

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 2014/04/02 – 145

MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY TOWN COUNCIL MEETING held in the Council Chamber, Claremont House, Lydney on Wednesday 2 April 2014 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs B Berryman (Chairman), J Bevan, D Biddle, R Bonser, J Greenwood, C Harris, V Hobman, C Matthews, W Osborne, B Pearman, A Preest, S Rudge and C Vaughan

Mrs J Smailes – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Miss C Wheeler – Executive Officer (EO)

Cllr Berryman informed all present that no practice fire evacuation had been scheduled for the duration of the meeting. All attendees were then informed of the locations of the nearest fire exits.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received and noted from Cllr Thomas.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Matthews advised that she may need to declare an interest, depending on the discussion.

**EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC & PRESS
CLOSED SESSION**

Standing orders suspended in order that the council may continue in “closed session” under the provisions of The Public (Admission to Meetings Act 1960) as the business to be discussed is considered to be of a confidential nature

3. **MEMBERS CONDUCT/STAFFING**

The following is a statement which was read out by Cllr Berryman:

“Standing Orders have been suspended and we are now in closed session, I therefore expect the content of this meeting to remain confidential. I have invited the CEO, Jayne Smailes, and the EO, Carol Wheeler, to this meeting.

As closed session minutes are publicly available, in line with good practice, only the minutes taken during this session will be my opening statement and resolution voted upon via recorded vote by the Council at the end of the debate.

Where Councillors, Clerk and Chairman work together as a team they combine knowledge and skills to deliver real benefits to the community they serve. Good working relationships, mutual respect and an understanding of their different roles are vital.

Conflict between key players, especially in front of press or public, can damage the Council.

I have convened this extra ordinary meeting today in order to try and re-instil a sense of duty, responsibility and pride into this Council before it is too late.

It is apparent that there are councillors who do not understand the role of the Officers within the Council. The CEO, for example, is employed to advise the Council and Trusts of their corporate responsibilities. Whether the Councillor or Council act on this advice is irrelevant as they can vote as they think fit, but the CEO should not be prevented from providing this advice.

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I am disappointed with the manner in which Members address the Council Officers. All advice given is backed up by the required legislation and the actions taken by the Officers of this Council are with prior minuted approval or Delegated Powers. Advice has also been taken on Council actions in respect to recent events from Hedleys Solicitors.

If a vote takes place all Councillors should accept the result, even if it is not what they wanted. Things should not be brought back to the table by means of trying to amend minutes which should only be checked for accuracy.

I will not tolerate aggressive behaviour against staff or Councillors during this debate. I should warn you that if the conduct of Councillors causes the departure of members of staff it would make the previous episode concerning the pension of a former employee seem like a drop in the ocean. If this were to happen it would have to be explained to the electorate that a substantial increase in rates would have to be implemented to cover such cost. Be honest and bring your complaints in a civilised manner to the table in order that they may be discussed/resolved.

I will now ask the EO to stop minuting in order that we can all debate our concerns confidentially and put things back on a firm footing which make us best placed to serve our community”.

Resolution by Cllr Berryman: To move forward from this evening’s debate in a positive manner. Members will be expected to treat all employees with the respect that their roles deserve, mutual respect being key. As of this evening, if this is not the case, Standards Board complaints will be lodged against individuals citing previous meeting minutes. This Council will also further seek to protect its employees and Councillors against destructive actions and comments, whether by that of a Councillor, former Councillor or member of the public, by seeking external independent legal advice from Hedleys Solicitors, the cost of which will be covered by this Council and/or the Town Council’s insurance proviso. If any Councillor has an issue with a member of Lydney Town Council’s staff then it is to be reported confidentially via the correct manner outlined in the Town Councils procedures, which is either to the Mayor or Personnel Committee Chairman, it will then be investigated and dealt with as deemed appropriate.

A recorded vote was taken, the results as follows:

<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>	<u>Abstentions</u>
Cllr Berryman		
Cllr Bevan		
Cllr Biddle		
Cllr Bonser		
Cllr Greenwood		
Cllr Harris		
Cllr Hobman		
Cllr Matthews		
Cllr Osborne		
Cllr Pearman		
Cllr Preest		
Cllr Rudge		
Cllr Vaughan		

Meeting closed at 8.29 pm

Chairman

Date 15/4/2014