



**Date: Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2022**

**Present:**

James Miller, Melissa Aylott, Jonathan Humphrys, Simon Jones, Rob Cammidge, Sim Spooner and Emma Dodson and Connor Bines

**Apologies for Absence:**

Lee Clarke, Kayleigh Burgess, Nicky Gilbert, Deano Harris-Eckett, Brian Ayling, Terry Fane, Linzi Arkas-Binder, Michael Arkas Binder, Dee Curtis, Kevin Waller and Hayley Evans.

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## Minutes of previous meeting

Jon said that his vote regarding the road was 35.

## Agreed new policies for the 2023 manifesto from previous meeting

1. We will re-introduce permissions to allow barbecues on the beach, but with a set of guidelines that may include all or some of the following: permitted after 6pm; only re-useable BBQs allowed; must be raised above the stones; cold water must be poured over when finished; and disposal on coals in a yellow basket provided when finished.
2. We will not support £10m of tax payer's reserve money going into the seaway development.
3. We believe in the development of Queensway, however, we will stop the continuation of the current Queensway development due to the severe financial instability of the developers. We will then re-start process again.
4. We will re-build or re-furnish the Southend Cricket Pavilion, rather than the Council's current plans to demolish it.

## Election of parliamentary candidates for Southend West and Rochford and Southend East

With a general election approaching Confelicity will need to elect representatives to stand. James and Jon have put their names forward. All members may put themselves forward before the next meeting by emailing James at [confelicityparty@gmail.com](mailto:confelicityparty@gmail.com). The number of applicants will determine the election process.

## Local elections

### Candidate selections

We are delighted to announce that our new member, Sim Spooner, will be standing in the next local elections in Eastwood. It is a ward he knows well as Head Chef and Manager of the Bellhouse.

### Candidate progress

Around 90% of Leigh and 30% of Thorpe wards have received a Confelicity leaflet. 5000 more leaflets have arrived and are ready to distribute as each candidate wishes. Simon and Sim picked up 250. If any candidates wish to deliver some leaflets, email James.

### Election strategy

James is looking to put some adverts in the Echo and Leigh Times in due course, but in reality unless we knock on doors it is likely the party will see only marginal progress in the next election.

A results table of the previous election showed that 779 votes were achieved, representing 1.8% of the votes. Each leaflet, social media share or door knocked, will support an increase in vote share.

### Agreement of the 2023 manifesto.

All points from the 2022 manifesto were agreed to take forward into the 2023 manifesto. These, alongside the policies that have recently been agreed, will be published in the next few weeks. We will continue to debate policies, and will continue to add to the manifesto.

### Manifesto 2023 debate

Are you against taxing older vehicles?

#### Comments:

James: this only punishes people that cannot afford to buy a new car and taxation of this kind is not the route to changing behaviours. Jon - road tax covers this. There are other strategies such as lower emission zone. Simon - not fair to tax people that cannot afford it. But air pollution to be tackled. Sim - no! Melissa - no, and if we do have low emission zones to be different to how other cities do it as is unclear. Connor - no as not fair to more tax.

#### Voting

1. James – 100
2. Jon – 95
3. Simon – 90
4. Sim – 90
5. Melisa – 100
6. Rob – 90
7. Connor – 100

#### Result

100% of members support the opposition to this policy  
95% mean average support for the opposition to this policy

#### Conclusion

This was unanimously voted in and will be written up for on the next meeting. Once agreed, this will form part of the manifesto.

Do you support the city of culture bid?

#### Comments:

James explained that the £2m costs outlined by the portfolio holder who is against moving forward with it, is not the case. It is just a form to fill in, and then if it gets through there is a £40K grant to cover the next stage. The competition is held every four years, and this application is for 2029. If we do not go in for it now, we would have to wait until 2034. The deadline to decide is July, so there is

still time, that despite the Cabinet having made their decision. We have nothing to lose by going in for it, and everything to gain as others who have entered have seen investment and new ideas stem from the process.

Jon needs more information on the costs, but felt it should be continued to be explored.

### **Voting**

1. James - 100
2. Jon - 52
3. Simon - 99
4. Sim - 80
5. Connor - 70
6. Rob - 95
7. James - 90
8. Melissa - Abstained

### **Result**

100% of members support continuing to explore this policy rather than stop it as the Council has done.

83% mean average support for support of this policy

### **Conclusion**

This was unanimously voted in and will be written up for on the next meeting. Once agreed, this will form part of the manifesto.

Do you support reducing council tax? If so where?

### **Comments:**

James said that whilst we should rightly aim for excellent public services, at this point in time trust in how our tax is spent is highly questionable. In his lifetime, hospital waiting times have grown, school class sizes remain at 30 to 35, the police are under-staff, our pavements and roads are in a poor condition, we have an outdated sewage system that pumps raw sewage in the sea half the year, and so on, and this after we are paying the highest tax we ever have. Until we are able to easily access where our tax has been spent where those that are spending it can be accountable to all of us, we should look to trust ourselves more of our own money. This not to say we would keep everything, and not to the detriment of public services, but we need a temporary hold on the waste, corruption, incompetence and self-indulgence we see today. For example, Victoria Shopping Centre was acquired by the council for £10m and then they spent another £2m fixing the roof!

Simon did not agree that council tax should be lowered necessarily but instead change the question to not automatically allowing the increase of council tax without a specific need. Although it is not the case, it may also come across that we do not care about people.

The general consensus was until we are able to dissect the budgets to the penny, it would be difficult to reduce council tax.

## **Voting**

1. James - 85
2. Jon - 25
3. Simon - 35
4. Sim - 49
5. Connor - 60
6. Rob - 65
7. Melissa – 75
8. Emma - Abstained

## **Result**

57% of members supported the reduction of council tax.  
56% mean average support for this policy

## **Conclusion**

Reducing council tax was not unanimously voted in, therefore, it did not pass.

All had agreed that until the budget had been analysed in detail, it would be impossible to make that decision.

[Do you support reducing parking charges?](#)

## **Comments**

Sim initially agreed to the reduction, however, after Rob informed him of the Southend Pass, he was content with that as a solution.

Parking charges should still be reviewed across the city. Simon mentioned about where he lives and how difficult it is to park.

Simon will put forward a potential policy regarding resident parking for the next meeting.

## **Voting**

1. James - 90
2. Jon - 28
3. Sim - 80 (in certain areas)
4. Emma - 80
5. Rob - 20
6. Connor - 85
7. James - 90
8. Simon – 50

## **Result**

71% of members supported the reduction of parking charges.  
59% was the mean average support for this policy.

## Conclusion

Reducing parking charges was not unanimously voted in, therefore, it did not pass.

Do you support indoor/outdoor markets?

## Comments

General consensus was that it was help instigate an entrepreneurial environment and offer a unique shopping experience.

## Voting

1. James - 100
2. Jon - 100
3. Sim - 100
4. Emma - 100
5. Rob - 100
6. Connor - 99
7. Simon – 100

## Result

100% of members supported this policy.

100% was the mean average support for this policy.

## Conclusion

This was unanimously voted in and will be written up for on the next meeting. Once agreed, this will form part of the manifesto.

Do you support a price reduction for local people for The Pier?

## Comments

The general consensus was to gear the reduction to local people. The original question was aimed at all people, but was changed to this. There was a suggestion to link it to the Southend Pass. Some identification would be required of course.

Discussion also went onto what is actually at the end of the Pier. Criticism was launched at the main building, which is essentially just a café – albeit one with a good view!

## Voting

1. James - 90
2. Connor - 90
3. Rob - pass
4. Melissa - 100
5. Sim - 50
6. Simon - 70
7. Jon - 74.33

## **Result**

100% of members supported this policy.  
79% was the mean average support for this policy.

## **Conclusion**

This was unanimously voted in and will be written up for on the next meeting. Once agreed, this will form part of the manifesto.

Do you support the council's new policy jet-ski restrictions?

The decision was taken to wait for Dee to lead the debate on this issue.

Do you support Southend Business Improvement District (BID)?

## **Comments**

In principle, all deemed it a positive idea. There is a nominal cost to the taxpayer in its management.

## **Voting**

1. Connor - 70
2. Rob - 65
3. Sim - 65
4. Melissa - 70
5. Simon - 70
6. Jon - 63
7. James - 60

## **Result**

100% of members supported this policy.  
66% was the mean average support for this policy.

## **Conclusion**

This was unanimously voted in and will be written up for on the next meeting, but it was decided not to put it in the manifesto.

Do you support the introduction of a voluntary community skills-sharing platform?

## **Comment**

This policy would be part of the broader Confelicity ambition to introduce civic pride and duty into the culture of Southend.

This platform, both on an app and website, will allow residents to post the help they require, which can then be answered by Southend residents willing to lend their knowledge and expertise.

For example, a pupil who is struggling in maths but is unable to afford a private tutor, can post the help they need, which would then match their needs to someone who had already entered in the database the skills they have and what they are willing to do.

The idea would need detailed planning and consideration, but in principle, the general consensus was supportive.

This platform could then lead to awards and recognition ceremonies.

### **Voting**

1. Simon - 100
2. Jon - 100
3. James - 100
4. Connor - 90
5. Rob - 95
6. Melissa - 95
7. Sim – 100
8. Emma - 90

### **Result**

100% of members supported this policy.  
97% was the mean average support for this policy.

### **Conclusion**

This was unanimously voted in and will be written up for on the next meeting. Once agreed, this will form part of the manifesto.

[Do you support a cruise ship at the end of the pier?](#)

### **Comment**

This idea was put forward from Terry and it would provide all the amenities that a cruise ship would have without have to build something from scratch.

The general consensus was that the basic premise of having something worthwhile seeing is right and that this would do far more than what is currently down there, a variation of vessels throughout the year may attract people to attend The Pier more often.

Simon commented that it will be more effective if we have some specific ideas for the end of the Pier rather than the current manifesto policy to generally put a working group together to discuss what can be done. He is going to put suggestions forward for the next meeting.

### **Voting**



1. Sim - 49
2. Simon - 60
3. Jon - 49.97
4. James - 49
5. Connor - pass
6. Rob - cruise no 30
7. Melissa - 100
8. Emma - 50

### **Result**

50% of members supported this policy.

55% was the mean average support for this policy.

### **Conclusion**

This policy did not receive unanimous support, therefore, it did not pass.