

Minutes of a meeting of the **SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL** held in the Function Room, South Holland Centre, Market Place, Spalding, Lincolnshire, PE11 1SS, on Thursday, 3 March 2022 at 6.30 pm.

PRESENT

P A Redgate (Chairman)
A R Woolf (Vice-Chairman)

B Alcock	A C Cronin	G P Scalese
J R Astill	R Gambba-Jones	S-A Slade
J Avery	R A Gibson	E J Sneath
A C Beal	R Grocock	G J Taylor
F Biggadike	C J Lawton	S C Walsh
H J W Bingham	N H Pepper	D J Wilkinson
C J T H Brewis	G A Porter	C N Worth
P E Coupland	G T D Rudkin	

Apologies for absence were received from or on behalf of Councillors M D Booth, T A Carter, A Casson, M Hasan, J L King, J D McLean, A M Newton, J L Reynolds, M D Seymour, A C Tennant and J Tyrrell

In Attendance: The Chief Executive, the Deputy Chief Executive - Corporate Development (S151), the Assistant Director - Governance (Monitoring Officer), the Assistant Director - Finance, and the Democratic Services Team Leader.

84. **MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 19 January 2022.

DECISION:

That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

85. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.**

There were none.

86. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

The following announcements were made:

The Chairman acknowledged the current situation of the war in Ukraine, and its fight for democracy. It was important to recognise the humanitarian crisis, and the suffering of the Ukrainian people.

The Vice-Chairman echoed the words of the Chairman, and also paid tribute to the many groups across the district that had come together to provide assistance to the Ukrainian people. Within his own ward, Weston Church was now a centre for

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collections and the volunteers were doing a wonderful job, as were others across the district. It was noted that although a lot of clothes were being donated, there was a greater need for items such as food, small medical supplies and hygiene products. More volunteers to help were also required.

The Chairman thanked all those that had attended his Civic Service on Sunday. It had been well attended.

Finally, he reminded members that his Civic Reception was due to be held on 22 April 2022.

87. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY LEADER AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET.

Leader's Announcement

The Leader made the following announcement regarding the situation in the Ukraine:

The current situation as understood by the Government was that around 1 million people had currently been displaced, and the Ukrainian Ambassador had stated at a meeting the day before that this could eventually rise to around 20 million. The intention was to move all women and children out, and that the men would remain behind to fight for their country. It was anticipated that the war would not be over quickly – it was important therefore that the district supported and harnessed the community efforts that were currently underway, and that it then stepped up to keep the momentum going in the future. The bridge point for collections in the South Holland area was currently the Ukrainian Church in Peterborough, from where donations were then sent to Poland. Emily Holmes was the officer currently leading on this work and she was drawing together a briefing note on the current situation which would be sent to all members the next day.

The Leader also advised that Lincolnshire Leaders had all met yesterday and had agreed a position on the situation. He stated that the recent comments made in the House of Commons by Sir Edward Leigh, MP for Gainsborough, on Ukrainian refugees did not reflect the views of Lincolnshire Leaders – a rebuttal statement had immediately been issued stating that his views were not the views of the people of Lincolnshire, that they stood with the people of Ukraine, and that Lincolnshire would take in refugees when the time came. With regard to the situation around refugees in the future, the Government was trying to confirm the number of Ukrainians currently living in the UK – should refugees whose families lived here wish to come to the UK, the impact on the UK would be significant. The Government had also agreed that individuals living in the UK could sponsor people from the Ukraine to come to the UK. It was anticipated that there would be a lot of good will in this regard. However, as with community efforts to provide assistance, there had to be recognition that this situation could last for a long period of time. Finally, the Leader advised that a book of support had been opened in Parliament, and that he had signed it and provided a message of support on behalf of the people of South Holland.

Announcement by Members of the Cabinet

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Councillor Taylor reminded members that a Question without Notice had been raised at the last meeting of the Council regarding celebrations to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and a further update on this was provided.

He advised that celebrations would take place throughout the year. The Communities Team was offering guidance and support to communities across the district, and Parish Councils and community groups were being encouraged to register their activities so that these could be mapped across the district. To date, the following had been registered – tree planting, the lighting of beacons, installation of benches, community picnics, and a 1950s weekend. It was a year-long celebration, rather than just the weekend in June itself. The website would continue to be updated, social media would be utilised and information would be shared with the press and councillors. It was hoped that councillors would be in attendance at some of these events.

88. QUESTIONS ASKED ON NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER 6

There were none.

89. QUESTIONS ASKED WITHOUT NOTICE UNDER STANDING ORDER 7

Prior to asking a question, Councillor Alcock stated that the Independent Group wished it to be noted that it was in agreement with the statements made earlier by the Chairman and the Leader regarding the dreadful situation in the Ukraine.

Question to: Councillor Taylor

Question From: Councillor Alcock

Subject: Spalding Town Centre – outdated advertising and traffic restrictions

Councillor Alcock commented that, whilst recently visiting Spalding town centre, there was outdated signage, advertising the Christmas pantomime – the authority was attempting to encourage people into the town centre and this did not give a good impression. He also commented on the number of cars parked in, and driving through the town centre, despite traffic restrictions – why was this not being enforced, and had plans to pedestrianise the town centre been abandoned.

Councillor Taylor commented that the issue regarding the outdated signage for the pantomime would be dealt with. With regard to traffic flow in the town centre, he advised that this had been a topic for discussion at the last meeting of the Spalding Town Forum, where the local police officer had been in attendance to provide advice, guidance and take questions. The Forum had asked that the Police work in partnership with SHDC and LCC to find a way to enforce the traffic restrictions. In addition, the local paper had undertaken a survey asking people if they wished the restrictions to be enforced, and the majority of people were strongly in favour of this. A further update on this situation would be provided shortly.

Question to: Councillor Casson

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Question From: Councillor Alcock

Subject: Electric vehicle charging points

Councillor Alcock advised that he had recently contacted the Portfolio Holder with regard to the installation of electric vehicle charging points. Installation of these had been promised at sites in Crowland, and other areas within the district. However, this had not yet taken place – why was there such a long delay in undertaking work on a project that the authority had seemed keen to undertake?

Members were advised that Councillor Casson had provided his apologies and was therefore not in attendance at the meeting. It was agreed that a written response would be provided.

Question to: Councillor Coupland

Question From: Councillor Grocock

Subject: Investments in Russian institutions

Councillor Grocock asked whether, in light of the current situation in the Ukraine, the authority had any monies invested in any institutions with links to Russia?

Councillor Coupland confirmed that the Council had no investments with Russian institutions or banks, and never had done, due to them historically having a very low credit rating.

Question to: Councillor Porter

Question From: Councillor Wilkinson

Subject: Outdated signage

Councillor Wilkinson commented that there was signage at Wingland Park, Sutton Bridge naming the Chief Executive (Terry Huggins) as a contact point regarding plots of land. This was very out of date and needed to be removed.

Councillor Porter responded that this would be dealt with.

90. **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The minutes of the following Committees and Panels were noted:

- Planning Committee – 12 January 2022
 - Governance and Audit Committee – 13 January 2022
 - Policy Development Panel – 18 January 2022
 - Joint Performance Monitoring Panel and Policy Development Panel – 27 January 2022
- Planning Committee – 9 February 2022

91. **KEY DECISION PLAN**

Consideration was given to the Key Decision Plan.

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DECISION:

That the Key Decision Plan be noted.

92. **ANNUAL BUDGET REPORT 2022/23, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY, CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND CAPITAL STRATEGY, TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY, ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN AND APPROVAL OF COUNCIL TAX**

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive, Corporate Development (S151) which requested approval of: The General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2022/23 including the use of reserves, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Programme and Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy, MRP Policy and Annual Investment Strategy, Fees and Charges for 2022/23, the Annual Delivery Plan, and approval of Council Tax for recommendation to Full Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation and Partnerships introduced the report and outlined the main details of the Budget:

- Despite the numerous issues that had arisen from the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council had managed very well, and with the help of various Government grants, it had been able to manage its budget well, and a good standard of services had been maintained. The Portfolio Holder thanked all members and officers who had worked hard to achieve this;
- The Portfolio Holder gave special thanks to all the Council's frontline staff who had not been able to work from home during the pandemic, and who had maintained services for residents;
- The Portfolio Holder particularly thanked the Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Development) (S151), and the Leader, who had provided tremendous vision and leadership through the difficult period of the Covid pandemic;
- The Authority had fallen behind on a number of investment projects and initiatives planned for 20/21 and 21/22 however, the challenges raised by the pandemic had had to take priority;
- The serious effects of Covid appeared to be fading away for the new 22/23 financial year, and it was hoped that this would give the Authority the opportunity to accelerate its programme of planned investments into communities, and to catch up on the delays caused by the pandemic;
- The programme planned to spend around £16million this year and into next year in the district;
- £1 million would be spent on assets including the South Holland Centre, Ayscoughfee, the Bus Station, Spalding Cemetery, Moulton Park, public toilets, car parks and the Castle Leisure Centre;
- £3.1 million would be spent on commercialisation, to purchase and develop commercial land, the new waste depot centre, and other property;
- £1.5million would be spent on economic development by building more small commercial units for rental, and to continue the Grants for Growth Scheme to help small businesses to grow;

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- £2.3 million would be spent on private sector housing including disabled facilities and to provide more homes for market rental;
- £3.4 million would be spent on the Council's Decent Homes Improvement Programme, covering around 3,800 Council homes;
- £3.7 million would be spent on affordable housing across the district, for rental and shared ownership;
- £0.5 million would be spent on expanding the existing garden waste collection scheme (purchase of vehicles and bins, and providing new grounds maintenance machinery);
- Approximately £0.5 million would be spent on ICT, to help increase customer self-service and to create efficiencies through all Council services;
- The spending programme would mainly be financed through reserves, grants and cash balances;
- In addition to the capital spend, there would be a continuation of the Town Improvement Schemes, and Pride Teams would continue to keep footpaths and community areas tidy;
- There would be a continued expansion of the Enterprise Zone in Holbeach;
- All current base-line services would be maintained for 22/23
- Based on all the input from a rigorous Budget challenge, the 22/23 General Fund Budget was balanced with an identified efficiency target of £397,000 to be achieved by 31 March 2023;
- The District Council Tax equated to only around 10% of the overall Council Tax bill. Half of this figure went to Internal Drainage Boards;
- There were major service pressures in 22/23 - IDB levies which were increasing by £156,000; general staff pay and pensions and new National Insurance rates at £533,000; £51,000 spend in utility costs; and additional financial support for Environmental Services.
- More savings and efficiencies were expected as a result of the new partnership with Boston Council and East Lindsey District Council;
- The HRA provided management and trade operatives to look after the Council's housing stock, and this had continued during the Covid pandemic;
- A surplus of £1.9 million was forecast which would be retained for future capital spend on existing assets and new Council homes;
- It was the Council's policy to maintain Decent Homes standards and remain the landlord of choice;
- Councillor Lawton was thanked with regard to her work on the HRA and Housing Portfolio;
- With regard to reserves, at 31 March 2023 the General Fund forecast was set to be £8.48million, and the HRA reserves was forecast to be £21.4 million;
- The Portfolio Holder concluded that it was important to get back to some sort of normality, following the Covid pandemic. However, the situation in the Ukraine could affect the Authority and individuals going forward.

The following points were raised:

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- It was noted that it was encouraging to see that PSPS had reduced their contract costs due to transformation plans. The amount of £162,000 was not an insignificant amount, and the continued support for PSPS was proving fruitful.
- The Independent Group thanked officers at all levels of the Council, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation and Partnerships and members generally for their work in producing a successful budget. The Independent Group had provided plenty of input during the budget setting process where there had been several opportunities for challenge. Members asked: a) Would charges be reviewed at some point in the year; and b) Following assurances at the last Council meeting, would the Authority be reviewing provision of leisure facilities.
 - The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation and Partnerships advised that leisure provision was being progressed, and that the Leader was involved in bringing this forward. It would take time, there were a number of avenues to be pursued and cost would clearly be an issue, but work was being undertaken. With regard to Fees and Charges, the only change in the Budget was with regard to Markets and there was no intention to review Fees and Charges any further within the next 12 months.

DECISION:

That Council approves:

- a) The Revenue Estimates for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Spalding Special Expenses for 2022/23 (Appendices A and C);
- b) The use of Reserves detailed at Appendix D;
- c) The Council Tax for a Band A property in 2022/23 be set at £126.42 (£3.30 per annum increase on 2021/22 levels) and Band D £189.63 for 2022/23 (a £4.95 per annum increase on 2021/22 levels);
- d) The Spalding special expenses for a Band A property be set at £16.38 for 2022/23, (previously £16.12 in 2021/22) and Band D £24.57 for 2022/23, (previously £24.18 in 2021/22);
- e) The Medium Term Financial Strategy (at Appendix B);
- f) The Capital Strategy and Capital Programme (Appendices E and F);
- g) The Fees and Charges for 2022/23 (at Appendix G);
- h) The Treasury Management Statement and Strategy, including the Minimum Revenue Provision policy and Investment Strategy (Appendices H and I); and
- i) The South and East Lincolnshire Council's Annual Delivery Plan 2022/23 (Appendix J).

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations (Annual Budget Report 2022/23, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Capital Programme and

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Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Delivery Plan and approval of Council Tax). The vote was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain	Apologies/Absent
Councillor Alcock			Councillor Booth
Councillor Astill			Councillor Carter
Councillor Avery			Councillor Casson
Councillor Beal			Councillor Drury
Councillor Biggadike			Councillor Hasan
Councillor Bingham			Councillor King
Councillor Brewis			Councillor McLean
Councillor Coupland			Councillor Newton
Councillor Cronin			Councillor Reynolds
Councillor Gambba-Jones			Councillor Seymour
Councillor Gibson			Councillor Tennant
Councillor Grocock			Councillor Tyrrell
Councillor Lawton			
Councillor Pepper			
Councillor Porter			
Councillor Redgate			
Councillor Rudkin			
Councillor Scalese			
Councillor Slade			
Councillor Sneath			
Councillor Taylor			
Councillor Walsh			
Councillor Wilkinson			
Councillor Woolf			
Councillor Worth			

93. **COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2022/23**

Consideration was given to the report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Commercialisation and Partnerships and the Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Development (S151) which sought the Council's approval for the setting of the amounts of Council Tax applicable for 2022/23 for each valuation band and in each part of the district.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Strategy and Partnerships introduced the report which set out statutory resolutions that the Council needed to approve in accordance with the Budget as set out at agenda item 10.

DECISION:

- a) That the formal Council Tax resolutions for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix A and summarised at 1.8 of the report (and detailed below) be approved; and

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- b) That the charge to be levied to the Council Taxpayers of Spalding for services provided in their town (Spalding Special Estimates) (£233,130 for 2022/23) be approved. This equates to a Band D equivalent charge of £24.57 (£24.18 for 2021/22), a 1.61% increase.

1.8 Council Tax Resolutions

The required resolutions for the approval of the levels of Council Tax are set out at **Appendix A**. The figures relating to the District Council and the average of the parishes are summarised in the following table:

Resolution Ref	Description	SHDC	Parish Precept (incl Spalding Special)	Total
		£	£	£
3a	Gross expenditure	36,956,544	1,247,945	38,204,489
3b	Gross Income	31,382,750	0	31,382,750
3c		5,573,794	1,247,945	6,821,739
1a	Tax base	29,393	29,393	29,393
3d 3f	Band D Council Tax	189.63	42.46	232.09

Council is recommended to approve the following resolutions:

- 1 It is to be noted that on 16 December 2021 the Council calculated: -
 - (a) the Council Tax Base 2022/23 for the District as **29,393** (item T in the formula in section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended) and;
 - (b) Dwellings in those parts of the district to which a Parish precept relates as shown in **Appendix B**
2. Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2022/23 (excluding Parish precepts and Spalding Special Expenses) is **£5,573,794**
- 3 That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2022/23 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended (the Act): -
 - (a) **£38,204,489** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act;

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- (b) **£31,382,750** being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act;
 - (c) **£6,821,739** being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year (item R in the formula in Section 31a (4) of the Act);
 - (d) **£232.09** being the amount at 3(c) divided by the amount at 1(a) (item T), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts);
 - (e) **£1,247,945** being the aggregate amount of all special items (Including Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act (see **Appendix B**);
 - (f) **£189.63** being the amount at 3(d) less the result given by dividing the amount at (e) by the amount at 1(a) calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its areas to which no special item relates;
 - (g) The figures shown in **Appendix C**, being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3(f) the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the district divided in each case by the amount at 1(b), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate;
 - (h) The figures shown in **Appendix D**, being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3(f) and 3(g) by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.
4. That it be noted that for the year 2022/23 the Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Lincolnshire have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance

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with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Council Tax 2022/23	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
Lincolnshire County Council	954.78	1,113.91	1,273.04	1,432.17	1,750.43	2,068.69	2,386.95	2,864.34
Police & Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire	184.20	214.90	245.60	276.30	337.70	399.10	460.5	552.60

5. That having calculated the aggregate in each case the amounts at 3(h) and 4 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts shown in **Appendix E** as the amount of Council Tax for 2022/23 of the categories of dwellings shown.
6. **Appendix F** provides definitions for the formal Council Tax resolution.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 a recorded vote was taken on each Budget decision. The vote was as follows:

For	Against	Abstain	Apologies/Absent
Councillor Alcock			Councillor Booth
Councillor Astill			Councillor Carter
Councillor Avery			Councillor Casson
Councillor Beal			Councillor Drury
Councillor Biggadike			Councillor Hasan
Councillor Bingham			Councillor King
Councillor Brewis			Councillor McLean
Councillor Coupland			Councillor Newton
Councillor Cronin			Councillor Reynolds
Councillor Gambba-Jones			Councillor Seymour
Councillor Gibson			Councillor Tennant
Councillor Grocock			Councillor Tyrrell
Councillor Lawton			
Councillor Pepper			
Councillor Porter			
Councillor Redgate			
Councillor Rudkin			
Councillor Scalese			
Councillor Slade			
Councillor Sneath			
Councillor Taylor			

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Councillor Walsh			
Councillor Wilkinson			
Councillor Woolf			
Councillor Worth			

94. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate and Development (S151) which sought Council's approval to the way forward regarding the appointment of External Auditors.

The current auditor appointment arrangements covered the period up to and including the audit of the 2022/23 accounts.

Public Sector Audit Appointments Limited ("PSAA") was undertaking a procurement for the next appointing period, covering audits for 2023/24 to 2027/28. All local government bodies needed to make important decisions about their external audit arrangements from 2023/24. They had options to arrange their own procurement and make the appointment themselves or in conjunction with other bodies, or they could join and take advantage of the national collective scheme administered by PSAA.

The following points were raised:

- Members asked if there was an estimate of the difference in cost to the Council for each different option.
 - Officers responded that there was an option to go out to the market, the better value option would be to go through the group procurement process.
- Members commented that whilst the principal should be supported, it was important for the auditor to be aware of the rural nature of the area. It was important to differentiate between urban and rural authorities.

DECISION:

- a) That Public Sector Audit Appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023 be accepted; and

That delegate authority be given to the Section 151 Officer (or deputy in their absence) to communicate the willingness of the council to join the scheme, led by PSAA and to enter into the scheme after a satisfactory examination/negotiation of the proposed terms and conditions is included.

95. PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23

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Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Chief Executive – Corporate Development (S151 Officer) which sought approval of the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23.

Members were advised that the main difference to this year's report was the end of SHDC's partnership with Breckland Council and the start of the new partnership with Boston Council and East Lindsey District Council, and the report reflected this change.

The following points were raised:

- Members asked whether there was any relationship between this policy and the employees of PSPS and those employed through the leisure contract.
 - Officers confirmed that the policy related purely to the Council's arrangements.

DECISION:

That the Pay Policy Statement 2022/23, appended at Appendix A to the report, be approved.

96. NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEES AND OTHER SEATS AND PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION.

There were none.

97. HEALTH SCRUTINY FOR LINCOLNSHIRE REPORT

Consideration was given to the report of Councillor Scalese in respect of Health Scrutiny for Lincolnshire.

DECISION:

That the report be noted.

98. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

(The meeting ended at 7.24 pm)

(End of minutes)