



Town Hall | 61 Newland Street | Witham | CM8 2FE
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MINUTES

WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Date: **Monday, 30th September 2024**

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

Present: Councillors:

L.	Barlow	(Town Mayor)
P.	Heath	(Deputy Town Mayor)
E.	Adelaja	
P.	Barlow	
J.C.	Coleman	
J.M.	Coleman	
B.	Fleet	
L.	Headley	
J.	Martin	
R.	Playle	
J.	Robertson	
B.	Taylor	
E.	Williams	
N.	Smith	(Town Clerk)
H.	Andrews	(Deputy Town Clerk)
G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

96. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ramage and Sloma. Councillor Hewitt was absent.

RESOLVED That the apologies be received and approved.

97. **MINUTES**

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

98. **INTERESTS**

No interests were declared at the time but later in the Meeting at Minute 109 – Bellfields, Councillor Playle declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of Essex County Council which owned the Bellfields site and he explained that he would refrain from voting.

99. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the press or public present.

100. ESSEX COUNTY AND BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL UPDATE

Essex County Councillor Playle said that new bus shelters were being installed around the town. The information regarding the request for a shelter by the old police station had been lost so a new request was required. He said that the Conrad Road parking scheme and the new pedestrian crossing in Rickstones Road would soon be out for consultation with the parking restrictions in place by March 2025 and the crossing installed in the next financial year.

Braintree District Councillor Taylor explained that the Cabinet Member had requested an urgent meeting with Eastlight regarding its poor performance. He mentioned the new revised Local Plan timetable with the Issues and Options Consultation planned for January/February 2025. He reported that Councillor Ethan Williams had raised safety and security concerns regarding the incursions onto the Rickstones playing fields and the District Council would enhance security; and that complaints had been made about the poor quality of service at the Leisure Centre which would be investigated.

Braintree District Councillor Heath said that the Terms of Reference for the North Essex Parking Partnership had now been approved and evidence was being gathered prior to NEPP officers being called to the Scrutiny Meeting in February.

Braintree District Councillor Martin said that the BDC was reviewing its Local Plan and stressed the importance of a Neighbourhood Plan to ensure new housing was put where it was required.

Members commented on the problems with Eastlight and that residents were being ignored.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

101. TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS

Details of the Town Mayor's engagements attended for period 28th August to 24th September 2024 were received.

She spoke about the 100th anniversary of the Hockey Club and that she had the opportunity to play a game. She said that the Skateboard Park would be officially opened on Saturday and that all Members would be welcome to attend.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

102. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk's report on matters arising was received.

In answer to a question, the Town Clerk explained that the figures for footfall at the Street Festival had been produced by The Grove shopping centre. She asked Members to assist at the Halloween Trail on Saturday, 26th October 2024.

Members spoke about the Street Festival and considered that there were more people in the town than in the past few years. The suggestion was made that businesses could be asked

whether takings were up on a normal Saturday and if they would contribute towards the costs of the festival. Comment was made that parents had given positive feedback.

The Town Mayor formally thanked Town Council staff, volunteers and Members who had helped to make the festival a success.

The Town Clerk would continue her report in private session.

RESOLVED That the information be received and noted.

103. DISPENSATION

A report was received and Members asked to consider granting leave of absence for Councillors Hewitt and Sloma.

Members were conscious that Councillor Sloma had been unwell for a time and the Town Clerk gave the assurance that the leave of absence could be extended if necessary. In answer to a question in relation to Members' Grants, she explained that if the money was not used then it could go into the Community Grant Scheme.

RESOLVED That leave of absence be granted to Councillors Hewitt and Sloma.

104. SCRUTINY PANEL

A report from the Scrutiny Panel, which met on 5th September 2024, was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

105. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- (a) **Planning and Transport Committee held 2nd and 16th September 2024**
Minutes 91 to 120 (inclusive)

Councillor P. Barlow, Chairman of the Planning and Transport Committee, gave his Report en bloc.

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

- (b) **Policy and Resources Committee held 16th September 2024**
Minutes 50 to 58 (inclusive)

Councillor P. Barlow, Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, gave his Report en bloc.

RESOLVED That the Report be received.

106. 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) of the Local Government Act 1972.

107. COMMITTEE REPORT – CONTINUED

Policy and Resources Committee held 16th September 2024

Minute 59.

Councillor P. Barlow continued his Report.

RESOLVED That the Report of the Policy and Resources Committee be received.

108. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT – CONTINUED

A report was received.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

109. BELLFIELDS

A report was received.

Councillor Playle declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of Essex County Council which owned the Bellfields site.

RESOLVED That the report be received and noted.

110. 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 8.45 p.m.

Councillor L. Barlow
Town Mayor
NS/GK/3.10.2024