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MINUTES

WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Monday, 29th April 2024**

Place: **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Newland Street, Witham, CM8 2FE**

Present: Councillors:

S.	Ager	(Town Mayor)
L.	Barlow	(Deputy Town Mayor)
E.	Adelaja	
P.	Barlow	
J.C.	Coleman	
J.M.	Coleman	
B.	Fleet	
L.	Headley	
P.	Heath	
T.	Hewitt	
J.	Martin	
R.	Playle	
R.	Ramage	
A.	Sloma	
B.	Taylor	
E.	Williams	
C.	Davey	(Ride London)
N.	Smith	(Town Clerk)
H.	Andrews	(Deputy Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

And one member of the public.

209. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

210. MINUTES

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Town Council held 2nd April 2024 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Town Mayor.

211. INTERESTS

No declarations of interest.

212. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

The member of the public explained that he had been at the recent Annual Town Meeting and asked questions in relation to Section 106 funding. He expressed concern that large sums of money had been earmarked for community projects and this funding could be lost if it were not spent within the time limit.

Members explained that S106 was primarily a District Council matter but the Town Council had been given more information recently and was now able to watch dates to ensure that the funding could be spent within the time limit or a deferral requested from the developer. Section 106 monies were used to mitigate development and a ‘wish list’ had been drawn up with the District Council.

The member of the public considered that Section 106 monies were not being spent quickly enough and he was concerned that Witham could be missing out on potential projects. He added that there was no transparency on the part of the District Council. The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council was now able to access funding for projects on its land rather than wait for the District Council to do so.

The member of the public suggested that more public involvement was required. He had not for example been aware that funding would be used for the board walk in James Cooke Wood. The Town Clerk explained that better access around the woodland had been requested but more public involvement would take place.

The member of the public gave a sheet containing further questions and comments so that the Town Clerk could respond to him direct.

213. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

Reports were received from Essex County and Braintree District Councillors on matters relating to Witham.

Councillor Heath, Braintree District, said that a grant had been received from Sports England to upgrade heating and lighting at the Fusion Leisure Centre. The use of solar panels and LED lighting would reduce costs by up to 80% and provide an income in due course. He added that the Chairman of Braintree District Council had said that it had been a pleasure this past year to work with the Town Mayor.

Councillor Taylor, Braintree District, explained that a soil bund had been created in Manor Road to prevent incursions onto the cemetery. He said that Bellway had submitted plans for the turning point and bus gate on Rivenhall Park development. He was pleased to advise that planning consent had recently been given for the 3G pitches in Witham. He congratulated Councillor Heath on being re-elected as Chairman of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee. He said that he had been elected as lead member for Leisure Services and Environmental Health.

Councillor Playle, Essex County, said that the new member led scheme means that every six weeks he will have a crew undertake necessary footpath and roadway repairs. Members should advise him of faults but because he represents a large ward he does group requested repairs together. He said that Avenue Road would be closed overnight for resurfacing. The Local Highways Panel had agreed road safety improvements for Conrad Road along with no HGV signage for Braintree Road. He referred to the National Grid event on 14th May 2024 at the

Public Hall. He said that the improvements to the town centre were still awaiting licences from Essex County Council. Members commented about blocked drains near the railway station and street lights in Chipping Hill that were not working.

RESOLVED That the updates be received and noted.

214. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Details of the Town Mayor's engagements attended for period 26th March to 23rd April 2024 were received.

The Town Mayor explained that the Charity Cricket match on Sunday had been rained off. She said that Calendar Girls had been a brilliant show.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

215. RIDE LONDON

Chris Davey from Ride London was welcomed to the Meeting.

Chris Davey explained that he was the Ride London engagement officer and worked in conjunction with Essex County Council. He had brought leaflets and contact details about the event which would take place over three days. The impact on Witham would be on Saturday 25th when 150 elite women cyclists would be riding in a figure of eight starting in Maldon, passing three times through Witham. There would be a rolling road closure and the route had been changed to avoid the town centre and the railway station as there would be replacement buses that day. He detailed the history of the event which was a legacy from the 2012 London Olympics raising £6m over the years. He spoke of the impact on residents and that bespoke routes for healthcare workers had been arranged and blue light services would have priority. The cyclists would be escorted by police and support teams; and roads would be closed for approximately 25 minutes, three times to allow for the route to be checked both before and after the cyclists. There would be stewards along the course and at cross roads. He would be able to provide maps and expected times for the cyclists both as leaflets and as PDFs for the Town Council website.

In answer to a question he was aware of the state of Essex roads and crews have been out surveying and defects would be fixed as a priority before the event. He said that it was important that residents were aware and prior notice signs would be erected and social media used. He said that there was a great schools' programme with funding available through Active Essex to encourage cycling.

The Town Mayor thanked Mr Davey for his presentation.

216. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk explained that she had nothing further to report.

217. COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) **Planning and Transport Committee held 2nd and 15th April 2024**
Minutes 244 to 265 (inclusive).

Councillor P. Barlow, Chairman of the Planning and Transport Committee, gave a report of the Meetings en bloc.

RESOLVED That the Report of the Planning and Transport Committee be received.

(b) **Environment Committee held 15th April 2024**
Minutes 37 to 50 (inclusive).

Councillor Ager, Chairman of the Environment Committee, gave a report of the Meeting en bloc.

RESOLVED That the Report of the Environment Committee be received.

Councillor J.C. Coleman left the Council Chamber

218. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED That under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A (S3) and S(5) of the Local Government Act 1972.

219. LEGAL TRANSACTION

A report was received.

Whilst this matter was discussed Councillor J.C. Coleman returned to the Council Chamber.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

220. CHANGING PLACES TOILET

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

221. LAND TRANSFER

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

There being no further business the Town Mayor closed the Meeting at 9.15 p.m.

Councillor S. Ager
Town Mayor

NS/GK/1.5.2024