

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held remotely on Wednesday 25 November 2020, at 6.00pm which was broadcast live via the Council's YouTube Channel.

PRESENT: Councillor Ashford (Chairman); Councillors Bartlett, Boad, Cooke, Cullinan, Davison, Day, A Dearing, J Dearing, K Dickson, R Dickson, Evans, Falp, B Gifford, C Gifford, Grey, Grainger, Hales, Heath, Illingworth, Jacques, Kennedy, Kohler, Leigh-Hunt, Luckhurst, Mangat, Margrave, Matecki, Milton, Murphy, Nicholls, Noone, Redford, Rhead, Russell, Skinner, Syson, Tangri, Tracey, Weber and Wright.

42. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Morris, Norris and Roberts.

43. Declarations of Interest

Item 5 – Petitions

Councillors Cooke, A Dearing, J Dearing, K Dickson, R Dickson, J Kennedy, Illingworth and Milton declared they were Kenilworth Town Councillors and had considered the motion referred to by Kenilworth Town Council within the petition on the agenda for this evening. All confirmed they wished to listen to the debate this evening prior to voting on the petition.

(Councillor Tangri, joined the meeting during this item)

44. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 2 September 2020 were proposed by Councillor Day, duly seconded by Councillor Cooke and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

45. Communications and Announcements

With the Vice-Chairman led a moment's silence as a mark of respect for the Chairman's wife Angela, who was also his consort, who had passed away.

The Chairman responded in thanking the Council for its support at this time.

The Chairman offered the thoughts and support of the Council to Councillor Roberts and his family at this time.

The Chairman offered the congratulations of the Council; to Councillor Murphy on his recent marriage and to Councillor Luckhurst on the safe arrival of his and his partner's baby.

The Chairman thanked all Warwick District Council staff, Councillors and our partners for their continued efforts in both responding to the Pandemic and continuing to deliver services to the local communities.

46. **Petitions**

The Council received a petition of 1149 signatures, from the Restore Kenilworth Lido Group, that read as follows:

"At a time when Lidos across the country are growing in popularity it seems a poorly judged and short-sighted decision by Warwick District Council, to close Kenilworth's outdoor pool in Abbey Fields. Outdoor swimming is valuable for both physical and mental wellbeing. As we all try to adapt to the 'new normal' brought about by Coronavirus this must be given high priority. Simply the fact that being outdoors is proven to reduce the risk of contracting or spreading Coronavirus warrants an urgent review of outdoor leisure facilities.

Outdoor swimming in Kenilworth is part of the town's history. Abbey Fields Lido was one of the 1st in the country. The current outdoor pool is the furthest from the sea and the only safe public outdoor swimming facility within 30 miles. The pool's heritage is highly valued, but change is in its history. The original pool has already been rebuilt twice and we now have the perfect opportunity to create a lido for today; with the latest chemical free filtering, and the best 21st century design and eco credentials.

As well as providing a wonderful community facility Kenilworth Lido would also bring visitors to the town, benefiting the local economy, at a time when we need to do everything we can to keep Kenilworth open for business.

We therefore call on Warwick District Council to carry out Kenilworth Town Council's call for WDC to pause the current Kenilworth leisure project and 'create a revised plan'; and this to include a Feasibility Study into the viability of an outdoor pool."

Judy Brook addressed the Council on the petition.

Councillors, Wright, Milton, J Dearing, R Dickson, Cullinan, Illingworth, A Dearing, Matecki and Grainger spoke on this item.

It was proposed by Councillor Milton and seconded by Councillor R Dickson that the motion be referred to the Executive. On being put to the vote this was lost.

Prior to the vote above a Point of Order from Councillor Milton that Warwick District Council had received a request from Kenilworth Town Council to pause the current Kenilworth leisure project and 'create a revised plan'; and this to include a Feasibility Study into the viability of an outdoor pool, on which the Deputy Chief Executive had responded, after consultation with the Portfolio Holder to saying the District Council did not see the merit to revisit the proposal. The Portfolio Holder for Culture provided a personal explanation in that she did not recall the letter from Kenilworth Town Council seeking a pause but reconsideration of the whole scheme.

It was then proposed by Councillor Grainger and seconded by Councillor Wright that no further action be taken. On being put to the vote this was carried and therefore the petition fell with no further action to be taken.

47. **Notice of Motion**

To Council considered a notice of Motion from Councillor B Gifford seconded by Councillor Syson, that reads as follows:

“While we all remember the pleasure of firework displays in our childhood, in recent years their nature has changed, becoming as much a spectacle to be heard as one to be seen. The occasions on which people let off fireworks have also become much wider. Unfortunately, very loud fireworks cause great distress to pets and wild animals, and the really loud (up to 150 decibel) fireworks are often used as an anti-social weapon. These explosive fireworks have no place in either public displays or private gardens, and we urge the Government to ban their sale. This would not inhibit the enjoyment of quieter fireworks in public or private spaces.

This Council writes to the UK Government urging to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays”

Councillor Nicholls proposed an amendment that was seconded by Councillor Heath, as follows:

“This Council:

- requests that a report is brought to the Executive, before the end of August 2021, on the ability for this Council to require all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people*
- requests that the Executive brings forward proposals actively to promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks*
- will write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays*
- requests that the Executive writes to Warwickshire County Councillors within Warwick District to consider what action Warwickshire County Council could take to encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock ‘quieter’ fireworks for public display.”*

Councillor Gifford and Councillor Syson accepted this amendment and therefore the proposed amendment became the substantive motion for Council to debate.

Councillors B Gifford, Nicholls, Heath, Boad, Wright, R Dickson, Matecki, Hales, Cooke, Davison, Skinner, Falp and Syson spoke on this item.

Resolved that this Council:

- (1) requests that a report is brought to the Executive, before the end of August 2021, on the ability for this Council to require all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people;
- (2) requests that the Executive bring forward proposals actively to promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks;

- (3) will write to the UK Government urging it to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays; and
- (4) requests that the Executive write to Warwickshire County Councillors within Warwick District to consider what action Warwickshire County Council could take to encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display.

(Councillor Heath left the meeting after this item)

48. **Leader's & Portfolio Holders' Statements**

There were statements from the Portfolio Holders for: Finance & Business, Councillor Hales; Development, Housing & Property, Councillor Matecki, Councillor Cooke; Environment, Councillor Rhead; Culture & Neighbourhood, Councillor Grainger and the Leader, Councillor Day. These are set out at Appendix 1 to the minutes.

49. **Questions to the Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holders**

Councillor Mangat asked the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection I would like to ask Cllr Falp to confirm what work she was leading to connect with the efforts of the police, youth services, and drug treatment services, coordinating that with Warwickshire County Council in particular?

In response Councillor Falp explained that she had been due to meet with Ben Twomey, because he was a candidate for Police and Crime Commissioner, last week but this had been deferred until a meeting in person can take place.

The increase in County Lines activity had been noted during lockdown. There was a proactive partnership working with Warwickshire Police to disrupt activity. Leaflet drops had been carried out to specific locations, joint visits undertaken to vulnerable individuals' addresses and there were high visibility patrols in areas known for dealing.

A partnership group had been formed to monitor, assess and support vulnerable individuals across the Warwick District where their life choices make them a target for criminal exploitation. Over 200 individuals were currently monitored based on police and partner intelligence. Proactive interventions were put in place on those highest risk individuals; this included increased visits by the police and relevant WDC officers as well as contact from local support services.

Awareness raising activity was in development including pre-recorded theatre productions for schools and a Crimestoppers/Fearless campaign commenced on the 16 of November. As of Thursday (19) lunchtime 6400 people had seen/interacted with the Facebook Campaign across the District.

This was combined with the Meaningful Change Leamington which had raised over £600 to date. There were Five contactless donation points installed in Leamington. Donations were being released to fund essential supplies, identification documents and rehab placements for vulnerable individual's identified through our vulnerability group.

Partnership CIAOG's were initiated in response to any major incidents that occurred across the District. This allowed partners to identify community tensions and appropriate responses effectively. Scored action plans were used to monitor progress and to create exit strategies. In 2020, 3 CIAOG's had been held in response to a stabbing and two murders.

Councillor R Dickson asked the Leader if they could provide an update of the response to the 2020 Electoral Register household canvass e.g. how many forms have been returned and where are the response rates lowest by demographic?

In response the Leader explained that this was a matter for the Chief Executive as Electoral registration Officer. The Electoral register is due to be published on 1 December 2020 and the Chief Executive will respond to all Councillors on these points after that day. However, the Chief Executive had advised the Leader the data in respect of the demographics was not collected.

Councillor R Dickson asked the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection that on if they could provide an update as to which site(s) have been agreed by WDC as acceptable for this service?

In response Councillor Falp explained that she was unable to provide the details of the sites because the Council had not been notified, it was anticipated that this information would be circulated to all Councillors later this week.

Councillor R Dickson asked the Portfolio Holder for Business and Finance if the Council would be consulting on the proposed Council Car Parking Charges with the respective Town Council's?

The question was responded to by Councillor Grainger, Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood. She explained that there would be consultation after fees and charges had been agreed and the charges will come in later in 2021 rather than January 2021 to allow for this consultation.

Councillor K Dickson asked the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood, when the long term strategic plan for management of the fields would be produced to direct the work being done in the Abbey Fields?

In response Councillor Grainger publicly thanked and acknowledged the constant work that the Friends of Abbey Fields and other volunteer groups do to help maintain this wonderful historic open space. The delay in getting a formal Development Plan for Abbey Fields had been delayed by over a year. The public consultations were completed late in 2019 however due to both Officer absence at WDC, then Covid furloughing of IdVerd staff the whole plan had been delayed.

This work and further consultations regarding the Scheduled Monument Status and further biodiversity work had now been completed. The next step would be several stakeholder meetings to discuss the 10 year draft maintenance plan. She had heard, just this evening, that IDVerde would be contacting the stakeholders to review the draft plan week beginning the 7 and 14 December; with the intention of the plan being agreed by March 2021. She agreed to ensure that Kenilworth Councillors, the Town Council and the Friends of Abbey Fields were kept fully updated.

Councillor Cullinan asked the Portfolio Holder for Health & Community Protection for reassurance that the Council would continue to do everything they could, to help local charities support our residents, in these very difficult and challenging times?

In response Councillor Falp explained that the Council could not directly help charities but had been supporting community centres through grants and officers were processing applications to the economic recovery. Community Development workers were continuing to support community hubs, even during lockdown. Work was underway to reintroduce the poverty forum to help struggling families and setting up network meetings to share information and provide support.

There would be a report to the Executive in December on large grants to organisations to help support communities further.

Councillor Grainger encouraged all to talk with Town Councils as some had established additional grant funding for Charities.

Councillor Boad asked the Leader that, in light of the announcement of free off street car parking in District Council Car Parks for Christmas, had discussions taken place with Warwickshire County Council on the reintroduction of charges afterwards to avoid confusion for with residents?

In response the Leader explained those discussions were ongoing but agreed to inform Councillors.

Councillor Boad asked the Leader of the Council if he had had the opportunity to talk with the Chancellor about growing the economy and using the climate change emergency work to achieve that?

Councillor Day explained that he did not have personal access to the Chancellor and if he did there would be a long list for discussion, but we did have the Mega Lab and trying to take opportunities as they raise. The climate emergency should be used to encourage green business and reinvigorate the economy.

Councillor Weber asked the Portfolio Holder for Business and Finance, that following the disappointment of Diwali lights switch on at 2.00am, with little or no community engagement and promotion, would there be improved plans for 2021?

In response Councillor Hales explained that he had a virtual meeting with the relevant team tomorrow and this was the first item of the agenda to work forward and ensure this did not happen again.

Councillor Davison asked the Leader to provide an update in respect of Council Officers visiting residents homes to deliver services when restrictions were lighter and when some residents were suffering severe hardship?

In response the Leader acknowledged the recognition of Councillor Davison in the excellent and hard work from our officers.

While in lockdown it remained a legal requirement on employers to undertake risk assessments to protect its staff in the workplace, including visits to people's homes. Comparing trade roles is like comparing apples and pears because of the different roles they undertake and the measures therefore required were different. There is a generic risk assessment for Council Officers and control measures they were required to follow. If a service activity is above those standard risks then a further assessment needed to be undertaken. If officers fall into the vulnerable or clinically

vulnerable, then further assessments were required along with dynamic assessments when on site and the Council could not force staff to undertake a visit where they did not believe it could be undertaken safely. The general risk assessment could be shared with Councillors as we should be following these practices and of course all the risk assessments were required to be reviewed to ensure they remain up to date and in line with Government guidelines.

Officers had been innovating to ensure services can continue to be delivered for our residents despite restrictions. He reminded Councillors that evidence of over 82% of transfer being within a households and there was asymptomatic transmission from those who show no symptoms but had it. There were also plans for asymptomatic testing nationally which would further help with planning and service delivery.

In response to two supplementary questions the Leader explained that asymptomatic testing would help to provide dynamic risk assessments to address risk to officer, but reminded that the Council had limited resources and staff needed to be focussed on responding to the pandemic as priority. In respect of which site visits were taking place the Leader agreed to provide details of this to Councillor Davison.

Councillor Jacques asked the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Neighbourhood, what was the rationale for joining the Sherbourne Park scheme at the late stage rather than its inception?

In response Councillor Grainger explained that at that time our waste collection scheme did not fit with the scheme as comingled collection was required. This had now changed with the proposal for waste collection from 2022 which in part recognised that recycled material value has significantly decreased.

There was also the advantage that a significant part of the work to develop the project had been undertaken with the planning application due to be considered in the next few weeks.

Councillor Milton asked the Leader that while it is good to support local business in providing free car parking in the run up to Christmas but in light of the declared climate emergency will he undertake the lead of Kenilworth Town Council would he commit to helping people to find more environmentally friendly ways to travel during this time?

In response Councillor Day, explained he was always in support of such an idea and the Council was bringing forward a number of projects to support long term sustainable transport but will also promote this over the seasonal period.

50. **Employment Committee Report**

It was proposed by Councillor Margrave, seconded by Councillor Day

Resolved that the report of the Employment Committee of 15 September 2020, be approved.

51. **Executive Reports**

It was proposed by Councillor Day, seconded by Councillor Cooke and

Resolved that the report of the Executive of 17 November 2020, be approved.

52. **Licensing & Regulatory Committee Report**

The Chairman of the Council highlighted that an email from officers on this item had been circulated that set out a revision as follows:

Consultation has taken place with the Programme Director for Climate Change and in respect of points 23 to 25 on pages 22 and 23 of item 10, wording should be amended to read as follows:

23. Toughened recycled and recyclable polycarbonate glasses or bottles (or similar compostable/reusable alternative) to be used in the outside areas of the premises.
24. Toughened recycled and recyclable polycarbonate glasses or bottles (or similar compostable/reusable alternative) will be used when requested by Warwickshire Police.
25. Drinks must only be served in toughened recycled and recyclable polycarbonate glasses or bottles (or similar compostable/reusable alternative) containers.

It was proposed by the Councillor Murphy, seconded by Councillor Grey and

Resolved that the report of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee of 16 November 2020, with the amendment above, be approved.

53. **Common Seal**

It was proposed by Councillor Ashford, seconded by Councillor Day and

Resolved that the Common Seal of Warwick District Council be affixed to such documents as it may be required for implementing decisions of the Council arrived at this day.

(The meeting ended at 8.52pm)

CHAIRMAN

24 February 2021

Minute 48 Leader's and Portfolio Holders' Statements**Finance & Business Portfolio****Finance**

We have been working cross party on putting together a budget for 2021-22. I would like to thank all councillors, especially those on the Portfolio Advisory Board for their comments and thank you to Cllr Liam Bartlett for leading on the Board so effectively. Without doubt this will be one of the hardest budgets that any council will have to put together. One where we have to protect the services which are provided to our residents, ensure our council can continue to function to the highest levels that is achieved and appreciated by our residents, and appreciating the real financial pressures that our residents are facing at the moment. We all have to remember that the aim of our council is to make Warwick District a great place to live, work and visit, where we aspire to build sustainable, safer, stronger and healthier communities. I appreciate that we all represent different political parties across the council, but we need to ensure that our residents and businesses are at the forefront of our minds as we continue our discussions over the coming months, as these are the individuals that we all collectively represent.

Congratulations to Mike Snow and all his team in receiving the notification from our external auditors that our accounts have successfully been given a clean bill of health and this has been achieved within the government extended time period. This has been a phenomenal achievement faced in probably the most difficult and challenging circumstances that this council has encountered, and therefore makes this achievement so remarkable and outstanding. I would also like to thank the members of the Finance & Audit Committee for their assistance and especially Chair of the committee Councillor Jonathan Nicholls.

Also the finance team have been working hard in distributing the track & trace payments, and I know from the comments I have received from residents how impressed they have been in the response of the team and the speed of the payment. This payment is being distributed to some of our most vulnerable residents and I would like to thank Andrea and her team for their supreme efforts.

Grants

Paul Town and his team have been working round the clock in distributing the payments of the Local Restrictions Support Grant, to businesses who have been forced to close due to the lockdown. I am delighted to announce that to date they have paid over £750,000 to over 460 business across the district and continue to work through other applications. This has been a fantastic effort and I am sure that everyone in this meeting will want to pass their thanks onto Paul and his team.

For the Additional Resources Grant I am delighted to announce that we have already paid £15,000 to business across the region and am working through 375 applications. We were the first council in Warwickshire to have a scheme debated, written and then implemented and this achievement cannot be underestimated, as we are supporting a huge range of individuals, community centres and small businesses who are the lifeblood of this district. I know that the efforts of Gayle Spencer and all her team are truly appreciated by these people and I wanted to place on record my thanks to Gayle for implementing this policy so quickly and getting these funds out to people who desperately require this money.

Business

I am delighted to report that we have had regular engagement with the Chambers of Trade and BID over the last couple of months. I would like to thank Phil Clarke and Martin O'Neill for leading in these discussions. I believe it is vital as a District Council that we work with and support these organisations over the coming months, as we come out of lockdown and support our independent retailers and businesses, who make this area so vibrant. I know the Leader is going to announce a fantastic initiative which I believe shows our commitment to them and I would like to thank him and also the Chambers and BID for their involvement and support of this scheme and all the work they do in supporting our businesses in this present climate.

Councillor Hales

Portfolio Holder for Business & Finance

Development Portfolio

Authority Monitoring Report:

We have just published our latest Authority Monitoring report for the year 2019/20. This provides a snapshot of development during the year and includes information on housing and employment development, planning obligations, CIL, and many other areas. A few key figures:-

1,168 new homes were built in Warwick District in the year and we currently have 5.63 years supply of housing land.

Of these homes, 493 were affordable, 42% of all homes built.

17,621 sq m of new employment floor space was completed.

Total section 106 income from developments in the district totalled £9.1m.

South Warwickshire Plan:

Following approval by Executive, and Stratford District Council's Cabinet in October, progress is being made on starting work on the South Warwickshire Plan. We are looking to bring forward proposals for a joint committee and setting up a joint officer team. The first piece of work will be to scope the South Warwickshire Plan, and work is commencing on that now.

Building Control:

We are working with Morgan Sindall on a project at Rugby Radio Station, known as Houlton School, and are about to secure the building control work for Kenilworth School. Both of these are £40m projects.

Development Management

As a wider and more general point, workloads remain demanding in Development Management at the moment, but we are ensuring that we prioritise major new projects such as the recently announced Mega Lab.

Councillor Cooke

Portfolio Holder for Development

Housing Portfolio

The Triangle

Work has started on the triangle at Europa Way. This will deliver 54 affordable homes, which will be some of the most environmentally friendly homes we have built. The Properties will benefit from underfloor heating, air source heat pumps and Solar PV units. They should achieve an EPC A rating and will reduce carbon emissions by up to 80%.

Homelessness

In light of the reduced number of rough sleepers on our streets, together with the increased number of approaches the council has received since the start of the Covid crisis, we will be reviewing the approach we take to tackle the many forms of Homelessness. I will provide more details once the review is complete.

Allocations Policy

As you know, and you should all have received a copy, the new revised Allocations Policy has gone out to consultation. The consultation period will end on 7th December, so if you have any comments please send them in before the deadline.

Councillor Matecki Housing Portfolio Holder

Environment Portfolio

I am pleased to announce that the People's Inquiry into the Climate Emergency has now met twice, and further meetings will be held either side of the Christmas Holidays. This is an independently facilitated inquiry undertaken by external consultants and will provide the Council with important views from this resident's panel.

I can also announce that the Climate PAB has also met under the chairmanship of Councillor John Dearing and I thank him for his time and expertise in leading this PAB.

We have submitted an application to the Public Section Decarbonisation Fund for engaging consultants to scope the work involved in the installation of heat pumps to replace gas boilers. Once, and if this application is successful, we will then make a further application to fund the actual replacement work.

And finally, every Executive Report now has a section to set out how each report in question addresses the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

I would like to thank Dave Barber who, as the Programme Director, has been working very hard to ensure that our Council does not lose momentum despite the pandemic.

Councillor Rhead Environment Portfolio Holder

Neighbourhood and Culture Portfolio

I would also like to publicly thank all our teams who have worked really hard to keep our parks looking so attractive over this current lockdown, it has really been appreciated by our residents. Similarly, our cleaning teams who as I am sure you have seen in the press had to deal with some horrendous ASB issues within our public toilets, no one should have to be put in such a situation of having to clear up smeared faeces. I'm afraid I just cannot understand such mentality.

On a lighter note, I can confirm that our Leisure Facilities will all be reopening next week however until we know which Tier we will be in Everyone Active cannot confirm exactly what services they will be able to offer.

Despite the current situation work continue a pace as we work toward the CG in 2022, with new path works in Victoria Park. We are also working on another exciting CG event which hopefully I can announce in the New Year – so something to look forward too!

Councillor Grainger Neighbourhood and Culture Portfolio Holder

The Leader of the Council

I welcome the Right Move report 2020 that Royal Leamington Spa was the third best place to live in the United Kingdom.

The Government spending review highlights that while end may be in sight for Covid-19, the economic crisis to follow has just started our spirit of joint working we have developed since May last year. This needs to be maintained and developed to ensure our response is delivered in a timely manner. Our local communities are looking for us to put political differences aside and put the local community first.

We will be working with partners to be in the lowest Tier as possible, but much will depend on which cohort of authorities this Council area is included in, for example, if combined with wider West Midlands, it will be different to being in a group with Warwickshire and Coventry.

Councillors will be well aware of work of merging services and management with Stratford District Council. The creation of a South Warwickshire council would bring a number of opportunities, and a report will be brought forward to this Council as soon as possible but in time to consider it as part of the budget process in February 2021.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Group Leaders for their openness to consider all potential options to enable the Council to set, as required by law, a balanced budget, but also thank the tireless efforts of officers who are working in difficult circumstances through evenings and weekends to support our residents and local communities at this time.

It is Light Up the District this Friday at 5.45pm and I encourage all to participate to provide good cheer for all. However, remember that coming out of lockdown, we need to support local businesses, but we know this needs to be done safely and thank the local chambers of trade and as part of that, we are able to support free parking in town centres for all of December in our District Council Car Parks to help support local businesses.

Councillor Day
Leader of the Council