MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON MONDAY 12 JULY 2010 AT SIX THIRTY O’CLOCK IN THE EVENING

PRESENT: Councillor Hill (in the Chair).


1. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR
Councillor B Hoare proposed and Councillor Palethorpe seconded “That Councillor Hill be elected Chair of the meeting”.

The Motion was carried and Councillor Hill assumed the Chair of the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
Councillors Church and Woods declared a personal interest in item 8 “Cabinet Member Presentations” insofar as the discussion related to WNDC of which they were Board members.

Councillors Capstick and Flavell declared a personal interest in item 8 “Cabinet Member Presentations” insofar as the discussion related to WNDC of which they were members of WNDC’s Northampton Planning Committee.

Councillor Yates declared a personal interest in item 8 “Cabinet Member Presentations” insofar as the discussion related to the Wildlife Trust of which he was a trustee.

Councillor Clarke declared a personal interest in item 8 “Cabinet Member Presentations” insofar as the discussion related to the Friends of Delapre Abbey of which he was a patron.

Councillor Simpson declared a personal interest in item 8 “Cabinet Member Presentations” insofar as the discussion related to the Friends of Delapre Abbey of which he was a member.

3. MINUTES.
Subject to the list of attendees of the meeting held on 24 May 2010 being amended to remove the name of Councillor Golby, the minutes of the meetings of Council held on 20 May and 24 May 2010 were signed by the Chair.
4. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from The Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and Councillors de Cruz, Edwards, M. Hoare, Larratt, Scott and Wilson.

5. MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

There were none.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Mr Watt commented that he had circulated all Councillors with a six page letter concerning his eviction from the Becketts Park Boathouse. He referred to correspondence from the Council that he believed contained contradictory statements. He had vacated the Boathouse on 31 May as he could not afford a legal battle. He understood that the Environment Agency’s use of the Boathouse as a visitor centre had been restricted. Mr Watt had made an offer on 4 November 2009 to share the use of the Boathouse but this had been turned down. He believed that the Environment Agency did not want the building but only the lake. Mr Watt stated that it had cost him £1,000 to vacate the building and had only received £1,200 in compensation. He had not yet heard if he could still run the café from alternative premises in the park.

Mr Baker commented in respect of the motion on the Government’s proposed VAT increase that this would hit the poor disproportionately hard. He believed that he and his wife would particularly suffer as a consequence of it. He believed that this measure had been poorly thought out as means of reducing the deficit. Mr Baker referred to the removal of trees at St Andrews Hospital expressing his disappointment that this had happened. He hoped that the public could be assured that this would not happen elsewhere in the town.

Shayley Watson, a concerned tenant and resident of Eastfield and member of the Residents Association commented on the lack of consultation by the Council over the PFI project for Eastfield. She was also concerned about what would happen to Eastfield Park and whether her home would be demolished. Her youngest child would shortly be starting nursery and her eldest starting secondary school; she did not want to have to move. She had lived in her present home for 11 years and on the estate for 30 years. She would rather miss out on the improvements than have her home demolished. She referred to a local petition expressing opposition to the possible demolition of homes on Eastfield and hoped that residents views and opinions would be taken into account.

Tony Mallard, Vice Chair of Northampton Federation of Residents Associations referred to concerns in respect of the PFI project for Eastfield and Thorplands. Questions had been put to the Federation that they could not answer: would homes be demolished? Would compulsory purchase be used? Would people have to move? And would green spaces be lost? He believed that after two years of consultation matters were no further forward. He accepted that some information would be confidential but the residents should be treated with respect. It was accepted that Eastfield needed regeneration but this should not happen forcibly. Mr Mallard noted that a Steering Group meeting would take place on 13 July and hoped that its membership would not become so large as to prevent progress being made.
Sheron Watson, a committee member of Eastfield Residents Association, member of the PFI Steering Group and member of the Northampton Federation of Residents Associations commented that it had been said that the majority of residents’ views were not being represented. This was not true. The residents association had surveyed 400 homes on the estate out of a total of just over 400. Residents believed that they should be involved in the plans. The Council’s consultants had claimed a combined response rate of 77% across four estates to their survey but very few people seemed to be aware of it. The consultants had admitted that in respect of Eastfield their survey had been restricted to the flats and maisonettes from which they had a 57% response rate. People were angry at the prospect that their homes might be demolished. She referred to comments from the HCA that the whole of the Eastfield estate should be included which presumably meant that more homes would be affected. The HCA also had said that residents should but into the principles of the project.

Chris Swinn in referring to the Cabinet Member Presentations welcomed the estate walkabouts but commented that the original commitment had been for these to take place monthly rather than annually. He believed that they should take place at least quarterly. The environmental enhancements were good but felt that these could be discussed at the Area Housing Boards. He noted attendance at Tenants Panels that appeared more effective than the Consultant’s efforts. Mr Swinn referred to the Constitution Working Party that had met in private. He contrasted the current process of amending the Council’s Constitution with that which had taken place in 2006 where the public had been able to present evidence to Overview and Scrutiny. He noted that the County Council placed no restriction on public speaking at their Cabinet and County Council meetings; addresses be taken at the point at which the item was to be discussed.

Chris Grethe noted that the County Council allowed public speaking on any item. The Council should listen to the views of the public. He expressed a hope that public speaking rights would be returned to what they had been originally.

Beverley Mennell stated that she was a Council tenant who had moved to Northampton from central London and was addressing her comments to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council. She attended most Council and Cabinet meetings and received the papers for them. She had asked for papers the previous Thursday which had not yet arrived. She stated that the public had a legal right to ask for paper copies of committee papers and that she was aware that Councillors had only received copies of one of the reports for that evening’s meeting on Friday afternoon. Beverley noted the concerns of other speakers in respect of the PFI project and reminded Councillors of who paid their wages.

7. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair advised that sixteen questions had been received from members of the public and Councillors and that they and the answers had been tabled in accordance with the Constitution.

Norman Adams asked a question of Councillor Beardsworth as the relevant Portfolio
Holder, as to the date on which the possibility of a return to resident wardens had become “not possible”. He noted the response as tabled and in referring to an e-mail dated 24 March 2009 from the Head of Housing Need and Support to Councillor P. D. Varnsverry that did not preclude the possibility of resident wardens where residents wanted them and were prepared to pay for them. Councillor Beardsworth undertook to write to Mr Adams with a response.

Norman Adams asked a question of Councillor Beardsworth as the relevant Portfolio Holder, as to the number of tenants who had attended a meeting on 17 June 2010 in respect of the Tenant Involvement Strategy and the number different households represented. He noted the response as tabled.

In the absence of Mr McNabb it was noted that the response to his question would be sent to him.

Councillor I Choudary asked Councillor Crake as the relevant Portfolio Holder, a question regarding noise complaints he had received from members of the public in respect of the Race Horse public house on Abington Square. He noted the response as tabled and asked for an explanation of the Environmental Health out of hours service. Councillor Crake commented that the service was an out of hours one as opposed to 24 hours a day; that diaries had been sent to residents since 2007 but none had ever been returned; and the reported incidents seemed to relate to an annual event. She suggested that Councillor Choudary liaise further with the residents.

Councillor Mildren asked Councillor B. Markham as the relevant Portfolio Holder as to the number of staff at risk of redundancy and how these instances had been resolved. He noted the answer as tabled and queried whether long term agency arrangements had also been affected. Councillor B. Markham undertook to write to Councillor Mildren with a response.

Councillor Mildren asked Councillor Crake as the relevant Portfolio Holder as to the number of reported sightings of grey squirrels since April 2007 and any subsequent action. He noted the response as tabled.

Councillor Mildren asked Councillor Crake as the relevant Portfolio Holder the extent to which the Council employed “bin inspectors”. He noted the response as tabled.

Councillor Mildren asked Councillor B. Markham as the relevant Portfolio Holder to indicate the situation in respect of a national pay award for 2010/11. He noted the response as tabled.

Councillor Mildren asked Councillor Beardsworth as the relevant Portfolio Holder what contingency plans the Council had if the Government discontinued the PFI process. He noted the response as tabled.

Councillor Hawkins asked Councillor Beardsworth as the relevant Portfolio Holder to give a summary of the latest position in respect of the PFI bid and how Eastfield residents could be assured that the Council was effectively managing the situation.
She noted the response as tabled and asked if the Portfolio Holder would respond to the public speakers earlier in the meeting. Councillor Beardsworth commented that she had listened to what had been said. The Steering Group had now been convened and she hoped that progress could be made. By November the Council should know if the project would go ahead.

Councillor Hawkins asked Councillor P. D. Varnsverry as the relevant Portfolio Holder what measures were in place to reverse the downward trend in visitor numbers to the Central Museum and Art Gallery. She noted the response as tabled and asked if lessons could be learnt from the success of Leicester and Nottingham museums in increasing footfall. Councillor P. D. Varnsverry commented that lessons would be learnt from wherever the opportunity arose.

Councillor Hawkins asked Councillor P. D. Varnsverry as the relevant Portfolio Holder to clarify the membership of the Youth Forum. She noted the response as tabled and asked how many places constituted membership; who conducted the electing/co-opting; if members only came from 15 wards how representative were they of all 24; and could the Forum be subsumed into the new Area Management arrangements. Councillor P. D. Varnsverry undertook to write to Councillor Hawkins with a response.

Councillor Hawkins asked Councillor Church as the relevant Portfolio Holder what measures were being undertaken to protect the below ground archaeology of Abington Medieval Village. She noted the response as tabled. Councillor Church stated that at present there was no evidence to suggest that temporary car parking was damaging the archaeology but if it was proved otherwise then the parking would be moved.

Councillor Clarke asked Councillor Perkins as the relevant Portfolio Holder the combined Capital and Revenue Spend on the Market Square since April 2009. He noted the response as tabled and queried how the Council could justify expenditure of £301,000 on the Market Square when it had ended the Balloon Festival which had cost less than half that figure. Councillor Perkins undertook to write to Councillor Clarke with a response.

Councillor Clarke asked Councillor B. Hoare as the relevant Portfolio Holder how Cabinet Advisory Panels fitted into the Council’s Constitution. He noted the response as tabled and queried the relationship between advisory panels and Overview and Scrutiny. Councillor B. Hoare commented that the advisory panels (and there had only been two) provided a welcome cross party method of working on difficult issues. He noted that Overview and Scrutiny determined its own work plan. It was within the Cabinet’s remit to seek advice from an advisory panel.

Councillor Clarke asked Councillor Crake as the relevant Portfolio Holder for an update on progress for the market testing of environmental services. He noted the response as tabled. In noting the Leader of the Council’s response to a Call-in in April 2009 that there would be regular reports to Cabinet on the progress of this project, that the next report would not be until January 2011 which would be 19 months since the last report. Councillor Crake commented that “regular reporting”
was in the context of key decisions needing to be made. None had been necessary over that time. Briefings had been held for Group Leaders, Cabinet members and Overview and Scrutiny. Further briefing for all Councillors would be held during July, August and September.

8. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

At this point each of the Portfolio Holders made a presentation of their respective portfolios that had been circulated with the agenda.

Councillor B. Hoare submitted his Portfolio Holder report. Councillor Malpas sought an assurance that the Council would not “fire sale” its assets and asked what practical steps the Council had taken to increase employment opportunities. Councillor commented that there would be no “fire sale” of Council assets; the most appropriate decisions would be made as the opportunity arose. In terms of unemployment he noted that 70% of the unemployed had been so for longer than six months. He had raised this at Public Service Board and had argued for resources to be made available for services such as Money Advice and Mortgage Rescue. It was important to tackle the underlying trends. Councillor Mildren enquired whether The Leader supported a point of view expressed in The Times that middle class public service workers doing pointless jobs should be the first for the axe. Councillor B Hoare declined to respond. Councillor Palethorpe asked what discussions had taken place with the private sector in order to bring jobs to the Town. Councillor B. Hoare commented that the public sector could not solve the current problems and may indeed add to them. The private sector would need to lead the way and he pointed to investment in the Town Centre, Carlsberg and in Gold Street as being positive signs for the future. Councillor Clarke enquired as to what action the Leader had taken to encourage the establishment of apprenticeships instead of using agency workers since the last Council meeting. Councillor B. Hoare commented that there was always a role for the Council to provide jobs; however the public sector could not lead the way. The Council would take whatever opportunities arose. He noted that the Council had currently taken on 29 Job Seekers and would continue to do so whilst bearing in mind the need for the Council to reconfigure its services.

Councillor Perkins submitted his Portfolio Holder report. Councillor Mildren asked if there was any further news in respect of the cost of concessionary bus passes. Councillor Perkins noted that the administration of this scheme would pass to the County Council from 1 April 2011. Councillor Palethorpe, in congratulating Revenues and Benefits for their success in dealing with an increase in demand for
their services expressed the hope that they would be adequately resourced. Councillor Perkins commented that regular meetings were taking place with the Head of Service to monitor demand and resources. He noted that improved technology had helped and further improvements were planned. In respect of NAPS and the joint procurement of Environmental Services with Daventry Councillor Clarke queried that a report would not go to Cabinet before January 2011 despite the achievement of key stages. Councillor Perkins commented that “key decisions” related to expenditure in excess of £50,000 and that at present a shortlisting exercise was being gone through. The decision to award a contract would be made by Cabinet.

Councillor Beardsworth submitted her Portfolio Holder Report and commented that six monthly estate walkabouts, avoiding the winter months, had been planned. The schedule would be published online and in “About My Home”. Councillor Malpas asked if some of the walkabouts could take place during the evenings or at weekends so as to allow more people to take part. Councillor Beardsworth agreed to consider this. Councillor Mildren, in noting that 35 successful mortgage rescues had taken place and the outcome of a further five was awaited, asked how many people had enquired about the scheme and how many repossessions had actually taken place. Councillor Beardsworth stated that the scheme had been successful and that she would write to Councillor Mildren with the details that he sought.

Councillor Church submitted his Portfolio Holder report and referred to Mr Watt’s comments about the Boathouse. The Boathouse was now occupied by the Environment Agency and Mr Watt’s needed to speak to them. Everyone wanted to see the Boathouse used. He also shared Mr Baker’s concern in respect of the removal of trees at St Andrews Hospital. Steps had been taken to ensure that no more were removed without first seeking the Council’s advice. Councillor Hawkins, enquired as to the outcome of the English Heritage CABE visit. Councillor Church stated that the report from the Urban Panel had not yet been received but they had seemed very interested in the proposals for the Grosvenor Centre, Bus Station and St Johns. Councillor Hadland expressed the hope that trees on any land that the Council was thinking of disposing of would be protected. Councillor Church agreed that this would be so providing they had a conservation value. Councillor Mildren asked that with the abolition of the RSS how swift would be the demise of WNDC and that a tree survey of the Cliftonville House site should be carried out. Councillor Church commented that there was no news as to the future of WNDC, which continued to deliver significant regeneration projects and that any trees within the Cliftonville House site with a conservation value would be protected. Councillor Church noted that the redevelopment of the Grosvenor Centre represented the single biggest investment of £350million and would create thousands of jobs. Councillor noted that this was welcome but that other parts of the Borough and its boundaries also needed to be considered. Councillor Church commented that the Emergent Joint Core Strategy identified land for employment purposes. The Brackmills Business Area was included as well as other examples. Councillor Yates asked that ownership of the Boathouse by the Environment Agency be confirmed. Councillor Church confirmed that the ownership of the Boathouse and the lake was with the Environment Agency.
Councillor Clarke asked when the Boathouse was sold to the Environment Agency and how Councillors had been informed of this. Councillor Church commented that the transfer had enabled the marina development to take place and that all Councillors had been made aware of it. Councillor Yates noted that the removal of trees at St Andrews had included trees being used by nesting and fledgling birds.

Councillor Crake submitted her Portfolio Holder Report and commented that she was unable to announce the results of National Recycling Week as the information had not yet been received. Councillor Golby noted how good the Town looked ahead of the Britain in Bloom competition and expressed his best wishes for it. Councillor Flavell referred to the Community Clean Up of rubbish at Rectory Farm and enquired as to what it constituted. Councillor Crake commented that the clean up had been undertaken by Cleansing Services, the Community Wardens and the public. Councillor Flavell enquired whether some or all of the rubbish should have been collected by Cleansing Services in any case. Councillor Crake commented that it was not possible to answer this. Councillor J. Lill enquired as to the amount of glass collected during the pilot scheme and how much had been collected this year. Councillor Crake undertook to write to Councillor J. Lill with this information. Councillor J. Lill observed that she didn’t believe that the scheme had been as successful as was being portrayed. Councillor Crake remarked that 60 tonnes of glass had been collected during one week of the recent World Cup competition.

Councillor Clarke moved and Councillor Hawkins seconded “That Council Procedural Rules be suspended so as to allow the remaining Portfolio Holder reports to be taken”.

The motion was carried.

Councillor B. Markham submitted his Portfolio Holder Report and announced the introduction of Google Street View, an in-house development that would enable staff and the public to better pinpoint locations and incidents. He also referred to the new
Guildhall and Guildhall events web pages that were successful in obtaining bookings for the facilities. Councillor Mason asked what “clean mail” was. Councillor B. Markham commented that it was a process of sorting mail out by street and postcode before it was collected by the Royal Mail. This was saving the Council £1,000 per month before any special bulk mailings were taken into account. Councillor Meredith commented that he had been advised by the Councillor Contact Centre of changes to the method of working in relation to housing needs and asked what the new system was. Councillor B. Markham commented that more services were being undertaken by the Contact Centre and undertook to investigate Councillor Meredith’s issue. Councillor Hadland observed that facilities such as Google Street View only tended to work if one had access to the latest software. Would this include properties or areas of land without a street frontage. Councillor B. Markham commented that it would not but despite this drawback it still represented an improvement over the existing facility. In respect of “clean mail” Councillor Malpas observed that he had recently received three A4 envelopes from the Council in the same post, each containing a few sheets of paper. Councillor B. Markham commented that processes were continually being reviewed. Councillor Hawkins commented that there remained criticism of Cabinet and Neighbourhood Management consultation with the public. Councillor B. Markham commented that Ward Meetings and tenants meetings would be used to engage with the public.

Councillor P. D. Varnsverry submitted his Portfolio Holder Report and announced that free swimming would be continued for under 16’s until the end of August for a £2 upgrade of the Leisure Card that would also give access to other facilities. From 1 September and with use of the Leisure Card under 16’s would be able to enjoy subsidised swimming at a cost of £1 per swim until the end of the financial year. Councillor Beardsworth commented on the favourable public reaction to the Pride of Northampton and the Britain in Bloom entries. Councillor P. D. Varnsverry stated that the initiative was due to Becky Allen in the Events Team. Councillor Golby asked if the Portfolio Holder would maximise publicity to encourage the public to attend the new Ward meetings. Councillor P. D. Varnsverry stated that it was up to all Councillors to encourage public involvement and noted that in Duston these meetings had been combined with those of the Parish Council. Councillor Meredith enquired as to how members of the public could purchase the lions at the conclusion of the Pride of Northampton display and which charities would benefit from any sales. Councillor P. D. Varnsverry stated that the Born Free and Cynthia Spenser Hospice charities would be the beneficiaries of the auction which would take place on 23 September 2010. The lions would be repaired as necessary before the auction. Councillor Palethorpe commented on the success of the Pride of Northampton. Councillor I Choudary asked why the previous successful neighbourhood model had been replaced: Meetings were now less frequent. Councillor P. D. Varnsverry stated that the new arrangements for neighbourhood working were under continual review as well as a planned review after twelve months. The new system was not different to the old insofar as two meetings were held in each ward over a year. Councillor Clarke expressed his congratulations in respect of the Pride of Northampton but also expressed disappointment that Town Centre businesses had not sponsored more of the lions. He understood that the Council had sponsored about a third of them. Councillor Clarke repeated his earlier question in respect of the costs of events on the Market Square vis a vis the
decision to scrap the Balloon Festival. Councillor Church noted that the cost of events on the Market Square had been covered by grant from NEL and therefore at no cost to the Council Tax Payer; these events had brought thousands of people into Northampton. Councillor P. D. Varnsverry noted the Italian Market the following weekend and stated that the public seemed to like what had been provided. The vitality of the Market Square was improving.

9. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Palethorpe stated that this year’s budget process would begin shortly for the next five years. At the Local Government Association Conference the mantra of Value for Money had been replaced by Doing More with Less. The Council had reduced its spending by 35% over three years. There were differences in opinion as to whether these reductions had been made in the right places, however, all Councillors needed to be involved in deciding how the Council would survive the next five years. He believed that savings needed to be made top down so as to preserve services; consideration needed to be given to how services should be provided, in partnership or by the private sector. The Opposition had offered previously to help the Administration look at the Council’s finances. With the local elections next year there seemed to be two options, firstly not to make the difficult decisions and thereby making it harder for whomever had control of the Council or secondly to make the difficult decisions now. The Opposition would support making difficult decisions if they were made for sound business reasons. People needed to know that they would be treated with respect.

Councillor Perkins stated that he welcomed Councillor Palethorpe’s comments. There was uncertainty as to the level of cuts required over the next four years, perhaps 25% to 40%. It seemed that Local Government would be hit hardest. The Council would need to look at spending top down and bottom up. Partnerships may provide an answer but it was not always easy to find partners as had happened so far with Revenues and Benefits. The premise of a sound business case was supported and the input of The Opposition was welcome.

Councillor Palethorpe welcomed the response from Councillor Perkins. He commented that the Government could not be blamed for everything; the Council needed to find its own solutions and make its own decisions. The Council must be honest with the public. He looked forward to working with the Administration to protect the young and vulnerable.

10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

Councillor Malpas submitted a report that set out the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2009/10 and noted that of ten reviews started during the year eight had been completed and 91% of recommendations had been accepted by Cabinet. There had been four Call-ins of Cabinet decisions. The Council’s processes were regarded as good practice which gave confidence in terms of meeting challenges in the future. Councillor Yates seconded adoption of the report.
RESOLVED: That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2009/10 be received.

11. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION
This item was withdrawn.

Councillor Clarke commented that as the report was in the ownership of the Council it should be moved and if necessary referenced back to Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the General Purposes Committee.

The Chief Executive stated that the report was from the Borough Solicitor and Monitoring Officer but had been withdrawn. It was not a motion but if it were it still had been withdrawn.

Councillor B. Hoare moved and Councillor Perkins seconded “That Council move to next business”.

Upon a vote the motion was carried.

12. NOTICES OF MOTION
(i) Chris Swinn commented that the process had reached the third stage of the review of the electoral boundaries but there had been only one public meeting. He supported the motion and the premise that there should be one Councillor per Ward per 3,500 population. He noted the proposed exceptions to this which he believed gave an inbuilt advantage to the Conservative Party. He felt that it was rather late in the day for the Council to be having this debate and that residents had had little opportunity to be involved: another example of the Council not consulting.

Councillor Clarke moved and Councillor Mildren to seconded:

That this Council recognises the importance of the views of all 47 elected Members being heard or canvassed by the Council and debated at a Full Council meeting before submitting any Council view on the draft report of the Local Government Boundary Commission into new electoral arrangements for the Borough of Northampton. This Council therefore agrees to submit the Minutes of the passage of the motions, and any debate, to the Local Government Boundary Commission to give comfort that all Councillors, from all parties and none, have had the opportunity to discuss the full impact of the proposed changes on their individual electorates and wards.

This Council thereby intends that all views are submitted to the Commission through the proper democratic process of Full Council in the name of the Council.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote the motion was lost.
The Chair proposed that Council Procedural Rules be suspended to extend
the meeting until 10.30pm so as to allow the debate on the following motion
to take place. The proposal was accepted.

(ii)Chris Swinn commented that it was preposterous for the Labour Group to
put this motion when it had been their Government who was responsible for
the national economic situation. The VAT increase would affect the poor
hardest but food was zero rated. Greed and avarice over the last 13 years
had caused the current situation. The motion was merely tokenism.

Chris Grethe stated that the VAT increase was wrong for people on low
incomes and benefits. He noted that the Conservatives had been the last
people to increase VAT too. He noted that the Liberal Democrats had
changed their manifesto pledge having joined the Coalition Government. He
believed that the motion was important.

Norman Adams stated that the motion was just theatre and nothing would
come of it. He noted an e-mail from Brian Binley MP that stated that one
billion seconds equalled 32 years. The VAT increase would affect ordinary
people and he hoped that the public would resist through civil disobedience.

Councillor Mason moved and Councillor Davies seconded:

“That this Council expresses its concern at the increase in VAT announced in the
budget on June 22\textsuperscript{nd} 2010, which will have a disproportionate impact on the poorest
families in Northampton.

The Council recognises the Government’s need to bring down the borrowing deficit
and the need to make decisions over tax and spending. The Council notes however
that this should be done in as fair a manner as possible, should not have a
disproportionate impact on the poor and should not risk economic recovery.

The Council further notes the report produced by the Institute of Fiscal Studies
which says that the increase in VAT will impact those on low incomes the hardest
and this includes pensioners living on savings.

This Council instructs the Leader of the Borough Council to write to the Deputy
Prime Minister asking him to reconsider the VAT increase to 20%.”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a requisition for a recorded vote there voted:

For the motion: Councillors Capstick, I. Choudary, Clarke, Davies, Hawkins, Mason
and Mildren.

Against the motion: Councillors Hill, Beardsworth, Church, Collins, J. Conroy, R.
Conroy, Duncan, Flavell, Garlick, Glynane, Golby, Hadland, B. Hoare, Hollis,
Malpas, B. Markham, I. Markham, Matthews, Meredith, Palethorpe, Perkins, Reeve,
Simpson, P. D. Varnsvery, P. M. Varnsvery and Yates.
There were no abstentions.

The motion was lost.

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

There were none.

The meeting concluded at 10.28 hours.