



**Minutes of the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting of
Westgate-on-Sea Town Council held in Town Council Office
78 St Mildreds Road, Westgate on Sea CT8 8RF
on Tuesday 26th June 2024 at 7.00pm**

Present

Cllr Wallin (Chairman)
Cllr Donaldson
Cllr King
Cllr Thomason
Cllr Veck
Cllr Fenning

Ms Nabila Yakub – Interim Town Clerk
4 x Members of the Public

FC/24/01 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Worrow (Vice-Chair), Scott and Mulinya.
No apologies for absence were received from Cllr D'Abbro.

FC/24/02 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest

FC/24/03 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 5th June 2024

The Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 5th June 2024 were presented for approval and **Agreed** as a true record. (Cllr King abstained from voting).

FC/24/04 Chairman's Report and Public Participation

The Chairman welcomed the members of the public to the Extraordinary Full Council meeting which he said had been arranged to agree and sign off the Annual Governance documents prior to being sent off to the Council's nominated auditors.

A member of the public questioned the status of two members of the public present who had been referred to as 'observers'. Cllr Donaldson responded that two members from Birchington Parish Council had been requested to assist the Interim Town Clerk with the preparation of the submission of governance documents to the Auditors. Whilst they were observing the proceedings, he said this was a public meeting and therefore anyone could attend as members of the public.

FC/24/05 Finance-Annual Governance

The Chairman referred to the pack of governance documents that had been circulated.

FC/24/06 To receive and note the recommendations in the Annual Internal Audit Report

The Interim Clerk asked if members had received and noted the recommendations in the Annual Audit Report – **Members agreed**

FC/24/07 To consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement (Section1) for the year ended 31.03.24

The Interim Clerk asked if all members had received and read the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1).

A member of the public interjected and said that the full statement needed to be read out.

The Interim Clerk then proceeded to read out the full statement.

A member of the public interjected and said that each paragraph on the statement had already been ticked which was pre-determination.

Cllr King called a point of order and said that members of the public were only allowed 3 minutes to speak at the beginning of the meeting, and they should not interfere during the course of the meeting and should remain quiet. The Chair agreed and said that members of the public must remain quiet or would be removed from the meeting.

The Interim Clerk continued to read out the statement. She then asked for members to approve the statement – **Approved** (Cllr King abstained from voting).

The statement was then signed by the Chair and the Interim Clerk.

FC/24/08 To consider and approve the Accounting Statements (Section 2) for the year ended 31.03.24

The Interim Clerk sought approval for the Accounting Statements (Section 2) – **Approved** (Cllr King abstained from voting).

The Chair signed the document.

FC/24/09 To receive and approve the year end bank reconciliation

The Interim Clerk sought approval for the year end bank reconciliation – **Approved** (Cllr King abstained from voting).

FC/24/10 To note the arrangements for the Exercise of Public Rights

The Chair said that members of the public could make an appointment to look through the Council's accounts for a period of up to 30 working days which must include the first two weeks of July 2024. Therefore, the period for the Exercise of Public Rights would be from 1 July 2024 to the 9th August 2024 inclusive – **Noted**

FC/24/11 Audit Recommendations

The Chair said that the Council needed to agree a strategy to ensure that the Audit recommendations were addressed. He suggested that a working group was set up which would report into a newly formed Finance Committee. The Working Group should submit their first initial report for the next Full Council meeting. **Agreed** (Councillor Veck abstained from voting)

Cllr Donaldson said that to put this into context there had been some issues with the Interim Clerk's predecessor who had not undertaken the full role of the job. He said following the Clerk's departure,

the Council had managed to have the internal audit undertaken but had an incomplete set of books. He had, however, been able to provide the internal auditor with other entries relating to bank statements. The internal auditor was then able to balance the books from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. He said due to staffing issues there had also been no VAT returns since September 2023. He said this was about income as VAT was claimed and refunded to the Council but it should be shown in the income account. He said there had not been any bookkeeping undertaken since 1 April 2024. The Rialtas Accounting System that was used insisted that the accounts needed to be brought up to date from October 2023. He added that at present there was not any management accounting i.e. monitoring expenditure and reserves etc. It was therefore important that the current interim Clerk had external assistance to bring the accounts and other systems up to date. The Chair agreed and said it was therefore all the more important to have a finance working group set up to identify all the issues. Cllr King objected to the remarks that Cllr Donaldson made about the previous Clerk. He said the Clerk had 21 years relevant previous experience and the comments made were unsubstantiated.

FC/24/12 Clerk's Correspondence

The Interim Clerk invited Cllr Thomason to provide an update on the Westgate Poverty Alleviation Project. Cllr Thomason said that she had circulated a paper on this project and thanked Cllrs Wallin, Veck and Donaldson for their input. She said there were a number of considerations to be discussed including the availability of food at the offices and the privacy of individuals who would want to be recipients of food. She asked members to comment on the proposals prior to agreeing and signing off the project at a later Full Council meeting. All members present made positive comments and were unanimous in their thanks to Cllr Thomason for the initiative and congratulated her on the work she had so far undertaken on the project.

FC/24/13 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 10th July 2024 at 7pm at the Town Council Offices.

The Chair said that he had initial discussions with the Vice Chair and the Interim Clerk about looking into reducing the number of monthly committee meetings from five to 2 or 3. Final proposals would be circulated to members. Cllr King asked if a vote had been taken on changing the numbers of meetings. The Chair responded that a final proposal had not been agreed but when it was it would be taken to full council. Cllr King said that there was already a calendar of meetings and said that these should be confirmed at the Annual General Meeting. The Chair said that the proposal would be to amend the calendar of meetings.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm

Signed by Interim Town Clerk

Nabila Yakub

Dated: 27th June 2024