

Date of Publication of Decision List: 5 May 2021

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**COUNCIL – 29 APRIL 2021 – DECISION LIST**



EAST  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman delivered a tribute and a minute's silence was held as a mark of respect following the passing of HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh

Agenda Item No.	Report Ref.	Item	Issue	Decision	Action by
1.	-	Public Question Time	To answer questions from members of the public.	No public questions had been received.	-
2.	-	Election of Chairman 2021/22	To elect a Chairman of the Council for the 2021/22 municipal year.	It was resolved:  That Cllr Alan Sharp be elected as Chairman of East Cambridgeshire District Council for the municipal year 2021/22.	-
3.	-	Vote of thanks to outgoing Chairman	To thank the outgoing Chairman and present the Past Chairman's medallion and scroll.	Cllr Lis Every was thanked for her two years of service as Chairman of the Council, and received a Past Chairman's medallion and scroll.	-
4.	-	Apologies for Absence	To receive apologies for absence from Members.	Apologies had been received from Cllrs Victoria Charlesworth and Alison Whelan.	-
5.	-	Declarations of Interest	To receive declarations of interests from Members in respect of any items on the Agenda in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.	A Declaration of Interest was made by Cllrs Anna Bailey and Lisa Stubbs as follows:  Agenda Items 18 & 19: Loan Facility to East Cambs Community Land Trust – Prejudicial Interests as Trustees of ECCLT, would	-

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				exercise their public speaking right and then leave the meeting for these items.	
6.	-	Minutes – 23 February 2021	To receive the Minutes of the last Council meeting.	It was resolved: That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 February 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.	Democratic Services Manager
7.	-	Election of Vice-Chairman 2021/22	To appoint a Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2021/22 municipal year.	It was resolved: That Cllr Daniel Schumann be appointed as Vice-Chairman of East Cambridgeshire District Council for the municipal year 2021/22.	-
8.	-	Chairman's Announcements	Announcement of items of interest.	The Chairman informed Members that the application to the High Court made by ADSO, LLG and Hertfordshire County Council in relation to virtual meetings had been dismissed. This meant that the legislative provision enabling local authorities to conduct remote meetings would expire on 6 May. A Motion and Agenda Item later in the meeting would consider the implications of this.	-
9.	-	To Receive Petitions	To receive public petitions.	No public petitions had been received.	-

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10.	-	Notice of Motions Under Procedure Rule 10	The following motions were received and considered:  a) <u>Endorsement of the Fenland Flag</u> (text of Motion at end of Decision List)  b) <u>Virtual Council Meetings</u> (text of Motion at end of Decision List)	Motion carried.  Motion lost.	-
11.	-	To answer Questions from Members	To receive questions from Members of Council.	Four Questions from Members were received and responses given as detailed at the end of the Decision List.	-
12.	W1	Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, Group Leaders and Deputy Group Leaders	To receive details of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council; Political Groups; and Group Leaders and Deputies for the 2021/22 municipal year.	It was resolved:  That the details of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council; Political Groups; and Group Leaders and Deputies for the forthcoming municipal year, as shown in paragraph 3.1 of the report, be noted.	Democratic Services Manager
13.	W2	Political Proportionality	To receive details of the political balance of the Council and the implications for the allocation of seats on Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member Bodies.	It was resolved:  That the details of the political balance of the Council, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted and the allocation of seats on Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member Bodies, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, be approved.	Democratic Services Manager

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14.	W3	Membership of Committees and Sub-Committees (including substitutes) and other Member Bodies 2021/22	To consider the appointment of Members and substitutes to Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member Bodies for 2021/22.	It was resolved:  That the membership of Committees, Sub-Committees and other Member Bodies, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.	Democratic Services Manager
15.	-	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority  a) Appointments to the Combined Authority  b) Update report	a) To consider the appointments to be made to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority for the municipal year 2021/22.  b) To consider reports on the activities of the Combined Authority from the Council's appointees.	It was resolved:  a) That the Chief Executive be authorised to appoint the Leader of Council to act as the Council's appointee to the Combined Authority and the Deputy Leader to act as the substitute member, and to make appointments to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee, in consultation with the Political Group Leaders, in accordance with the political balance calculations to be provided by the Combined Authority.  b) That the reports on the activities of the Combined Authority from the Council's appointees be noted.	Chief Executive / Democratic Services Manager

16.	W4	The future of remote meetings	To consider the future of remote meetings for East Cambridgeshire District Council and its Committees.	<p>It was resolved:</p> <p>i) That the update by the Chief Executive on the High Court Proceedings in relation to remote meetings be noted.</p> <p>ii) That Option 1, as detailed in paragraph 4.2 of the report, be implemented for Council and all Committees.</p> <p>iii) That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make necessary amendments to the Constitution to implement the Council's resolution.</p> <p>iv) That the arrangements be reviewed by September 2021, or earlier on the advice of the Monitoring Officer.</p>	Chief Executive / Monitoring Officer / Democratic Services Manager
17.	W5	Action taken by the Chief Executive on the Grounds of Urgency – Anglia Revenue Partnerships	To note the action taken by the Chief Executive on the grounds of urgency.	<p>It was resolved:</p> <p>That the action taken by the Chief Executive on the grounds of urgency relating to Anglia Revenue Partnerships, as detailed in the report, be noted.</p>	-
18 & 19.	W6	Loan facility to East Cambs Community Land Trust (ECCLT)	To consider a loan to East Cambs Community Land Trust from the District Council.	<p>It was resolved:</p> <p>i) that the loan of £390,000 based on the draft heads of terms detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.</p> <p>ii) that the Section 151 Officer be authorised to execute the loan agreement in accordance with the above resolution and Appendix 1 of the report.</p>	Finance Manager & Section 151 Officer

## 10. NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 10

### a) Endorsement of the Fenland Flag

Inspired by the success of the Black Country flag, adopted in 2012, and aware of the strong sense of identity in the people of the Fens, East Cambridgeshire resident and vexillographer Mr James Bowman embarked on the design and promotion of a flag for the Fenland area in 2016.

The area that Mr Bowman intends the flag to cover is that defined by Natural England as the National Character of the Fens, stretching north to the fens of Lincolnshire, taking in Fenland and most of East Cambridgeshire to the south.

Mr Bowman writes that the symbol of the Fens is the Fen Tiger and that this designation derives from the sometimes violent opposition of the local population to the fen drainage schemes of the 17th century. 'Fen Tiger' is a well known and well used nickname for someone from the Fens; many associations and businesses in the area use the term, sometimes with logos that feature tigers.



Mr Bowman, aided by a number of people, has run a successful campaign since 2018 to encourage take up and usage of the flag, with the ultimate aim of having the flag officially recognised through inclusion in the registry of the Flag Institute. The flag is promoted online on social media and via direct canvassing for support and has steadily increased in visibility with flags being displayed in a number of locations as well as through the use of supporting materials such as postcards, stickers, keyrings and other items.

Businesses and organisations supporting the flag campaign include those from the travel and tourism sector, food manufacturing, catering, and boating, as well as community clubs, the private boating community, FACT Community Transport, and Ely Tourist Information Centre. There is good evidence of widespread use of the flag and it is included on the British County Flags website.

This Council:

- Thanks and congratulates Mr Bowman and his colleagues on the success to date of the promotion of a flag for Fenland.
- Encourages and endorses the inclusion of the flag in the registry of the Flag Institute.
- Wishes Mr Bowman the best of luck in his efforts to have the flag recognised by the Flag Institute.

## **b) Virtual Council Meetings**

During the period of the COVID-19 restrictions this council has successfully held meetings virtually using Zoom. It was one of the first councils to introduce virtual or online meetings, initially for Planning Committee meetings, before being used for all committee and full council meetings.

The government is not currently planning to extend the temporary power to hold virtual meetings beyond 7 May 2021. This Council notes there have been occasions where face to face meetings would have been preferred, but this council notes the advantages of being able to hold remote meetings.

1. Many of East Cambridgeshire's district councillors live quite a distance from Ely. For some it is an hour round trip to attend a committee meeting. It isn't always easy, particularly during winter time to attend all the meetings because of inclement weather and work commitments. Often there are meetings in the morning, afternoon and evening with some time in-between. That time is not wasted if members are able to attend remotely from home.
2. East Cambridgeshire District Council has declared a climate emergency and by attending meetings via Teams or Zoom we are not driving and using non-renewal resources but are cutting down on our carbon footprint – a priority of this council.
3. Virtual meetings have saved the council money during the past financial year as, for example, travel expenses have been very much reduced. As we are facing a significant shortfall in funding for the foreseeable future any saving is helpful.
4. Councillors wish to attend the East Cambridgeshire District Council committees but are also keen to attend meetings of the Parish Councils within their wards. Some are also County Councillors and inevitably there is often a clash of dates. This means that councillors have to choose which to attend. The result is less engagement with the District Council, or the County Council or the Parish Councils. Having remote meetings means that councillors can more easily attend most of the meetings, to the advantage of all the councils.

5. The engagement of the public and press has also generally increased. The level of reporting about council business has increased as face to face or physical meetings often no longer attracted the local press due to cutbacks in their staff.

6. For some councillors who have work commitments, mobility issues or are carers remote meetings have been easier for them to attend. This may well help to attract a wider age range of potential councillors in future elections.

This Council would like to have the flexibility to hold remote or virtual, and physical or face to face meetings. We recognise that some meetings are better dealt with face to face and we also recognise that a hybrid model could also work successfully.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Write to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) urging that the temporary change to the meeting rules set out in the Local Government Act 1972 be made permanent so that after 7 May we have the flexibility to hold meetings remotely or physically or by using a combination of the two.
2. Write to our two MPs, the County Council and Parish Councils asking for support for this flexible approach to council meetings.
3. If our request is successful to explore the use of technology to develop remote meetings even more in order to attract a wider audience.

## **11. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

### **i) Question to the Chairman of the Finance & Assets Committee from Cllr Mark Inskip:**

“In March, the government announced the awarding of the £56 million Welcome Back Fund to principal councils including East Cambridgeshire. These funds are intended to help boost tourism, improve green spaces and provide more outdoor seating areas, markets and food stall pop-ups – giving people more safer options to reunite with friends and relatives.

Robert Jenrick, the Secretary of state for Housing, Communities and Local Government, in a letter to councillor Sue Baxter, the Chair of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), confirmed that the government is strongly encouraging principal authorities in England to work with parish and town councils to pass on funding from the Welcome Back Fund.

What steps has East Cambridgeshire District Council taken to identify opportunities to pass on funding from the Welcome Back Fund to parish and town councils? What proportion of the funding received by the district council is expected to be passed to parish and town councils?”

**Response from the Chairman of the Finance & Assets Committee, Cllr David Brown:**

“Thank you for your question Cllr Inskip. The Guidance Notes and the supporting Frequently Asked Questions document have only recently been published (16<sup>th</sup> April and 23<sup>rd</sup> April) and indeed Officers attended a webinar only yesterday. Now Officers have all the information available relating to the scheme and its eligibility criteria, they will be able to prepare an action plan that must be submitted to MHCLG before we begin to incur expenditure. In a nutshell, watch this space.”

**ii) Question to the Chairman of the Finance & Assets Committee from Cllr Lorna Dupré:**

“Prior to the full council meeting held on 31 July 2020, a total of £71,487 was spent on the Mepal Crematorium project. Following that meeting and through to February of this year an additional £91,451 had been spent, bringing the total expenditure on the project to £162,938. I understand that further expenditure on the project has taken place since February.

Can the Chairman of the Finance & Assets Committee confirm the total expenditure to date on the Mepal Crematorium Project, i.e. the total of the £71,487 spent before 31 July 2020 and all subsequent expenditure to date?

Further, can the Chairman of the Finance & Assets Committee confirm the forecast additional expenditure expected to be needed before the work to submit the planning application for the Mepal Crematorium project can be completed?”

**Response from the Chairman of the Finance & Assets Committee, Cllr David Brown:**

“Thank you for your question Cllr Dupré. I can confirm that the total spent on the crematorium project during 2020-21 was £213,535.75. From April 2021 to date there has been additional expenditure of £5,400. Therefore, the total amount spent since April 2020 is £218,935.75.

With regards to your second question I can advise that the forecast of additional expenditure prior to work undertaken for any planning application will be approximately £18,025.”

**iii): Question to Cllr Lisa Stubbs from Cllr Simon Harries:**

“In the 12 months between 29th April 2020 and 29th April 2021, how many meetings of the East Cambs CLT have taken place, and how many of these did you personally attend?”

**Response from Cllr Lisa Stubbs:**

“Thank you Cllr Harries for the question. There have been 12 meetings of the East Cambs CLT for the period stated and I have attended all 12 of those meetings.”

**iv) Question to the Chairman of the Finance & Assets Committee from Cllr John Trapp:**

“The Greater Cambridge Partnership is having an extensive review, with public consultation, of access to Cambridge City from places outside the city. This includes the idea of stopping cars going down Newmarket Road. The overwhelming majority

of the traffic going west into Cambridge along the Newmarket Road is from our district: Bottisham, Woodditton, Burwell, Fordham and Isleham, and both Soham wards will be affected.

What consultative relationship has ECDC had with GCP in this matter?"

**Response from the Chairman of the Finance & Assets Committee, Cllr David Brown:**

"Thank you for your question Cllr Trapp. A draft response to the Greater Cambridge Partnership Cambridge Eastern Access Consultation was circulated to all members for comment by Sally Bonnett on 14th December 2020. The final consultation response, taking into account comments received, was submitted to GCP on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020. In addition to this I represented ECDC, as a substitute member, at the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Transport and Infrastructure Committee meeting on 6th January 2021. I used the ECDC response to inform the consultation response from the CPCA to GCP."