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MINUTES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Commencing Civic Year 2021-2022

Via Zoom

Date: **Tuesday, 4th May 2021**

Present:	Councillors	C.	Lager	(Retiring Town Mayor)
		A.	Kilmartin	(Town Mayor Elect)
		S.	Ager	
		K.	Atwill	
		P.	Barlow	
		J.	Bayford	
		J.	Goodman	
		S.	Hicks	
		C.	Jay	
		M.	Lager	
		C.	Livermore	
		T.	Pleasance	
		M.	Weeks	
	Councillor	S.	Wilson	(Braintree District Council)
	Revd	M.	Child	(Witham Baptist Church)
		J.	Sheehy	(Town Clerk)
		N.	Smith	(Deputy Town Clerk)
		G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)
		L.	Brimson	(Events Co-ordinator)

Two members of the public were present.

The retiring Town Mayor spoke of the Town Council's sadness on the death of Councillor Paul Ryland. Paul was a man of judgement and forthright statement with a love of the natural world, deep knowledge of the town and long Council experience. She had visited his wife Sue and passed on condolences from the Town Council.

A minute's silence was held in respect and remembrance of Paul.

1. ADDRESS FROM THE TOWN MAYOR

The retiring Town Mayor for civic years 2019-2020 & 2020-2021 spoke of her enjoyment of her first year in office with so many events to attend including Carnival Day, opening the Charter Market and hosting coffee mornings with the Mayor. She spoke of her successful Barn Dance in January and Bollywood Evening in February 2020. She was looking forward to a Golf Day and a Civic Service to finish a busy year when covid hit and everything stopped. This past year had been an anti-climax with government restrictions limiting events to acts of remembrance at the War Memorial, the lighting of the Christmas tree and congratulating residents on reaching their 100th birthdays. She was pleased that the Town Council had been able to host the Easter Quest event for families on the River Walk and she thanked staff for their support.

2. ELECTION OF WITHAM TOWN MAYOR FOR 2021/2022

The retiring Town Mayor invited nominations for Town Mayor of Witham for Civic Year 2021/2022.

RESOLVED That Councillor Angela Kilmartin be elected to serve as Town Mayor of Witham for the Civic Year 2021/2022.

Taking the chair, The Town Mayor thanked Councillor C. Lager for her for dutiful service and Members for her election to office.

3. DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was received, signed and witnessed, before subsequently being:

RESOLVED That the Declaration of Acceptance of Office be accepted.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R. Williams due to employment commitments.

RESOLVED Apologies be received and accepted.

5. INTERESTS

Later in the Meeting at Minute 20, the Town Mayor declared non-pecuniary interests in Witham in Bloom and Witham Town Luncheon Club.

6. INTRODUCTION OF ORDER NOTES

Members acknowledged the introduction of Order Notes on agenda papers, to assist meeting participants with procedural navigation of debates.

RESOLVED The information be received and noted.

7. APPOINTMENT OF WITHAM DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR FOR 2021/2022

The Town Mayor invited nominations for Deputy Town Mayor of Witham for Civic Year 2021/2022.

RESOLVED That Councillor Jack Bayford be elected to serve as Deputy Town Mayor of Witham for the Civic Year 2021/2022.

8. DISPOSAL OF TOWN MAYOR'S APPEAL 2019/2020 - 2020/2021

Members were asked to authorise the disposal of the Town Mayor's Appeal to the sum of £7,345.81 to Citizens Advice as her nominated beneficiary for the civic years 2019/2020 & 2020/2021.

Members congratulated Councillor C. Lager on the sum raised.

RESOLVED That authority be given to release the sum of £7,345.81 from the Town Mayor's Appeal to her nominated charity.

9. APPOINTMENT OF TOWN MAYOR'S CHAPLAIN

The Town Mayor explained that she wished to appoint the Revd Michael Child, Witham Baptist Church, as the Town Mayor's Chaplain.

Revd Child was delighted to accept the role as Town Mayor's Chaplain.

RESOLVED That Revd Michael Child be confirmed as the Town Mayor's Chaplain.

10. TOWN MAYOR'S ALLOWANCE CIVIC YEAR 2021/2022

Members were asked to authorise payment of the Town Mayor's Allowance set at £2,000 for civic year 2021/2022.

RESOLVED That the Town Mayor's Allowance of £2,000 for the civic year 2021/2022 be confirmed.

11. MINUTES

The Minutes of Witham Town Council Meeting held 6th April 2021 were received.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held 6th April 2021 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor.

12. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The current Scheme of Delegation was received along with proposed amendments for adoption including terms of reference.

RESOLVED That the Scheme of Delegation and amendments be received and approved.

13. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO EXISTING COMMITTEES

Nominations were received to appoint Members to the following Standing Committees:

13.1) Planning Applications & Transport Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Planning Applications and Transport Committee for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors	K.	Atwill
	P.	Barlow
	J.	Goodman
	S.	Hicks
	A.	Kilmartin
	C.	Jay
	C.	Lager
	M.	Lager
	C.	Livermore
		Vacancy

13.2) Environment Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Environment Committee for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors	K.	Atwill
	J.	Bayford
	J.	Goodman
	S.	Hicks
	A.	Kilmartin
	C.	Lager
	M.	Lager
	C.	Livermore
	M.	Weeks
		Vacancy

13.3) Community Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Community Committee for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors	S.	Ager
	J.	Bayford
	C.	Jay
	C.	Lager
	M.	Lager
	C.	Livermore
	T.	Pleasance
	M.	Weeks
	R.	Williams
		Vacancy

13.4) Policy & Resources Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Policy and Resources Committee for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors	S.	Ager
	K.	Atwill
	P.	Barlow
	J.	Goodman
	C.	Jay
	M.	Lager
	T.	Pleasance
	M.	Weeks
	R.	Williams
		Vacancy

14. APPOINTMENT OF STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS/VICES

Nominations were received to appoint Chairman & Vice Chairman to the following:

14.1) Planning Applications & Transport Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor Goodman be appointed as Chairman and Councillor Kilmartin appointed as Vice Chairman of the Planning Applications and Transport Committee for the ensuing civic year.

14.2) Environment Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor Goodman be appointed as Chairman and Councillor Atwill as Vice Chairman of the Environment Committee for the ensuing civic year.

14.3) Community Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor Ager be appointed as Chairman and Councillor Bayford as Vice Chairman of the Community Committee for the ensuing civic year.

14.4) Policy & Resources Committee

RESOLVED That Councillor M. Lager be appointed as Chairman and Councillor Williams be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee for the ensuing civic year.

15. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO EXISTING SUB-COMMITTEES

Nominations were received to appoint Members to the following Sub-Committees:

15.1) Staffing & Accommodation Sub-Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Staffing and Accommodation Sub-Committee for the ensuing civic year–

Councillors	S.	Ager
	P.	Barlow
	J.	Goodman
	M.	Lager
	T.	Pleasance
	M.	Weeks

15.2) Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Open Spaces Management Sub-Committee for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors	K.	Atwill
	J.	Goodman
	S.	Hicks
	C.	Lager
	T.	Pleasance

And the opportunity to co-opt members.

15.3) Estimates Sub-Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Estimates Sub-Committee for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors	S.	Ager
	J.	Bayford
	J.	Goodman
	M.	Lager
	R.	Williams

16. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Nominations were received to appoint Members to the following Advisory Committees -

16.1) Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors	S.	Ager
	K.	Atwill
	P.	Barlow
	J.	Goodman
	S.	Hicks

C. Jay
M. Lager

And the opportunity to co-opt members.

16.2) Delivering Developers Obligations Advisory Committee

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Delivering Developers Obligations Advisory Committee for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors K. Atwill
P. Barlow
C. Jay
M. Lager

16.3) Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group –

Councillors K. Atwill
J. Goodman
M. Lager
T. Pleasance

And the opportunity to co-opt Members

16.4) Localism & Devolution Steering Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Localism & Devolution Steering Group for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors K. Atwill
J. Goodman
M. Lager
T. Pleasance
Vacancy

16.5) Council Events Review Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Council Events Review Group for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors J. Bayford
J. Goodman
C. Livermore
R. Williams
Two vacancies

16.6) Youth Working Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Task and Finish Group (Youth) for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors J. Bayford
 S. Hicks
 C. Lager

And the opportunity to co-opt members

16.7) Improving Healthcare Facilities Working Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Improving Healthcare Facilities Working Group for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors S. Ager
 P. Barlow
 J. Goodman
 C. Jay
 A. Kilmartin
 M. Lager
 T. Pleasance

And the opportunity to co-opt members

16.8) Local Heritage List Review Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Task and Finish Group (Local Heritage List) for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors S. Ager
 J. Goodman
 M. Lager

And the opportunity to co-opt members

16.9) Social Isolation Working Group

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Task and Finish Group (Social Isolation) for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors S. Ager
 C. Jay
 C. Lager
 C. Livermore
 M. Weeks

And the opportunity to co-opt members

16.10) Financial Scrutiny Panel

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Financial Scrutiny Panel for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors K. Atwill
 P. Barlow
 J. Goodman.

It was noted out that no appointments to the Voice Editorial Board had been included, as the role required further clarity in the Scheme of Delegation.

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Voice Editorial Board for the ensuing civic year -

Councillors	P.	Barlow
	J.	Goodman
	M.	Lager
	M.	Weeks

17. APPOINTMENT / DISSOLUTION OF COMMITTEES

Members were asked to consider appointment to the newly constituted functions:

17.1) Climate Scrutiny Panel

RESOLVED That the following Members be elected to serve on the Climate Scrutiny Panel for the ensuing civic year –

Councillors	S.	Ager
	S.	Hicks
	C.	Jay

18. ADOPTION OF STANDING ORDERS

The Standing Orders were received along with proposals for amendment and adoption.

RESOLVED That the Standing Orders be received.

RESOLVED That the proposed amendments be adopted.

19. ADOPTION OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Financial Regulations were received along with proposals for amendment and adoption.

RESOLVED That the Financial Regulations be received.

RESOLVED That the proposed amendments be adopted.

20. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES & REPRESENTATIVES

Members then had an opportunity to express interest in outside roles.

20.1) Essex Association of Local Councils

It was noted out that the Town Council does not have a right to appoint a Member to serve on the Essex Association of Local Councils Committee, this would be a nomination from the Braintree Association of Local Councils.

20.2) Braintree Association of Local Councils

Councillor M. Lager explained that he had been involved in reviving Braintree Association of Local Councils with half of the town and parish councils in the Braintree District becoming members so united they can be a stronger voice when dealing with Braintree District and Essex County Councils.

RESOLVED That Councillor M. Lager be appointed as the Town Council representative on Braintree Association of Local Councils.

20.3) Witham Chamber of Commerce

RESOLVED That Councillor S. Ager be appointed as the Town representative on Witham Chamber of Commerce.

20.4) Witham in Bloom

Councillor Kilmartin had declared an interest.

RESOLVED That Councillor Kilmartin be appointed as the responsible member for Witham in Bloom.

20.5) Witham Town Luncheon Club

Councillor Kilmartin had declared an interest as the Chairman of the Witham Town Luncheon Club.

RESOLVED That Councillor Kilmartin be appointed as the Town Council representative for Witham Town Luncheon Club.

20.6) Witham Carnival Association

RESOLVED That Councillor Williams be appointed as the Town Council representative on the Witham Carnival Association.

20.7) Citizens Advice

RESOLVED That Councillor C. Lager be appointed as the Town Council representative for Citizens Advice.

20.8) Passenger Transport Panel

RESOLVED That Councillor Goodman be appointed as the Town Council representative for the Passenger Transport Panel.

20.9) LGBTQ+ Ambassador

RESOLVED That Councillor Jay be appointed as the Town Council LGBTQ+ Ambassador.

21. APPOINTMENT OF AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES

Members were asked to consider proposed Member placements of Authorised Signatories.

RESOLVED That the following Members be Authorised Signatories

—
Councillors K. Atwill
 P. Barlow
 J. Goodman
 S. Hicks
 M. Lager
 R. Williams

22. GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

Members reaffirmed the Council’s eligibility for holding the General Power of Competence.

RESOLVED That the Town Council uses the General Power of Competence for the civic year 2021/2022.

23. APPOINTMENT OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

A report was received and Members asked to consider whether a Leader of the Council should be appointed.

Members considered the role and agreed that further clarification within the Scheme of Delegation would be beneficial in recognition that the office of the Leader should continue to function as the direct contact point for Council business.

RESOLVED that the Council continues to operate the Leader of the Council role.

24. ASSET REVIEW

Members were asked to review the Council’s assets.

RESOLVED That the Assets be received and noted.

25. TIME AND PLACE OF ORDINARY MEETINGS

Members noted the calendar of meetings having recently been set with the possibility of further, future amendments arising as required.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

26. ADOPTION OF TOWN COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT

A revised draft Code of Conduct was received along with recommendations.

RESOLVED That the Code of Conduct be adopted subject to general formatting and corrections.

27. TREASURY & INVESTMENT POLICY

Members were asked to receive and renew the Town Council’s Treasury & Investment Policy.

The suggestion was made at paragraph 6 that it would be sufficient for the Town Council to invest in high credit quality banks and building societies. The Town Clerk explained that he would investigate as he considered that the following section might be prescribed by the government.

RESOLVED That the Treasury and Investment Policy be received subject to deletion of credit ratings references with Mood’s Investors Service and Standards and Poor’s.

28. MANDATORY MEMBERS TRAINING REPORT

A report was received from Councillor Chelsey Jay and Members asked to consider the motion that all elected Witham Town Councillors partake in mandatory equality and diversity training as unconscious biases can influence a person’s judgement without them being aware.

An amendment was put that the proposed training of unconscious bias, disability, race & cultural diversity and LGBTQ+ was too narrow an approach and that regular briefings for Members to include those items and ones such as data protection and Freedom of Information should be included. It was also important to remember that training is not enforceable on Members.

RESOLVED That the amendment be carried.

A further amendment was tabled to replace “unconscious bias” with “behavioural modification”

RESOLVED That the amendment be carried.

RESOLVED That the Town Clerk arranges regular training briefings, to which all elected Town Councillors will be invited, which will include inter alia behavioural modification, disability, race and cultural diversity and LGBTQ+.

29. WITHAM TOWN TWINNING CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was received from the twin town of Waldbröl giving advance advice of the Unification Celebrations to be held in October which would coincide with the 35th anniversary of the two towns’ twinning.

Members remembered that in the past the Town Mayor and possibly the Deputy would attend this important celebration. Members realised that covid restrictions it might not be possible to attend.

Members agreed that if at all possible there should be a delegation from the Town Council attend the celebrations.

RESOLVED That the correspondence be received and that the invitation be accepted to attend Waldbröl in October 2021 if travel is permitted.

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and for helping debates move forward.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.15 p.m.

Councillor Angela Kilmartin
Town Mayor

JS/GK6.5.2021