

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD VIA REMOTE ACCESS
AT 6:00 P.M., WEDNESDAY, 24 JUNE, 2020
PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors:

Stretton, Mrs. P.Z., M.B.E. (Chairman)	
Dudson, A. (Vice-Chairman)	
Adamson, G. (Leader)	Jones, Mrs. V.
Alcott, G.	Kraujalis, J.T.
Allen, F.W.C.	Layton, A.
Bennett, C.	Lyons, Miss O.
Boucker, A.S.	Martin, Mrs. C.E.
Buttery, M.S.	Mitchell, Mrs. C.
Cartwright, Mrs. S.M.	Molineux, G.N.
Crabtree, S.K.	Muckley, A.M.
Davis, Mrs. M.A.	Newbury, J.A.A.
Dudson, A.	Pearson, A.R.
Dunnett, Ms. A.J.	Preece, J.P.T.L.
Fisher, P.A.	Smith, C.D.
Fitzgerald, Mrs. A.A.	Startin, P.D.
Freeman, Miss M.A.	Sutherland, M.
Hewitt, P.M.	Sutton, Mrs. H.M.
Hughes, R.J.	Thompson, Mrs. S.L.
Johnson, J.P.	Todd, Mrs. D.M.
Johnson, T.B.	Wilkinson, Ms. C.L.
Jones, B.	Woodhead, P.E.

The Chairman welcomed Members to the 'remote' Annual Meeting of the Council, which was being held under the 'Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ('The Regulations').

As it was a public meeting, Members and Officers were reminded that members of the press and public may be watching or listening in. The Regulations required that the meeting be broadcast live; therefore, it may be recorded or replayed at some future date. , Members were asked to be mindful of the Council's Rules of Conduct and Debate, including etiquette at remote meetings, and to ensure that the meeting was conducted in a professional manner.

Members were also asked that when not speaking, they ensured microphones were on 'mute' and mobile phones switched off.

Before proceeding further with the meeting, the Chairman took a moment to acknowledge the unprecedented times everyone had been part of, and continued to be affected by, following the Coronavirus outbreak across the Country.

It had been heart-warming to see how local communities had pulled together in support of one another during the crisis, and thanks were given to the residents of the District, along with Members and Officers, for the help that had been offered. The number of volunteers that came forward so quickly to offer assistance with tasks such as shopping for those who were isolating or shielding, collecting prescriptions, giving advice, to name a few, was overwhelming, and many would not have managed without that support.

Sadly, there were also people who had lost their lives to the virus and families that had lost their loved ones. The Chairman also noted that, sadly, two Health Care Workers, who were from within the District, had lost their lives whilst working through the pandemic. As a Council, sincere condolences were sent at this very sad and difficult time to all families affected by the loss of a loved one.

Members were then asked to join the Chairman in a minutes silence as a mark of respect.

1. Chairman's Outgoing Remarks

The Chairman advised that it had been a great pleasure to represent the District of Cannock Chase as Chairman of the Council. This was her third term as Chairman, and every occasion had always been most enjoyable and a great opportunity to meet some wonderful people. The enjoyment and honour of holding this position was something that would always be cherished. Thanks were given to her Consort (and husband) for sharing the experience with her.

Members and Officers were thanked for the support they had given whilst as Chairman of the Council, which was invaluable in making the role a success. Finally the soon to be newly-elected Chairman was wished great success in the role, and hoped that they would enjoy the experience just as much.

In May 2019, it was announced that the Birmingham Children's Hospital had been chosen as the organisation the Chairman wished to fundraise for during her term in office. In total, £1,674.18 had been raised, and arrangements would be made for the donation to be sent to the hospital.

2. Apologies

None.

3. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

No other Declarations of Interests were made in addition to those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members' Interests.

4. Election of Chairman of the Council

Councillor A.R. Pearson nominated Councillor A. Dudson, to be the Chairman of the Council for the 2020-21 municipal year, which was seconded by Councillor Mrs. C.E. Martin.

The Chairman asked if there were any other nominations.

Councillor B. Jones nominated Councillor Mrs. A.A. Fitzgerald to be the Chairman of the Council for the 2020-21 municipal year, which was seconded by Councillor J.P. Johnson.

The matter was put to the vote.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor A. Dudson, be elected Chairman of the Council to hold office for the ensuing municipal year.

Councillor A. Dudson thereupon read and signed the Acceptance of Office.

Councillor A. Dudson, the newly appointed Chairman, thanked Members for electing him to office and took the Chair.

(Councillor A. Dudson, in the Chair)

5. Election of Vice-Chairman of the Council

Councillor J.T. Kraujalis nominated Councillor P.T. Witton to be Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2020-21 municipal year, which was seconded by Councillor A.R. Pearson.

The Chairman asked if there were any other nominations.

Councillor B. Jones nominated Councillor Mrs. A.A. Fitzgerald to be the Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2020-21 municipal year, which was seconded by Councillor J.P. Johnson.

The matter was put to the vote.

The vote was tied and the Chairman used his casting vote.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor P.T. Witton be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council to hold office for the ensuing municipal year.

(Councillor P.T. Witton thereupon declared and signed the Acceptance of Office).

6. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February, 2020, be approved as a correct record.

7. Chairman's Announcements and Correspondence

(i) Armed Forces Day

The Chairman advised Members that Saturday 27 June was national Armed Forces Day; an occasion for the whole nation to show its appreciation for the contributions made by those who serve, or had served, in Her Majesty's Armed Forces.

For a number of years now, local authorities across the nation had been invited to fly a specially commissioned Armed Forces Day flag, to show support to the Forces, and this year was no exception. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the Council had not been able to host its usual flag-raising ceremony; however the flag was raised on 22 June, and would remain flying at the front of the Civic Centre until Armed Forces Day.

8. Leader's Announcements and Correspondence

The Leader presented the following announcements / updates:

"First of all, can I congratulate you Mr Chairman on your election and I hope that you have an enjoyable year.

2020 has, to say the least, been a terrible year, the only bright spot for me personally was my wedding in January, of course. After that the year has not been good for anyone.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating effect on the whole world, with the UK being one of the worst affected. Here in Cannock Chase we have had 71 deaths in hospitals and care homes attributed to Covid-19 and 217 people admitted to hospital. Our thoughts and prayers are with those who have lost someone close or who are still suffering.

I know that we all pay tribute to our incredibly brave key workers who have risked their lives to keep us safe. That includes not only our incredible NHS but also shop workers, refuse collectors, police, fire, care workers and many more.

Not only has Covid-19 had a devastating effect on the health of our district it is also having and will continue to have, a devastating effect on our economy.

Cannock Chase is forecast to be one of the worst affected areas economically in the West Midlands.

Helping our district cope with the dreadful health issues and trying to ensure as quick as possible an economic recovery have to be the top priorities of this Council and administration during 2020 and beyond.

Our staff have done an incredible job throughout the pandemic to keep services going and many have gone above and beyond the call of duty, working 7 days a week to get grants out to businesses, food parcels to residents and even helping with post-mortems. They've ensured that frontline services continued during the crisis.

We set up a community hub to help the most vulnerable in our communities and in a matter of days the staff there went from nothing to a slick organisation that is still helping the most vulnerable. They have been amazing and I thank each and every one of them.

One of the few positives to come out of this pandemic is the wonderful community spirit that has been shown by hundreds of volunteers who stepped forward back in March. New friendships have been formed, neighbours have got to know neighbours, and we've seen wonderful examples of kindness - I really hope that this continues going forward.

We are moving from the Response phase to the Recovery phase and to this end I have invited the other Group Leaders to sit with Labour cabinet members on the

newly-created Recovery Overview Board to try and ensure that we have all party consensus. We are in the middle of a pandemic and at the start of an economic crisis and I hope that all Members will put aside party politics in the Council Chamber and enable us all to work collectively for the benefit of our district.

We face a daunting challenge. Not only do we need to protect the health of our residents, and work with partners to help to rebuild the local economy, but we also need to deal with the huge financial problems that this council, and, indeed, our partners, face. We are facing an unprecedented loss of income, and we will need to maintain as many services as possible within that budget.

We may choose to provide services in a different way to that done previously and that may be one of the few benefits of this wretched pandemic. A new, smarter, way of working must result.

As a Council we will need to review our previously agreed priorities and amend them where necessary. We have to act quickly.

This will be a difficult year ahead for Cannock Chase Council, as for all other local authorities and businesses, but I am sure that we, like our staff, will rise to the occasion, put political differences aside, and work for all of our residents and businesses at this very difficult time.”

9. Form and Composition of the Cabinet

The Leader of the Council notified the Council of the form and composition of the Cabinet:

Cllr. G. Adamson	Leader of the Council
Cllr. G. Alcott	Deputy Leader of the Council and Town Centre Regeneration Portfolio Leader
Cllr. J.P.T.L. Preece	Corporate Improvement Portfolio Leader
Cllr. A.R. Pearson	Community Safety and Partnerships Portfolio Leader
Cllr. Mrs. C. Mitchell	Culture and Sport Portfolio Leader
Cllr. T.B. Johnson	Economic Development and Planning Portfolio Leader
Cllr. J.A.A. Newbury	Environment and Climate Change Portfolio Leader
Cllr. Mrs. C.E. Martin	Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Leader
Cllr. J.T. Kraujalis	Housing Portfolio Leader

10. Leader of the Opposition

The Chairman called upon the Leader of the largest opposition group to confirm the acceptance of office as the Leader of the Opposition.

Councillor Miss O. Lyons (Conservative) confirmed her acceptance of office as Leader of the Opposition.

11. Form and Composition of the Shadow Cabinet

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Miss O. Lyons, notified the Council of the form and composition of the Shadow Cabinet:

Cllr. Miss O. Lyons	Leader of the Opposition
Cllr. P.D. Startin	Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Economic Development and Planning Shadow Portfolio Leader
Cllr. M. Sutherland	Corporate Improvement Shadow Portfolio Leader
Cllr. B. Jones	Community Safety and Partnerships Shadow Portfolio Leader
Cllr. M.S. Buttery	Culture and Sport Shadow Portfolio Leader
Cllr. J.P. Johnson	Environment and Climate Change Shadow Portfolio Leader
Cllr. Mrs. V. Jones	Health and Wellbeing Shadow Portfolio Leader
Cllr. Mrs. A.A. Fitzgerald	Housing Shadow Portfolio Leader
Cllr. P.M. Hewitt	Town Centre Regeneration Shadow Portfolio Leader

12. Allocation of Seats to Political Groups to Committees and Other Bodies

Consideration was given to the Report of the Managing Director (Item 11.1 – 11.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the allocation of seats to the different Political Groups to the Council's Committees and Other Bodies as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be confirmed.

13. Appointment of Members, Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen to the Council's Committees, Sub-Committees and Other Bodies 2020-21

A schedule setting out the nominations provided by each of the Political Group Leaders for Members to be appointed to the Council's Committees, Sub-Committees and Other Bodies, together with nominations for the appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman (Item 12.1 – 12.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council) was moved by the Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The membership of the Council's Committees, Sub-Committees and Other Bodies for the 2020-21 municipal year, as set out in the schedule, be agreed.
- (B) The Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Council's Committees, Sub-Committees and Other Bodies for the 2020-21 municipal year, as set out in the schedule, be agreed.

14. Representatives on Outside Bodies 2020-21

Consideration was given to the Report of the Managing Director (Items 13.1 – 13.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

A schedule of outside bodies, together with the nominations received by each of the Political Groups, was circulated in advance the meeting (Item 13.5 – 13.9 of the Official Minutes of the Council)..

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Council's representatives on Outside Bodies for the 2020-21 municipal year, as detailed in the schedule circulated in advance of the meeting, be agreed.
- (B) The Managing Director, in consultation with the Political Group Leaders, be authorised to make additional appointments and amendments, to any new or existing outside bodies, as necessary, throughout the municipal year.
- (C) In the event of the Political Group Leaders failing to agree on a nomination(s) to an outside body (as referred to in (B) above) the appointment be a matter for determination by the Council.
- (D) Subject to (B) above, the Managing Director when appointing representatives to Outside Bodies, be authorised to determine which of the appointments should be classed as an 'approved duty' for the purposes of claiming travelling and subsistence expenses.

15. Recommendations Referred from Cabinet, Committees etc.

- (i) Consideration was given to the following recommendation to Council agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 27 February, 2020, in respect of:

Social Media Policy for Employees and Members (Minute No. 109)

"That Council be recommended to approve the Social Media Policy for Employees and Members, as attached at Appendix 1 of the 27 February 2020 Cabinet report."

RESOLVED:

That the Social Media Policy for Employees and Members be approved.

- (ii) Consideration was given to the following recommendation to Council agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 18 March, 2020, in respect of:

Communications Strategy 2020-23 (Minute No. 122)

"That a supplementary estimate of £5,000 per annum be approved to support the continued provision and production of the 'Chase Matter' magazine."

RESOLVED:

That a supplementary estimate of £5,000 per annum be approved to support the continued provision and production of the 'Chase Matter' magazine.

- (iii) Consideration was given to the following recommendation to Council agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 21 May, 2020, in respect of:

Development of New Cemetery, Norton Road / Hednesford Road, Norton Canes (Minute No. 143)

“That Council be requested to approve the revised capital programme for the Scheme, amounting to £1.411 million.”

RESOLVED:

That a the revised capital programme for the Scheme, amounting to £1.411 million, be approved.

16. Appointment of Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Consideration was given to the Report of the Leader of the Council (Item 15.1 – 16.3 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That Ian Curran be confirmed on a permanent basis the Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer for Cannock Chase District Council.

17. Revised Calendar of Meetings 2020-21

Consideration was given to the Report of the Managing Director (Item 16.1 – 16.11 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The revised Calendar of Meetings 2020-21 be approved.
- (B) The Managing Director, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council, the relevant Chairman of Committees and / or the Leader of the Council, as appropriate, be authorised to amend the Calendar of Meetings through convening additional meetings, or the postponement or cancellations of meetings, if required.

The meeting closed at 6:50 p.m.

CHAIRMAN