

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Lichfield City Council held in Guildhall, Lichfield on Tuesday 1 October 2024 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors S Schafer (Mayor), J Anketell, H Ashton, C Ball, J Blackman, R Bragger, J Eagland, K Farrelly, M Field, A Fox, R Harvey-Coggins, A Hughes, P Knight, J Marshall, C Pinder-Smith, P Ray, D Robertson, A Rushton, J Smith, E Strain, M Warfield, B Watkins and R Yardley.

APOLOGIES: Councillors D Baker, J Christie, C Greatorex, S Hollingsworth, A Lax and P McDermott.

40. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor detailed functions that he had attended, including the Mayor and Sheriff's charity pub quiz and live music event at the Guildhall, which raised over £2,000. The Mayor also attended the opening of a new outdoor bar and patio area at Lichfield Rugby Club; the Johnson Birthday celebrations, which included the Mini Town Criers competition and the unveiling of the Johnson Bust

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None.

42. COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED: *That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 July 2024 (Nos 29-39) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.*

43. MATTERS ARISING

Councillor D Robertson thanked Councillors Greatorex, McDermott and Ray for their kind comments at the July meeting of council, the first meeting following Cllr Robertsons election to Parliament.

44. PLANNING COMMITTEE (DELEGATED AUTHORITY)

RESOLVED: *That comments submitted to Lichfield District Council for the period 13 July 2024 to 26 September 2024 and made in the name of LCC via delegated authority, be received.*

45. MARKETS WORKING GROUP

Members considered the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Markets Working Group held on 12 September 2024.

Councillor B Watkins asked that Councillor J Sylvester-Hall be recorded in the minutes as a District Councillor rather than County Councillor. The Town Clerk suggested that as she is a dual hatted member she be minute as 'Councillor Sylvester-Hall'. This suggestion was agreed.

RESOLVED: *That the minutes (as amended) of the Markets Working Group meeting held on 12 September 2024, be adopted.*

46. GRANTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes and recommendations of the Grants Advisory Committee held on 16 September 2024. The Minutes included recommendations to council for CIL contributions to Liberty Jamboree, Lichfield Community Speed Watch and to facilitate the provision of a plaque to J L Petit. A 'general grant' allocation was made to Late Night Listeners to facilitate the purchase of

Public Liability Insurance.

RESOLVED: *That the Minutes and recommendations of the Grants Committee meeting held on 16 September 2024 be adopted.*

47. REQUEST FOR EXTENDED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Members considered a request from Councillor A Lax for an extended leave of absence from Council meetings due to ill health. Councillor R Harvey-Coggins extended the good wishes of the Council to Councillor Lax stating that she would be missed in the Chamber; a sentiment that was echoed by Councillor H Ashton on behalf of the Liberal Democrats, wishing Councillor Lax a speedy recovery.

RESOLVED:

- a) *That the Council approve the request from Councillor A Lax for an extension beyond the six-month period of non-attendance on the grounds of ill health. Any extension to this request to be reviewed, if necessary, at the meeting of the Council scheduled for June 2025.*
- b) *That the best wishes of the Council be passed to Councillor Lax and her family*

48. FINANCIAL PROGRESS REPORT – 1 APRIL TO 31 JULY 2024

Councillor J Marshall noted the encouraging report and the good financial health of the Council.

RESOLVED *That the report be noted.*

49. AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2023/24

Members noted the completion of the audit of accounts for the year ending 18 September 2024. Councillor J Marshall remarked on the “*clean bill of health*” received from the external auditors and commended the Town Clerk, Internal Auditor and Finance Officers for their good stewardship.

RESOLVED: *That the Report be noted.*

50. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

Members noted the proposed amendments to the membership of Committees put forward by the controlling group.

RESOLVED: *That the revised Committee membership to include Chair and Vice Chair, be adopted.*

51. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor D Robertson stated that it was unfortunate that Cllr M Field had been removed from the appointment to Municipal Charities due to non-attendance, citing Cllr Field’s request to have meeting times changes due to work commitments. Cllr Robertson expressed concern that some bodies were being inflexible, and that this would lead to effective exclusion for large portions of the population who have work commitments but also wish to involve themselves in the community and contribute to the City.

RESOLVED :

- a) *That Councillor C Ball be appointed as LCC representative to Curborough Community Association for the remainder of the current term (to June 2025)*
- b) *That Councillor H Ashton be appointed as LCC representative to Lichfield Municipal Charities for a new four – year term to (October 2028).*

52. OFFICERS' REPORT

Councillor C Ball commended the report, citing in particular the Community Day held on the Square, and the work undertaken by the Open Spaces Officer, Museums and Heritage Officer and Civic Officer. Cllr P Knight thanked the Open spaces Officer for arranging the replacement picnic bench at Curborough Community Centre. Cllr A Hughes highlighted the work of the team at the Birthplace Museum, notably the new merchandise that had been developed. Cllr R Harvey-Coggins spoke to echo the previous comments and commend the report., highlighting in particular the work of the Civic Officer and all Councillors and volunteers involved in the 'Back to School' Uniform bank events.

RESOLVED: That the Report be noted.

53 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Councillor J Smith queried how many more payments were to be made for remedial works to Darwin Hall and asked whether the legal advice sought had provided optimism as to a potential claim against those involved in its original construction. The Town Clerk confirmed that only one payment remained and that advice received did not provide an optimistic assessment of the legal position.

RESOLVED: That payment of accounts be approved and confirmed for the periods:

- ***1 June 2024 to 30 June 2024 in the sum of £161,473.54 General Account, and £636.63 Imprest Account.***
- ***1 July 2024 to 31 July 2024 in the sum of £96,618.60 General Account, and £584.67 Imprest Account.***

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.00PM

MAYOR