

COUNCIL MEETING

8 JULY 2014

PRESENT:

D. S. Smith (Chairman)
K. P. Humphreys (Vice-Chairman)

Allsopp, Mrs J. A.	Fisher, Mrs H. E.	Spruce, C. J.
Arnold, Mrs S. P.	Hancocks, Mrs R.	Stanhope MBE, Mrs M.
Awty, R. J.	Heath, H. R.	Strachan, R. W.
Bacon, B. F.	Isaacs, D.	Taylor, S. D.
Barnett, Mrs S. A.	Leytham, D. J.	Tittley, M. C.
Bland, Mrs M. P.	Marshall, T.	Tranter, Mrs H.
Boyle, Mrs M. G.	Mosson, R. C.	Walker MBE, J.T.
Constable, Mrs B. L.	Mynott, G.	Warfield, M. A.
Constable, D. H. J.	Pearce, A. G.	White, A. G.
Derrick, B. W.	Powell, J. J. R.	Wilcox, M. J.
Drinkwater, E. N.	Pritchard, I. M. P.	Willis-Croft, K. A.
Eadie, I. M.	Roberts, N. J.	Wilson, B.
Eagland, Mrs J. M.	Salter, D. F.	Yeates, B. W.
Evans, Mrs C. D.	Smedley, D.	

(**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were received from Councillors Mrs Bacon, Cox, Mrs Flowith, Greatorex, Hogan, Norman, Pullen, Mrs Richards, A. F. Smith, Wilks and Mrs Woodward.)

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Mrs Constable to the Council Chamber following her recent illness and Councillor Mrs Constable thanked all those who had sent their best wishes to her. Members were also informed that Councillor Wilks was recovering well following his recent operation.

PRAYERS:

Prayers were said by the Very Reverend Archimandrite S. Piers.

42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Councillor White declared a Non Pecuniary Interest in any matters arising out of Items 2 (Supporting People Review) and 3 (Burntwood Health Centres) under Agenda Item 8 (Report of the Chairman of the Community, Housing and Health (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee).

43 MINUTES – 30 APRIL 2014:

It was proposed, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 April 2014 (Volume 42 Part 1 Minute Book) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

44 MINUTES – 6 MAY 2014:

It was proposed, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That subject to it being noted that the civic visit to Drayton

Manor would now be held in October 2014 rather than as proposed in June 2014 the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 6 May 2014 (Volume 42 Part 1 Minute Book) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

45 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(a) Grandson

The Chairman informed Members that he had recently become a grandfather again.

(b) Civic Service Cathedral Evensong

The Chairman reminded Members that the Civic Service Evensong would take place at 3.30 pm on 20 July 2014 at the Cathedral.

(c) Civic Events

The Chairman informed Members that he had been kept very busy with many Civic Events including those attended by members of the Royal Family.

46 REPORT OF THE LEADER ON CABINET DECISIONS FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 3 JUNE 2014 AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS:

2 – Armitage with Handsacre Play Areas

Councillor Mynott asked which development the £73,000 referred to had come from and Councillor Pritchard informed him that it was from developments in the Armitage and Handsacre area.

4 – Application for Non Domestic Rates Discretionary Rate Relief (NDRDRR)

Councillor Mynott asked for clarification about why a Northamptonshire organisation was obtaining rate relief and Councillor Wilcox informed him that the Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs owned property in the District of Lichfield.

47 REPORT OF THE VICE CHAIRMAN OF ECONOMIC GROWTH ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE:

Councillor Mrs Eagland submitted her report on the matters considered by the Economic Growth Environment and Development (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 4 June 2014.

8 – Fazeley and Bonehill Townscape Heritage

Councillor Mynott welcomed the report submitted and hoped that the Townscape Heritage Programme would bring much needed restoration in the area and thanked Officers involved for their work.

48 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMUNITY HOUSING AND HEALTH (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE:

Councillor Marshall submitted his report on the matters considered by the Community, Housing and Health (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 10 June 2014.

3 – Burntwood Health Centres

Councillor Mrs Evans appreciated the work that Councillors White and Mrs Woodward had undertaken to try and progress a health facility on the Burntwood Leisure Centres site but emphasised that Burntwood residents were angry and disappointed that Burntwood had again been short changed. Councillor Mrs Evans commented that the Member of Parliament for Lichfield had done nothing to help the scheme at the crucial time and felt that the decision made was short sighted as there was concern that surgeries were not fit for purpose. Councillor Mrs Evans was pleased to note that the planning and lease permission for the temporary health facility on the site was in the process of being extended and noted that this item was to continue to be on the Work Programme.

4 – Future of Community Hospitals

Councillor Mynott asked if any important information had emerged from the meeting held on 20 June 2014 which was referred to in the report. Councillor Marshall indicated that he was not aware of anything transpiring from the meeting and confirmed that any information received would be shared with Members.

8 – End of Year Performance Review 2013/14

Councillor Mrs Evans asked that the phrase “back to work” be avoided in future when referring to unemployed people obtaining work as not all unemployed had previously had jobs. Councillor Mrs Evans informed Members that the scheme referred to in Paragraph 8.3 was not a Ring and Ride Service but rather a provision made by Burntwood Town Council whereby the elderly and disabled could obtain Community Transport Services. Councillor Mrs Evans added that the implementation of the scheme had been delayed due to limited officer capacity. Councillor Mrs Evans made reference to future proposals for the Old Mining College and confirmed that Burntwood Town Council was in discussions with the District Council about this issue. However a reduction in officer resources again meant that this matter had made only limited progress.

Councillor Mynott, in referring to Work Clubs, asked if more detail could be provided as the report did not indicate the type of employment which was entered into. He also made reference to the reduction in staff resources available to undertake work and suggested that a Task Group could be set up to look into this.

Councillor Marshall undertook to look into the possibility of setting up a Task Group and confirmed that he would try to find additional information for Councillor Mynott about employment statistics.

49 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STRATEGIC (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE:

Councillor Strachan submitted his report on the matters considered by the Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 17 June 2014.

50 REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE LEISURE PARKS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE:

Councillor Mrs Tranter submitted her report on the matters considered by the Leisure Parks and Waste Management (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 18 June 2014.

2 – End of Year Performance Overview 2013/14

Councillor Mynott expressed concern about anti social behaviour in Fazeley and asked if the demise of the Aspire Scheme could be an explanation for the rise in such behaviour. Councillor Mynott also referred to an apparent discrepancy in the statistics submitted to this Committee and the Community Housing and Health (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee and asked for an

explanation of which figures were correct. Councillor White asked why Councillor Mynott had not raised these figures at the meeting as he had attended it and Councillor Pritchard pointed out that the Police Inspector was to be invited to a meeting to discuss what more could be done to reduce anti social behaviour in the area. Councillor Mynott explained that whilst he had attended the meeting of Leisure Parks and Waste Management (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee he did not attend the meeting of Community Housing and Health (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee and therefore was not aware of the apparent discrepancy in figures and thus was seeking clarification. Councillors Marshall and Mrs Tranter undertook to look into the comments made by Councillor Mynott and get back to him.

5 – The Control of Dogs in Parks

Councillor Drinkwater said that he was disappointed but not surprised at the result of the consultation exercise particularly as the majority of those responding were dog owners. Councillor Drinkwater added that whilst it appears that there was not a problem in the parks in Burntwood he considered that there was and only recently reports had been received by him of such problems. Councillor Walker suggested that the report be referred back for further consideration.

Councillor Mrs Tranter considered that there was no need for the report to be considered further as conclusions and proposals had been arrived at and were detailed in her report.

51 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES:

(a) Planning Committee – 28 April 2014

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Fisher, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 28 April 2014 (Minutes Nod 300 – 308) be approved and adopted.

(b) Audit Committee – 29 April 2014

It was proposed by Councillor Mosson, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Audit Committee held on 29 April 2014 (Minutes Nod 309 – 321) be approved and adopted.

(c) Planning Committee – 19 May 2014

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Fisher, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 19 May 2014 (Minutes Nod 13 – 17) be approved and adopted.

(d) Regulatory and Licensing Committee – 20 May 2014

It was proposed by Councillor Derrick, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Regulatory and Licensing Committee held on 20 May 2014 (Minutes Nod 18 – 23) be approved and adopted.

(e) Planning Committee – 9 June 2014

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Fisher, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 9 June 2014 (Minutes Nod 24 – 28) be approved and adopted.

(f) Regulatory & Licensing Committee – 25 June 2014

It was proposed by Councillor Derrick, duly seconded and

RESOLVED: That subject to the name of Councillor Yeates being added to those submitting apologies for absence the Minutes of the Meeting of the Regulatory and Licensing Committee (Minutes Nod 29 – 30) be approved and adopted.

52 CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION:

It was proposed by Councillor Spruce and seconded by Councillor Mrs Stanhope “that the changes to the Constitution as submitted be agreed”.

Councillor Mynott asked when controversial development proposals were submitted if Officers could use their initiative to refer the application to Committee and sought clarification about the reasoning of why applications might be submitted to Committee. Councillor Spruce, in response, informed Members that the proposed delegation was to extend the number of Officers who could make decisions rather than changing the delegation already agreed.

It was then:

RESOLVED: That the changes to the Constitution as submitted be agreed.

53 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

It was proposed by Councillor Spruce, seconded by Councillor Mrs Stanhope and

RESOLVED: That Councillor Roberts be appointed as the substitute Member on the Cannock Chase AONB Joint Committee in the event that Councillor A. F. Smith cannot attend a meeting.

54 BOUNDARY REVIEW

It was proposed by Councillor Derrick and seconded by Councillor Pritchard “that the recommendations of the Regulatory and Licensing Committee held on 25 June 2014 be approved”.

Councillor Drinkwater stated that whilst supporting some of the submissions his Group could not support all of them as they considered that there were areas of inequality and informed Members that a submission by the Labour Group would be sent to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. Councillor Mynott commented that he considered it was unfortunate that the Working Group had not looked at the Armitage and Fazeley areas in detail but had chosen to concentrate on the single member Ward of Stonnall.

Councillor Powell commented that he felt that the southern rural area proposals had been put forward by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England based on statistical calculations rather than using local knowledge and common sense particularly in the Blake Street, Little Aston area and hoped that this would be rectified in the final decisions.

The Chairman supported some of the comments made by Councillor Drinkwater but stated that the Working Group had tried to be fair in arriving at their proposals.

Councillor Derrick reminded Members that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England would welcome any submissions from anyone but the Working Group had held many meetings to try and reach a conclusion on a very difficult task.

It was then:

RESOLVED: That the recommendations of the Regulatory and Licensing Committee held on 25 June 2014 (Minute No. 30 refers) be approved.

55 QUESTIONS:

Question 1

Question from Councillor Mynott to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Democratic and Legal Services

“Could the Cabinet Member give me an indication of the number of council tax payers in Lichfield who have fallen into arrears since council tax benefit changes were introduced in April 2013 by telling me how many liability orders for non-payment were in place in March 2013 and March 2014 and how many are currently in place?”

Response from Councillor Spruce:

“Following the abolition of Council Tax Benefit and the introduction of Local Council Tax Support in April 2013 the numbers of liability orders in place are as follows:

Liability orders issued	In year	Outstanding
2012/13	1966	2882
2013/14	2645	3845
1 April 2014 to date	831	4570

We do not keep data on the reason for non payment of council tax, so cannot attribute the increase solely to the change from CTB to LCTS.”

Councillor Mynott asked the following supplementary question:-

“In view of the statements made by the Leader and Deputy Leader that residents in the area should be supported would the Cabinet Member look again at the Council Tax Support Scheme?”

Councillor Spruce responded:

The Benefits System is set by legislation and the District Council have the task of implementing the rules set which is what is done and the District Council currently collect 99% of domestic rates.”

Question 2

Question from Councillor Norman to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Democratic and Legal Services

“At the meeting of the Strategic (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on the 17th of June neither he nor any officer was able to answer my question regarding Agenda Item 6 (Appendix B) – The End of Year Performance Review – despite the purpose of that committee being to scrutinise the reports presented to members.

I am sure he has now had time to research the item he presented to us and can now give an explanation as to why Channel Shift is apparently not working at Lichfield District Council as far as payments are concerned. The report showed that whilst payments via our website increased by 4,296 between 2012/13 and 2013/14 payments requiring help from members of staff also increased by 1,971. Could the Cabinet Member offer an explanation for this?”

Response from Councillor Spruce:

“The Council introduced a new payments module in 2012 to enable payments to be made by customers using "chip and pin" technology.

This was part of "channel shift" to move away from cash payments from customers as cash is expensive to process both in terms of staffing and bank charges; effectively improving the Council's efficiency and reducing its costs in the way in which it deals with payments received.

Since 2012 the Council's Connects team have been proactively encouraging our customers to pay, for example, their Council Tax, Taxi Licences and Fixed Penalty Notices by using a card rather than paying by cash. As a result the volume and value of transactions processed in this way has increased, 1,971 extra transactions and £150,145.02 in 2013/14 in comparison with 2012/13.

The "Staff Assistance" is our interaction with our customers using the chip and pin devices located in Connects, just as you would use in a shop. We have four such devices available for use by our Connects team.”

(The Meeting closed at 6.55 pm)

CHAIRMAN