

## Council Meeting

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held in The Chamber, Pelham House, St Andrew's Lane, Lewes on Tuesday, 4 December 2007 at 2.30pm.**

### Present:

Councillor M P Chartier (Chair)  
Councillors R E Allen, P L Bennett, C P Bishop, C A Bowers, S T Bratchie, C J Butler, E N Collicot, M A Cutress, J F Daly, S B Davy, A C De Vecchi, I Eiloart, J H Freeman, P Gander, P F Gardiner, B W Groves, L M Hallett, J M Harrison-Hicks, T M Hawthorne, P A Howson, A T Jones, C S Lambert, J N MacCleary, R Main, R Maskell, D H Mitchell, I A Nicholson, C R O'Keeffe, R Robertson, D O Rogers OBE, E E J Russell, S Saunders, J Sheppard, C Sugarman and I J White.

### Apologies Received:

Councillors D M Gray, K D Mayers, J V S Page, R Sinclair and R L Worthington.

## Minutes

### 140 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 26 September 2007 and the Minutes of the Trustees of the Mountfield Pleasure Ground Trust, Lewes, and the Stanley Turner Recreation Ground, Lewes dated 26 September 2007, were approved as correct records and signed by the Chair.

### 141 Declarations of Interest

Councillor A C De Vecchi declared her non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 12(a) (Notice of Motion).

Councillor R Main declared his non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 12(b) (Notice of Motion).

### Action

**142 To Receive any Announcements From the Chair of the Council, Leader of the Council, Members of the Cabinet or the Chief Executive****(i) Councillor De Vecchi**

The Council welcomed Councillor De Vecchi to the meeting following the injuries she had sustained during a recent fall.

**(ii) Chair of the Council's Engagements**

The Council received the list of the Chair of the Council's engagements carried out since the Meeting of the Council held on 26 September 2007.

**(iii) Presentation of Award**

The Chair explained that the Council, and its contractor, Wyevale Landscapes Limited, had achieved the Principal Award, first place in category, in the annual British Association of Landscape Industries Awards 2007, within the category Grounds Maintenance of Public Grounds (Constant Public Access). The award was in respect of Southover Grange Gardens, Lewes.

The category had received the highest number of entrants and the award had been made against formidable competition from the likes of Liverpool, Blackpool and Chester Councils which also reached the final grouping.

Wyevale had made the entry and recently invited the Parks Manager, Andy Frost, and the Parks Technical Assistant, Bill Gandey, to the national awards ceremony.

The Chair, on behalf of the Council, congratulated Mr Frost, Mr Gandey and Mr Garry May, Manager of Wyevale Landscapes Limited, on their success which was in recognition of exceptional work that was acknowledged at national level, and presented Mr Frost and Mr May with the award on behalf of their teams.

**143 Question From a Member of the Public**

A question was asked by a member of the public on the following subject, a copy of which was circulated to all councillors at the meeting and made available to the public attending the meeting:

**Questioner**

Ms Jan Marshall

**Question Concerning**

Ways in which the Council can help the Post Office to consider the impact which the proposed Post Office closure programme will have on local economies.

**144 Written Questions From Councillors**

Councillor O’Keeffe asked a question of the Leader of the Council, Councillor De Vecchi, relating to the closure of Thebes Annexe, Lewes House, Lewes, as an art gallery, an oral reply to which was given at the meeting by Councillor De Vecchi.

Councillor Nicholson asked some questions of the Leader of the Council, Councillor De Vecchi, relating to the lack of publicity in respect of the District in France and on-board cross-channel ferries between Newhaven and Dieppe, oral replies to which were given at the meeting by Councillor De Vecchi.

**145 Ward Issues**

Ward issues were raised by Councillors on the following subjects:

<u>Councillor/Ward</u>	<u>Ward Issue Concerning</u>
Councillor Davy – Chailey and Wivelsfield Ward.	Support for the Bluebell Railway which was one of the largest visitor attractions in the area and which had its principal station located within the District.
Councillor Davy – Chailey and Wivelsfield Ward.	The proposed closure of North Chailey Post Office.
Councillor Nicholson – Seaford East Ward.	Proposals relating to the Environment Agency’s consultation in respect of the Draft Flood Risk Management Strategy for the Cuckmere Estuary and the possible flooding of the A259 road at Exceat.
Councillor Groves – Seaford West Ward	Proposals to close several Mini-Recycling Centres in Seaford.
Councillor Lambert – Seaford Central Ward.	Proposals to suspend the provision of education for 6 <sup>th</sup> Form students at Seaford Head Community College, Seaford, due to a reduction in the level of intake of such students.
Councillor Robertson – Newhaven Valley Ward.	Whether or not the closed circuit television surveillance system was operating in Newhaven Town Centre on Friday, 30 November 2007.

**146 Urgent Decisions Taken by the Cabinet**

In accordance with Scrutiny Procedure Rule 17, the Committee Officer reported details of some urgent decisions that had been taken by the

Cabinet at its meeting on 21 November 2007, which were not subject to the call-in procedure, together with the reasons for such urgency, as follows:

Cabinet 21 November 2007

- (a) The Cabinet had agreed that Resolutions 125.4 and 125.5 of its meeting held on 21 November 2007 relating to the Finance Update were urgent in order that the necessary work relating to the implementation of the concessionary travel bus passes scheme from 1 April 2008, could begin, and to enable the Director of Finance and Community Services to respond to the Department of Transport's consultation and to voice the Council's strong conviction that the Government has not fully funded its proposals relating to the operation of the scheme; and
- (b) Resolution 129.2, also of its meeting held on 21 November 2007, relating to the Proposed South Downs National Park Re-opening of Public Inquiry, was urgent in order that advice could be sought from legal Counsel at the earliest opportunity, prior to the forthcoming pre-inquiry meeting in mid-December 2007, in respect of proposed deletions from the National Park.

Resolved:

That details of the urgent decisions that had been taken by the Cabinet at its meeting on 21 November 2007 be received and noted.

**147 Recommendations From the Cabinet Held on 17 October 2007 and 21 November 2007**

Councillor Chartier moved, and Councillor Saunders seconded, the motion that the recommendations of the Cabinet held on 17 October 2007 and 21 November 2007 contained in Minutes 110 and 132 relating to:

- Abandoned Trolleys - Adoption of Enforcement Powers; and
- Meetings Timetable 2008/2009,

be received and adopted.

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

**147.1** Accordingly.

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**148 Recommendation from Licensing Committee**

The Vice-Chair of the Licensing Committee, Councillor Bennett moved, and Councillor Main seconded, the motion that the recommendation of the Licensing Committee held on 9 October 2007 contained in Minute 13 relating to a Review of Lewes District Council Statement of Licensing Policy, be received and adopted.

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

**148.1** Accordingly.

DPES

**149 Notices of Motion**

- (a) The Chair of the Council reported that a Notice of Motion had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13 by Councillor Jones relating to proposals for a referendum in respect of the EU Reform Treaty which was also known as the Lisbon Treaty.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13, Councillor Jones moved, and Councillor Nicholson seconded, the Notice of Motion as follows:

“The EU Reform Treaty (also known as the Lisbon Treaty) will affect UK citizens including those within Lewes District.

The District Council believes the government should hold a referendum of the people before seeking to ratify the Treaty.

The District Council therefore resolves to write to the Prime Minister demanding that a referendum be held”.

Councillor MacCleary moved, and Councillor Rogers seconded, an amendment as follows:

“The European Union affects the lives of all UK citizens including those within Lewes District.

The District Council believes the government should hold a referendum of the people on Britain’s continued membership of the EU.

The District Council would like to see an honest debate on the European Union followed by a real choice for the British people. That means a referendum on Britain’s membership of the EU.

The District Council therefore resolves to write to the Prime Minister demanding that a referendum be held to ask the British people the big question - whether to remain in the European Union or not.”

The amendment was put to the meeting, Declared Carried.

The substantive motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

**149.1** Accordingly.

*(Note: Councillor De Vecchi declared her non-prejudicial interest in this item as she held dual British/Italian nationality and, therefore, took part in the consideration, discussion and voting thereon.)*

(b) The Chair of the Council reported that a Notice of Motion had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13 by Councillors De Vecchi and Freeman relating to the Post Office closure programme.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13, Councillor De Vecchi moved, and Councillor Freeman seconded, the Notice of Motion as follows:

"This Council regrets the loss of post offices between 1999 and 2005 in the Lewes District area and notes with concern the announcement by the Government on 14th December 2006 of Ministers' plans to close 2500 Post Office branches across the UK, which includes branches in Chailey, Lewes, Newhaven and Seaford.

This Council further notes the social importance of Post Offices to the well being of both communities and individuals within Lewes District.

This Council believes that the recently announced closure programme is unnecessary and calls on the Government to:

- 1 end the branch closure programme;
- 2 remove the Royal Mail restrictions on the Post Office to open up further business opportunities for the network;
- 3 stop removing Government business from Post Offices;
- 4 carry out a review of which additional Government functions could be carried out through Post Offices; and
- 5 invest in the Post Office network.

This Council welcomes the decision of the Government to withdraw its previous proposals to scrap completely the Post Office Card Account (POCA) but calls on Ministers to ensure that any replacement POCA should be open freely to all pensioners and benefit recipients who want one. Therefore, the Council calls on the Government to avoid putting

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pressure on current and future POCA users to switch to having benefits and pensions paid directly into bank accounts."

Councillor White moved, and Councillor Groves seconded, an amendment as follows:

"That the words 'The Council authorises the three members of the Cabinet who have been appointed to serve on the Post Office Closure Programme Sub-Committee, to seek a meeting with Post Office officials for further consultation and information before the Council responds to the consultation which is currently being undertaken by the Post Office in respect of the proposed closure programme.' be added after the words '...to switch to having benefits and pensions paid directly into bank accounts.'"

The amendment was put to the meeting, Declared Carried.

The substantive motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

**149.2** Accordingly.

*(Note: Councillor Main declared his non-prejudicial interest in this item as he lived close to one of the Post Offices which, it was proposed, would close under the Post Office closure programme and, therefore, took part in the consideration, discussion and voting thereon.)*

- (c) The Chair of the Council reported that a Notice of Motion had been submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13 by Councillors Collict and Freeman relating to the control of tuberculosis in cattle.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13, Councillor Collict moved, and Councillor Freeman seconded, the Notice of Motion as follows:

"The Council accepts the conclusions of the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB that a large scale cull of badgers cannot meaningfully contribute to the future control of TB in cattle. The Council therefore condemns any attempt to undertake a cull of badgers in the area of Lewes District."

Councillor O'Keeffe moved, and Councillor Groves seconded, an amendment as follows:

"That the full-stop be deleted after the words '.....area of Lewes District' and that the words 'and urges the Government to seek alternative measures to support our farming community. The evidence indicates the application of heightened control measures and an effective vaccine for badgers would benefit the welfare of badgers and help control of TB in

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cattle.' be added in its place.”

The amendment was put to the meeting, Declared Carried.

Councillor Gardiner moved, and Councillor Butler seconded, an amendment as follows:

“That the Notice of Motion read:

‘The Council is aware of the conclusions of the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB that a large scale cull of badgers cannot meaningfully contribute to the future control of TB in cattle, and is aware of the King Report presented to the Government by its Chief Scientist. In view of the conflict of scientific opinion, the Council believes that any attempt to undertake a cull of badgers in the Lewes District would be premature and urges the Government to seek alternative measures to support our farming community. The evidence indicates the application of heightened control measures and an effective vaccine for badgers would benefit the welfare of badgers and help control of TB in cattle.’”

The amendment was put to the meeting, Declared Carried.

The substantive motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

**149.3** Accordingly.

DPES

**150 The Provision of Housing, Including Affordable Housing, in the District**

Councillor Gardiner moved, and Councillor Chartier seconded, the motion that Report No 203/07, which was considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 17 October 2007 and which was set out beginning on page 28 of the Council Agenda, be discussed by the Council.

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

**150.1** Accordingly.

During the ensuing discussion, several matters were raised by councillors including issues relating to:

the provision of housing, including affordable housing, in rural areas;

(1) the current level of house-building in south east England compared



with the level in the 1950's and 1960's;

- (2) increasing the level of Planning Delivery Grant to the Council;
- (3) Planning Gain Supplement;
- (4) Carbon Emissions Supplement; and
- (5) the provision of flood resilient homes in areas of flood risk.

Following the discussion, Councillor Nicholson moved, and Councillor Davy seconded, the motion that the Council, mindful of its strategic role in the provision of housing in Lewes District and mindful of the importance of housing to Lewes District as a whole, requests the Cabinet, at its meeting on 9 January 2008, to consider the formation of a Housing Working Party to possibly report to the Cabinet.

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

**150.2** Accordingly.

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(to note)

#### **151 Amendments to the Council's Constitution**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor De Vecchi moved, and Councillor Rogers seconded, the motion that the recommendations contained in Report No 232/07 relating to amendments to the Council's Constitution, be approved.

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

**151.1** Accordingly.

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#### **152 Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places**

The Lead Councillor for Staff and Corporate Services, Councillor Freeman moved, and Councillor Robertson seconded, the motion that, following the Council's consideration of the results of the consultation process relating to the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places, the proposed Polling Districts and Polling Places as set out in Tables 1 and 2 of Report No 233/07, be approved.

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

**152.1** Accordingly.

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**153 Appointment of Non-Lead Councillor on Cabinet**

The Leader of the Minority Group, Councillor Nicholson moved, and Councillor Davy seconded, the motion that the recommendation contained in Report No 234/07 relating to the Appointment of a Non-Lead Councillor on Cabinet, be approved.

The motion was put to the meeting, Declared Carried, and it was

Resolved:

**153.1** Accordingly.

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The meeting ended at 6.15pm.

M P Chartier  
Chair