



**Minutes of the Meeting of Sleaford Town Council held on
Wednesday 19th October 2022 at 7.00pm, at The Town Hall, Sleaford**

Present:

Cllr L Edwards-Shea – Chairman
Cllr J Thomas – Vice Chairman
Cllr B Allan
Cllr P Edwards-Shea
Cllr K Fernandes
Cllr T Hayat Cllr
Cllr R Oates Cllr
Cllr M Offer
Cllr J Parry
Cllr M Shanahan-Kluth
Cllr S Shanahan-Kluth
Cllr M Smith
Cllr Ad Snookes
Cllr Al Snookes
Cllr D Suiter

Also in attendance: Mr Chris Pilkington (Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer), Ms Michelle Free (Temporary Responsible Financial Officer) and Mrs Debbie Scott (Minute Taker).

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, a 15-minute period was observed for updates. There was no County Council representative. A member of the public spoke on behalf of the Sleaford Castle Heritage Group in support of Agenda Item 12c (13c as minuted)

Please note the Audio Recording from this meeting is available on the Town Council's [YouTube Channel](#)

FC.1 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Mr Chris Pilkington, the new Town Clerk.

FC.2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and **noted** from Cllr D Darmon, Cllr H Lorimer and Cllr L Lowndes

FC.3 Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest were received at this stage.

FC.4 Minutes

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the notes of the Council Meeting held on 28th September be approved as minutes of that meeting.

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Signed: *Linda Edwards-Shea*

Date: *24th November 2022*

Vote: for 12 – against 0 – abstained 3. The Resolution was carried.

FC.5 Chairman's & Deputy Chairman's Report

The Chairman and Deputy Chairman's report was noted, both having attended the Sleaford Town Awards and the Chair having attended a meeting with Sleaford in Bloom, the RBL Poppy Prom and the Sleaford & District Twinning Association's trip to Marquette-lez-Lille. She had also unveiled the Harry Gregson Memorial Bench on Gregson Green. The Chairman announced that she planned four Civic Events to take place after Christmas, the first confirmed date being a Poetry event, Sleaford Slam, on Saturday 25th February.

FC.6 Temporary Proper Officer's Report

The Temporary Proper Officer's Report was noted.

FC.7 Clerk's Report

There was no written report, but the Clerk thanked Councillors for their kind welcome. He had spent his first two days visiting the Council's properties across the Town. He reminded Councillors of the principle of collective leadership.

FC.8 Acting Deputy Clerk's Report

The Acting Deputy Clerk's Report had been shared, explaining recent issues with the Boston Road Recreation Ground storm drain, the basket swing on Boston Road, the triennial Tree Report (and subsequent works) and the Allotment invoicing, recently issued. He was unable to attend in person.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** unanimously, that the report be noted.

FC.9 Change in Agenda Order

Cllr Allan requested that Agenda Item 13 be brought forward to allow her to present her report on the Current Economic situation.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED**, that item 13 be brought forward to item 11, following the Council's Financial Matters Item.

Vote: for 14 – against 0 – abstained 1. The Resolution was carried.

FC.9 Planning Applications for Consideration

It was noted that no comments had been received from Councillors before the meeting.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that no comments be made on the following planning applications:-

Vote: for 13 – against 2 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried.

Ref No	Location	Proposal
22/1364/FUL	Carre's Grammar School, Northgate, NG34 7DD	Removal of existing fencing & gates & replace with 2.4m high security fencing & gates

22/1355/HOUS	108 North Parade, NG34 8AW	Erection of single storey side extension
22/1371/TCA	Lollycocks Nature Reserve, NG34 7EE	G1 Hazel – coppice 50%
22/1358/FUL	Kesteven & Sleaford High School, Jermyn Street, NG34 7RS	Erection of new 2.4m high black security fencing to areas within & on the boundary of the school grounds, including pedestrian & vehicular gates & addition of a light above the pedestrian automated gate
22/1374/FUL	26 Westgate, NG34 7PN	Change of use from part business/part dwelling (Use Class E & C3) to beauty salon (sui generis)
21/1310/FUL – Receipt of amended details	Ashfield Lodge, Ashfield Road	Demolition of existing former care home building (C2) to facilitate new proposed 68-bed care home (C2). NB: Amended updated plans to show amended updated fenestration details. FOR INFORMATION ONLY. (FC 20.10.21 no comments)
22/1402/HOUS	44 Hervey Road, NG34 7LT	Erection of first floor extension to rear & loft conversion plus ground floor alterations & exterior rendering
22/1428/LBC	Watergate Yard, 2 Watergate, NG34 7PG	Installation of new signage to the front of the building (retrospective)

(The Temporary RFO joined the meeting at 7.15 pm)

The following applications had been circulated and requests made for Council's consideration.

Ref No	Location	Proposal	Comment
22/1365/FUL	The Cut, Carre Street	Erection of timber shed for storage of watercourse maintenance equipment	Loss of outlook to the detriment of physical amenity

Councillors welcomed the proposal to tidy up the area but expressed concern about its impact, especially for residents of Berkeley Court.

Cllr Hayat declared a pecuniary interest being a resident of an adjacent property. Cllr Parry declared an interest as the Council's representative on the Civic Trust, the owner of the property.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Council submit a neutral comment, but with concern that the development should not impede the outlook

from the ground floor apartments of Berkeley Court and that the area should be properly protected against Anti-Social Behaviour.

Vote: for 8 – against 0 – abstained 7. The Resolution was carried.

FC.10 Financial Matters

a) Council's Bank Balances

Councillors noted that, of the total combined balance of £1,704,401.53 included £1,359,808.23 of Capital Funds which were intended to be spent on forthcoming capital projects.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to note the Bank Balances and Reconciliations to 30 September.

Vote: for 15 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried.

b) Financial Transactions

The Temporary RFO explained requests received for funding from the Twinning Association to cover a shortfall in funds following the recent visit. Copies of the Association's accounts and bank statements had been requested, with clarification about any earmarked reserves. Other payments highlighted were the Lottery Registration with NKDC, Allotment deposits, Christmas Market printing, Electricity for the Depot and the Handley Monument toilets and Franking Machine charges.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to approve the financial transactions listed on the attached reports totalling £14,743.01, £5,102.15 and £1,369.04 respectively, with the exception of the Sleaford & District Twinning Association's request which was to be deferred, pending further information, and to note the highlighted transactions.

Vote: for 15 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried unanimously.

Request for two members to sign paperwork – Councillor Smith and Councillor Adrian Snookes volunteered.

c) 2022/23 Quarterly Review & Budget Revisions

The Temporary RFO reported that a review of expenditure to date had been conducted, in comparison with the Council's budget. Income had exceeded expectations in respect of Bank Interest, Town Hall Hire income and Eastgate Car Park receipts. She recommended that those budget lines be amended to £1,250 (from £200), £1,500 (from £200) and £63,000 (from £53,000) for accuracy. Expenditure on Pay (including Employer's contributions) was now expected to be over budget, as was Plants and Trees expenditure and spend from Capital, Accumulative and General Reserves. She recommended that the Pay budget be increased from £384,600 to £420,000 and the Plants and Trees budget from £10,300 to £20,000.

At the request of a Councillor, the Temporary RFO agreed to provide details of the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) number of Council employees.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to accept the amendments to the Council's Budget for 2022-23:

Vote: for 15 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried, unanimously.

d) 2023/24 DRAFT Budget & Consideration

(Cllr Thomas left the meeting briefly at 8.10 pm)

The Temporary RFO explained that the Budget for 2023/24 needed approval by Council by mid-January to enable the Precept submission to NKDC. She intended to amend some budget headings for clarification, ease of record-keeping and reporting.

In advance of the Budget discussions, Councillors were asked to consider a review of Eastgate Car Park charges, a review of the arrangements with NKDC for litter-picking payments, additional requests from the Twinning Association (for an increased budget and a specific arts project) and an increase in the Christmas Market budget for the 2023 event.

Christmas Market Budget

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to increase the Christmas Market budget from £5,000 to £10,000 for 2023/24:

Vote: for 11 – against 3 – abstained 1. The Resolution was carried.

Eastgate Car Park Charges

It was noted that Council had already resolved to increase charges by 50p on completion of the resurfacing works, but felt that it was not appropriate to increase fees any sooner.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to keep the Eastgate Car Park charges as free for the first hour, £1.50 for up to 3 hours and £3.50 for more than 3 hours:

Vote: for 15 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried unanimously.

Sleaford and District Twinning Association

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to defer this decision, pending further information as in Minute FC 10b:

Vote: for 15 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried unanimously.

NKDC Litter Picking Arrangement

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to defer this decision, pending further information:

Vote: for 15 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried unanimously.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to hold an Extraordinary General Meeting to discuss the draft Budget for 2023/24

Vote: for 15 – against – 0 abstained 0. The Resolution was carried unanimously.

Cllr Allan requested that Agenda Item 13, brought forward to Item 11, be considered at this stage in view of the time, but the Clerk advised that Agenda Item 10 should be completed in full first. This was accepted

e) 2021/22 AGAR Conclusion Notice

The Temporary RFO reported that the External Audit for 2021/22 had been concluded and the External Auditor's report published, along with the Closure Notice, as required, by the deadline of 30th September. The Auditor had pointed out that the Council's answer to question 1 on the Annual Governance Statement, regarding the advertising of Public Rights, should have been 'no' rather than 'yes' as the Rights had not been available during the proscribed period of 1st to 10th July and this needed to be formally recognised.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to incorporate the response to the findings of the External Auditor into the remit of the T&F Group looking at the Internal Audit findings.

Vote: for 15 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried unanimously.

f) Finance Update

The Temporary RFO presented updates on the Eastgate Car Park payment for August and September, not yet received; HSBC bank mandates for adding signatories, amending the Daily Expenditure Limits and the arrangements for the Council's Credit Card. A further update on the types of Bank Accounts used would be brought to the next meeting.

Cllr Oates agreed to forward details of the agreement with the Recruitment Agency used for Clerk's Recruitment.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the written and verbal finance updates be noted.

Vote: for 15 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried unanimously.

FC.11 Economic Situation

The Councillor's paper on the current economic situation with suggestions for actions that Town Council could undertake to make savings to minimise Council Tax increases was discussed. It was noted that recommendations in respect of reducing costs of council services and office activities would be part of the Clerk's management role, reviewing budget lines would be conducted by the Temporary RFO with Councillors, either as Finance T&F group, Finance/Budget Committee or at an EGM of the Council. The Acting Deputy Clerk was already investigating Solar Panels for the Tractor Shed and other Council buildings. Councillors endorsed the intentions of the report and asked that the Acting Deputy Clerk be instructed to include the Town Hall in his work on Solar Panels.

(Cllr Allan left the meeting at 9.24 pm)

(Cllr Thomas also left the meeting briefly)

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Signed: *Linda Edwards-Shee*

Date: *24th November 2022*

FC.12. Council Business

a) Health & Safety

The Acting Deputy Clerk's report listed potential hazards found on Town Council properties, including trip hazards at George Street Play Area, Castlefield and Eastgate Car Park, and updates on H&S procedures at the office, the Depot and the Cemetery.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to accept and note the report.

Vote: for 14 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried unanimously.

b) Request for Speed Sign

A request for the Council's Speed Sign to be deployed on Almond Walk had been received. Councillors debated the relative merits of this location compared to others which may have seen more speeding issues. The Temporary RFO explained that LCC permission would be required for any new location.

An amendment to the recommendation was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to apply to LCC to identify a suitable additional location on Lincoln Road, south of Holdingham Roundabout, in the vicinity of the Lincoln Road Play Area.

Vote: for 10 – against 1 – abstained 3. The Resolution was carried.

c) Anglian Water Lincolnshire Reservoir

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to note the consultation period for the proposed new reservoir and await further information.

Vote: for 13 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried.

FC.13 Council Committees, Panels, Task & Finish Groups and Outside Bodies

a) Internal Audit Report Task & Finish Group – The Group Lead gave a verbal update following a meeting held 12th October 2022, after which only four outstanding issues remained to be resolved, two of which were relatively minor. The group had also considered the Risk Register and been able to significantly reduce the number of 'red' risks, following recent work and decisions of the Council. The Risk Register should be reviewed on a monthly basis. It was suggested that the Group's task would be complete once the External Auditor's report had been considered, and, in future, a Finance Committee could be established.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to note the report.

Vote: for 14 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried unanimously.

b) S106 & CIL Funding Task & Finish Group – The Group Lead gave a verbal update following a meeting held 5th October 2022. Public Engagement was underway until 7th November, in respect of the proposals for George Street Play Area, with leaflets, social media and press releases being planned. Costings were also being researched. Further information would be brought to the next meeting.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to note the report.
Vote: for 14 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried unanimously.

c) Sleaford Castle Heritage Group

Meeting Notes 14th September 2022

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to note the meeting report.
Vote: for 14 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried unanimously.

A project proposal for earmarked funding for the project had been received.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to defer the matter until after the proposed EGM's consideration of the Draft Budget for 2023/24 .

Vote: for 13 – against 1 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried.

FC.14 County Councillor's Report – none.

Closed Session

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to move into closed session in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 due to the sensitive nature of the business to be discussed in relation to the following matters:-

HR Committee Minutes

Vote: for 14 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried unanimously.

(The Temporary RFO left the meeting at 9.59 pm)

The Clerk, being the host of the Zoom Meeting, ensured members of the public were no longer participating and confirmed the recording had been stopped.

FC.15 HR Committee Minutes

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** to note the minutes of the HR Committee held on 6th September 2022. Terms of Reference were still being drafted. The Clerk confirmed that copies of signed minutes of Committee meetings needed to be retained as Council records.

Vote: for 14 – against 0 – abstained 0. The Resolution was carried unanimously.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 10.02 pm.