



**Minutes of the Meeting of Sleaford Town Council held on  
Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2023 at 7.00pm, at The Town Hall, Sleaford**

**Present:** Cllrs Anthony Brand (Chairman), David Suiter (Vice-Chairman), Bozena Allan, Nadim Aziz, Pat Cockcroft, David Darmon, Linda Edwards-Shea, Ken Fernandes, Heather Lorimer, Steve Mason, Robert Oates, Malcolm Offer, Melody Shanahan-Kluth, Stephen Shanahan-Kluth, Mark Sharpe and Mark Smith.

**In attendance:** Mr Chris Pilkington (Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer), Mrs Debbie Scott (Minute Taker) and five Members of the Public.

**23.89 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

Cllr Brand welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**23.90 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for the meeting and a reason for absence from it had been received from Cllrs Adrian Snookes and Alison Snookes. Cllr Edwards-Shea informed the meeting that she would be leaving at 8.00 pm.

**RESOLVED:** That the reason for absence of Cllrs Ad Snookes and Al Snookes be approved.

**23.91 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**(a) TO RECEIVE DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS FOR THE PURPOSES OF SECTION 31 OF THE LOCALISM ACT 2011 AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT INTERESTS UNDER THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

There were no declarations of interest.

**(b) TO RECEIVE AND DECIDE UPON REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS TO COUNCILLORS TO TAKE PART IN DISCUSSIONS AND VOTES WHERE THEY HAVE DECLARED DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

There were no requests for dispensations.

## **23.92 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION**

### **(a) REPRESENTATION FROM MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC REGARDING SUNDAY TRAINS**

A Member of the Public spoke in favour of a campaign requesting Sunday trains between Sleaford and Lincoln. He cited a number of public transport action groups that he had approached, mainly without success, but commended the work of the South Holland (Spalding and Peterborough) Transport Forum and asked whether a similar model could be set up for Sleaford. Councillors sympathised with the Member of the Public and explained previous efforts to improve the public transport service in and around Sleaford. It was suggested that the matter be referred to the Planning Committee, although it was not strictly a Planning matter.

### **(b) QUESTION, COMMENTS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ITEMS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY THE TOWN COUNCIL FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Another Member of the Public spoke about the poor state of area around the Handley Monument especially in respect of the ongoing barriers surrounding the area. It was understood that these related to tree works being carried out by LCC. The Town Clerk reported that he had recently met with NKDC Officers regarding the Monument and had raised the issue; NKDC Officers had agreed to take the matter up with colleagues at LCC for resolution.

He raised a second question in connection with the alleged 4,000 new homes planned for Sleaford and concerns about the lack of infrastructure, including doctors. Councillors confirmed that the number was accurate, but included houses already completed and under construction in the Sleaford South SUE, Holdingham and Quarrington, as well as those planned for the Sleaford West SUE. It was noted that plans were in place for services, but providers were not always in a position to deliver in a timely manner.

## **23.93 DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORT**

Apologies had been received from Cllr Mark Allan (Lincolnshire County Council).

## **23.94 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023, be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman of the Council.

## **23.95 CHAIRMAN & VICE-CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Cllr Brand reported on his attendance at the Armed Forces Day events in Sleaford on 19<sup>th</sup> June and in Spalding on 20<sup>th</sup> June. Cllr Suiter added that he would be liaising

with the Town Clerk regarding ideas for a Burns' Night event in January 2024. Cllr Brand welcomed Cllr Edward-Shea's offer to help with another Sleaford Slam event.

**RESOLVED:** That the report of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be noted.

## **23.96 TOWN CLERK & RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT**

The Town Clerk reported on various meetings he had attended, as listed, including meetings of the Council and its committees, of the Sleaford Neighbourhood Plan Working Group, the Sleaford Castle Heritage Group and the NKDC Armed Forces Day Working Group. He had also met with the Internal Auditor on 9<sup>th</sup> June and attended the site visit to the Cemetery on 12<sup>th</sup> June, as well as meeting with NKDC about the UKSPF project in relation to highlighting Handley Monument. He had represented the Council at the Armed Forces Day event on 19<sup>th</sup> June and had just returned from a two-day SLCC Management in Action Conference in Warwickshire.

As Councillors would have noticed, work was underway on the Town Hall lift repairs.

He reported on the successful 1940s Day on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, with the Wm Alvey School and asked that thanks to Stephanie Goodland in the office and Natalie Mason at the School be recorded for all their hard work in organising the event. He added that staff had also helped facilitate the Airborne Re-Enactment event in the Market Place on 10<sup>th</sup> June and the Armed Forces Day Flag-Raising Event outside the Town Hall on 19<sup>th</sup> June. Again, he asked that thanks be recorded to office staff and the services team.

The Town Clerk had also included the list of Priority Work Areas in his report.

**RESOLVED:** That the report of the Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer be noted.

## **23.97 GOVERNANCE MATTERS**

### **(a) UPDATE ON THE REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE 2022-2023 FINANCIAL YEAR AND TO CONSIDER ANY ACTION REQUIRED**

The Town Clerk reported that the Internal Auditor had re-visited on 9<sup>th</sup> June and updated his report to take into account actions taken since his previous visit in February. Councillors questioned a number of items which were still noted as medium risks, but the Town Clerk assured the meeting that actions were underway in each case. Councillors welcomed the significant and substantial progress that had been made. The issue of the pay policy would be resolved on completion of the national NJC Pay Negotiations for 2023-24 and the forthcoming staffing review.

The Internal Auditor had also completed and signed the relevant page on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) confirming compliance, which was noted.

**RESOLVED:** That the report of the internal auditor be accepted and its recommendations implemented.

**(b) ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT SECTION OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR 2022-2023**

The Town Clerk took the meeting through the Annual Governance Statement, with Councillors answering 'yes' on each item 1-8, and N/A to item 9 regarding Trust Funds. Councillors asked that thanks be recorded to Mrs Free, the former Temporary Responsible Financial Officer, for her work when the Council had been without a Town Clerk and RFO.

**RESOLVED:** That the Annual Governance Statement for 2022-23 be approved as completed.

**(c) THE ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS FOR THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR 2022-2023**

Councillors questioned the increase in the value of the Fixed Assets. The Town Clerk explained that the value listed was not based on replacement, market or insurance valuations, but for these purposes new assets were added to the list at cost price. No increases or decreases in value were accounted for and any assets sold or disposed of were removed at their original cost.

He added that explanations were required for any variances that exceeded 15% between the figures in the reporting year and the previous year.

**RESOLVED:** That the Annual Accounting Statements for 2022-23 be approved as completed.

**(d) THE DATES FOR THE PERIOD OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF INSPECTION IN RELATION TO THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR 2022-2023**

The Town Clerk recommended that the dates be set as 26th June to 4th August 2023, in compliance with the statutory requirements.

**RESOLVED:** That the dates for the Period of Public Rights of Inspection be from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June to Friday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023.

(Cllr Edwards -Shea left the meeting at 8.00pm)

**(e) RECOMMENDATION TO INCUR EXPENDITURE ON LAPTOPS FOR COUNCILLORS AND AGENDA SOFTWARE AND ANY ACTION REQUIRED**

Councillors had received a summary of the recommendations from the Town Clerk. Some Councillors requested that tablets, rather than laptops, be provided and others offered to use their own equipment to save the Council money. The Town Clerk explained that, for security reasons, Councillors were required to use Council devices which would include secure software to suit the Council's purpose, ensure GDPR compliance and appropriate security requirements. He added that the costs incurred by Councillors in providing internet access would normally be covered by their allowances.

**RESOLVED:** That the contract with CloudyIT for 18 laptops and associated support for £10,272 plus VAT, with ongoing monthly costs of £302.40 plus VAT and their Decisions software packed at £2,508.75 plus VAT for set up and £1,250 plus VAT for annual costs be approved.

**(f) REQUEST FROM GROUNDWORK FOR THE REPAYMENT OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN GRANT MONIES**

The Chairman of the Sleaford Neighbourhood Plan Working Group reminded the meeting that, for various reasons including having to await the adoption of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan, it had not been possible for the group to complete the work planned for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Groundwork now required the return of the unspent grant, amounting to £6,490. He added that once the repayment had been made, a further application could be submitted for funding for the work that was still to be undertaken. The Town Clerk explained that the grant should have been designated as an earmarked reserve, and added that, should a further grant application be unsuccessful, it was expected that the work could be completed within the Council's existing budget.

**RESOLVED:** That the grant repayment of £6,490 to Goundwork be approved.

**(g) REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SLEAFORD CASTLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND TO CONSIDER THE APPOINTMENT OF NON-COUNCILLORS TO THE COMMITTEE**

The Town Clerk explained that, following the Council's decision to establish a Sleaford Castle Advisory Committee, he had received feedback from long-standing members of the Sleaford Castle Heritage Group asking that the original name be retained and that the number of non-Councillors on the group be increased so that all the non-Councillors from the original group could be appointed to the Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That the name of the Committee now be the Sleaford Castle Heritage Group, that the number of non-councillors on the Committee be increased to ten, the terms of reference amended accordingly and Doreen Bamford, Mark Bamford, Paul Cope-Faulkner, Brenda Hitchcock, Faith Hopkins, David Marriage, Garry Titmus and Dale Trimble be confirmed as the current non-councillor members of the Committee.

**(h) VACANCIES ON THE FINANCE AND SERVICES COMMITTEE AND A REQUEST TO STAND DOWN FROM THE PLANNING COMMITTEE AND JOIN THE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

An amendment to the recommendation was proposed and agreed to allow the Council to appoint Councillors to fill the vacancies on the Finance Committee, the Services Committee and the Planning Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillors M Shanahan-Kluth, Offer and Mason be appointed to the Finance Committee, Councillor Offer be appointed to the Services Committee and Cllr M Shanahan-Kluth be appointed to the Planning Committee, in place of Cllr Mason, whose resignation from the committee was accepted.

**23.98 PLANNING AND HIGHWAYS MATTERS**

**(a) LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, PROPOSED WAITING RESTRICTIONS CONSULTATION – EASTGATE, SLEAFORD**

**RESOLVED:** That the Council support Lincolnshire County Council’s proposal to extend the waiting restrictions along Eastgate.

**(b) NORTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL, WAYFINDING SIGNAGE PHASE 2 CONSULTATION**

The Town Clerk explained that North Kesteven District Council was now asking for suggestions for signage in the next phase of the project and views on whether ginnels (alleys) should be marked by wall signage or signage set in the pavement.

**RESOLVED:** That councillors submit their ideas to the Town Clerk by the end of the following week to enable the Clerk to formulate a response to NKDC on behalf of the Town Council.

**23.99 COUNCIL AND TOWN MATTERS**

**(a) TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE REGARDING THE GRANTING OF A NEW OPTION AGREEMENT TO TESCO AND TO CONSIDER ANY ACTION REQUIRED**

The Town Clerk reported that he had contacted both Tesco and the Council's solicitors but the revised document with references to the Council's obligations under the Local Government Act 1972 had not yet been received.

**RESOLVED:** That this be noted and an update provided to the next meeting of the Council.

**(b) TO CONSIDER AN UPDATE REGARDING THE LAND AND PLAY EQUIPMENT AT TAMAR COURT AND TO CONSIDER ANY ACTION REQUIRED**

The Town Clerk reported that he and the Acting Deputy Clerk had met with NKDC about the offer from NKDC to hand over the play area and the equipment which the Council had previously declined without assurances regarding the condition of the equipment. The outcome of the Play Equipment Inspection was awaited. There was also a suggestion about the land ownership which was being investigated.

**RESOLVED:** That this be noted and an update provided to the next meeting of the Council.

**(c) TO CONSIDER WHETHER TO SUPPORT THE CREATION OF A PASSAGEWAY AND BRIDGE FROM THE NAG'S HEAD PASSAGEWAY TO THE SLEAFORD CASTLEFIELD**

The Town Clerk's report had been shared. He explained that the Council had not previously taken a specific decision about the idea of a passageway and it would be helpful to NKDC with the UKSPF Project relating to the Nag's Head Passageway and to the Castlefield site project if the Council took a decision about the matter. All that was required at this point was in principle support and that any detailed proposals would come back to a future meeting of the Council. Any decision taken today would not commit the Council at this stage to any financial obligation. It was noted that the proposal to have a passageway was supported by the Sleaford Castle Heritage Group.

Cllr Lorimer requested a recorded vote on the proposal.

For - Cllrs Brand, Allan, Aziz, Cockcroft, Mason, Oates, Offer, M Shanahan-Kluth, S Shanahan-Kluth, Sharpe and Smith.

Against - Cllrs Suiter, Darmon, Fernandes and Lorimer voted against the proposal.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council support the proposal to create a passage and bridge into the Castlefield Site from Nag's Head Passage.

**(d) TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE SITE VISIT TO SLEAFORD CEMETERY AND TO CONSIDER ANY ACTION REQUIRED**

It was noted that the Member of the Public who had raised concerns about the Cemetery had been very grateful for the opportunity to meet with Councillors and Staff on site and intended to attend future meetings of the Services Committee.

It was agreed that the notes of the site visit on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023 were an accurate record of the meeting.

Councillors recognised that further maintenance work was necessary in certain areas of the site and welcomed the list of actions required.

**RESOLVED:** That the work proposed in the report be undertaken and consideration be given to the establishment of a voluntary group to help look after the Cemetery.

**(e) TO CONSIDER APPLYING FOR ACCREDITATION UNDER THE CEMETERY OF THE YEAR AWARDS**

The Town Clerk explained that working towards accreditation would include peer reviews and support to ensure the highest standards of physical management and administration. It was understood that there was no cost involved. It was noted that the Cemetery had already achieved national recognition as an Arboretum.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council apply for accreditation under the Cemetery of the Year Awards.

**(f) TO CONSIDER MATTERS RELATING TO THE TWINNING ASSOCIATION AND ANY ACTION REQUIRED**

The Town Clerk reported on his meeting with Twinning Association representatives earlier that week to explain that any future funding from the Council would be by way of reimbursement or direct payment of invoices and to clarify the relationship between the Town Council and the Association. It was noted that the Association was already committed to costs for hosting the visit in August so a payment would be appropriate at this stage. The Association had agreed to return any underspend to the Town Council.

**RESOLVED:** That a payment of £5,200 be made to the Twinning Association; the Town Clerk and/or a member of the office staff attend the meetings of the Association to support the Association, work be undertaken to clarify roles and responsibilities between the two organisations and the Town Clerk given the delegated power to arrange the twinning work of the Council.

**23.100 EVENTS**

21<sup>st</sup> June 2023

Signed:

Date:



**(a) Sleaford Coronation Celebration Event on Saturday 6th May 2023**

A comprehensive report on the event including costings and feedback from visitors which had been extremely positive. Thanks were again recorded to the organisers. It was noted that the working hours for members of the Services Team and for those Councillors who had volunteered to help had been extensive. It was suggested that a more structured rota for volunteers could be helpful. Thanks were also recorded to Help for Heroes volunteers who had helped erect banners on Southgate. It was noted that other volunteer groups could be approached for future events.

**RESOLVED:** That this be noted.

**(b) Sleaford 1940s Day Event held on Saturday 3rd June 2023**

It was noted that this had been another extremely successful event and again the collaboration with the Wm Alvey School had worked well.

**RESOLVED:** That the event be repeated in 2024.

**(c) REQUEST TO USE THE BOSTON ROAD RECREATION GROUND FOR A FUN FAIR IN EITHER AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER 2023**

**RESOLVED:** That the request be approved subject to the usual conditions.

**(d) REQUEST TO USE BOSTON ROAD RECREATION GROUND FOR A CIRCUS ON SUNDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER TO SUNDAY 1ST OCTOBER 2023**

**RESOLVED:** That the request be approved subject to the usual conditions.

**23.101 LINCOLNSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS.**

**(a) LALC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, THURSDAY 29TH JUNE 2023 (7PM, VIA ZOOM)**

It was noted that Cllrs Fernandes and Edwards-Shea would be attending as the Council's representatives.

**(b) LALC SUMMER CONFERENCE, WEDNESDAY 19TH JULY 2023, BENTLEY HOTEL, SOUTH HYKEHAM**

**RESOLVED:** That Cllrs Edwards-Shea, Fernandes, M Shanahan-Kluth, S Shanahan-Kluth, the Town Clerk and the Acting Deputy Clerk attend.

**(c) LALC SHINING STARS AWARDS**

**RESOLVED:** That the opportunity to nominate be noted.

**23.102 CORRESPONDENCE**

**(a) INSTITUTE OF CEMETERY AND CREMATORIUM MANAGEMENT, INFORMAL CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION**

**RESOLVED:** That the correspondence be noted.

**(b) NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH MARKET AUTHORITIES ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONFERENCE, MONDAY 9TH OCTOBER TO TUESDAY 10TH OCTOBER 2023, HILTON HARROGATE MAJESTIC HOTEL & SPA**

**RESOLVED:** That the correspondence be noted.

**23.103 DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the next meeting of the Council take place on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 7pm at the Town Hall, Sleaford.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 9.31 pm.

21<sup>st</sup> June 2023

Signed:

Date: