrictions.

-Visits to waste / recycling centres can be booked.

-Library services are offering click and collect and home delivery as well as electronic books.

-WCC will be delivering food parcels to very vulnerable people. – telephone number to phone for support.

The Covid19 test centre in Court Street, Leamington Spa was discussed. It was noted that there appeared to be significant spare capacity at the site.

RESOLVED – that the Town Clerk write to the Warwickshire Director of Public Health enquiring about spare capacity and whether testing of asymptomatic people could be introduced or random sampling of school students.

Cllr Gifford advised the Town Council that a proposal for a cycle route along the Emscote Road corridor was considered by WCC's Cabinet. It was noted that cycling provision was the most popular resident response to the Leamington Spa Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr A Boad advised the Town Council of the following Warwick District Council matters:

- Waste collection contract was being pursued jointly with Stratford District Council.
- WDC is looking to work more closely with Stratford DC on a range of issues.
- The first meeting of the Climate Change Citizen's Inquiry was due to take place.
- WDC has responded to the government's consultation on changes to the planning system.
- Newbold Comyn masterplan is due to be considered by WDC's Cabinet.

Their ensued discussion regarding Town Council representation on local groups and it was noted that external organisations seeking a Town Council representative should approach the Town Clerk in the first instance and the Town Council should then consider its representation.

61. UNITARY AUTHORITY DISCUSSIONS

The Council considered and noted the report (Report No 5)

It was noted that development of unitary proposals is likely to take some time.

The Town Clerk advised that Warwickshire County Council have invited Parish / Town Councils to be part of a working group.

Cllr S Boad proposed and Cllr J Alty seconded that the Town Council be represented by the Town Clerk on the working group.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Town Council note the summary provided regarding unitary authority discussions.
- (ii) That the Town Council continue to engage with local discussions regarding potential unitary authorities and consider further updates as appropriate
- (iii) That the Town Clerk be asked to contact WCC to indicate his willingness to represent the Town Council on WCC's working group of town / parish councils.

62. CREATIVE QUARTER - UPDATE

The Council considered report No 6 regarding the Creative Quarter.

Cllrs A Boad and B Gifford left the meeting for this item.

A number of comments were made and points raised:

- Town Councillors had fed comments to the Democratic Support Officer to feed into the recent consultation on the creative quarter.
- Access from the river to Spencer Yard is important.
- Entrance to the site is key.
- Pedestrian / cycling safety is important.
- Keen to make most of history of that part of the town.
- Plans not clear about whether the United Reform Church will be open to the public or sold for office space.
- It would be good to retain an auditorium space.
- It is challenging to find an economically viable use for the site.
- Encouraging that specific proposals are being developed.

In summary:

The Town Council welcomes the development of specific proposals for the site.

Access is a key issue for the site.

There are some reservations about the loss of features of the United Reform Church.

The Town Clerk will pass these comments to the Democratic Support Officer to feed into the consultation.

Cllr J Clarke proposed and Cllr J Alty seconded that Cllr S Rasmussen be the Town Council's representative on the Creative Quarter 'Cross Party Reference Working Group'.

RESOLVED - that Cllr S Rasmussen be the Town Council's representative on the Creative Quarter 'Cross Party Reference Group'.

63. CLIMATE EMERGENCY CITIZENS' INQUIRY

Councillor Rasmussen advised that she had been asked to join a Climate Change Oversight Group by WDC. This group would have oversight of the development of the Climate Emergency Citizen's Inquiry and is made up of reps from various organisations.

WDC is developing a Citizen's Assembly to inform its local climate change activities and approach. Invitees to join the assembly will be selected randomly and the intention is to have a group which is representative of the local population.

WDC will develop web pages on the Climate Programme that will be updated regularly.

There followed further discussion regarding protocols for identifying Town Council representation on partnership groups.

Cllr Rasmussen advised that she would inform WDC that she will represent Clean Air Leamington on the Climate Change Oversight Group.

It was re-iterated that requests for Town Council representation should be sent to the Clerk and considered by the Town Council.

It was identified that the Town Council's governance arrangements / documents should be updated, which would assist in clarifying these matters. It was suggested that, in due course, a working group be established for this purpose.

64. COVID 19 UPDATE

The Town Council considered the report (Report No 8).

It was noted that the Covid19 situation had been discussed earlier in the meeting.

The Town Clerk noted that with much regret the formal Annual Remembrance Sunday event had been cancelled after consideration of the Covid19 situation. It is hoped that a more fitting event will be possible next year. The Mayor had however attended to lay a wreath and it was noted that the approach taken was most appropriate in the difficult circumstances.

It was noted that the Town Council will continue to assist with the Covid19 efforts where appropriate – including through providing grant funding to relevant local organisations and through promoting relevant Covid19 messages through social media channels.

Cllr Stevens thanked the Civic Officer, Cllr Rasmussen and Father Wilson for a very effective Civic Service.

Cllr Chowdry noted and commended the increased output on social media in recent weeks.

Cllr Chowdry left the meeting at this point.

65. MINUTES OF COUNCIL AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES

(i) Planning Committee

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meetings of the Planning Committee held on 3rd September, 24th September and 15th October 2020. (Reports Nos 9 (a) 9 (b) and 9 (c)) are received.

Cllr A Boad declared an interest as chair of local planning committee

(ii) Cultural and Community Committee

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cultural and Community Committee held on 5th October 2020 (Report No 9 (d)) are received.

(iii) Policy and Resources Committee

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meetings of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 10th September and 8th October 2020 (Report no.9 (e) and 9 (f)) are received.

(iv) Council

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 17th September 2020 (Report No 9 (h)) are confirmed as a correct record

65. **ACCOUNTS**

Consideration was given to a schedule of invoices arising for payment since the last meeting.

RESOLVED that the schedule of invoices is approved for payment.

The meeting began at 6pm and finished at 19:37

Signed.....

(Chairman)

Date.....