

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
AT 4:00 P.M., WEDNESDAY, 8 JANUARY, 2020

PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors:

Stretton, Mrs. P.Z., M.B.E. (Chairman)

Dudson, A. (Vice-Chairman)

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

56. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillors C. Bennett and P.A. Fisher.

57. 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.

58. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 November, 2019, be approved as a correct record and signed.

59. Chairman's Announcements and Correspondence

Before making her formal announcements, the Chairman advised that as some Members were aware, the Leader of the Council was getting married on Saturday 11 January. On behalf of all Members, the Chairman gave their best wishes to the Leader and his fiancé for a wonderful wedding day and a long and happy life together.

(i) Chairman's Fundraising

The Chairman advised that a collection box was circulating for Members to make a donation to support her fundraising. At the meeting held on 6 November, 2019 a total of £39.00 was received, and she thanked Members for their donations.

(ii) Councillor Fisher and Councillor Bennett

The Chairman advised that as Members were aware, Councillor P.A. Fisher was currently unwell and in hospital at the University Hospital of North Midlands. The Managing Director had sent to Councillor Fisher's family the Council's hopes and prayers for a full and swift recovery. On behalf of all Members, the Chairman wished a speedy recovery for Councillor Fisher and sent their thoughts to his family members at this difficult time.

The Chairman further advised that Councillor C. Bennett was currently in hospital in Bristol, having been taken ill over the Christmas period whilst visiting family. Again, on behalf of all Members, the Chairman wished a speedy recovery for Councillor Bennett and hoped to see both Members back in the Chamber soon.

(iii) Former Councillors

The Chairman advised that, as Members were aware, four former Councillors had sadly passed away since the last Council meeting was held, these being: Len Sharratt; Mick Grocott; Doug Thomas; and Brian Gamble.

- Former Councillor Len Sharratt – the Chairman advised that former Cannock Urban District Councillor Len Sharratt passed away in November 2019. Councillor Sharratt was also one of the first Councillors to sit on the newly formed Cannock Chase District Council from 1973 – 1976.
- Former Councillor Mick Grocott – the Chairman advised that former Councillor Mick Grocott passed away on 20 November 2019. Councillor Grocott served as a Cannock Chase District Councillor for 18 years from 2000 – 2018, and during that time held the position of Cabinet Portfolio Leader for Culture and Sport. Councillor Grocott was also more recently appointed as one of the Council's first Honorary Aldermen in May 2018.
- Former Councillor Doug Thomas – the Chairman advised that former

Councillor Doug Thomas passed away on 18 December 2019. Councillor Thomas served as a Cannock Chase District Councillor for 31 years from 1980 to 2011, and during that time held the office of Leader of the Council.

- Former Councillor Brian Gamble – the Chairman advised that former Councillor Brian Gamble passed away just before Christmas 2019. Councillor Gamble served as a Cannock Chase District Councillor for four years, from 2010 to 2014, and, as President of the Cannock Chase Branch of the Royal Air Forces Association, received the Freedom of Entry at a celebratory event in October 2018 on behalf of the Association.

The Chairman then noted that the Council's thoughts were with all the former Councillors family and friends at this sad time.

A number of Members then paid tribute to the former Councillors.

All Members then stood and joined the Chairman in observing a two minutes silence as a mark of respect.

60. Leader's Announcements and Correspondence

(i) Tim Pile – Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership

The Leader advised that Tim Pile, Chairman of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, visited Cannock Chase District on 10 December 2019. Mr Pile had a tour of the Engineering Academy based at the Cannock campus of South Staffordshire College, meeting students and representatives of the College. He also met with the Council's Leader, Managing Director and Head of Economic Prosperity to discuss progress and future plans for economic grants in the District.

(ii) NHS Consultation – Gluten Free Products

The Leader advised that an NHS consultation had commenced on a proposal to cease prescribing the majority of gluten-free products for adults. The Clinical Commissioning Group spent £59,214 on these products in Cannock Chase. The five-week public consultation was due to close at midnight on Sunday 9 February 2020, details of which had already been circulated to Members via email.

(iii) CCG Consultation on Restriction of Treatments in Cannock Chase

The Leader advised that further to the above, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had also announced a consultation on the restriction of:

- Assisted conception;
- Hearing loss in adults;
- Removal of excess skin following significant weight loss;
- Breast augmentation and reconstruction; and
- Male and female sterilisation

Members were urged to take part in the consultation whatever their views on the matters put forward.

The Leader then noted that these announcements following the general

election seemed to indicate that the Conservative pre-election promise to increase NHS spending was just a hollow promise, not backed up in reality.

(iv) Funding for Homelessness Allocated to Districts

The Leader advised that the Council had been notified of funding to prevent and tackle homelessness. This related to the Government announcement on 23 December 2019 of £263m to local authorities to support delivery of services to tackle homelessness.

Cannock Chase District Council had been allocated £205,000 from the two funding streams of 'Flexible Homelessness Support Grant' and the 'Reducing Homelessness Grant' for the 2020/21 financial year. This was the third highest allocated to any local authority in Staffordshire after Stoke-on-Trent City Council and East Staffordshire Borough Council. The funding had been allocated according to a formula that reflected relative homeless pressures. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) homelessness data for the year to March 2017 was used to assess levels of acceptances and preventions, and then projected into the future based on current trends. Officers were working through the details a report would be submitted to Cabinet in due course.

61. Questions Received under Council Procedure Rule 8

No Questions were submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8.

62. Recommendations Referred from Cabinet, Committees etc.

- (i) Consideration was given to the recommendations made to Council by the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 19 December 2019, in respect of 'Empty Dwellings and Council Tax', as detailed under item 7(i) of the Council agenda.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The schedule of charges and discounts contained within Appendix 1 of the 19 December 2019 Cabinet report be adopted with effect from 1 April 2020.
- (B) The schedule of charges and discounts contained within Appendix 2 of the 19 December 2019 Cabinet report be adopted with effect from 1 April 2021.

- (ii) Consideration was given to the recommendations made to Council by the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 19 December 2019, in respect of 'Proposed Improvements to the Play Area and Open Space at Penny Cress Green, Norton Canes', as detailed under item 7(ii) of the Council agenda.

RESOLVED:

That £187,477 from S106 funds be included in the Capital Programme for 2019-2022.

- (iii) Consideration was given to the recommendations made to Council by the Cabinet, at its meeting held on 19 December 2019, in respect of 'Proposed Improvements to Public Open Space and Play Area Adjoining Fortescue Lane, Bonney Drive and Eaton Drive, Rugeley', as detailed under item 7(iii) of the Council agenda.

RESOLVED:

That an additional £28,332 be included in the Capital Programme 2019-22 to undertake the proposed improvements as set out in Appendix 1 of the 19 December 2019 Cabinet report, and the plan attached at Appendix 1 to the same report.

63. Motions Received under Council Procedure Rule 6

- (i) Consideration was given to the following Motion, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6, by Councillor G. Adamson, Leader of the Council:

“This Council recognises that many people are unable to stand for election due to work and other commitments that make attending afternoon meetings difficult. In order to try and remedy this, I propose that meetings of the full Council should start at 6pm instead of the current time of 4pm.”

Councillor Miss O. Lyons, Leader of the Opposition, moved the following Amendment to the Motion, which was duly seconded, and then accepted by the mover of the substantive motion:

“I propose that we agree today to reschedule Full Council meetings so that they begin at 6.00pm. However, in addition to this, I also request that a feasibility study be undertaken to reassess the implications of moving Scrutiny meetings, Shadow Cabinet and Cabinet Meetings so they also begin at the later time of 6.00pm. This Council will then have an up-to-date report to accurately weigh up the pros and cons at an upcoming meeting and reach a final well informed decision.”

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) This Council recognised that many people were unable to stand for election due to work and other commitments that made attending afternoon meetings difficult. In order to try and remedy this, it was agreed that meetings of the full Council should start at 6pm instead of the current time of 4pm.
- (B) A feasibility study be undertaken to reassess the implications of moving Scrutiny meetings, Shadow Cabinet and Cabinet meetings so they also begin at the later time of 6.00pm. The Council would then have an up-to-date report to accurately weigh up the pros and cons at an upcoming meeting and reach a final well-informed decision.
- (ii) Consideration was given to the following Motion, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6, by Councillor P.D. Startin, Deputy Leader of the Opposition:

“Equality is something that affects us all. As a society we are becoming more and more aware of the inequalities that have been accepted for decades. Unfortunately we are still seeing inequality in everyday society, with recent scenes on football and cricket pitches around the world, and the UK still ranking far too high in the inequality of pay in the workplace for women.

In April 2019, Cabinet discussed the Equality and Diversity Policy and Equality Objectives, and the recommendation that the policy and objectives be approved was followed. For far too long in this country we have seen minorities of all persuasions penalised professionally and personally for perceived differences. The

truth of the matter is we're all human and all have the same rights, regardless of gender, race, religion, sexuality or any other marker that people wish to use.

In light of this, February 2020 is LGBT History month and I would like to see this Council make a gesture towards supporting the fight for equal rights that the LGBTQ+ community has had. I know there is a huge amount of work going on in Cannock Chase to support this community and 6 June 2020 sees the first Cannock Chase Pride event.

Therefore, I move that this Council publicly supports LGBT History month by flying the Rainbow flag for the month of February. This small act helps demonstrate this Council's support for an often-penalised community in society and helps raise awareness of the struggle that this community has had. This act should also help promote the Cannock Chase Pride event in June 2020."

Councillor J.A.A. Newbury moved the following Amendment to the Motion, which was duly seconded, and then accepted by the mover of the substantive motion:

"That the Managing Director write to the Minister for Women and Equalities to ask that she implement the proposals set out by the Government in July 2018 in response to the National LGBT Survey, namely to outlaw so-called 'conversion therapy' and to reform the process of changing one's legal gender."

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Council publicly support LGBT History month by flying the Rainbow flag for the month of February. This small act would help demonstrate this Council's support for an often-penalised community in society and help to raise awareness of the struggle that this community has had. This act should also help promote the Cannock Chase Pride event in June 2020.
- (B) The Managing Director write to the Minister for Women and Equalities to ask that she implement the proposals set out by the Government in July 2018 in response to the National LGBT Survey, namely to outlaw so-called 'conversion therapy' and to reform the process of changing one's legal gender.

64. Comments and Questions on Part 1 Minutes of Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels under Council Procedure Rule 9

No comments or questions on Part 1 Minutes had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.

(Councillor P.T. Witton left the meeting at the start of this item and did not return.)

65. Calendar of Meetings 2020-21

Consideration was given to the Report of the Managing Director (Item 10.1 – 10.11 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The Calendar of Meetings 2020-21, as included at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

- (B) The start time of full Council meetings be set as 6pm, in accordance with the Motion agreed by Council earlier in the meeting.
- (C) The Managing Director, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council, the relevant Chairmen of Committees and / or Leader of the Council, as appropriate, be authorised to amend the Calendar of Meetings, through convening additional meetings, or the postponement or cancellation of meetings, if required.

66. Outcome of Compulsory Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations

Consideration was given to the Report of the Managing Director as (Acting) Returning Officer (Item 11.1 – 11.15 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That:

- (A) The review process be noted, and the proposals as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
- (B) The review investigations should continue, with a view to implementing any further possible changes to polling places and polling stations in advance of the next scheduled elections on 7 May, 2020.
- (C) Delegated authority be granted to the Managing Director in his capacity as (Acting) Returning Officer to approve changes to polling place and polling stations, as may be required, in between formal reviews.

67. Comments and Questions on Part 2 Minutes of Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels under Rule 9

No comments or questions on Part 2 Minutes had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.

The meeting closed at 5:17 p.m.

CHAIRMAN