

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes

WEDNESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2021

PRESENT: Councillor P Roberts (Chairman)

Councillors J Aberley, R Alcock, C J S Atkins, G Bentley, M Bowen, B Cawley, S Coleman, J Davies, M Deaville, B Emery, E Fallows, K Flunder, M Gledhill, T Hall, A Hart, N Hawkins, G Heath, I Herdman, T Holmes, K Hoptroff, B A Hughes, A Hulme, K J Jackson, P Jackson, B Johnson, J T Jones, L A Malyon, K Martin, L Page, I Plant, J Porter, D Price, S E Ralphs MBE, T Riley, P Routledge, J Salt, S Scalise, D Shaw, P Taylor, E Wain, R Ward, P Wilkinson, P Wood, M Worthington and N Yates

APOLOGIES: Councillors G Bond, C Brady, S Ellis, H Plimley, I Lawson, L D Lea, T McNicol, J Redfern, H Sheldon MBE and L Swindlehurst

Prayers were offered by Reverend Nigel Irons.

20 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 30 June 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made.

22 **CHAIRMAN'S OR LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE, IF ANY.**

The Chairman of the Council confirmed that his charity ball would be held on 18 March 2022 at the Alton Towers Hotel and that he planned to hold two charity quizzes with the support of Councillors Ward and Cawley. The Chairman also congratulated Councillor Ward on the occasion of his upcoming wedding.

The Leader of the Council also led tributes to the late Keith Hollins, a former Headteacher of Westwood College, Leek and Chief Executive Officer of the Staffordshire University Academies Trust.

23 **TO CONSIDER AND DEBATE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET, OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS AND COMMITTEES, IF ANY.**

23a **AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE - ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2020/21**

RESOLVED:

That the Annual Treasury Management Report 2020/21 be approved.

23b **AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE - TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

RESOLVED:

That the Treasury Management position as at 31st May 2021 be noted.

24 **CONSIDERATION OF DISPENSATION TO ALLOW ALL COUNCILLORS
DISPENSATION FROM S.85 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 FOR A
PERIOD OF 6 MONTHS**

Councillors considered a proposal to allow all councillors dispensation from S.85 of the Local Government Act 1972 for a period of six months. This was proposed given the issues that some councillors may encounter in attending face to face meetings due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Councillors raised concerns with regards to the use of hybrid meetings and the inability to vote if not present in person. Councillor Price requested that it be minuted that he would have preferred to be in the Chamber rather than attending online and that individual councillors should seek a dispensation if required. It was subsequently proposed that a dispensation be issued to all councillors for a period of four months and that any further dispensations that may be required be granted to specific councillors at the December meeting of Council.

RESOLVED:

That a dispensation to allow all councillors dispensation from S.85 of the Local Government Act 1972 be granted for a period of four months.

25 **NOTICES OF MOTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE NO. 8, IF ANY.**

25a **TREE CANOPY COVER - NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - CLLR P. TAYLOR**

“To ensure the provision of adequate tree canopy cover on all new housing development in the Staffordshire Moorlands, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council should adopt the government’s 2021 National Planning Policy Framework and incorporate it, into both part one of the Council’s Climate Change plans and its forthcoming Tree Strategy.”

Having been **SECONDED**, upon being put to the vote, the **PROPOSAL** was declared **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED:

That to ensure the provision of adequate tree canopy cover on all new housing development in the Staffordshire Moorlands, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council should adopt the government’s 2021 National Planning Policy Framework and incorporate it, into both part one of the Council’s Climate Change plans and its forthcoming Tree Strategy.

TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10, IF ANY.**1. Question to the Leader of the Council received from Councillor C Atkins:**

“In the light of today’s arrangements for Full Council, what will be the future format of Full Council meetings in 2022?”

Response:

“It has been agreed by Group Leaders that tonight’s and December’s Full Council meeting will take place in a hybrid manner taking into account the data available with regards to the number of Covid cases locally (the Staffordshire Moorlands district currently has the highest 60 + years case rate in the West Midlands at 254 per 100,000 people – a 42% increase in the last 7 days). It has also been agreed with Group Leaders that the next cycle of meetings for the Council’s four Overview and Scrutiny Panels will also take place using the Council’s hybrid system.

It is anticipated that Full Council meetings from February 2022 will meet as normal. The arrangements for meetings will be reviewed at the end of 2021 with the involvement of all political groups and will continue to be discussed and agreed at Group Leader meetings. This will take into account the Council’s health and safety responsibilities and the latest Government data with regards to the number of Covid cases. The Council will also monitor the latest legislative requirements which may be subject to change following the Government’s call for evidence earlier this year with regards to the conduct of local authority meetings.” In response to supplementary questions the Leader of the Council explained that all members would be expected to be in attendance for consideration of the Council’s budget at its meeting in February 2022 and that there had been a great increase in the number of people in the Moorlands succumbing to Covid during the past week.

2. Question to the Leader of the Council received from Councillor J Salt:

“Can the Leader please provide a timeline for the restoration of the Miner’s lamps in Biddulph. Despite a multitude of emails and a question raised in February, they continue to rot. The Leader assured me two months ago that they’d be removed into storage until they could be restored, so why are they still there? Why haven’t the flower beds been tended to at the very least? Please can we see a timeline in response to this question that I can share with my constituents?”

Response:

Cllr Salt’s requests with regards to the maps had not been ignored. The Council has had to tender for the work to be completed. As the lamps were set in concrete a crane will be required to remove them. A company has been found and the lamps will be removed and stored at the Council’s Fowlchurch depot. There had been confusion with regards to the maintenance of the flowerbeds on the roundabout. Alliance Environmental Services were under the impression that Biddulph Town Council were responsible for this but this was wrong and they will address this as soon as the lamps are removed. In response to supplementary questions the Leader explained that the lamps could not be restored in their current location and could not provide assurance that the lamps could be restored to due to their very poor condition.

27 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC:**

RESOLVED:

That, pursuant to Section 100A(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings whereby it is likely that confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act would be disclosed to the public in breach of the obligation of confidence or exempt information as defined in Section 100 I (1) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act would be disclosed to the public by virtue of the Paragraphs indicated.

28 **TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10, IF ANY.**

1. The Leader of the Council replied to a question submitted by Councillor Cawley with regards to the Nolan principles. In response to supplementary questions the Leader referred to the confidential update with regards to staffing matters provided at the Council meeting on 30 June 2021.
2. The Portfolio Holder for Communities replied to a question submitted by Councillor Salt with regards to the use of CCTV cameras in Biddulph. Councillor Bowen explained that the Council was committed to upgrading its CCTV system, involving a major financial investment, which demonstrated the Council's commitment to making our district safe for all and that the improvements in Biddulph would be completed shortly.

The meeting closed at 8.43 pm

_____ Chairman _____ Date