

# WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 23 October 2013, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.15pm.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Caborn, Dagg, Mrs Falp, Guest, Heath and Mrs Knight

## 52. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## 53. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 26 September 2013 were approved as a correct record subject to:

- (1) the attendance being amended to show Councillors Mrs Bromley and Councillor Illingworth as present;
- (2) the question to the Deputy Leader about Councillors Dagg and Williams being corrected to read "Councillors Dagg and Williams do not now live or work within Warwick District, which is one of the criteria in standing for election. Will the Deputy Leader, for fairness and conscious, recommend to Councillors Dagg and Williams that stand down as councillors for Kenilworth St Johns and Warwick North respectively, in response Councillor Caborn stated that he will discuss this matter with the Monitoring Officer and email the outcome to Councillors"; and
- (3) the response to from the Deputy Leader regarding the question about Councillors Grainger being corrected to read "Councillor Caborn responded explaining that he was aware of the tweet, that it was sent as Town Councillor and not as District Councillor".

## 54. **COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman informed Council that he attended the National Memorial Arboretum on Sunday 20 October for the opening of the Fusiliers memorial.

The Chairman informed Council that the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers were looking forward to their home coming parade on 26 November in Royal Leamington Spa. The Chairman asked Councillors unable to attend to please let officers know. This was because if they were not attending their space could be offered to more veterans from the Fusiliers Association.

The Chairman reminded Councillors that tickets were still available for the wine tasting event, in aid of his charities, on 22 November 2013.

The Chairman informed Councillors that his Christmas concert was on 14 December 2013 and he hoped to see Councillors there.

The Chairman informed Council that there would be no business under items; 5, Public Interest Debate; 6, Petitions; 7, Notices of Motion; 8, Public Submissions; 9, Questions to Committee Chairmen; and 10, Questions to Portfolio Holders.

55. **APOLOGY FROM COUNCILLOR DHILLON**

Councillor Dhillon addressed the Council. "Thank you for bringing this forward. Bearing in mind 21 August meeting and findings where Council voted in favour of me apologising for the breach of the Code of Conduct, I apologise to the Council."

56. **LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' STATEMENTS**

(A) Councillor Doody informed the Council that he would be stepping down as Leader of the Council and of the Conservative Group. The statement he had produced previously had been sent to all Councillors and was available on the Council's website. However he felt it was important to add a few comments for clarification.

He explained that he was extremely proud of the situation the Council was in with substantial reserves and healthy budget which was a position many authorities wished to be in.

He highlighted the small problem in the Warwick Courier, of 18 October 2013, which incorrectly showed Shire Hall rather than the District Council and also said that the resignation was due to the Local Plan. He found this disappointing that the paper could not call him to find out the reasons why he was standing down.

He outlined that a number of people did not know how this Council worked. He explained that the Council had moved away from using the political spin of Council Tax not being an increase in real terms to the fact that Council Tax has been frozen for three years.

He explained that he was proud to have seen the Council purchase Oakley Wood; produced the Jubilee House development in Kenilworth; assisted Warwick as a town to a value in excess of £1.2 million pounds, plus leveraging in a further £2million; paid £34.5million to the Government and purchased the United Reform Church in Leamington. He highlighted that next year the District would welcome the Bowls England Championships, to Victoria Park, for both men and women. He reminded Councillors that the Council had also bought itself out of the national rent scheme and while this debt had not been paid back yet it was going very well.

Looking to the future he outlined the launch of "Shakespeare's England" the new approach for tourism locally and next year the District would be supporting the 1100 years of Warwick.

He took the opportunity to thank the Chief Executive for his work and support and emphasised it should be him who took a large share of the praise for the success of this Council. He also thanked Councillor Coker for a calming influence on the Executive and the former Leader of the Council who started the financial recovery.

He concluded by emphasising that he was not standing down on health grounds or to get away from hard decisions. The prior notice was to enable both the Conservative Group and the Council to have good time to appoint a

replacement for him under the proper due process. He thanked all parties for their support during his time as Leader as through all this the Council now was Fit for the Future and while this future would be different for him he would look forward to his new role as a critical friend;

- (B) Councillor Shilton, Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services, informed the Council that Kenilworth Skaters had won a competition for improving their patch and in so doing had secured a grant of £29,500 for a new half pipe at Castle Farm. He also informed the Council that the contact details for the tree maintenance service had now been emailed to all Councillors;
- (C) Councillor Coker, Portfolio Holder for Health and Community Protection, informed the Council that the recovery of precious metals at the crematorium had raised £3,473 for charity. The metals were recovered with the consent of the deceased relatives in line with agreed procedure. He also informed Council that the Service Area had received a letter of thanks for its work in Leamington in the evening, specifically for assisting a gentleman home one evening. This highlighted the proactive approach of the work in Leamington to make it safer experience in the evening for all parties.

#### 57. **QUESTIONS FOR THE LEADER**

- (a) Councillor Mrs Gallagher asked the Leader if he would agree with her that the decision by the Planning Inspector to dismiss the appeal/application for the Gypsy/Traveller site at Kites Nest Lane, in favour of the District Council, was good news for the Council?

Councillor Doody agreed with Councillor Mrs Gallagher. He hoped it would send another message to everyone. The applicants had moved onto the site on Friday night of a Bank Holiday weekend. They had submitted a planning application at 4.40pm then moved onto the site. If they had worked with the Council it would have saved the occupants, the Council and local residents a lot of time and money.

- (b) Councillor Mrs Bromley asked the Leader if considering the corrections to minutes that the Council should record its meetings for the avoidance of doubt?

Councillor Doody agreed.

#### 58. **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The reports of the Executive meeting of 9 October 2013 were proposed by Councillor Shilton, duly seconded and

**RESOLVED** that the report be approved.

#### 59. **CODE OF CONDUCT TRAINING**

The Council received a report from the Democratic Services Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer that sought clarification of the decision taken by Council on 21 August 2013 with regard to the training requirements for Councillor Dhillon.

**RESOLVED** that:

- (1) Councillor Dhillon be required to undertake training on the Code of Conduct for Councillors, Member Officer protocol and Employee code of conduct and pay half the cost of his training on these matters. This training be incorporated once the review of these is completed; and
- (2) as part of the wider training programme for all Councillors, Councillor Dhillon be required to undertake training on Questioning skills, Public speaking, Coping with pressure/stress and three coaching sessions, for which he will not be required to pay half the costs.

60. **MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES**

It was proposed by Councillor Doody, duly seconded and

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) the change in political composition of the Employment Committee & Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee to 5 Conservatives, 2 Liberal Democrats, 2 Labour and 2 Independents, be noted;
- (2) the changes to Committee membership from the Conservative Group, be approved;
  - (a) remove Councillor Caborn from the Employment Committee as a Conservative appointment;
  - (b) replace Councillor Dagg on Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee with Councillor Mrs Bunker;
  - (c) replace Councillor Dagg on Planning Committee with Councillor Mobbs;
  - (d) replace Councillor Dagg and Councillor Mrs Grainger on Housing Appeals Review Panels with Councillors Mrs Bunker and Councillor Mrs Gallagher;
  - (e) remove Councillor Dagg as a substitute for Employment Committee, Licensing Committee, Overview & Scrutiny Committee, and Regulatory Committee;
  - (f) remove Councillor Mobbs as a named substitute for Planning Committee; and
  - (g) appoint Councillor Caborn to the Conservative vacancy on the Licensing Committee.
- (3) the changes to the Committee membership from the Independent Group, be approved;
  - (a) appoint Councillor Mrs Bromley from the Independent Group to the Employment Committee as the second Independent representative;
  - (b) appoint Councillor Mrs Mellor to the Finance & Audit Scrutiny Committee as the second Independent Representative; and

- (c) appoint Councillor Dagg as a substitute for the Independent Group for all Committees that he is not a member of, excluding Standards Committee.

61. **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 Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

62. **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE**

The confidential report of the Executive meetings of 9 October 2013 was proposed by Councillor Doody, duly seconded and

**RESOLVED** that the reports be approved.

63. **CHAIRMAN'S BANK ACCOUNT**

The Chairman had agreed to take this item as a matter of urgency to enable the new arrangements to be implemented as soon as possible.

The details of the report were set out in the addendum to the agenda circulated at the meeting.

The Chairman of the Council held a bank account for the collection of the money for his charities and payments associated with holding the Chairman's events for his charities.

At present the signatory for this account was the Chairman of the Council and each year the signatory was changed under the decision to appoint a Chairman.

The Chairman proposed that the account signatories should be the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer and Personal Assistant to the Chairman.

Two signatories would be required to sign cheques from this account. It would enable the Personal Assistant to the Chairman to access details about the account more readily. It would also remove the need for the new Chairman to complete changes in the bank mandate each year.

Internal Audit had accepted the proposal as a reasonable process.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) the Chairman's bank account be amended so that the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer, Democratic Services Manager and Personal Assistant to the Chairman are signatories; and

- (2) at least two of the above signatories must sign cheques from this account.

64. **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 6.38 pm)

CHAIRMAN  
4 December 2013