

Council

Monday, 15th September 2014

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Pat Witherspoon (Mayor), Councillor Pattie Hill (Deputy Mayor) and Councillors Roger Bennett, Rebecca Blake, Michael Braley, Andrew Brazier, Natalie Brookes, Juliet Brunner, David Bush, Greg Chance, Brandon Clayton, John Fisher, Andrew Fry, Carole Gandy, Bill Hartnett, Gay Hopkins, Wanda King, Alan Mason, Phil Mould, Jane Potter, Mark Shurmer, Rachael Smith, Yvonne Smith, Paul Swansborough, Debbie Taylor, David Thain, John Witherspoon and Nina Wood-Ford

Also Present:

Michael Collins (Independent Observer on the former Standards Committee), Janet Little (Alzheimer's Society) and a volunteer and two service users of Redditch Friends Together

Officers:

Claire Felton, Sue Hanley and Sheena Jones

Committee Services Officer:

Debbie Parker-Jones

25. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Joe Baker.

The Mayor advised that she had that afternoon spoken with Councillor Baker who was making a good recovery following his recent ill-health. Councillor Baker had been advised by his doctor to refrain from undertaking Council duties for a further 2 weeks, and the Mayor passed on Councillor Baker's thanks to both Councillors and Officers for their good wishes.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor David Bush declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Item 8 (Executive Committee) as detailed separately at Minute 31 below.

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Chair

27. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14th July 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

28. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Mayor

The Mayor's announcements were as follows:

i) Michael Collins

The Mayor led the Council in thanking Michael Collins for his service as the Independent Observer on the former Standards Committee. Mr Collins had taken on this role when the Council was required to change the way in which the Standards Committee worked, some two years previously. Mr Collins had previously been an Independent Member on the Committee and his advice and support had been appreciated by all those involved with the Committee and the Group Leaders.

The Leader of the Council and a number of other Councillors echoed their appreciation to Mr Collins for his hard work and support under the standards regime, as well as his presence at other meetings of the Council in observing the proceedings.

Mr Collins stated that it had been an honour to work with the Council, especially as he had been chair of licensing at the Magistrates' Court at the point when the liquor licensing function had transferred to local authorities.

A small gift was presented to Mr Collins as a token of the Council's appreciation for his services.

ii) Janet Little – Alzheimer's Society & Redditch Friends Together

The Mayor reminded the Council that Redditch Friends Together, a support group for those with dementia and Alzheimer's disease, was one of the Mayoral charities.

Linked to this she welcomed to the meeting Janet Little from the Alzheimer's Society, together with Sue, a volunteer, and Elaine and Sandy, two service users, of Redditch Friends Together.

The Council heard from the representatives present of the work being undertaken locally by the Alzheimer's Society and Redditch Friends Together, and of their plans to make Redditch a Dementia

Friendly Town. Redditch Friends Together was currently the only group under the Alzheimer's Society which was working to change society in order to make the town a better place to live in for those with the condition. Numerous activities were being undertaken by the group, which met on a weekly basis. The group was currently working on a book of poetry which it hoped to publish in the future. The group had also recently spoken at an event at Woodfield Academy in Redditch, at which 600 pupils had become champions on dementia.

iii) Mayor's announcements

The Mayor advised that, since the previous meeting of the Council, she had attended a number of engagements, including the Dementia Assembly at Woodfield Middle School, YMCA Bike Project, a Family Art Trail at Arrow Valley Country Park, the Three Choirs Festival at Worcester Cathedral, the Batchley Summer Fete, Redditch in Bloom, a World War One exhibition at St Philips Church, Where Next Association's 30th birthday celebrations and the Redditch Bandstand Festival; the last Bandstand event of the year. The Mayor thanked everyone who had supported her Civic Service on 7th September and her comedy evening in aid of her charities on 9th September.

iv) Forthcoming engagements

The Mayor advised that forthcoming engagements included Ride for Rory at the Alexandra Hospital, Bromsgrove District Council's Civic Service, the MacMillan Coffee Morning, the County Harvest Festival Service and the Friends of Gruchet Annual General Meeting and Quiz. The Mayor went on to thank the Deputy Mayor, Pattie Hill, for standing in for her at those events which she had been unable to attend.

b) Leader's Announcements

The Leader's announcements were as follows:

i) Councillor Nina Wood-Ford

The Leader welcomed Nina Wood-Ford as the Council's newest Councillor.

ii) Neonatal Maternity Unit – Alexandra Hospital

The Leader stated that he had written to all Members in August advising them of the visit which he and the Chief Executive had made to the neonatal maternity unit at the Alexandra Hospital. The staff and management had advised at the visit that they were working very hard to keep the unit open.

iii) August Bandstand event

The Leader advised that the August Church Green Bandstand event had gone ahead, with thanks being owed to Ken Williams, Kingfisher Centre Manager, for saving the day and offering use of the Kingfisher Centre as a venue for the event due to heavy rain. The Leader stated that this was a sign of true partnership working in action and that he had written to Ken thanking him for his kindness.

iv) Britain in Bloom

The Leader advised that he had attended the Britain in Bloom event when the judges visited Redditch. The Council had been informed the previous week that it had won its fourth Gold Medal, which was excellent news, and congratulations were expressed to all Officers concerned. The Leader formally thanked Officers for their hard work, with what were reducing resources and growing demands on their time.

v) Future of Acute Hospital Services in Worcestershire

The Leader reported that he and the Leaders of Bromsgrove and Stratford-on-Avon District Councils had written to the Health Minister in early August regarding the future of acute services at the Alexandra Hospital. A reply was currently awaited from the Health Minister in this regard.

They had pointed out that the consultation which the Redditch and Bromsgrove Clinical Commissioning Group (RBCCG) were planning on (Modified Option 1) would only be a short term (3-year) fix, which would cost the CCG £1million more than expected. The three local MPs had agreed therefore that an alternative option should be explored.

The Leader also made reference to two letters sent by the Redditch and Bromsgrove Advisory Forum to the RBCCG Governing Body on 13th June 2013 and 9th September 2014 respectively. The letters expressed concerns on the available Options and the CCG Member Practices' expectations in relation to the Joint Services Review. A response had been received earlier that evening from the CCG to the 9th September letter, which needed to be considered by all parties concerned.

The Leader urged all available Members to attend a public CCG Board meeting which was taking place at 1.30pm on 25th September at the Council House in Bromsgrove, at which it was understood the Advisory Forum's letter of 9th September calling for Option 2 to be explored would be discussed.

vi) Mettis Aerospace

The Leader advised that he had attended the Mettis Aerospace 75 year anniversary celebrations. This had included a spectacular fly past of a spitfire and he had been impressed to see the many skills in Redditch that were at the cutting edge of technology.

vii) 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War

The Leader reported that he and the Mayor had attended St Phillips Church in Webheath to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.

viii) Farewell to Officers

The Leader bid farewell to Elise Hopkins and Ivor Westmore, recently departed Officers of the Council whom Members knew well, and wished them both well in their future endeavours.

ix) Inspector Rebecca Love

The Leader welcomed back to the Borough Inspector Rebecca Love who had been appointed the new District Inspector for Redditch following Inspector Ian Joseph's retirement.

Inspector Love would be attending the Town Hall on Monday 20th October, 20 minutes before the start of Full Council, should Members wish to meet and have an informal chat with her.

x) Fire victims of Johnson Close

The Leader reported that he and the Mayor had visited victims of the fire in Johnson Close, Abbeydale. A number of bungalows had been damaged by the fire, two seriously. The Leader placed on record his thanks to Officers who had worked hard to support the displaced residents. The hero of the incident was a dog called Alfie, who had raised the alarm at 2.30am. Thankfully no one was injured in the fire, however it was feared that two of the bungalows might have to be demolished. A charity event in aid of the victims was being held at the Abbeydale Club on Saturday 20th September.

xi) Community clean up in Church Hill

The Leader advised that he and a number of fellow Members from various wards within the Borough had attended a community clean up in Church Hill. The Members had been joined in the clean up by cubs, scouts, staff from the local McDonald's restaurant and members of the local community. Some had gone on a general litter pick and others had concentrated on the former medical centre which had become overgrown. The day was reported to be a great success and the Leader expressed his thanks to all involved.

xii) Mayor's Civic Service & Mayor's Charity Comedy Night

The Leader reported that he and many other Members had attended the Mayor's Civic Service at St Stephens Church and the 'Ship of Fools' charity comedy night at the Palace Theatre. Both events were a great success, with thanks expressed to the Council's 'Ant' Hill for compering the comedy night.

xiii) Final Bandstand event

The Leader advised that the final Bandstand event of the season had taken place on the afternoon of 13th September. The event was based on a harvest festival theme, with donations going to a local food bank. NHS staff had also been honoured at the event as part of NHS Staff Appreciation Week. The event featured diverse art forms from around the globe which had been performed by local artists. The Leader expressed his thanks to Sue Yeng for her hard work and help in organising the Bandstand events.

xiv) Free swim policy

The Leader reported that since the introduction of the controlling group's under 16's/over 60's free swimming policy in August 2012, the number of free swims had now broken through the 40,000 mark.

xv) Comments from Councillor Brunner

Councillor Brunner expressed her thanks to the Mayor for the invite which she had received to the Civic Service, which she stated she was always glad to attend. Councillor Brunner also requested that a letter be sent to Councillor Baker on behalf of the Council wishing him a speedy recovery.

c) Chief Executive's Announcements

The Deputy Chief Executive had no announcements.

29. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

No questions had been submitted.

30. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

No motions had been submitted.

31. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Council considered the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Committee held on 29th July and 8th September 2014.

In relation to Minute 20 (Consolidated Revenue and Capital Outturn, Executive Committee meeting, 29th July 2014), there was some discussion regarding the delay in selling Threadneedle House and it was queried how proactively this had been/was being marketed. The Leader set out his understanding that there had been an expression of interest in the building and a bid on this made. Officers confirmed that Property Services had marketed the building on the Council's behalf and that a written update would be issued to all Members detailing the current position. A further query was raised in relation to the balance of the grant for Town Centre developments, to which the Leader responded that the relevant Officer could provide any required update on monies which had been earmarked for improvements.

In relation to Minute 22 (Response to Stratford Upon Avon's Proposed Submission Core Strategy), it was commented that there appeared to be inconsistencies in the Council's approach to the exercise of its green belt policy between Stratford Upon Avon and Redditch and Bromsgrove. The Leader stated that the response had been considered by the Planning Advisory Panel within a very short timescale, and that this represented a continuation of the Borough Council's existing policy. A further issue was raised in relation to the large number of empty commercial units in the Moons Moat area and what was deemed to be an unnecessary need to develop the Winyates Green Triangle. The Leader referred to his earlier response in this regard.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 29th July 2014 be received and all recommendations adopted; and**
- 2) the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 8th September 2014 be received and all recommendations adopted.**

(Prior to consideration of this item Councillor David Bush, declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, in view of the nature of his employment, and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of the item on the Response to Stratford-on-Avon District Council's Proposed Submission Core Strategy.)

32. REGULATORY COMMITTEES

Members received the minutes of recent meetings of the Audit, Governance and Standards, Licensing and Planning Committees.

In relation to Minute 15 (Portfolio Holder Update – 2013/14 Outturn, Audit, Governance and Standards Committee meeting, 3rd July 2014), it was noted that the final sentence should have read that a large number of staff had moved into the Town Hall and not Threadneedle House. Officers confirmed that the amendment would be reported at the next meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee, at which the minutes were due to be received for approval as a correct record. It was further agreed that the amended minutes would be referred back to the next meeting of Full Council for adoption.

RESOLVED that

- 1) subject to an amendment to the final sentence of Minute 15 (Portfolio Holder Update – 2013/14 Outturn) to read the Town Hall and not Threadneedle House, the minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee held on 3rd July 2014 be received, and that these be referred back to the next meeting of Full Council for formal adoption following their referral to the next meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee;**
- 2) the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 28th July 2014 be received and the recommendation adopted; and**
- 3) the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 9th July and 6th August 2014 be received and adopted.**

33. ALLOCATION OF POLITICAL BALANCE

Following the by-election for the Church Hill ward on 17th July 2014, which was won by Nina Wood-Ford, a member of the Labour Group on the Council, Members considered the revised political balance of the Council's Committees.

The only change proposed related to Planning Committee, where Labour took an additional place and the place previously allocated to the non-aligned Member was removed.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the political balance of the Committees of the Council be agreed as follows:

Committee	Total places	Labour Group Places – entitled to 18 (+1)	Conservative Group Places – entitled to 9	Non-aligned Councillors Not entitled on political balance basis but Council allocates position
Audit, Governance & Standards	9	5 (5.59)	3 (2.79)	1
Licensing	11	7 (6.83)	3 (3.41)	1
Planning	9	6 (5.59) (+1)	3 (2.79)	0 (-1)
	29	18	9	2
Committees below are <u>not</u> proposed to be politically balanced – Council convention is that majority group does not take majority of seats				
Overview and Scrutiny	9	4 (5.27)	4 (2.79)	1
Crime and Disorder Panel	5	2 (2.93)	3 (1.55)	0

and

- 2) Councillor Nina Wood-Ford be appointed to the extra Labour place on the Planning Committee.

34. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES ETC.

In light of the recent appointment of Councillor Yvonne Smith as Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services, Members considered changes in nominations to certain outside bodies and a change of membership to the Council's Joint Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Committee.

RESOLVED that

- 1) **Councillor Yvonne Smith be nominated as the Council's representative on the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel and the Corporate Parenting Steering Group; and**
- 2) **it be noted that Councillor Nina Wood-Ford had been appointed to the Council's Joint Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Committee in place of Councillor Yvonne Smith.**

35. URGENT BUSINESS - RECORD OF DECISIONS

There were no Urgent Decisions to note.

36. URGENT BUSINESS - GENERAL

There were no separate items of urgent business to consider at this meeting.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 7.52 pm

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MAYOR, in the Chair