

# **NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **COUNCIL**

**Friday, 8 October 2004**

### **MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL , NORTHAMPTON, ON FRIDAY THE EIGHTH DAY OF OCTOBER 2004 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING**

**PRESENT:** HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor W B Massey (in the Chair);

**COUNCILLORS** Acock, Allen, Barron, Boss, Caswell, Church, Concannon, Crake, Duncan, Edwards, Eldred, Evans, Flavell, Glynane, Hadland, B Hoare, Hollis, Hope, Lane, Larratt, McCutcheon, Malpas, Miah, B Markham, I Markham, Marriott, Mason, Matthews, Palethorpe, Patterson, Perkins, Pritchard, Robinson, Roy, Simpson, Stewart, Tavener, Taylor, Wire, Woods and Yates

#### **1. MINUTES.**

The minutes of the proceedings of the special meeting of the Council held on 9 July and the ordinary meeting held on 29 July 2004 were signed by the Mayor.

#### **2. APOLOGIES.**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Beardsworth, Hill, M Hoare, C Lill, and J Lill.

#### **3. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

The Mayor advised that his Chaplain the Reverend Simon Godfrey was now convalescing after a serious illness and that he had sent a letter on behalf of the Council wishing him well for a speedy recovery.

The Mayor then announced that Judith Ball, Personal Assistant and Secretary to the Mayor had retired that day after nearly 30 years service with the Borough Council. He paid tribute to Judith's dedication and hard work throughout her time with the Borough and it was agreed that on behalf of himself and past Mayors that a letter of thanks be sent to Judith wishing her well and a long and happy retirement.

The Mayor then referred to the 25th Anniversary of twinning with Poitiers and advised that the Mayor of Poitiers had presented him with some silverware to mark the anniversary which was on display at the meeting.

The Mayor then presented the Mayor's Cadet with a badge.

The Mayor then referred to a plaque that had been presented to the Sports and Leisure Management Section by the Association of Public Service Excellence as the Internal Service Team of the year for Sports and Leisure Management.

#### **4. DEPUTATIONS/PUBLIC ADDRESSES/QUESTIONS.**

**RESOLVED:** That the following be permitted to address the Council; Mr P James and Mr D Ince from Radlands Skateboard Park and Mr G Howes who wished to address the Council under item 7 "Statement of Accounts" of 19 July Executive minutes and item 14 "Council Consultation Procedure of 13 September Executive minutes. Mr Howes had also given notice that he wished to ask a number of questions in relation to the Street Fair.

At this juncture the Mayor received a deputation from Members of the Radlands Skateboard Park and heard addresses from Mr D Ince, Manager of the Skateboard Park and Mr P James, a user of the park as well as representing England in the Bicycle Stunt team. Both referred to the fact that Radlands which was the only indoor skateboard and BMX park in the county and the first of its kind to be opened back in November 1992 faced closure that weekend and asked the Council if it could help in some way to keep the centre open so that it could continue to be enjoyed by the hundreds of users.

At this juncture the Mayor agreed under Matters of Urgency to allow this issue to be debated and for any motions to be moved.

Councillor Glynane then moved and Councillor Church seconded a motion of regret:-  
"This Council regrets the news that Radlands is due to close on 10 October.

This Council recognises that Radlands provides a unique indoor facility for Northampton, and resolves to work with users to find a way of maintaining an indoor skateboard and BMX facility in Northampton.

This Council requests the Executive:-

- (1) To explore all options to ensure that the facility continues to be provided.
- (2) Work with users to ensure that they are consulted and involved in those options.
- (3) Work with other local bodies providing leisure facilities for young people.
- (4) Work with Northampton Co-operative Development Association to consider a users co-operative venture."

The motion was duly debated, voted upon and carried unanimously.

At this juncture Mr G Howes presented his nine written questions on the Street Fair which were directed to Councillor Hadland as the relevant Portfolio Holder and who responded accordingly. The questions covered issues including whether the fair was expected to make a profit this year, what public consultation had taken place, questions on who the Safety

Engineers would be, what criteria had been applied to select the rides and a question on crime levels. Councillor Hadland advised that this year's fair was not expected to make a profit and that it was reduced in size from previous years and would be located mainly in Abington Street. Safety factors and inspections would be in place and he then read out information from the Police regarding crime figures for 2002/3 during the period of the fair.

Mr G Howes then made his address to the Council in respect of item 7 of the July Executive minutes and item 14 of the September Executive minutes which involved Street Fair costs.

## **5. COMMITTEE MINUTES.**

**(A). EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 JULY 19 AUGUST AND 13 SEPTEMBER 2004.** With regard to item 7 of the July minutes Councillor Boss moved and Councillor Evans seconded a motion of regret:- "That this Council has been misled over running and budgeting of the Street Fair".

The motion was lost.

Reference was made to the fact that the minutes of 19 July should only have been for noting having been tabled and discussed at the July Council meeting. However in view of the issues that had arisen from this Councillor Larratt moved and Councillor Taverner seconded as a motion of future policy;- "This Council does not accept minutes tabled at Council meetings only those contained in the booklet".

The motion was carried.

A motion that the minutes as presented be adopted was carried.

NB Councillor Allen declared an interest in respect of item 15 of the September minutes and Councillor Larratt declared an interest during mention of the Health and Safety Executive.

At this juncture the Mayor agreed to vary the order of business to consider the Notice of Motion under item 7(C) on the agenda and to receive an address from Ms D Anul.

The Council then heard Ms D Anul's address advocating support of the motion and to the lowering of the voting age to 16.

Councillor Concannon then moved and Councillor Barron seconded:-

"This Council welcomes the "Making Your Mark" focus of local democracy week (18-24) October this year in a background of reducing percentages of young people voting,

This Council believes that the young people of this town are one of the most valuable resources in the community.

This Council believes it essential to engage young people to be a recovering and effective authority.

This Council believes that to do this we need to:-

Ensure that work with the Youth Forum is developed

Encourage young people to play an active part in their forthcoming Conference given the focus on Northampton's future

“Consult with young people to seek the views of young people on lowering the voting age to 16.

Councillor Glynane then moved and Councillor Simpson seconded an amendment to the motion with the following addition:- “That the Council seeks to engage more with sixth formers, college students and those young people not at school by seeking the creation of additional forums and through promoting the establishment of a local youth parliament linked to the National Youth Parliament”.

The amendment was duly debated, voted upon and carried to become the substantive motion.

The substantive motion was then voted upon and carried.

**(B) GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2004** were presented and it was moved that the recommendation contained under item 6 – “The Consumption of Alcohol in Park Square, Kings Heath be adopted. A motion that minutes as presented be adopted was carried.

**(C) LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD ON 27 JULY 2004.** A motion that the minutes as presented be adopted was carried.

**(D) PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 JULY 2004.** A motion that the minutes as presented be adopted was carried.

**(E) OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES.** The meetings of the following Overview and Scrutiny Committees – Health and Environment held on 7 July, Housing held on 8 July, Planning, Transportation and Regeneration held on 14 July, Financial Strategy and Performance held on 4 August and the reconvened meeting held on 16 August 2004 were moved en bloc and duly adopted.

**(F) TREE PANEL** held on 3 August 2004. A motion that the minutes as presented be adopted was carried.

## **6. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURAL RULE 5.2.**

Councillor Simpson asked a number of questions of the relevant Portfolio Holder regarding the Racecourse Football Pitches. He asked how many pitches had been damaged on the Racecourse during the balloon festival and when they would be available again for use; what alternative facilities had been provided whilst the pitches recovered; what had been the cost to repair the pitches and what steps would be taken to protect them during future

Balloon Festivals. In the absence of the Portfolio Holder Councillor Eldred responded to the questions. He advised that nine football pitches and one gaelic football pitch required reinstatement. All had been reinstated and seeded but were likely to be out of action for the remainder of the season. However pitches at other parks in the town that had spare capacity were being used. The cost of reinstatement had been £11,200. The problems had been caused by torrential rain on the Monday afternoon/evening immediately after the Balloon Festival. Temporary trackways/roads at vulnerable points could be looked at to provide protection in future but it was expensive.

Councillor Patterson then asked a question of the Portfolio Holder for Housing as to what progress had been made on identifying footpaths in the ownership of the Housing Department and supplying this to Councillors as requested two meetings ago. Councillor Palethorpe advised that unfortunately progress had been slower than anticipated but that he would get officers to expedite this with the County Council. It was a case of more paths possibly being maintainable by the Highways Authority than was previously thought. Identifying and agreeing them was going to be a complex exercise. A meeting that had been arranged with the County on 7 October had been cancelled by the County Council but it had been rearranged for 1 November. He advised that he was happy to give an update on the issue at the next meeting of Council.

Councillor Glynane then asked a question of the relevant Portfolio Holder on what progress had been made to date on Northampton's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report. He noted that the draft report had been submitted to the Environment Agency for independent audit and subsequent approval on 17 November 2003. Also he asked whether Leaders of the Political Groups could be issued with copies of the new maps showing flood risk that had been published by the Environment Agency. In the absence of the Portfolio Holder Councillor Larratt responded to the questions. He explained why completion of the project had been delayed but that the issues had now been resolved and it was expected that the final report would be submitted to Executive at its 22 November meeting. He agreed to supply copies of the maps to the Leaders of the political groups assuming they were not too expensive and in addition suggested that one be placed in the One Stop Shop and Cliftonville Reception for members of the public.

Councillor B Hoare asked a question regarding the current status of the Abington Park Plan and whether it was a formally adopted Borough Council document and how the Portfolio Holder would represent the aspirations in the plan during the 2005/6 budgetary process to restore the standards and improve the facilities in the park for the health and wellbeing of the residents of Northampton. In the absence of the Portfolio Holder Councillor Eldred responded to the questions. He advised that a Management Plan had been drawn up with the local Committee which had identified a number of improvements. Those which required capital funding had been programmed into the capital cycle whilst others were being addressed through the revenue allocation or through community involvement and in partnership with other agencies. He then listed recent improvements to the park which had been carried out within the last 12 months which included provision of new seats and litter bins, the installation of new information boards and park signage, the erection of new fencing, liaison with Northants Police and Barclays Bank and works to the lower park lake. Major improvements scheduled for 2005/6 included further works to the lower lake, CCTV and historic interpretation for park and museum.

Councillor Malpas then asked a question on behalf of the Race Equality Forum, firstly congratulating those involved for the work that had gone into the new Equalities and Diversity Policy and asking that considering the heavy workload whether additional resources could be made available. Councillor Larratt responded to the question in absence of the Portfolio Holder. He stated that the administration recognised and supported the work fully and endorsed thanks made to those involved. He added that resources were currently being looked at and would be considered as part of the root and branch review.

## **7. NOTICES OF MOTION**

(A) Councillor Patterson moved and Councillor Evans seconded:- "When staff assess the need and priority for tree work an additional and important consideration should be the light levels in neighbouring properties and the disabilities the occupants of those properties have":-

The motion was carried and stood referred to the Executive.

(B) Councillor Wire moved and Councillor Evans seconded:- "That procedural rules be suspended to enable the following motion to be debated".

The motion was carried.

Councillor Wire then moved and Councillor Evans seconded:-

"This Council condemns the amount of illegal traveller encampments which have increased over the last twelve months. The comments of the Leader of the Council who heaps the blame on the County Traveller Unit are unproductive, when many of his Conservative colleagues in other District Authorities have signed up to the Unit and are working effectively. His party's claim to a zero tolerance policy is now in tatters.

We call on the Executive of this Council to develop a policy which is achievable. This policy should clearly show approaches in the long, medium and short term and be presented at the first full Council of 2005.

Councillor Glynane then moved and Councillor Church seconded an amendment to the motion with the following addition:-

"This Council endorses the following House of Commons Early Day Motion No 79 on traveller accommodation sponsored by Labour MP Kevin McNamara and signed by 117 MPs of all three main parties.

That this House is deeply concerned that the shortfall of traveller sites is causing severe hardship for the gypsy and traveller community and is leading to a deterioration in relations between the traveller and settled community; notes that the Institute for Public Policy Research has produced proposals for traveller sites entitled "Moving On" which has received widespread support, further notes at the ODPM Select Committee Report on the draft Housing Bill has called upon the Government to introduce a statutory duty on local authorities to provide and facilitate gypsy and traveller sites; calls upon the Government to ensure that mechanisms are urgently put in place to provide and facilitate a sufficient

number of travellers sites; and further note such action is supported by the Institute for Public Policy Research, Local Government Association, Shelter, Children's Society, Traveller Law Reform Coalition and Commission for Racial Equality.

This Council requests the Acting Chief Executive to write to our MPs urging them to support this motion and to Kevin McNamara MP and the relevant Government Minister informing them of this Council's support for the early day motion.

This Council requests the Executive to work with the other Councils in the County Traveller Unit in order to provide and facilitate suitable traveller sites in the County to which unauthorised traveller encampments can be directed".

Councillor Wire as moved with the original motion accepted the amendment.

The amendment was duly debated, voted upon and carried to become the substantive motion.

A vote was then taken upon the substantive motion and carried.

(C ) Councillor Larratt moved and Councillor Barron seconded; "That procedural rule 3.4 be suspended to enable the following motion to be discussed and voted upon".

The motion was carried.

Councillor Larratt then moved and Councillor Barron seconded; "That this Council endorses the Acting Chief Executive's participation in the forthcoming Parliamentary Select Committee in support of the ODPM Policy to establish an Urban Development Corporation for West Northamptonshire to deliver the Government's Sustainable Community Plan".

Councillor Roy then moved and Councillor Patterson seconded; "That the question be now put".

The motion was carried.

Upon the request for a roll call it was recorded that there:-

Voted for the motion: Councillors Acock, Barron, Caswell, Concannon, Duncan, Edwards, Eldred, Evans, Flavell, Hadland, Lane, Larratt, McCutcheon, Malpas, Miah, Marriott, Mason, Palethorpe, Patterson, Pritchard, Robinson, Roy, Taverner and Wire (24).

Voted against the motion: Councillors Allen, Church, Crane, Glynane, B Hoare, Hollis, Hope, B Markham, I Markham, Matthews, Perkins, Simpson, Woods and Yates (14).

Abstained: His Worship the Mayor.

The motion was carried.

## **8. RECENT NOTICES OF MOTION**

The Council received a report together with an Appendix, copies of which were circulated at the meeting detailing the progress on recent Notices of Motion. The report was duly received and noted.

## **9. RECOVERY PLAN**

In view of the earlier motion of future policy passed regarding minutes tabled at the meeting this issue and the two sets of minutes tabled were duly deferred until the next meeting.

## **10. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE MAYOR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED.**

The Mayor was of the opinion that the following motion be considered as a Matter of Urgency.

Councillor B Markham then moved and Councillor Barron seconded the following motion:-  
“This Council regrets the decision of Bernie Ecclestone to withdraw the British Grand Prix from Silverstone, putting at risk 400 jobs in Northamptonshire and over £5m in annual investment in the County.

This Council notes the comments of a Government spokesperson that the Government has pumped over £24m of public money into the Silverstone area in recent years including £8m spent on the Silverstone bypass.

This Council recognises the importance of the Grand Prix to the local economy and the Government investment put into the Silverstone area.

This Council resolves to work with other Councils in Northamptonshire and with our local MPs to persuade the FIA World Sports Council meeting on 13 October to include Silverstone in its Grand Prix programme for 2005 and secure the return of the Grand Prix to Northamptonshire in subsequent years.

This Council requests the Acting Chief Executive to write to Bernie Ecclestone, to the British Racing Drivers Club (the owner of the Silverstone Circuit) and to Max Moseley, the President of the FIA informing them of the Council’s strong support for the Grand Prix remaining at Silverstone”.

The motion was agreed unanimously although it was noted that in the Chronicle and Echo that evening there had been a further development of events where Bernie Ecclestone had suggested the possibility of making a bid to purchase the Silverstone Circuit as a possible solution to the problem.

The meeting concluded at 2220 hours.



