



**Minutes of the Meeting of Sleaford Town Council held on
Wednesday 14th December 2022 at 7.00pm, at The Town Hall, Sleaford**

Present:

Cllr L Edwards-Shea – Chairman
Cllr J Thomas – Vice Chairman
Cllr D Darmon
Cllr P Edwards-Shea
Cllr K Fernandes
Cllr T Hayat
Cllr H Lorimer
Cllr R Oates

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 and Responsible Financial Officer), Ms M Free (Senior Finance Officer) and Mrs D Scott (Minute Taker)

FC.1 Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed all the meeting. She drew Councillors' attention to a print of a watercolour by Mike Weston of Sleaford Castle which she was presenting to the Council for display in the Town Hall.

FC.2 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for the meeting and reasons for absence from it had been received from Cllrs B Allan and L Lowndes.

RESOLVED: That the reasons for absence of Cllrs Allan and Lowndes be approved.

FC.3 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Other Interests

(a) To receive disclosures 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

Cllr D Suiter declared an interest in agenda item 8h, being a resident on that street.

RESOLVED: That this be noted.

(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

None.

FC.4 Minutes of Previous Meetings

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 23rd November 2022 and Wednesday 1st December 2022 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman of the Council.

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

The Chairman commended the two Mayoral Events planned for January and February 2023. Eight events had been attended since the last meeting. Revised dates for Twining Visits were listed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

FC.6 Town Clerk's Report

The Clerk reported that he had attended a training event organised by the Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils and the Lincolnshire branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks which had included a presentation on parish precepts. He had also attended a meeting of the North Kesteven District Council Planning Committee. He reported that the Council needed to appoint an Internal Auditor for 2022-23, and that the Council should convene a separate meeting to consider the Budget for 2023-24 prior to approval at the meeting on 18th January. Banking arrangements would also need to be re-considered following the announcement of HSBC's closure. Issues with Councillors' iPads were noted and training was offered outside the meeting if Councillors were still having problems.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

FC.7 Governance Matters

(a) Revised Standing Orders

The Clerk reminded councillors that the Internal Auditor had advised that the Council's standing needed updating and explained that if it was to achieve accreditation under the Local Council Award Scheme then it would be expected to have up to date standing orders based on the model standing orders produced by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). He presented draft revised standing orders for consideration by the Council. Members felt that they needed more time to consider the draft document before adopting them.

RESOLVED: That consideration of the draft standing orders be deferred to the meeting of the Town Council on 18th January 2023 and comments about them by members be sent to the Clerk ahead of the meeting.

(b) Appointment of PKF Littlejohn LLP as the Council's External Auditor

14th December 2022 Meeting

Signed:

Date:

The Clerk reported that PKF Littlejohn LLP had been appointed as the Council's external auditor the 2022-2023 to 2026-2027 financial years.

RESOLVED: That the appointment of PKF Littlejohn LLP as the Council's external auditor for the 2022-2023 to 2026-2027 financial years be noted.

FC.8 Planning and Highways Matters

(a) Request from Tesco Stores Ltd to extend an option agreement over Town Council owned land

The Clerk explained that the previously extended option agreement was due to expire in January 2023 and that Tesco had contacted the Council to request and activate a further extension as they were entitled to do under the terms of the original agreement. He was awaiting advice from solicitors who had previously supported the Council in this matter and would bring the new agreement and associated advice to the Council when it was ready.

RESOLVED: That this be noted, the Clerk obtain the relevant legal advice, the original agreement documents be shared with councillors and an update be provided to the next meeting of the Council.

(b) Proposals from Anglian Water to create a new reservoir in Lincolnshire following a presentation held on 12th December 2022.

Councillors raised various concerns and questions about the proposals including raising sea levels from climate change potentially making the project unviable in the long term, that the reservoir should be of a natural design rather a concrete bowl and that the site should be a wildlife haven. A peninsula as part of the site, such as at Rutland Water, would be desirable. In addition concerns were expressed that both during the construction phase and afterwards that there may be increased road and rail traffic through Sleaford. Would there be a traffic management plan for the project and how would we be updated about it? Would the roads near the reservoir be upgraded to cope with the increased traffic and could the development be an opportunity to build a southern bypass for Sleaford? The Council wanted to see a cycle path and rail transport links between Sleaford and the reservoir and thought that the development might be an opportunity to have a rail spur from Heckington and/or a new station at Donington. Furthermore that renewable energy be generated at the reservoir site. For example by floating solar panels. Finally it was unclear when Anglian Water would undertake environmental impact assessments and establish which species would be positively and negatively impacted by the development.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk respond to the consultation on behalf of the Council raising the concerns listed above.

(c) Request from North Kesteven District Council for a letter of support for signage relating to Cogglesford Mill

RESOLVED: That the Clerk send a letter of support to NKDC for the continuation of brown tourism signage on the road outside Cogglesford Mill.

(d) Planning application 22/1554/TPO, Application to undertake work to a tree(s) – T1 Lime, remove epicormic growth up to 2m height, remove deadwood. 43 Kinross Road, Greylees, Sleaford, NG34 8GB.

RESOLVED: That no response be made.

(e) Planning application 22/1665/FUL, Proposed side extension to create a new storage building. George H Kime & Co Ltd, East Road, Sleaford, NG34 7EQ.

RESOLVED: That no response be made.

(f) Prior Approval Development 22/1696/PMA, Change of use from Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E) to 1no apartment (Use Class C3). 20 Riverside Shopping Centre, Southgate.

RESOLVED: That no response be made.

(g) Planning application 22/1706/HOUS, Proposed erection of single storey rear & side extension with parapet roof. 1 Finch Drive, Sleaford, NG34 7US.

RESOLVED: That no response be made.

(h) Planning application 22/1709/HOUS, Proposed front porch extension. 39 Stephens Way, Sleaford, NG34 7JN.

RESOLVED: That no response be made.

(i) Planning application 22/1727/TPO, Application to undertake work to a tree(s) – T1 Cedar, lift whole crown to 3m above ground level. 6 Playground Court, Quarrington, Sleaford, NG34 7AB.

RESOLVED: That no response be made.

FC.9 Financial Matters

(a) Council's Bank Balances

RESOLVED: That the Council's bank balances be noted

(b) Financial Transactions Retrospective and Pending

RESOLVED: That the financial transactions listed on the reports totalling £20,968.37, £28,967.87, £1,344.89 and £163.73 respectively be approved. Moreover that Cllrs Offer and Smith sign the relevant paperwork.

(c) Authorisations of Expenditure Under Financial Regulation 4.6

- (i) Angels Dance Squad, Performance at Christmas Market, £50
- (ii) Castle Print, Signage for Christmas Market, £80
- (iii) Express Entertainments, main stage, sound and light for Christmas Market, £500
- (iv) Freddie Meakin, Fairground rides at Christmas Market, £500
- (v) Lincolnshire Today, Advert in Christmas Magazine, £198
- (vi) Pennells Garden Centre, Christmas trees and related items for Christmas Market, £218.35
- (vii) Sleaford Ukulele Orchestra, Performance at Christmas Market, £50
- (viii) Sparkles, Cleaning of Town Council offices, £336

RESOLVED: That the authorisations of expenditure listed be noted.

(d) Fund transfers within the Council's banking arrangements

RESOLVED: That the fund transfers within the Council's banking arrangements since the last meeting of the Council be noted.

(Cllr J Thomas left the meeting briefly at 8.18 pm)

(e) Request for Financial Support from the Twinning Association for the 2022-2023 financial year

As the Chairman of the Twinning Association had explained in the public session held before the meeting and in correspondence, it was noted that the reserves held by the group had been raised by volunteers and were intended to support visitors, such as school children and families who could not afford the fares or accommodation. Some had already been used for deposits to secure transport arrangements for the 2023 visits. The Clerk explained that the funds set aside for Twinning in 2022-23 had been exhausted but that the request of £621.31 could be covered from the Pride in Sleaford funds. He added that the Budget meeting could consider a larger annual amount for 2023-24. Councillors asked that a meeting be arranged with the Twinning Association to consider future arrangements for governance and forward planning.

RESOLVED: That an additional grant of £621.31 be made to the Twinning Association for the 2022-2023 financial year to be taken from the Pride in Sleaford funds and

that the Clerk contact the Twinning Association to discuss governance and forward planning matters.

(f) Request for Financial Support from the Twinning Association for the 2023-2024 financial year

RESOLVED: That the request be deferred to the meeting of the Council which would be held to discuss the draft budget for 2023-2024.

(Cllr P Edwards-Shea left the meeting briefly at 8.48pm)

(g) Request for a grant from Sleaford in Bloom.

A request for funding for replacement planters on Northgate and additional barrier planters for the town centre was considered. The group was commended for its exemplar application including full audited accounts. The Chairman added that there would be a cost saving for the Council as, with reservoirs, watering would be less frequently required.

RESOLVED: That the request be deferred to the meeting of the Council which would be held to discuss the draft budget for 2023-2024.

FC.10 Council and Town Matters

(a) Lincolnshire County Council's Scrutiny Review of Parish and Town Centres

The Clerk explained that the County Council was seeking the views of the Town Council regarding what it did to support the town centre as part of this scrutiny review.

RESOLVED: That councillors send any views that they may have about the matter to the Clerk by 21st December and that he be given the delegated power to then respond to the scrutiny review on behalf of the Council ahead of the response deadline of 23rd December 2022.

(b) Request for lighting at the toddler play area at the Boston Road Recreation Ground

The Clerk reported that a request had been received from a member of the public for lighting at the toddler play area at the location. Councillors discussed the costs and benefits of lighting at that other and other play areas and whether there would be public support for the idea.

RESOLVED: That the matter be deferred to the S106/CIL Task & Finish Group for further investigation.

(c) Planned Closures of the Barclays and HSBC bank branches in Sleaford

The Clerk reported that Barclays and HSBC would be closing their branches in Sleaford in 2023. Councillors were concerned about losing two more banks in the town and the detrimental effect on the Council itself, residents, visitors and businesses in the town and surrounding areas. Statistical evidence presented by the Banks seemed challengeable and it was not clear whether the two local Post Offices had the capacity to take on the extra work. Banking Hubs were suggested as an alternative.

RESOLVED: That an open letter objecting to the planned closures of the Barclays and HSBC branches be sent to the two banks and that the Council liaise with NKDC regarding alternative banking models such as the Hub concept.

(Cllr T Hayat left the meeting at 9.35)

FC.11 Council Committees, Panels, Task & Finish Groups and Outside Bodies

(a) Notes of the S106 and CIL Funding Task & Finish Group Meetings held on 24th November 2022 and 6th December 2022

The Clerk explained that the notes of the meeting on 6th December 2022 were not yet available but the lead of the Group spoke to the work of the group and the recommendations arising from the two meetings.

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting held on 24th November be noted and the recommendations from the Group from that meeting and the one held on 6th December be accepted.

(b) Notes of Sleaford Castle Heritage Group Meeting – 30th November 2022

RESOLVED: That the meeting notes be noted.

(c) Request from Sleaford Castle Heritage Group for expenditure

The Chairman spoke to the request for expenditure by the Council received from the Group for trench digging and augering. The former would cost £5,000 and the latter £1,500. The Senior Finance Officer explained that the Sleaford Castle Heritage Group understood that there was £6346 left in the budget, but in fact after deducted expenditure on repairs and the new noticeboard only £4997 remained.

(Cllr S Shanahan-Kluth left the meeting briefly at 9.43 pm)

RESOLVED: That the Council spend up to £4,997 on the digging of up to five trenches as requested by the group with any orders for works to be placed by the Council. Moreover that the request for £1,500 for augering be deferred to the meeting of the Council at which the draft budget for 2023-2024 would be discussed.

14th December 2022 Meeting

Signed:

Date:

(The Temporary RFO left the meeting at 9.49 pm)

FC.12 District and County Councillors Report.

There was no member of Lincolnshire County Council present due to illness. Town councillors who were also NKDC Councillors welcomed the Clerk's presence at the recent NKDC Planning Committee meeting. One felt that the lateness of this item on the Town Council agenda could have been a deterrent to the county councillor attending. The Chairman explained that, if a county councillor had been present, the item could have been brought forward.

RESOLVED: That this be noted.

FC.13 Dates and Venues of Meetings

(a) Date of draft budget meeting

RESOLVED: That a meeting of the Council to discuss the draft budget for 2023/2024 be held on Wednesday 4th January 2023 at 7pm at the Town Hall, Sleaford.

(b) Meeting of Council on Wednesday 18th January 2023

RESOLVED: That the meeting of the Council on Wednesday 18th January 2023 at 7pm at the Town Hall, Sleaford be confirmed.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 9.52, wishing all present a joyful and peaceful Christmas and a prosperous New Year.