

Warwick District Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24 September 2014, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.05pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Sawdon (Chairman); Councillors; Barrott, Mrs Blacklock, Boad, Mrs Bromley, Mrs Bunker, Caborn, Coker, Copping, Cross, Ms De-Lara-Bond, Ms Dean, Dhillon, Doody, Edwards, Mrs Falp, Mrs Gallagher, Gifford, Gill, Mrs Goode, Mrs Grainger, Hammon, Mrs Higgins, Illingworth, Kinson, Mrs Knight, MacKay, Mobbs, Pittarello, Pratt, Mrs Syson, Vincett, Ms Weed, Wilkinson, Williams, and Wreford-Bush.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brookes, Davies, Guest, Heath, Kirton, Mrs Mellor and Weber.

32. **Cliff Cleaver**

The Chairman of the Council informed the Council that former Councillor Cliff Cleaver had died at Warwick Hospital on 19 September 2014.

Cliff Cleaver had been a Warwick District Councillor from May 1979 to May 2003 and Chairman of the District in 1992/93. In addition to this he had also been a Warwickshire County Councillor, a member of the Warwickshire Police Authority, Cubbington Parish Council and a Governor of two local schools totalling over 97 years in public service.

Tributes were paid by former colleagues of Cliff Cleaver and this was followed by a minutes silence of respect.

33. **Declarations of Interest**

Minute 41 – Report of the Employment Committee

Councillor Mrs Falp declared a Personal Interest because it impacted on her son who worked in Cultural Services.

34. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 August 2014 were taken as read and, signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

35. **Communications and Announcements**

The Chairman informed the Council that

- (1) Jephson Gardens had been awarded Green Flag status;
- (2) the Court House in Warwick had now reopened;
- (3) Councillor Mrs Gallagher was runner up in the home cook of the year competition; and
- (4) new legislation had been introduced to increase the abilities of individuals to report from Council meetings. This included the freedom to use social media in meetings and record meetings that were open to the public. A full guide was available online and was called "Open and accountable local government, a guide for the press and public on attending and reporting meetings of local government".

The Chairman introduced Mr Andrew Thompson, the new Head of Head of Housing & Property Services, and informed Council that there would be a presentation from Mr Thompson, along with his senior officers to Council in November.

The Chairman informed Council that there would be no business under items; 5, Public Interest Debate; 8, Notices of Motion; 9, Public Submissions; 10, Questions to Committee Chairmen; and 11, Questions to Portfolio Holders.

36. **Public Health Warwickshire**

The Council received a presentation from Dr Linnane on the work of Public Health Warwickshire and summarised its work in the first year. Dr Linnane also responded to questions from members.

37. **Petitions**

The Council received a petition from Warwick Residents, sponsored by Councillor Mrs Higgins, Councillor Mrs Bromley, Councillor Dhillon and Councillor Kinson, that asked Warwick District Council to withdraw the Severn Trent Water site from the list of possible Gypsy and Traveller sites for consultation.

Advice had been provided by officers that the decision of Council of 13 August 2014 could not be amended, within six months, without a notice of motion signed by 10 Councillors, and this had not been received. In addition a decision of Council could not be changed if it was based on a recommendation of the Executive. This was the case for decision of 13 August 2014. Therefore the only option available was for Council to accept the petition for consideration by officers as part of the Consultation which it was hoped would start in mid-October 2014.

38. **Leader's and Portfolio Holders' Statements**

The Leader

- (a) informed the Council that a further £130,000 had been secured for superfast broadband in the District, which could provide connection for up to 6000 homes but at least 1500 properties would benefit;
- (b) thanked all officers and Councillors for their stunning performance again in ensuring the healthy balance at the close of the statement of account for 2013/14;
- (c) thanked all Group Leaders for their continued work in taking the Council forward together; he respected this work and dialogue; and
- (d) confirmed his utmost respect for senior management team at this Council and his admiration for their efforts which he knew, through meetings with other Councils, was the envy of others.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Councillor Mrs Gallagher informed the Council that after two years of planning the District had been delighted to play host to the National Bowls Championships with visitors from across the country. This Council, Leamington Spa Bowls Club, the Café in the Park, CJ Events, Royal Naval Club and Sea Cadets were all thanked by Bowls England for their efforts making the event successful. Councillor Mrs Gallagher thanked the Green Keeping Staff for their tireless efforts which were so good the bowling could continue in the rain and a member from Worthing even complimented them. Councillor Mrs Gallagher thanked the volunteers from the District Council who

worked on the Visitor Information stand. The feedback from the event so far has been very good. Initial assessment of the economic impact has been very promising. Councillor Mrs Gallagher closed by offering her personal thanks to District Council officers Rose Winship, Chris Charman, Tom Duckham and Stuart Poole for their planning and delivery of the event.

The Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Shilton,
(a) informed Council that Jephson Gardens had been awarded the Green Flag and the Christchurch Gardens project, with Royal Leamington Spa Town Council, had been recognised in the Leamington Society Awards; and
(b) congratulated Warwick for its Gold in the Britain in Bloom awards. As part of the judging of Warwick, Warwick District Council was complimented on its grounds and the cleanliness of streets.

The Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection, Councillor Coker,
(a) welcomed the reception the Council provided to Dr Linnane earlier that evening and he went on to inform Council that the CCG had provided the Council £30,000 funding for public health initiatives;
(b) informed the Council that the Panel dealing with grants to voluntary sector would continue with over £300,000 in the budget. The bids made would be coming to the panel shortly;
(c) informed Council that he had great pride in attending the Police commendation ceremony for one of our CCTV operatives for their work which ensured a perpetrator of serious crime was arrested and prosecuted;
(d) informed Council about the recent survey of taxis by a multi agency enforcement event and the impact of this work. He emphasised that the centre of the town in Leamington should be a safe place with safe taxis. Any indication of non compliance by taxi drivers would be brought to Licensing and Regulatory Committee for consideration;
(e) informed Council that the funding by Warwick University for the Street Marshals in Leamington Town Centre would continue. The marshals were accredited by the Police who were pleased with what had been achieved and coupled with the "street pastors" the young people would be able to enjoy themselves and get home safely; and
(f) he concluded that officers were looking forward to Kenilworth horse fair this following weekend because there were good strong arrangements in place to ensure a safe and successful event for all.

39. **Questions to the Leader**

Councillor Williams asked the Leader if he was aware of the fantastic work by the clean-up team of this Council on 8 September, the day after the travellers had left the park on the Woodloes, which ensured the area was returned to wider use and made safely within hours. In response the Leader explained he was aware and endorsed the views of Councillor Williams.

Councillor Williams asked the Leader if he would consider suggestions to help protect open areas against unauthorised uses, such as travellers staying on them. In response the Leader explained that it was exactly these issues why the Council needed a robust Local Plan with a Gypsy and Traveller allocation of sites. He was aware of suggestions and he assured Councillors that these would be considered with officers.

Councillor Mrs Bromley asked the Leader if he had seen the recent press release from the ICO regarding the poor performance in responding to

Freedom of Information requests and what arrangements the Leader had put in place in response to ICO criticism. In response, the Leader said that the Legal fees were higher than we realised and he would be looking at this.

40. **Reports of the Executive**

The report of the Executive of 13 August 2014 and minute 35 of 3 September 2014, were proposed by Councillor Mobbs, duly seconded and

Resolved that the report be approved.

41. **Report of Employment Committee**

The reports of the Employment Committee meeting of 17 September 2014, were proposed by Councillor Mrs Bunker, duly seconded and

Resolved that the report be approved.

42. **Report of Standards Committee**

The reports of the Standards Committee meeting of 9 September 2014, were proposed by Councillor Pratt, duly seconded and

Resolved that the report be approved.

43. **Statement of Accounts 2013/14**

The Council received a report from Finance and the minutes of the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee of 23 September 2014.

Resolved that the Statement of Accounts for 2013/14 be approved.

44. **Membership of Committees**

It proposed by Councillor Mobbs, duly seconded and

Resolved that

(1) Councillor Mrs Bunker be replaced on Licensing & Regulatory Committee with Councillor Mrs Grainger; and

(2) Councillor Mrs Grainger be replaced as a substitute for Licensing & Regulatory Committee with Councillor Mrs Bunker.

45. **Public and Press**

Resolved that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item by reason of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local

46. **Confidential Report of the Executive**

The confidential report of the Executive meeting of 3 September 2014 in relation to minutes 45 and 50, were proposed by Councillor Mobbs, duly seconded and

Resolved that the report be approved.

47. **Councillor Kirton**

The Council considered a request to provide dispensation for Councillor Kirton not to attend meetings due to personal circumstances.

Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act stated that:

"if a member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the Authority".

This item was brought forward as an urgent item following a request from Councillor MacKay as Councillor Kirton's Group Leader.

The Chief Executive had accepted this request as an urgent item. It has been brought to Council with the support of the Chairman and Group Leaders as a mark of respect for the service Councillor Kirton had provided to this Council.

Councillor Kirton last attended a meeting of the Employment Committee in September and therefore he had until March 2015. This dispensation would provide him with reassurance at this difficult time.

It was understood that a similar proposal would be considered by Warwickshire County Council tomorrow, to enable Councillor Kirton to have dispensation from his attendance at WCC meetings.

Resolved that the absence of Councillor Kirton from all meetings, on the grounds of compassion be approved.

(The Chairman, with support from all Group Leaders and the Chief Executive, had agreed to take this as an urgent item to provide reassurance to Councillor Kirton in this difficult time).

48. **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 7.36 pm)

CHAIRMAN
18 November 2014