

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA TOWN COUNCIL
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, PARADE, LEAMINGTON SPA ON 18th SEPTEMBER
2014**

Present: Councillors John Knight (Chairman), Sarah Boad, Heather Calver, Judith Clarke Roger Copping, Bill Gifford, Balvinder Gill, Sue Ingleby, Simon Lytton, Yvonne Moore, Ann Morrison, and Alan Wilkinson

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gurpreet Dulay, David Greenwood, Mota Singh and Amanda Stevens.

Three members of the public present were present.

32. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:-

1) Leamington Society Awards

"I am pleased to announce that at the Leamington Society Awards evening on the 10th July, the Town Council was the recipient of a Certificate of commendation from the Leamington Society in recognition of its collaboration with Warwick District Council for the scheme of landscaping and general improvement undertaken at Christchurch Gardens. Particular thanks must go to Members of the Town Council, both past and present who sat on the Christchurch Gardens Working Party – Councillors Boad, Clarke, Greenwood, Ingleby and Wilkinson and past Councillors Robert Cunliffe and Simon Wheeler.

2) Mayor's Charity Fund Tea Party

I am pleased to say that over 60 friends, colleagues and members of the public were able to join my afternoon vintage tea party at the Royal Pump Rooms last Saturday. This together with the Heritage Walk held on the same afternoon has helped to raise £1700 pounds for the Charity fund. I am indebted to all those who gave up their time and donated resources to make this occasion such a success.

3) County Warwickshire Roll of Honour 1914-2005

Since assuming responsibility for the War Memorial, Members will know that there have been many requests to add further names that were originally omitted. A particularly useful source of reference is the work produced by Kenneth Fowler "The County of Warwickshire Roll of Honour". This book has a published price of £120. The Town Council has been donated a copy of this significant reference by District Councillor Sidney Syson. It can be seen in the Meeting Room on the ground floor. The Council will I am sure wish to formally thank Councillor Syson for her generosity."

RESOLVED that the Council's appreciation for the donated copy of "The County of Warwickshire Roll of Honour" is conveyed to Councillor Syson.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS/GRANT OF DISPENSATION

No declarations of interest were made.

34. PUBLIC FORUM

Representations were made by County Councillor Matt Western and Mrs Pat Edgington (Royal British Legion) in relation to Agenda item 8 (World War 1 Commemorative proposal) which was considered as the next item of business.

35. WORLD WAR 1 COMMEMORATIVE PROPOSAL

Consideration was given to a report (Report no 8) which had been submitted by County Councillor Matt Western in support of a proposal to commemorate the centenary of World War 1 and the call up of volunteers in October 1914. Councillor Western was invited to further develop his proposal and answer questions from members of the Council.

Councillor Western explained that the project aimed to commemorate those who had fallen during the First World War through the symbolisation of the trenches which were probably the most significant feature of the entire conflict. This would be achieved by creating two separate trench lines, one either side of the War Memorial, in the area of Euston Gardens. The initial suggestion that the trench lines be excavated below ground had, following discussion with Warwick District Council, been amended to be less invasive and would now consist of two lines of sand bags laid at ground level approximating to 2 feet 6 inches in height. Councillor Western confirmed that the project would provide an opportunity for pupils of Campion School to engage in a living history project which would involve them in the undertaking of research and the production of materials to subsequently be placed on public display. Each year from 1914 to 1918, the participants would change so that pupils from year 9 throughout the four year period would gain a unique insight and understanding of the greatest of conflicts and the impact on the individuals who fought in it.

Whilst appreciative of the intent of the project and its positive educational impact, several members expressed concern at the proposed use of Euston Place Gardens and the placement of the trench lines either side of the War Memorial. It was generally felt that the visual impact would be detrimental to the dignity of the Memorial and the Gardens which sought to achieve a contemplative environment. The absence of the involvement of pupils from other Secondary Schools in the Town and Myton School was regarded as a missed opportunity. Whilst the involvement of school pupils was a commendable element, the proposed expenditure of £1350 to acquire research materials and access records was considered potentially excessive.

In answer to questions, Cllr Western confirmed that Campion School was the only secondary school planning to take part in the Project but that the option of other schools in Leamington participating had not been excluded at the initial planning stage. The delivery of the project would be undertaken by the Community Arts Workshop.

Mrs Pat Edgington, Secretary of the Leamington and District Branch, Royal British Legion, confirmed that the local Branch had been consulted on the proposal in July, had raised no objection in principle but questioned the appropriateness of the suggested location and the timing which would coincide with a number of other events leading up to the annual service of Remembrance on 9th November.

Following further discussion, it was

RESOLVED

(i) that the Town Council is unable to provide financial assistance to the commemorative proposal in its present form;

(ii) that Councillor Western is advised that the Council would welcome the opportunity to reconsider the proposal, following exploration of options for the involvement of all Secondary Schools in Leamington, together with Myton School, and the identification of an alternative location for siting the simulated trench lines.

36. PRESENTATION BY EDITOR OF COURIER

The Chairman welcomed Mr Chris Liddington, Editor of the Courier, to the meeting.

Mr Liddington indicated that he was pleased to attend and talk to the Council following an invitation extended by Councillor David Greenwood and the Town Clerk with regard to reporting on matters of local interest and helping to raise the profile of the Town Council. He briefly outlined the significant changes experienced both by the press nationally and the regional press groups such as Johnston Publishing, and the impact that this has had on levels of staff resource at Leamington. Newspapers were now delivering coverage through a range of media and the internet which had revolutionised the way people seek and exchange information. As a result the emphasis was now upon readers notifying the Courier about potential news items of general interest so that these can be followed up by the News team. In addition, Mr Liddington was pleased to have suggested that the Town Council could become a regular contributor to the Courier through a monthly column in which matters of community importance and Council activity could be reported.

Councillors welcomed the opportunity to maintain a close dialogue with the local Press and the offer of a regular monthly column.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the introduction of a regular monthly column in the Courier for items submitted by the Town Council is gratefully accepted and the Courier thanked for the proposal;
- (ii) that the Communications Working Group is the preferred vehicle for generating news stories for inclusion in the Monthly column; and
- (iii) that the Town Clerk arranges a meeting of the Working Group to initiate the first new article and to consider the options for a range of future items.

Mr Liddington was thanked for his attendance and presentation and left the Meeting.

37. COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR FORUM

Apologies for absence had been received from District Councillors Jane Knight and Sidney Syson and County Councillor Nicola Davies.

No items had been notified for discussion.

38. COMMUNITY FORUMS

Minutes/action sheets from the meetings of the following Community Forums had been circulated and were considered:

North Leamington Community Forum – 5th June
South Leamington Community Forum – 26th June
Town Centre Safer Neighbourhoods Forum – 12th August

The Council welcomed the introduction of this item to the Agenda as a positive informant for this Council.

Councillor Boad reported that briefings had been arranged for County Councillors on two significant service issues: changes to the response of the Fire and Rescue Service and the outcome of the re-tendering of the enforcement of on-street car parking regulations. A request had been made that Parish and Town Councils be advised of these matters.

RESOLVED that the Minutes/action sheets for the meetings of the Community and Neighbourhood Forums are noted.

39. ELECTORAL REVIEW OF WARWICKSHIRE: DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Consideration was given to a report (Report No. 9) setting out the draft recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission in relation to the electoral review of Warwickshire's County Divisions.

It was noted that in order to implement the recommended changes to County Electoral Divisions, consequential changes would need to be made to the boundaries of Parish Wards. In the case of Leamington Spa this would result in a total of 13 Wards to be implemented for the next local elections in May 2015. This compared with six Wards currently and eight Wards accepted by the Local Government Commission as part of the District Council boundary review recently concluded.

The Council expressed concern at the potential confusion that would arise for voters on the occasion of combined elections in the event of the draft recommendations being implemented.

RESOLVED that a response to the draft recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission is deferred for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee at the meeting on 2nd October 2014.

40. AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL RETURN

Consideration was given to the report and opinion of the external auditor following the approval of the Council's Annual Return of Accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2014.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Auditor had issued an unqualified opinion but had drawn attention to the requirement to review Financial Regulations once every three years. This would be addressed by a Report to full Council at a future meeting.

RESOLVED that the Report of the External Auditor is noted.

41. MINUTES OF COUNCIL AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES

- (i) Planning Committee – 23rd July, 14th August and 3rd September, 2014

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meetings of the Planning Committee held on 23rd July, 14th August and 3rd September 2014 (Reports Nos.11 (a) 11(b) and 11 (c) are received.

- (ii) Cultural and Community Committee –1st September 2014

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cultural and Community Committee held on 1st September 2014 (Report No 11 (d) are received.

- (iii) Policy and Resources Committee –4th September 2014

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee dated 4th September, 2014 (Report Nos. 11(e) are received.

- (iv) Council – 24th July 2014

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 24th July, 2014 (Report No. 11 (f)) are confirmed and sign as a correct record.

42. **ACCOUNTS**

A schedule of accounts arising for payment had been circulated and a copy is attached to the signed Minutes.

RESOLVED that the schedule of accounts and payments under Section 137 of the Local Government Act, 1972, are approved.

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The Meeting commenced at 6.00pm and ended at 7.30 pm

Signed.....(Chairman)

Dated.....