

Lichfield City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Lichfield City Council held in Guildhall, Lichfield on Monday 16 December 2024 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Councillors S Schafer (Mayor), J Anketell, H Ashton, D Baker, C Ball, J Blackman, R Bragger, J Christie, J Eagland, M Field, A Fox, C Greateorex, R Harvey-Coggins, A Hughes, P Knight , J Marshall, P McDermott, C Pinder-Smith, A Rushton, J Smith, B Watkins and R Yardley.

APOLOGIES: Councillors K Farrelly, A Lax, P Ray, D Robertson, E Strain and M Warfield.

54. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor detailed functions that he had attended, including Remembrance Sunday, the Christmas Illuminations Switch On event and the Mayor and Chair of Lichfield District Councils' joint Carol service.

55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

Councillor J Blackman declared an interest under Appendix B of the City Council's Code of Conduct in relation to agenda item 8 (minute 59) Climate Change and Biodiversity Committee.

Councillor J Christie declared an interest under Appendix B of the City Council's Code of Conduct in relation to agenda item 15 (minute 66) Lichfield District Allotment Society.

Councillor J Smith declared an interest under Appendix B of the City Council's Code of Conduct in relation to agenda item 17 (minute 68) LGA Model Code of Conduct for Members.

56. COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED: *That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 1 October 2024 (Nos 40-53) be confirmed and signed as a correct record.*

57. MATTERS ARISING

None.

58. PLANNING COMMITTEE (DELEGATED AUTHORITY)

RESOLVED: *That comments submitted to Lichfield District Council for the period 27 September 2024 to 5 December 2024 and made in the name of LCC via delegated authority, be received.*

59. CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE

Councillor J Blackman drew members attention to the feasibility study regarding the installation of solar panels on the roof of the Guildhall and also the importance of having a habitat plan.

RESOLVED: *That the minutes of the Climate Change and Biodiversity meeting held on 23 October 2024, be adopted.*

60. JOHNSON BIRTHPLACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes and recommendations of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee. Councillor A Hughes commended the work and enterprise of the Museums and Heritage

Officer. Councillor C Greatorex suggested that the Birthplace Museum and the Guildhall be marketed together, highlighting the availability of rooms for hire in the Guildhall.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes and recommendations of the Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committee meeting held on 5 November 2024 be adopted.

61. GRANTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes and recommendations of the Grants Advisory Committee. Councillor C Ball highlighted the request that the general revenue grant funding (currently £32,000) be increased to £50,000 for 2025/26, this sum to include the previously separate funding for the 'Summer Grants' programme of £5,000. Councillor C Ball also reminded members that the closing date for grant applications was the 20 January 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes and recommendations of the Grants Advisory Committee meeting held on 11 November 2024 be adopted.

62. MARKETS WORKING GROUP

Members considered the minutes and recommendations of the Markets Working Group. Councillor R Bragger commented that a meeting is being scheduled with the organisers of the Food Festival to discuss recent issues. He also drew Members attention to minute 73 clarifying that, as previously agreed by Council, the Lichfield Chamber of Trade would continue to have free use of the Market Square for their Christmas event but not the proposed summer event in June which would be charged at the prevailing hire rate.

RESOLVED That the minutes and recommendations of the Markets Working Group meeting held on 14 November 2024 be adopted.

63. AUDIT COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes and recommendations of the Audit Committee. Councillor C Greatorex suggested that property management of the Council's buildings be documented separately on the Strategic Risk Register. The Town Clerk confirmed that this would be discussed at the next meeting of the Audit Committee.

RESOLVED: That the minutes and recommendations of the Audit Committee meeting held on 4 December 2024 be adopted.

64. RESIGNATION – COUNCILLOR S HOLLINGSWORTH (STOWE WARD)

Councillor P McDermott commented that as Leader of the Liberal Democrats he had reluctantly accepted Councillor S Hollingsworth resignation. Councillor R Harvey-Coggins added that Councillor Hollingsworth would be missed and commended him for his service to the City Council, noting that his position on the Audit, Staffing and Johnson Birthplace Advisory Committees would be reappointed after the forthcoming By-Election.

RESOLVED:

- a) **That the resignation of Councillor S Hollingsworth be noted.**
- b) **That the Council reappoints to the vacant positions after the elections on 13 February 2025.**

65. FINANCIAL PROGRESS REPORT- 1 APRIL TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

Members noted the Financial Progress report for the period 1 April to 30 September 2024. Councillor C Greatorex queried the term 'Agency' on the report. The Town Clerk confirmed that this referred to the funds from Staffordshire County Council for grass verge cutting.

RESOLVED : That the Financial Progress report be noted.

66. LICHFIELD DISTRICT ALLOTMENTS SOCIETY - PETITION FOR ADDITIONAL ALLOTMENT LAND

Members considered the Town Clerks report at Agenda **APPENDIX 7**. Councillor R Harvey-Coggins noted that whilst it is encouraging there is a demand for allotments, the City Council does not have any additional land which could be used for this purpose. Councillor C Greatorex commended the Town Clerk for such a comprehensive report detailing the four broad options.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Lichfield City Council work closely with Lichfield District Council to raise the profile, through the Local Plan, of the need for further allotments in the City and across the wider district.*
- b) That if Lichfield District Council are in agreement , Lichfield District Allotment Society be consulted at each stage of the process.*
- c) That further work be undertaken by Lichfield City Council to determine the likely cost of acquiring land and the infrastructure required etc.*

67. REMOTE ATTENDANCE/PROXY VOTING CONSULTATION

Members considered the Town Clerks report at Agenda **APPENDIX 8**. Several members spoke on this matter noting that the legislation for the provision of remote meetings, established during COVID, had now lapsed, and commented on the need to modernise and make Council meetings more accessible. However, Councillors D Baker and C Greatorex stated that whilst they welcomed hybrid meetings for sub-Committees they felt full Council should be held in person and did not approve of proxy voting.

On being put to the vote the motion was CARRIED.

Councillors D Baker and J Smith voted against the motion.

Councillors J Eagland, C Greatorex and R Yardley abstained from the vote.

Whereupon it was declared

RESOLVED: That the Council give delegated authority to the Town Clerk to submit a response to the consultation on remote attendance/proxy voting as detailed at Agenda Appendix 8.

68. LGA MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

Members considered the Town Clerks report at Agenda **APPENDIX 9** noting that the new model code significantly expands upon the existing code and aligns with both the District and County Councils' Code of Conduct.

RESOLVED: That the LGA Model Code of Conduct be adopted and replace the current Code of Conduct in place at LCC since 2012, and to align LCC'S Code of Conduct with that of Lichfield District Council and Staffordshire Council.

69. LCC MARKETS – ADDITIONAL CHRISTMAS DATES/VEGAN MARKET

Councillor R Bragger noted how successful the markets currently are and welcomed the need for additional markets.

RESOLVED: *That utilising its powers under the Food Act Part III, The City Council creates markets to take place on:*

- a) Sunday 22 December and Monday 23 December 2024 - to facilitate additional Christmas Markets as requested by Traders.*
- b) The third Sunday of any given month - to facilitate the usual dates for the Vegan Market for 2025 and beyond.*
- c) 14 September 2025 and 14 December 2025 - to facilitate the variation in Vegan Market dates for 2025.*

70. OFFICERS' REPORT

Councillor R Harvey-Coggins thanked all Officers for an informative report. Councillor A Hughes thanked the Mayor and Civic Officer for facilitating the joint Carol service with LDC and LCC and commended the Deputy Town Clerk and Councillor C Ball for their presentation at the recent Support Staffordshire forum. Councillor C Greatorex welcomed the changes in the Christmas Illuminations event and joint Carol service, noting that such alterations showed that the Council was forward thinking.

RESOLVED: *That the report be noted.*

71. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

RESOLVED: *That payment of accounts as detailed at Agenda Appendix 11 be approved and confirmed for the periods:*

- 1 August 2024 to 31 August 2024 in the sum of £94,904.32 General Account, and £1,793.70 Imprest Account.*
- 1 September 2024 to 30 September 2024 in the sum of £96,650.09 General Account, and £636.47 Imprest Account.*

72. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: *That in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, by reason of the confidential nature of the business next to be transacted, the press and public be excluded from the meeting.*

73. STAFFING COMMITTEE

Members considered the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 7 November 2024, including the recommendation to council that the post of 'Responsible Financial Officer' be created together with the draft Job Description and Person Specification, plus the recommendation that the role is not recruited to at this time pending potential/known changes to staff provision.

RESOLVED *That the minutes and recommendations of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 7 November 2024 (Agenda Appendix 12) be adopted.*

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS THE MAYOR DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.25PM

MAYOR