

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13 July 2005, at the Town Hall, Royal Leamington Spa at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Shilton (Chairman); Councillors Ashford, Mrs Begg, Mrs Blacklock, Boad, Butler, Caborn, Chander, Cockburn, Coker, Mrs Compton, Copping, Crowther, Davis, Ms De-Lara-Bond, Doody, Mrs Edwards, Evans, Mrs Falp, Gifford, Gill, Mrs Goode, Guest, Hammon, Harris, Hatfield, Ms Hirsch, Mrs Hodgetts, Holland, Kinson, Kirton, Mrs Knight, Kundi, MacKay, Mrs MacFarland, Mrs Mellor, Pratt, Sandhar, Mrs Sawdon, Shilton, Smith, Tamlin and Windybank.

197. **ACT OF REMEMBRANCE**

A period of one minute silence was observed as an act of remembrance for those who had been killed and injured in the terrorist outrage which had occurred in London on Thursday 7 July 2005.

In addition, the Council remembered Mr Ces Bradshaw, the Council's former Housing Officer, who had recently died.

Following the period of silence, a prayer was offered by the Chairman's Chaplain.

198. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Bunker, Davies, Ms Flanagan and Short.

199. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 29 June 2005, were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman.

200. **COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- (A) The Chairman reminded the Council of the traditional Indian meal which was being held on Monday 18 July 2005 in aid of his Charities.
- (B) The Chairman reported that he sent a letter to Lord Coe and his team congratulating them on being awarded the summer Olympics to be held in 2012 in London.
- (C) The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Miss Sue Harrison who was a member of Leamington Cycling and Athletics Club. He outlined the major successes she had achieved during 2004 and so far in 2005. On behalf of the Council, the Chairman congratulated Miss Harrison on her

COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)

notable achievements and presented her with a free season ticket for the Edmondscote Athletics track for 2005/06 season.

201. PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

A submission was presented by Mr Michael Hill in relation to Minute 129(c) (High Hedges Legislation).

202. MEMORIALS AND PETITIONS

(A) A petition sponsored by Councillor Bill Gifford was presented signed by residents of Edmondscote Road, Leamington Spa regarding noise and nuisance.

In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules, Mrs Smythe addressed the Council on behalf of the petitioners.

RESOLVED that the petition be referred to the Executive.

203. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 7 (2)

(A) From Councillor Mrs A Blacklock to Councillor B Crowther, Leader of the Executive:

"In the light of the difficulties experienced by some members of the public in gaining access to Polling Stations in the recent elections, can we have confirmation that everything possible is being done to ensure that

- (a) every Polling Station is easy to enter and leave, for people with disabilities and people accompanied by children, and
- (b) there is a Polling Station within reasonable walking distance of the majority of homes

so that, by the next round of elections, voting in person will be a genuine option for voters in this District?"

Councillor R Crowther, Leader of the Executive, replied:-

"The Council has an established record of seeking to improve on access Polling Stations for all electors, including proactive work by our officers and the involvement of ward councillors in pointing out difficulties and suggesting alternative locations.

Under election law Returning Officers are obliged to provide an appropriate number of polling stations for electors in their area, aiming to have enough polling stations to ensure that every voter can reach one easily.

Since 1995 Warwick District Council has been following guidelines under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Returning Officer has been constantly surveying the premises used as polling stations within the District. Many stations have been relocated elsewhere where the original premises

COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)

could not be altered to comply with the Act and many others have benefited from the Returning Officer being able to arrange for the installation of handrails and permanent ramps at entrances to enable better access for electors.

From October 2004, local authorities have been required under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of buildings where disabled people would otherwise find it impossible or unreasonably difficult to make use of public services, including facilities for voting.

The disability organisation SCOPE works with politicians and electoral administrators to try to improve access to the electoral process.

Polling Stations can be inaccessible to disabled people for a variety of reasons:

- inaccessible physical location of the polling station;
- unclear signposting;
- difficulty in entering the building because of steps or other barriers; narrow corridors and slippery floor surfaces inside;
- poor lighting inside the polling station, making it difficult for people to see what they are doing;
- insufficient car parking spaces or space designated for use by disabled people;
- heavy doors which voters find difficult to open; and
- polling station materials are only provided in English and Welsh and the provision of instructions and guidance in other languages varies.

It is the intention that before the elections planned for May 2007, all premises currently used as polling stations will be visited so that an assessment can be made regarding their suitability. The Presiding Officers employed for the May 2005 elections were, as normal, requested to complete a questionnaire regarding their polling station and their comments will assist the planned review.

It should be noted that in many cases the Returning Officer has a very limited range of premises from which to choose when allocating a polling station within a polling district.

The Returning Officer always consults with ward members on proposed changes to be made to existing polling station premises and is happy to investigate any suggestions and ideas put forward for alternative premises or improvements that could be made”.

(B) From Councillor Mrs J Compton to Councillor B Crowther, Leader of the Executive:-

COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)

“As Warwick District Council wishes the Town Hall to be used by the wider community, has any consideration been given to providing chairs and tables that are suitable and inviting to prospective hirers? The chairs in the Council Chamber in particular are most uncomfortable - the only concession being given is the provision of red cushions in an attempt to make sitting for long hours more bearable. Members in particular spend many hours in their deliberations at Committee Meetings and I feel that it is time that some consideration was given to this matter”.

Councillor R Crowther, Leader of the Executive, replied:-

“The Council has not made any decision yet regarding change of emphasis for the use of the Town Hall, though the issue of how to make the best use of the facilities is under active discussion and options for greater use by the wider community form a part of these considerations.

However, the Town Hall Superintendent is investigating a package of improvements at present, which includes the tables and chairs, details of which will be forwarded to Councillor Mrs Compton when available. In the meantime, cushions have been provided as an interim measure.

There is currently no specific budget for any improvements to the Town Hall furniture and it would be necessary for a bid to be submitted in the normal way through next year's Service Plan for Leisure and Amenities. The bid would have to be considered along with all others submitted. This is in accordance with normal practice.

Clearly, it would be prudent to establish first the pattern of use envisaged for the building before making any substantial investment in the facilities”.

In a supplementary question, Councillor Mrs Compton asked the Leader:-

“Thank you for your response and I am pleased to see that the Town Hall Superintendent is investigating a package of improvements which includes tables and chairs, and that the details will be forwarded to me. That is very kind, but this is not a personal crusade. I have had such a lot of support since I put forward the question. I am disappointed that there is not a specific budget for any improvements to the Town Hall furniture and I would ask that a bid be submitted through the Service Area Plan by Leisure and Amenities as I feel the furniture in the Town Hall is well past its sell-by date.”

In reply, Councillor Crowther said

“I am sure it would be a straightforward matter to prepare a bid on the basis of the investigations but of course the success in the budget process would depend on the other priorities and balance of how the Council would wish to spend its money in what I anticipate will not be an easy budget year. I do not want to pretend that there is an instant solution that will satisfy Councillor Mrs Compton but certainly there is no reason why a bid should not be included in the consideration.”

COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)

204. EXECUTIVE

It was moved by Councillor Crowther and duly seconded that the report of the Executive dated 13 June 2005, be approved and adopted.

(A) High Hedges Legislation (129(C))

It was moved by Councillor Kinson and duly seconded that the resolution set out in Minute 129(C) be referred back to the Executive for further consideration.

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

(B) Adoption of report

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

(During the course of consideration of the report of the Executive, the Chairman left the meeting in order to attend a function and the meeting was then chaired by the Vice-Chair).

205. REGULATORY COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Goode, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the reports of the Regulatory Committee dated 20 April 2005 (am and pm) and 20 June 2005, be approved and adopted.

206. AUDIT AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Caborn, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the report of the Audit and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 7 June 2005, be approved and adopted.

207. 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 7 June 2005, be approved and adopted.

208. 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 8 June 2005, be approved and adopted.

COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)

209. 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 8 June 2005, be approved and adopted.

210. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

With regard to the report of the informal meeting of the Standards Committee held on 21 June 2005, it was proposed by Councillor Guest and duly seconded that as the meeting was inquorate, the minutes of the meeting should be removed from the official record.

On a vote being taken, the proposal was approved.

211. EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Crowther, duly seconded and

RESOLVED that the report of the Employment Committee dated 27 June 2005, be approved and adopted.

212. PLANNING COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Evans and duly seconded that the report of the Planning Committee dated 3 May 2005 be approved and adopted.

It was then moved by Councillor Mrs Compton, and duly seconded that the report of the Planning Committee dated 25 May 2005, be approved and adopted.

It was then moved by Councillor Ashford and duly seconded that the report of the Planning Committee dated 22 June 2005, be approved and adopted.

RESOLVED that the reports of the Planning Committee dated 3 and 25 May and 22 June 2005, be approved and adopted.

213. NOTICES OF MOTION

(A) It was moved by Councillor R Copping and duly seconded:-

“Warwick District Council welcomes the introduction of free bus travel for people aged 60 and over after 9.30 am on weekdays and all day at weekends.

Warwick District Council calls upon the Government to provide a special grant to Councils equivalent to the cost of increasing free bus travel subsidy from 50% to the full journey cost: so that no additional cost will fall on the Council Tax.”

COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5 (6) it was moved and seconded that the motion proposed by Councillor Copping be considered at the meeting.

On this being put to the meeting, it was declared carried.

Following debate, the motion was then put to the meeting and, on a vote being taken, was declared carried unanimously.

(B) It was moved by Councillor Mrs M Begg and duly seconded:-

“This Council urges the Government to introduce a 1p tax on every packet of chewing gum sold to cover the cost incurred by local Council’s in removing the residues from the pavement”.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5 (6), it was moved and seconded that the motion proposed by Councillor Mrs Begg be considered at the meeting.

On this being put to the meeting, it was declared carried.

Following the debate, the motion was then put to the meeting and, on a vote being taken, was declared carried.

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

In addition to Members who had 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>
97	Scrutiny of Regenesis	Councillor Evans (Personal: being the Council’s representative on the Old Town Community Partnership Board (Regenesis)).

COUNCIL MINUTES (Continued)

215. COMMON SEAL

It was

RESOLVED that the Common Seal of Warwick District Council be affixed to such Deeds as Documents as may be required for implementing decisions of the Council arrived at this day.

(The meeting ended at 8.00 pm)

CHAIRMAN

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