

CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL

**MEETING OF THE CHARNWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL
HELD IN
THE PRESTON ROOM, WOODGATE CHAMBERS, WOODGATE,
LOUGHBOROUGH
ON 24TH JUNE 2019**

PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor Seaton)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Snartt)

Councillor Bailey	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Baines	Councillor Mercer
Councillor Barkley	Councillor Miah
Councillor Bentley	Councillor Morgan
Councillor Bokor	Councillor Murphy
Councillor Boldrin	Councillor Needham
Councillor Bolton	Councillor Pacey
Councillor J. Bradshaw	Councillor Parsons
Councillor S. Bradshaw	Councillor Parton
Councillor Brennan	Councillor Poland
Councillor Brookes	Councillor Popley
Councillor Capleton	Councillor Radford
Councillor Charles	Councillor Ranson
Councillor Draycott	Councillor Rattray
Councillor Forrest	Councillor Rollings
Councillor Fryer	Councillor Savage
Councillor Goddard	Councillor Shepherd
Councillor Grimley	Councillor Smidowicz
Councillor Hadji-Nikolaou	Councillor Tassell
Councillor Hamilton	Councillor Taylor
Councillor Harper-Davies	Councillor Tillotson
Councillor C. Harris	Councillor Vardy
Councillor K. Harris	Councillor Ward
Councillor Howe	

Honorary Aldermen R Shields and J Tormey

14. OPENING THOUGHTS AND REFLECTIONS

The Mayor opened the meeting and welcomed the Councillors.

The Mayor stated that that the meeting was being recorded and the sound recording would be made available on the Council's website. In addition, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations people may film, record, tweet or blog the meeting and that was outside the Council's control.

The Mayor's Chaplin introduced himself and said prayers.

15. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Paling and Lowe and Honorary Aldermen Bush and Stott.

16. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

No disclosures of pecuniary and personal interests were made.

17. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 20th May 2019 were confirmed and signed.

18. ANNOUNCEMENTS

18.1 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made the following announcement.

“I would like to mention that Michael Hopkins, Democratic Services Officer and previous manager of the Democratic Services Team is attending his last Council meeting as he is hotfooting it over to the Planning Team this Wednesday. Michael has worked with the team for several years, providing advice, knowledge and support for his colleagues and Councillors. The Democratic Services’ loss is Planning’s gain. Congratulations to Michael, we will all miss you.”

18.2 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader made the following announcement.

“Madam Mayor on 20th June 2019 I made a Leaders decision confirming the re-appointment of Councillor Hilary Fryer as the Armed Forces Member Champion until May 2023”.

18.3 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chief Executive made no announcements.

19. PETITIONS

No petitions were submitted.

20. BUSINESS RESERVED TO COUNCIL

To consider the following matters reserved to Council in accordance with Part 5 of the Constitution.

20.1 APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED PARISH MEMBERS OF THE MEMBER CONDUCT COMMITTEE

A report of the Monitoring Officer, enabling Council to make appointments of co-opted parish members of the Member Conduct Committee following the parish and town council elections in May 2019, was submitted (item 6.1 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

It was proposed by Councillor Poland and seconded by Councillor Tassell and

RESOLVED

1. That Councillor Victoria (Vicky) Ball, a member of Anstey Parish Council, and Councillor Dennis Marchant, a member of Quorn Parish Council, be re-appointed as non-voting co-opted parish members of the Member Conduct Committee for a period of four years or until they cease to be a parish councillor, whichever is the sooner.
2. That Councillor Julie Jones, a member of Sileby Parish Council, be appointed as non-voting co-opted parish members of the Member Conduct Committee for a period of four years or until she ceases to be a parish councillor, whichever is the sooner.

Reasons

1. To fill two of the three vacancies for co-opted parish members of the Committee, who provide the opportunity for parish and town councillors to contribute to the work of the Committee, which have arisen at the end of the term of office of Councillor Ball's and Councillor Marchant's previous appointments.
2. To fill the third of the three vacancies for co-opted parish members of the Committee, who provide the opportunity for parish and town councillors to contribute to the work of the Committee, which has arisen following the retirement of the previous appointee.

20.2 ELECTION FEES AND EXPENSES FOR 2019/20

A report of the Chief Executive, enabling Council to approve scales of election fees payable to the Returning Officer for any Borough or Parish Council elections during 2019/20, was submitted (item 6.2 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The motion was proposed by Councillor Morgan and seconded by Councillor Miah and

RESOLVED that the scales of election fees set out in the appendix to this report be adopted for 2019/20 in relation to any Borough or Parish Council by-elections which may be required.

Reason

To ensure an approved scale of fees can be applied in respect of any Borough or Parish Council elections which take place during 2019/20.

21. CALL-IN REFERENCES

There were no call-in references from Scrutiny.

22. POSITION STATEMENTS

No position statements had been requested.

23. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

23.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

In accordance with Full Council Procedure 9.12, Councillor Vardy had given notice of a motion on climate change (item 9.1 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The motion was moved by Councillor Vardy and seconded by Councillor Morgan.

Councillor Needham addressed the Council and said that she felt the motion did not go far enough to address the climate emergency.

She asked if the Council's subcontractors would be committed to be carbon neutral by 2020 and stated that if they did not achieve this the Council would be in danger of not meeting its stated aims.

Furthermore she asked that the Council update its local planning guidance to ensure it is providing the highest energy efficient standards in all new build properties.

She concluded by saying that the Council needed to consider every decision it made and weigh it against its carbon impact.

Councillor Brennan proposed that the motion be amended to include the 9 phrases that had been circulated to Members for consideration (and which are filed with these minutes). The amendment was seconded by Councillor Ward.

For the amendment – Councillors Boldrin, Bolton, J. Bradshaw, Brennan, Draycott, Forrest, Goddard, Hamilton, C. Harris, K. Harris, Miah, Needham, Tillotson and Ward.

Against the amendment – Bailey, Baines, Barkley, Bentley, Bokor, S. Bradshaw, Brookes, Capleton, Charles, Fryer, Grimley, Hadji-Nikolaou, Harper-Davies, Howe, Hunt, Mercer, Morgan, Murphy, Pacey, Parsons, Parton, Poland, Popley, Radford, Ranson, Rattray, Rollings, Savage, Shepherd, Smidowicz, Snartt, Tassell, Taylor and Vardy.

Abstaining – Councillor Seaton.

The amendment was defeated.

The members then voted on the original motion.

RESOLVED

That this Council notes:

- (i) The International Panel on Climate Change published a report in October 2018 which concluded that we have less than 12 years to act to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. The report describes the enormous harm that a 2°C rise in global temperatures is likely to cause compared to a 1.5°C rise. It told us that limiting global warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action across all national governments that signed the Paris Agreement.
- (ii) On 12th June 2019, the UK government amended its target under the 2008 Climate Change Act, to reach net-zero greenhouse gases by 2050
– the first major nation to agree to this target, and which accords with the Paris Agreement’s aim to limit warming to 1.5°C.
- (iii) Charnwood Borough Council adopted its Climate Change Strategy in 2018, which sets out how the Council will address the issue. The Climate Change Strategy contributes to the Council’s Corporate Plan aim to ‘take action to protect the environment for future generations. A Carbon Management Plan was approved by the Cabinet in December 2015 to reduce the Council’s impact on climate change. The Council’s progress so far represents a 32% decrease in its own emissions since 2012/13.
- (iv) Charnwood Borough Council works through its existing Climate Change Strategy to enhance its existing Carbon Management Plan and green impact policies and support new ones, such as to get 100,000 trees planted over the next 4 years.

That this Council also notes that:

- (v) it can only operate within its own scope of control and influence;
- (vi) there is a need to balance the competing demands on its decreasing resources and finances;
- (vii) not all the technological solutions nor the required powers and resources are currently in place.
- (viii) that this Council will aim to achieve carbon neutrality from its own operations by 2030 and accordingly requests officers to

undertake a detailed plan of action and report back to the Carbon Management Board;

- (ix) that this Council, as a key place holder, also commits to work with residents, businesses and other public bodies across the borough and region to deliver this ambitious goal through all relevant technologies, strategies and plans.

24. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The questions on notice and the responses of the Leader or his nominee were submitted (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

24.1 RENT ARREARS

Councillor Draycott thanked the Lead Member for his response. She reiterated the figures of tenants receiving Universal Credit and the level of debt which showed an increase.

She said that the benefits system was affecting people adversely, in the Charnwood area generally and in her own ward and asked whether further information regarding the amount of tenants vacating properties due to rent arrears caused by Universal Credit could be supplied.

The Lead Member responded that the supply of information requested would be supplied. He went on to say that in fact the level of rent arrears had dropped whereas the number of people claiming Universal Credit had doubled. He confirmed that no tenants had cited Universal Credit as the reason for ending their tenancy and no tenants had been evicted due to Universal Credit. He believed this was due to the Council working hard to introduce Universal Credit smoothly and that it was testament to the hard work of the officers in the Landlord Services Team.

24.2 HOUSING REPAIRS

Councillor K. Harris made a supplementary statement in relation to his question regarding lack of communication between the Council sub-contractors and residents. He stated that he had spoken to one of the Council officers who advised on the reasons for the lack of communication and who agreed that it was not satisfactory. Councillor Harris commented that he was pleased that his involvement had expedited the works but hoped that in future that the process would be dealt with better.

He also commented on the level of complaints received and said that he hoped the Council would focus its efforts on reducing those.

The Lead Member responded to confirm that he regularly met with officers to review performance, to highlight any problems and identify solutions. He reminded Members that if they had any problems they should first raise them with the relevant officer and if they did not get a satisfactory response then to raise the issue with the Lead Member.

24.3 ELECTION COUNT

Councillor Draycott highlighted that there had been an article in the latest staff newsletter that referred to the recent election and that staff had been able to contribute to the review process. Councillor Draycott asked if members could also be included.

The Leader advised Members to contact the Chief Executive in his capacity as the Returning Officer with any comments they may have.

24.4 MEDICAL TRAINING FOR COUNCIL STAFF

Councillor J. Bradshaw thanked the Lead Member for their response and that the matter had been raised to reassure any members or visitors working out of hours. Councillor Bradshaw noted that one of the Members present had First Aid training but it was important that other members be given the opportunity to attend First Aid training. It would be useful when out with residents as well as for any Council meetings. She asked if First Aid training could be made available for members.

Councillor Poland advised that he would contact the relevant officers to discuss providing training for Members.

24.5 SOCIAL HOUSING CENTENARY

Councillor Tillotson made a statement regarding the history and implementation of social housing. She commented on the introduction of Right to Buy which gave home owners some profit from the sale of their property but meant that the number of social housing properties reduced for those in need.

Councillor Mercer responded and gave some more detail about the history of social housing and Right to Buy and highlighted that it was the 60th Anniversary of the Labour Party proposing the scheme to enable home owners to own their own home.

24.6 GENDER PAY GAP

Councillor Hamilton thanked the Lead Member for their response. It was highlighted that the same question had been asked a year ago when the gender pay gap was 17%. This year the gender pay gap was 17.6%. A comparison was made to neighbouring Councils which had a lower gender pay gap.

Council Hamilton suggested that when the action plan was reviewed there was an opportunity for officers to speak to Members as there was a learning opportunity available. He also stated that it was important to retain good staff of both sexes.

Councillor Poland responded by saying that it was important to remember that a gender pay gap was not the same as an Equal Pay comparison. He also mentioned the outsourced services the Council operated as those staff did not contribute towards the figures although the temporarily employed staff at the Council did which affected the figures.

He stressed that the data and figures provided were taken as a snapshot at a moment in time and were subject to change. He finished by advising Members that officers were happy to hear from them with any suggestions on how the Council could improve.

24.7 LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION IN CHARNWOOD

Councillor Parton stated that 1.1 million British citizens had declared themselves as lonely, but the real figure was thought to be around 9 million with the risk of causing pre-mature death believed to be around 50%. The NHS was putting money into assisting those people and the results were positive. Along with Councils and charities people were recognising how important the problem was but it was complicated.

He asked the Council to support and commit to the three following issues:

1. To acknowledge that loneliness is a serious epidemic
2. To work together in a non-political way
3. To deliver solutions as suggested by the relevant professionals.

Councillor Taylor responded by saying that the Council carried out a lot of good work within the Borough and there was a lot of support available for residents. Members were reminded that it was also their job to help support residents and signpost them to the help that is available in the Borough.

24.8 DECENT HOMES CONTRACT SETTLEMENT

Councillor Miah questioned why the question and response was exempt from the public and asked if the Mayor felt the information should be available to the public.

The Mayor advised Members that they needed to vote to go into exempt session to consider this matter, which was scheduled for later in the meeting.

24.9 PRESENTATION OF STATISTICS

Councillor Mercer advised he was happy with the response received and had nothing further to add.

Councillor Poland had no response.

25. MINUTE REFERENCES

There was reference to an exempt minute which would be considered under item 16 on the agenda.

26. URGENT EXECUTIVE DECISIONS EXEMPTED FROM CALL-IN

A report of the Chief Executive, informing the Council of three decisions taken by the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing that were exempted from call-in in accordance with Scrutiny Committee Procedure 11.9, was submitted (item 12 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

No questions were submitted in relation to the report.

27. CHANGES TO CABINET RESPONSIBILITIES

A report to Council to inform members of changes to the responsibilities of the Cabinet was considered.

No questions were submitted.

28. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

There were no proposals to consider.

29. EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED that members of the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of items 10.8 and 16.1 on the grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemptions outweigh the public interest in disclosing the information.

30. DECENT HOMES CONTRACT SETTLEMENT

Councillor Miah asked why the question on notice submitted (see minute 24.8) needed to be considered in exempt session as he felt it was in the public interest to make the information public.

The Monitoring Officer advised that the reason for exemption was as set out in the report.

A summary of the Council's discussion on this matter is provided in the exempt minute (Council 30E 2019/20).

31. MINUTE REFERENCE: REVENUES AND BENEFITS - FUTURE SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS

This matter was considered under exempt session and the minutes are exempt.

A summary of the Council's discussion on this matter is provided in the exempt minute (Council 31E 2019/20).

Note:

These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Council which is scheduled for Monday 2nd September 2019.