

MINUTES

OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, NORTHAMPTON, ON Monday, 2 November 2015 AT SIX THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE EVENING

PRESENT: HER WORSHIP THE MAYOR Councillor Flavell (in the Chair).

COUNCILLORS: Malpas, Ansell, Ashraf, Aziz, Beardsworth, Birch, Bottwood, Cali, Caswell, Choudary, Chunga, Davenport, Duffy, Eales, Eales, Eldred, Golby, Gowen, Hadland, Hallam, Haque, Hibbert, Hill, Hill, Kilbride, King, Lane, Lynch, Markham, Marriott, McCutcheon, Meredith, Nunn, Oldham, Parekh, Patel, Russell, Sargeant, Shaw, Smith, Stone and Walker

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Hallam declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in item 10, Motion vii) as a nominated Trustee of 78 Derngate Trust.

Councillor Sargeant declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in Item 10, Motion vi) as a Trustee of Churches Charity on St Giles Street

Councillor Marriott declared a personal, non-pecuniary interest in item 10, Motion vii) as a nominated Trustee of 78 Derngate.

2. MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting held on the 21st September 2015 were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

3. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Councillors Culbard and Larratt.

4. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Mayor addressed Council and wished, on behalf of the Council, best wishes to Councillor Culbard as she was currently unwell.

It was noted that there were a number of tickets still available for the Mayor's Gala Ball to be held at the Northamptonshire Cricket Club. It was noted that there were a number of Diwali events being held on the Market Square on the 7th November 2015. The Mayor also reminded Council that her Mayoral gig would be held at the Picturedrome on the 14th November 2015 for the Mayors Charity – Marie Curie featuring the Gingerpig jazz band and welcomed everyone to attend. She also noted that a service of Remembrance would be held at the All Saints Church on the 8th November 2015 and that it continued to mark the 100th anniversary of the First World War.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND PETITIONS

Mr Hufferdine Smith addressed Council and stated that there was a need for people to examine the causes of anti-social behaviour. He commented that there were numerous problems such as the round the clock access to alcohol and the irregular strength of drugs that were available. He questioned whether the police were trained at recognising the difference between the behaviour of someone under the influence of drugs and those experiencing mental health problems and urged Councillors to have compassion.

County Councillor Glynane addressed Council and stated that the football club was extremely important to the people of Northampton. He mentioned that the previous leader had spoken of the importance of working with the owner of the football club who had also spoken favourably about working with the Council. He commented that apparently, the current Leader of the Council was not aware until weeks ago that the payments were not up to date and also questioned why the Cabinet recommendations of the meeting held July 2013 had not been to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6. MEMBER AND PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

Questions and answers given were as tabled (included in an updated agenda on the website) unless states supplementary questions were asked – detailed below:

In response to a supplementary question asked, Councillor Hadland confirmed that a Viability Assessment was necessary, without which the development could not go ahead and that meetings continued with the applicants. He also stated that with regards to the proposed Waste to Energy Plant in the St James' Ward, any updated information received would be relayed to Councillor Ashraf, as Ward Councillor.

In response to a supplementary question asked, Councillor Hibbert commented that he did not have the budget information with regards to private housing, but asked that Councillor Gowen email him and he would respond in due course with the requested information.

7. CABINET MEMBER PRESENTATIONS

Councillor Markham, as Leader of the Council, submitted her Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. She spoke of the administration's commitment to supporting sports clubs in Northamptonshire and spoke of the recent loan that had been approved to the Northamptonshire Cricket Club. She commented that whilst there had been a Cabinet report, as referred to by County Councillor Glynane, at no point after the decision had been made, did he attempt to 'Call –In' the Cabinet decision. It was noted that the Council had undergone rapid changes recently and that consequentially there would be a review into the culture of NBC to ensure that staff are working in a positive and a productive environment. She congratulated the Customer Services Team who had achieved Customer Excellence Accreditation as part of the National Customer Service Week. Councillor Markham explained that she

had been out on the Night safe operation on Friday 16th October to experience the challenges faced by officers; she noted that there was a consultation on Public Spaces Protections Orders approved at the previous Cabinet meeting. She thanked those who had participated in the Landlords Forum and thanked officers and the Cabinet Member for Housing for their hard work.

In response to questions asked, Councillor Markham stated that the administration had delivered what the electorate had asked for and with regards to the Football Club, the only person whose integrity should be questioned was Mr David Cardoza. She also stated that she was aware that there were still numerous bad landlords, but that licensing of HMOs alongside establishing a Social Lettings Agency and exploring Planning Policy had reduced the numbers of bad landlords in the Town.

Councillor Hallam submitted his Cabinet Member report and commented that the Council currently had a balanced financial position for the next financial year. It was noted that the Revenues and Benefits departments was entering into a busy period as preparation was underway to prepare for a consultation on the 2016-17 Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS).

In response to questions asked, Councillor Hallam commented that the Football Club had missed 3 payments, but that they were in a good financial position to cushion the backdrop of the financial situation as they had been putting the finances in good order over the past 4 years. Councillor Hallam also stated that he would continue to assist Councillor Meredith with his bid for play equipment in Talevera. He also stated that there were a number of consultation events were being to be held with regards to the CTRS, but that it was too early to report any of the findings from that as they had yet to be published. He also stated that it was encouraging that there were a number of other people who were approaching NBC with regards to becoming more involved with LGSS.

Councillor Hadland submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that the exercise of expression of interest had been extended slightly the first phase of which would need to be submitted by 6th November 2015. He also mentioned that the judges from Great British High Street had visited as St Giles Street had been shortlisted alongside two other locations from 230 applications from around the country. In response to questions asked, Councillor Hadland commented that it was not the intention for Council staff to occupy any of the office spaces being built. He also noted that with regards to Dallington car park, he was still waiting to hear from the contractors for a start date. It was also noted that there would possibly be a referendum on the neighbourhood plan for Springboroughs.

Councillor King submitted her Cabinet Member report and elaborated thereon. She explained that the engagement events at the University of Northampton had been successful and well attended. She also commented that a consultation was also being undertaken to consider proposals to adopt a Public Order Protection Order. She further elaborated on the work of the various forums.

In response to questions asked, Councillor King explained that there had been instances of homeless people being barred from Oasis house, which was as a result

of unwelcomed behaviour. She explained that there were multi agencies working with some of the problem street drinkers.

Councillor Hibbert submitted his Cabinet Member report and noted that Cabinet had approved establishing a Social Lettings Agency. In response to questions asked, he explained that the 100 new Council Houses would be let by the Council. He also commented that he would look at exploring the possibility of establishing a leaseholder's forum.

8. OPPOSITION GROUP BUSINESS

Councillor Stone stated the poverty was a growing phenomenon, the causes of which were numerous; from zero hour contracts and a substantial shift in allocation of benefits. She stated that the Council should adopt an Anti-Poverty Strategy which she considered to need cross party support and with multi agency involvement as this would ensure that those in poverty would know that help would be at hand. She reported that 37% of children in her ward were classified as living in poverty and spoke of their plight of going to bed hungry and cold.

In response, Councillor Markham explained that she had looked at other councils who had adopted an Anti-Poverty Strategy and noted that they all had very vague intentions. She noted that rather than having a strategy of good intentions, it would be more effective for the issue to be report to and examined by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She commented that under the administration, she had helped ease poverty by agreeing to pay Council staff the Living Wage, establishing a Social lettings Agency and not increasing council tax.

Councillor Stone responded by explaining that people needed assistance in maximising their money. She also stated that there was an urgent need to get children out of living in overcrowded and urged the Council to consider an Anti-Poverty Strategy.

9. REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF NAME OF PARISH

Councillor Nunn proposed a report which sought Council to consider a request to change the name of a Parish Council.

Councillor M Hill seconded the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the request made by Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor Parish Council to change their name to Wootton Parish Council be considered and agreed to changing the name of the parish from Wootton, Wootton Fields and Simpson Manor to Wootton.
2. That authority be given to the Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer to take any action necessary to effect this change of name of parish, including the notification and publication of the change as required by law.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

Mr Hufferdine-Smith addressed motion i) and stated that some of the trollies had not simply been abandoned but they had been stolen and commented that they should not be burdened with costs as they were the victims of crime.

i) Councillor Davenport proposed and Councillor Smith seconded:

“This Council notes that abandoned trollies are still an ongoing problem in Northampton. They can be a real nuisance in our communities.

This Council therefore resolves the following,

- To note the success of the Trolleywise scheme, particularly their smartphone app.
- Ask the Chief Executive to write to all local supermarkets to ensure they are part of the Trolleywise scheme.
- Suggest to the Cabinet that they consider how best the Trolleywise scheme can be promoted to the general public but also consider what other powers they have at their disposal to help eliminate this problem.
- This Council does not currently collect abandoned trollies. We ask the Cabinet Member to consider adopting a policy of collecting trollies (by our Neighbourhood wardens) and then charging the supermarkets for costs of removal, storage and disposal. We would like the Cabinet member to report back to full Council in his report on Monday 14th December 2015”.

Councillor Bottwood proposed and Councillor Eldred seconded an amendment:

Amended motion to read:

This Council notes that abandoned trollies can be a real nuisance in our communities.

This Council resolves the following:

- To note the success of the Trolleywise scheme, particularly their smartphone app.
- Ask the Chief Executive to write to all local supermarkets to ensure they are part of the Trolleywise scheme
- Ask the Cabinet member to consider how best the Trolleywise scheme can be promoted to the general public.

Council debated the amendment.

Upon a vote, the amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

ii) Councillor Duffy proposed and Councillor Russell seconded:

“This Council agrees with the present Central Government policy of free schools meals in the first three years of primary school (Year R, Year 1 & Year 2).

This Council further agrees that healthy free school meals are of enormous benefit to young children in Northampton.

This council asks the Chief Executive to write to our local MPs (Northampton North, Northampton South, Northamptonshire South) asking them to lobby Central Government to keep this important policy for the long-term and safe from any Spending Reviews”

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

iii) Councillor Stone to propose and Councillor Russell to second:

“This Council notes that Central Government has announced it is introducing a ‘national living wage’ of £9 per hour by 2020.

This Council further notes the government rate is based on median earnings while the Living Wage Foundation rate is calculated according to the cost of living. Therefore the Living Wage Foundation rate is at present higher.

There is a concern that the benefits of the Government’s new national living wage will be outweighed by big cuts to tax credits.

This Council resolves to

- 1) Use the Living Wage Foundation rate in paying our staff.
- 2) Seek accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation. In order to be accredited we must pay all our directly employed staff the Living Wage and have a plan in place for contracted staff
- 3) Support the introduction of a Living Wage to all sub-contracted staff.
- 4) Use our influence as a major local employer and provider of services to urge other local employers to pay the Living Wage according to the Living Wage Foundation”.

Councillor Markham proposed and Councillor Hallam seconded an amendment.

Amended motion to read:

This Council welcomes that Central Government has announced it is introducing a

'national living wage' of £9 per hour by 2020

This Council notes the government rate is based on median earnings while the Living Wage Foundation rate is calculated on the cost of living. Therefore the Living Wage Foundation rate is at present higher,

This Council resolves to:

- 1) Continue to use the Living Wage Foundation rate in paying our staff
- 2) Seek accreditation with the Living Wage Foundation. In order to be accredited we must pay all our directly employed staff the Living Wage and have a plan in place for contracted staff
- 3) Support the introduction of Living Wage to all sub-contracted staff
- 4) Use of influence as a major local employer and provider of services to urge other local employers to pay the Living Wage according to the Living Wage Foundation

Council debated the amendment.

Upon a vote, the amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

- iv) Councillor Meredith to propose and Councillor Beardsworth to second:

“Council notes that the lakes in the Eastern District are in an ever worse state, with dropping levels leading to higher pollution and an increasingly unattractive visage and smell.

Council further notes that these lakes are important to the area for a number of reasons, giving a leisure space to local residents and a home to local wildlife.

Council therefore resolves to assign a lead officer to solving the problems of the Eastern District lakes who will be empowered to investigate and action potential solutions, including but not limited to seeking that controlled sources of water be increased, and tackling inward pollution into the lakes from all sources”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was lost.

- v) Councillor Beardsworth to propose and Councillor Meredith to second:

“The “Changing Places” campaign states that “People with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well people with other physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis often need extra facilities to allow them to use the toilets safely and comfortably.”

And further, that “Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all people with

a disability.”

Council desires Northampton to be an inclusive, accessible town with a diverse and vibrant community, and notes that accesses to basic facilities are essential for this end.

Council therefore resolves to work with developers to ensure that as many new developments in Northampton, and all developments in which the Borough Council is directly involved, will have “Changing places” accessible toilets”.

Councillor Hadland proposed and Councillor Hibbert seconded an amendment:

Amended motion to read:

The Changing Places campaign states that “People with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well people with other physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis often need extra facilities to allow them to use the toilets safely and comfortable

And further, that Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all people with a disability

Council desires Northampton to be an inclusive town with a diverse and vibrant community, and notes that access to basic facilities are essential for this end.

Council will encourage developments in which the Borough Council is directly involved to consider having “Changing Places” accessible toilets
Council debated the amendment.

Upon a vote, the amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

vi) Councillor Markham to propose and Councillor Hadland to second:

“This Council recognises that St. Giles Street offers a unique shopping experience with many independent and niche market businesses that local residents are rightly proud of.

St Giles Street is a vital part of Northampton town centre, and that is why this borough council is investing £3 million into improving the experience for visitors and businesses by widening pavements and installing additional parking bays.

This council:

- welcomes the achievement of St Giles Street in being shortlisted as a finalist in the 2015 Great British High Street competition;
- recognises the hard work of the traders and their co-operation with each other that helps make St. Giles Street the success that it is, and;
- calls upon all Northampton residents and businesses to back the campaign to make St Giles Street the winner in the City Location category of the 2015

Great British High Street competition”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

vii) Councillor Hallam to propose and Councillor Marriott to second:

“This Council recognises that 78 Derngate is a tremendous asset to Northampton and that the volunteers and team behind it do a fantastic job.

2016 is the 100th year of the refurbishment that Charles Renee Mackintosh carried out for W.J. Bassett Lowke. The Council re-affirms its commitment to 78 Derngate and to working to support plans for its 100th anniversary celebrations”.

Council debated the motion.

Upon a vote, the motion was carried.

11. 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 8.39pm