

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the annual meeting held on Wednesday 31 August 2011, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Davies, Edwards, Heath, Kirton and Mrs Mellor.

31. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 27 July 2011 were approved as a correct record.

32. **COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- (A) The Council had received a letter of appreciation from Bowls England for the continuing support and good greens during the womens national championships;
- (B) The Chairman's Bowls evening would be on 15 September 2011 starting at 5.00pm at the bowls pavilion in Victoria Park;
- (C) The Chairman would be holding two Macmillan Coffee mornings in September, one at the Almanac in Kenilworth from 10.30 am on 29 September and the other at the Town Hall on 30 September from 10.00am and encouraged members to attend to support them; and
- (D) The Chairman reminded members of her Christmas Concert on 3 December 2011.

33. **PRESENTATION BY UPS OF DOWNS**

The Council received a presentation from the Ups of Downs Group on the work of the Group at the request of the Chief Executive following their Civic Award from the Council in 2010.

Following the presentation the Group responded to questions from Councillors about their work and the challenges that they faced in financing and operating their group as well as with local government generally.

The Leader and the Chairman both thanked them for their inspiring presentation which they felt had helped members to understand and fully appreciate the work of the Group and the challenges they faced in caring and supporting people with downs syndrome.

(There was no public interest debate, petitions, notices of motion, public submissions, or questions to committee chairmen)

34. QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Councillor Barrott asked the Portfolio Holder for Culture (Councillor Mrs Gallagher) to inform members what part she was playing in restoring Racing Club Warwick to the community hub it once was prior to the 2007 District Council Elections?

In response Councillor Mrs Gallagher explained that Racing Club Warwick had the potential to be a fantastic community facility for the residents of Warwick West and the District more broadly. She felt it could be a catalyst for many community based initiatives. When Conservative Group took control of the Council the Club was in a parlous state due to financial mismanagement. The Executive were determined to support Racing Club Warwick and explored a number of options to try and create a sustainable future. Through the work of District Councillors, Town Councillors and this Council's officers, a business plan was produced which was now being taken forward by colleagues on this Council.

In addition Mrs Gallagher reminded Councillors that Racing Club Warwick was unhappy with the Council's position in respect of the lease that Racing Club Warwick held. The Council was working as hard as possible to resolve this matter and depending on discussions approval could be sort for further investment in the Hampton Road Ground , over and above the £120,000 already in the capital programme. To that end the Leader of the Council would be chairing a meeting of Racing Club Warwick trustees, the Portfolio Holder and council officers on 16 September to try and resolve the situation.

Councillor Mrs Gallagher responded to two supplementary questions explaining the £120,000 was money from the Section 106 agreement and discussions were ongoing about how this money should be spent. The money would not be released until the lease negotiations had been concluded.

35. LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S STATEMENTS

Councillor Shilton (Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services) informed the Council that Warwick District Council had been accepted to participate as part of the Guide Dogs for the Blind puppy walking initiative. This would be used as part of the publicity for the recycling partnership the Council had with Guide Dogs for the Blind and already interest had been expressed by the media on this matter. In addition, following this, other businesses and Council's had approached Guide Dogs for the Blind to set up similar arrangements.

Councillor Mrs Gallagher (Portfolio Holder for Culture) announced that the Swim Project was about to commence. The swim project would initially target 5 schools in South Leamington as these statistically had the highest number of non swimmers in the District. These schools included; St Paul's School, Sydenham School, St Margaret's School, St Antony's School and St Patricks School, subject to them signing up to the programme.

It would commence in September 2011 and initially run for one school year and be co-ordinated through the School Sports Partnership & delivered in WDC facilities and with WDC swim teachers. If the maximum capacity was used then there could potentially be over 230 children learning to swim and going from non swimmer to competent in water due to the programme.

COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)

The Maximum Teaching costs for 1 school year were £3950. However this could be significantly reduced if schools selected slots that were in 'non-public' time. These costs would be met through the Sports Development Budget. Leisure Centre Pool time (in kind): would be £4,700. The SSP were to administer and co-ordinate the programme and fund and organise any transport costs.

The project would be reviewed at the end of the year and further discussions would be held with key partners to decide on the continuation of the project.

In response to a question Councillor Mrs Gallagher explained that the Council had looked at the areas where the most number of non swimmers were as well as those schools not using the swimming lesson arrangements the Council offered.

Councillor Mrs Gallagher (Portfolio Holder for Culture) also announced that the Council's leisure centres would be participating in the nationwide BigSplash event which had set the aim for this year of getting 270,000 more people swimming weekly. The Council would be introducing swimming champions as part of this work who would encourage members of the public and provide advice and support at swimming sessions i.e. suggestions on improving swimming technique.

36. QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Councillor Kinson asked the Leader to provide reassurance to the Council that the current negotiations on the lease of Warwick Racecourse would include discussions on the use of the 1707 restaurant so that their activities would be properly authorised?

Councillor Doody responded explaining that a review had taken place in 2009, which had been agreed and the next review was due in 2023. However the lease had not come into force because an agreement could not be reached on the rental for the land. The Council could take this matter to arbitration and seek expert opinions. However, this would be at a cost to the Council. Therefore the aim was for officers to resolve the issues through discussions and therefore reduce any potential cost to the residents of the District.

Councillor Wilkinson asked the Leader if, in the light of the response to the Council's Enterprise Zone application, plans were being prepared that could offer an equal amount of development and investment within the District?

In response Councillor Doody explained the joint bid for a Local Enterprise Zone had failed for many reasons, however the Executive felt that the Council, using the relationships this process had built, could potentially progress a similar scheme through other avenues. It was recognised that this Council and others were not well represented on the LEP but there was good reason to believe that this would change. It was accepted that the enterprise was unlikely to bring significant new jobs to the District but could have secured 7,000 jobs and the zone was also likely to have benefited the village of Baginton through improved traffic control.

Councillor Barrott explained he did not feel that Councillor Dhillon should leave for this question and asked the Leader if he would consider inviting the relevant Town Councillors to the meeting with Racing Club Warwick on 16 September?

COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)

Councillor Doody responded by explaining that he would not invite the relevant Town Councillors because the discussions related to the lease between Warwick District Council and the Club. This was because the current lease did no one any favours. The Racing Club was a great asset for Warwick West Community and Racing Club Warwick was the way forward because the people on the board could take it forward, but there was a need to ensure that the benefits of any agreements would be for all parties.

Councillor Barrott asked if the vacant position of Town Centre Manager for Warwick would be replaced and if so when would this be advertised.

Councillor Doody responded by explaining that the post would be advertised and interim arrangements had been put in place.

37. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE

It was proposed by Councillor Doody, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the report of the Executive of 13 July 2011, be approved and adopted.

38. 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 7.10 pm)

CHAIRMAN
22 September 2011