

# WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 29 November 2006, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillor Evans (Chair); Councillors Ashford, Mrs Begg, Boad, Mrs Bunker, Butler, Caborn, Chander, Coker, Mrs Compton, Crowther, Davis, Ms De-Lara-Bond, Doody, Mrs Edwards, Gifford, Gill, Mrs Goode, Hammon, Harris, Hatfield, Ms Hirsch, Mrs Hodgetts, Holland, Kinson, Kirton, Mrs Knight, Kundi, MacKay, Mrs McFarland, Mrs Mellor, Pratt, Sandhar, Mrs Sawdon, Smith, Tamlin and Vincett.

## 596. PRAYER

A period of reflection was presented by the Chair's Chaplains.

## 597. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Blacklock, Copping, Davies, Mrs Falp, Ms Flanagan, Guest, Shilton and Short.

## 598. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 31 October 2006, were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chair.

## 599. COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (A) The Chair reminded members that a Charity Christmas Concert would be held in the Town Hall on Saturday 9 December 2006, tickets for which were currently available.
- (B) The Chair reported that members of the Council were being invited to a performance of the pantomime at the Royal Spa Centre on Saturday 16 December 2006.
- (C) The Chair reported that on Saturday 3 February 2007, he would be hosting an all day conference at the Royal Spa Centre on climate change. He encouraged as many members of the Council as possible to attend.
- (D) At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Mrs Knight reported on her recent visits to Bo in Sierra Leone which had taken place to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the link of friendship between the District and Bo. Councillor Mrs Knight referred to the contacts which had taken place over the years between the District, County and Royal Leamington Spa Town Councils with the civic authorities in Bo, and she expressed the hope that more practical support could be provided in the future.

## **COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)**

Councillor Mrs Knight had also attended a conference in London of major local government bodies regarding the international role of local councils.

The Chair then thanked Councillor Mrs Knight, on behalf of the Council, for her interesting and informative report.

### **600. QUESTION PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 7 (2)**

(A) From Councillor M Coker to Councillor B Crowther, Leader of the Executive:-

“Would the Leader of the Council please inform me as to the number of years outstanding on the Council’s lease of the Spencer Street Church and the current rental and as to how much has been expended on rent council tax and maintenance and the amount received over the last four years.”

Councillor Crowther replied:-

“The lease on the basement and on the main floor of the church was acquired in 2000 to enable the building to become part of the proposed Cultural Quarter and also to prevent it from being used for an incompatible use. The lease was required since without it the Council would not have been eligible to apply for Arts Lottery Funding. The lease lasts until 2031 and rent reviews are scheduled every five years.

The costs incurred since the Council acquired the lease are as follows:

Rent (as from 11-5-00 to 31-12-06) - £200,323 (This includes an over payment of £3-5k which is being investigated.)

Business rates £2,316

Utilities costs £10,092

Building maintenance £38,103

The Church is a listed building and within a Conservation Area so the investment in its maintenance is not only to meet the lease costs but is a general contribution to the amenity of this historic part of Leamington.

The building has been used in part by Arts Companies – Motion House and Heartbreak Productions. They are now tenants in the Cultural Quarter facility recently opened to the rear of the Church. The two companies have contributed between them £11,845 in capital and maintenance works to the Church.

Following the decision not to award funding to the Church element of the Cultural Quarter proposal in 2004, other uses have been sought. This has included a Spa company. More recently though there is the prospect of the

## **COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)**

Church forming part of a large regeneration scheme, via funding from Advantage West Midlands the Regional Development Agency. The bid, for over £5m, would involve:

- altering and extending the Church to become a theatre to house the Loft Theatre;
- the redevelopment of the Loft Theatre building and adjoining old Dole Office for a mixed use scheme involving more commercial/space for companies;
- refurbishment to railway arches for low cost business accommodation;
- an extension to the Brunswick Healthy Living Centre.

This will bring in further private sector investment of a similar amount. In this context the Council's investment in securing the Church for this purpose is very small by comparison.

The bid referred to will be the subject of a report to the next Executive."

In a supplementary question, Councillor Boad asked Councillor Crowther:-

"Am I correct in that there is a review now due, and that would be in an upwards direction? Does the Portfolio Holder agree with the Council's spokesman who appeared to suggest that there was little hope of obtaining the fundings suggested from Advantage West Midlands? In the light of the fact that we have already spent, in round figures, £240,000 and over the period of the lease are likely to spend another million pounds, exclusive of rates, utility costs and maintenance, if that is correct, is there a Plan B, and what is it?"

In reply, Councillor Crowther said:-

"I am particularly pleased to answer these questions particularly because the second point quite understandably was on the basis of a report in one of our local newspapers which I am able to correct. I am not criticising the newspaper but a misunderstanding occurred. I am very pleased to assure the Council that the progress of the bid to AWM is proceeding as we had very much hoped and a decision is due next month. The article in the paper was based on an interview with one of our officers which was done by a reporter sometime ago before this very positive move with AWM in which we are involved now. There will be a report to the next meeting of the Executive about this issue.

A question of the rent review, I agree with Councillor Coker that there will be a rent review imminent but we do not have any firm information about that but we are very happy to supply that information when we can check it. Clearly our intention and the whole purpose as we have explained it in the answer, of the lease of the building is to secure it in order that it can be involved in the wider regeneration of the Spencer Yard area and Old Town generally as part of the overall scheme for the cultural quarter which the Council has supported for many years. That is the purpose of the scheme and there has also been

## **COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)**

concurrently with the current bidding process an alternative proposal. At the moment we have every confidence that the scheme will go ahead but should that not be so then we will look for other ways of dealing with getting the best use for the community and value for the Council from the building.”

### **601. STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor Davis, duly seconded and

**RESOLVED** that the report of the Standards Committee dated 8 November 2006, be approved and adopted.

### **602. EXECUTIVE**

It was moved by Councillor Crowther and duly seconded that the report of the Executive dated 23 October 2006, be approved and adopted.

#### **(A) Approval of fees and charges 2007/2008 (549)**

First amendment: It was moved by Councillor Mrs Sawdon and duly seconded that the proposed increase in the fee for junior swimming be not approved.

On a vote being taken, the amendment was declared lost.

#### **(B) Adoption of report.**

The original motion was then put to the meeting and declared carried.

### **603. MEMBER/TRADE UNIONS JOINT CONSULTATION AND SAFETY PANEL**

It was moved by Councillor Ashford, duly seconded and

**RESOLVED** that the report of the Member/Trade Unions Joint Consultation and Safety Panel dated 4 October 2006, be approved and adopted.

### **604. AUDIT AND RESOURCES AND EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

It was moved by Councillor Caborn, duly seconded and

**RESOLVED** that the report of the joint meeting of the Audit and Resources and Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committees dated 17 October 2006, be approved.

### **605. AUDIT AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor Caborn, duly seconded and

## **COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)**

**RESOLVED** that the report of the Audit and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 17 October 2006, be approved and adopted.

### **606. EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor Doody, duly seconded and

**RESOLVED** that the report of the Executive Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 17 October 2006, be approved and adopted.

### **607. CULTURE AND SOCIAL POLICY COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor Kirton, duly seconded and

**RESOLVED** that the report of the Culture and Social Policy Committee dated 18 October 2006, be approved and adopted.

### **608. ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC POLICY COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Compton, duly seconded and

**RESOLVED** that the report of the Environment and Economic Policy Committee dated 18 October 2006, be approved and adopted.

### **609. EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor Crowther, duly seconded and

**RESOLVED** that the report of the Employment Committee dated 8 November 2006, be approved and adopted.

### **610. REGULATORY COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Goode, duly seconded and

**RESOLVED** that the report of the Regulatory Committee dated 13 November 2006, be approved and adopted.

### **611. PLANNING COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor Tamlin, duly seconded and

**RESOLVED** that the reports of the Planning Committees dated 10 October and 1 November 2006, be approved and adopted subject to:

## **COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)**

- (1) The following revised recommendation in minute 507 (Guidance Note on the Operation of the Planning Committee), being approved:

**RECOMMENDED** that the guidance notes on the operation of the Planning Committee be adopted (as set out at Appendix A); subject to the following amendments:

- (1) Section two of Preliminary Matters, be amended to state that where information relating to an application is contained within the addendum that this will be considered before the officers presentation to the Committee; and
- (2) Section three, Member Discussion, an additional paragraph be added to read "During the course of debate, Members will look to avoid repetition and will endeavour to add new points to the discussion"
- (2) In minute 496 (2 Rawnsley Drive, Kenilworth) the Resolution be amended to read:-

**RESOLVED** that Application WO6/1180 be refused because of the detrimental impact it would have on the street scene, especially the impact it would have on the openness of the area due to the proposed coming forward from the front of the current house.

### **612. SECTION 92, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

In addition to Members who already disclosed their interest in the appropriate Committee Minutes the following declared their interest in respect of the Minutes set out in columns (1) and (2) below and, when the Minutes were discussed by the Council, took no part in the discussion and did not vote.

(Those shown with \* indicate Members who left the meeting whilst the matter was under discussion).

<u>Minute</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Person Declaring Interest</u>
559	Future use of the Town Hall and Riverside House, Leamington Spa.	* Councillors Gifford and Mrs Goode (Personal and prejudicial; being members of the Royal Leamington Spa Town Council)

**COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)**

**613. COMMON SEAL**

It was

**RESOLVED** that the common seal of Warwick District Council be affixed to such deeds and documents as may be required for implementing decisions of the Council arrived at this day.

(The meeting ended at 7.35 p.m.)

CHAIR