

## **MINUTES OF ST EDMUNDSBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 13 December 2011 at 7.00 pm in the Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds.

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor C J E Spicer) (in the Chair),  
Councillors Ager, Beckwith, Mrs Broughton, Buckle, Chung, Clements, Clifton-Brown, Cockle, Cox, Everitt, Farmer, French, Mrs Gower, Griffiths, Hale, Mrs Hind, P Hopfensperger, Mrs R V Hopfensperger, Hordern, Houlder, Marks, McManus, Mrs Mildmay-White, Nettleton, Oliver, Pugh, Ray, Mrs Richardson, Rout, Mrs Rushbrook, Mrs Rushen, Simner, Springett, Mrs Stamp, Stevens, Thorndyke, Mrs P A Warby and Mrs D A Whittaker.

### **61. Prayers**

The Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Katherine Valentine, of Saint Marys Church, Pakenham, opened the meeting with prayers.

### **62. Remembrance**

The Council stood in silence in remembrance of the late Peter Rudge. Mr Rudge had been a Borough Councillor from 1976 to 1995 for the Stanton Ward, and was Mayor in 1989/1990.

### **63. Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 27 September and 25 October 2011 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Mayor.

### **64. Mayor's Communications**

The Mayor reported on the civic engagements and charity activities which he, the Mayoress, Deputy Mayor and Past Mayor Councillor Houlder had attended since his last report to Council on 27 September 2011.

In particular, the Mayor had attended the First Bury St Edmunds Mayor's Own Scouts Macmillan coffee morning and considered that encouragement should be given to the Scout, Guide and Sea Cadet movements. He had attended the Bury Society's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Dinner and considered that this organisation had made a significant impact on Bury St Edmunds. Finally, he reported on the Remembrance Services that he had attended over four days in November 2011.

### **65. Announcements from the Leader of the Council**

Councillor Griffiths, Leader of the Council, considered, as the end of the year approached, that the Council together with its partners and residents had a great deal to be proud of. As an example, he referred to the recent report of Mary Portas the Government's 'retail guru', and considered that the majority of her various recommendations had already been addressed in respect of Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill or were underway.

Councillor Griffiths took the opportunity to wish Councillors, officers and the residents of St Edmundsbury and West Suffolk a very happy Christmas and a healthy, happy and peaceful new year.

66. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms Byrne, Farthing, Mrs Levack, Redhead, F J Warby and A Whittaker.

67. **Declarations of Interest**

Members' declarations of interest are recorded under the item to which the declaration relates.

68. **Public Question Time**

**Mr Roy Day of Bury St Edmunds** asked why after at least two years had the Borough Council, it would appear in the eyes of the public, not done anything in St Andrews Street South in Bury St Edmunds towards the safety of pedestrians crossing between the arc and the 'old' town centre?

In reply, **Councillor Everitt, Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Bury St Edmunds**, informed the Council that, following extensive consultation, plans had been produced to address issues associated with traffic and pedestrians and that these plans had been put on hold following notification from British Gas that their contractors would undertake works within the area. When these works had been completed the planned enhancement of the area would begin.

As a supplementary question, **Mr Day** asked if there was any need for buses or taxis to go through St Andrews Street South in Bury St Edmunds at anytime?

In reply, **Councillor Everitt** considered that it was important for buses and taxis to 'drop off' passengers in the centre of town and particularly important for those elderly and infirm residents. He also considered that, providing the drivers adhered to what was considered to be shared space, it was an acceptable place for these public transport vehicles.

**Mr Tom Murray of Bury St Edmunds** stated that blue badge holders, especially attending the doctors surgeries on Angel Hill, Bury St Edmunds and some of the pharmacies in the town centre in Bury St Edmunds, were very concerned over the proposed charges for parking. He asked whether there was some leeway before charging was implemented?

In reply, **Councillor Clements, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport**, recognised that some blue badge holders would be on a low income and that any charge would be challenging for them. However, the proposed charge for blue badge holders had been set so that the holder would be entitled to park free for the equivalent time that had been paid for. No other concessions for parking were offered by the Council, even for people on low incomes.

As a supplementary question, **Mr Murray** stated that an issue was that some patients had to pay to park on Angel Hill when visiting their doctor and again when they moved onto Market Square to collect their prescriptions and asked for a system to be devised where a ticket could be purchased to cover both venues on the same day.

In reply, **Councillor Clements** stated that the system of charging for blue badge holders had been closely examined by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and had been subjected to public consultation.

*(At this stage in the proceedings the Mayor asked if any other members of the public wished to ask a question. As there were no further questions the Mayor determined that Mr Murray could continue and ask further questions.)*

**Mr Murray of Bury St Edmunds** stated that there was still confusion over the use of the word 'bid' on the application literature for people looking to move into social housing. In addition, he considered that the Council's website could be made more user friendly and explain how people were assessed for points.

In reply, **Councillor Mrs Gower, Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Housing**, informed the Council that a points system was no longer in operation and that, instead, under Choice Based Lettings, there was a priority banding system which incorporated bands A to D inclusive. Councillor Mrs Gower continued by stating that applicants had not informed her of confusion over the word 'bid'. Applicants who were registered with the Council, a partner Council or housing association were informed that expressing an interest was known as making a 'bid' for the advertised properties. She emphasised that the housing officers undertook a detailed examination of each applicant's individual circumstances and added that it almost certainly transpired that one situation was not identical to another.

As a supplementary question, **Mr Murray** stated that in his view as a past board member of Havebury Housing Partnership the word 'bid' could actually cause confusion for many tenants and they preferred to use the term 'express an interest', and there was also confusion about the banding system.

In reply, **Councillor Mrs Gower** re-emphasised that cases were assessed on an individual basis and people could contact the Council and get advice and help from the housing officers if they felt that they had been put in the wrong band or there was a change in their circumstances.

**Mr Murray of Bury St Edmunds** asked whether there had been any progress made in getting the apparent ban lifted on young people attending the Newbury Centre, because it had been three months since this issue had been raised and there seemed to be very little happening?

In reply, **Councillor Everitt, Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Community Services**, stated that officers had attended the last committee meeting at the Newbury Centre and in addition he was going to attend the next meeting in January 2012, and would again be broaching the subject. However he considered that this was a local matter between the committee and the community. He also considered it advisable that the organisations involved should meet and have discussions without the need for the Borough Council to become involved.

As a supplementary question, **Mr Murray** was concerned that this issue would 'drag on' until ownership of the Newbury Centre was transferred to the community and new governance arrangements were put in place. He requested that the local councillors should help facilitate a solution to this problem.

In reply, **Councillor Everitt** agreed that it would be better if the Newbury Centre Committee and the relevant organisations got together and held discussions. He also emphasised that when he attended the committee meeting in January he would raise the issue. He would also ask that the Ward Members try and facilitate a resolution to this issue.

**Mr Tom Murray of Bury St Edmunds** asked why the local taxi drivers appeared to be unaware that their customers could be 'dropped off' in the underground car park for events at The Apex in Bury St Edmunds.

In reply, **Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, Portfolio Holder with responsibility for the Borough Council's Public Halls**, stated that she was unaware that taxi drivers did not know that they could use the underground car park. In addition taxis could 'drop' people at St Andrews Street South if needed. She would ask that taxi and Hackney Carriage drivers were advised appropriately.

As a supplementary question, **Mr Murray** stated that because of the design of the upper tier The Apex was noisy and it had been suggested that banners could be hung from the support struts, perhaps with seasonal messages or advertising for forthcoming shows, and in that way the fabric could reduce the noise level.

In reply, **Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White** stated that she had not until now received comments about noise upstairs within The Apex but was aware of issues concerning noise downstairs around the reception area, which were currently being addressed. She agreed to pass on the comments made so that they would be considered as part of the current improvements but added that the fire officers may consider banners as a potential fire risk.

**Mr Murray of Bury St Edmunds** was concerned at the number of cars using St Andrews Street South, Bury St Edmunds which were not supposed to use this street. He considered that one of the problems was that there were no signs on Risbygate Street indicating no right turn and there were also no signs when approaching from the bus station stating no entry.

In reply, **Councillor Clements, Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Transport**, stated that there were signs in place but they were probably placed a little high. He emphasised Councillor Everitt's response to a previous question and added that he considered that the works that would be undertaken once British Gas had finished its own improvement works. In addition, with the construction of build outs and the placement of trees it would discourage people from using this street but also ensure that those that did would drive at a slower speed.

As a supplementary, **Mr Murray** stated that the scaffolding was still erected around the former Woolworths property in St Andrews Street South, Bury St Edmunds and this was causing a pinch point for pedestrians, especially when there were lorries unloading. The pavement was extremely narrow when lorries were unloading, which forced people into the path of traffic and enquired as to how long that scaffolding was going to be in place.

In reply, **Councillor Clements** was aware of the situation and that a Traffic Regulation Order was in place and would make appropriate enquiries to see the time limit in place.

69. **Items Referred to full Council by Cabinet, Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and Democratic Renewal Working Party**

The Council considered the Schedule of Referrals contained within Report C256 (previously circulated).

(A) Referrals from Cabinet: 23 November 2011

(A)(1) Haverhill Council Offices: Management Arrangements

Councillor Cox enquired whether a Member representing a Ward in Haverhill would be on the newly formed Shared Offices Joint Committee. In reply, Councillor Griffiths said that the membership of the Joint Committee would be reviewed in due course.

On the motion of Councillor Griffiths, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gower, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) the management of Haverhill Council Offices be included in the terms of reference of the West Suffolk House Joint Committee;
- (2) the joint committee be renamed as the 'Shared Offices Joint Committee'; and
- (3) the Terms of Reference of the West Suffolk House Joint Committee, as set out in Appendix 1 of Report C228, form the basis of the Terms of Reference for the new Joint Committee.

(A)(2) Joint Health and Safety Policy

On the motion of Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Mrs P A Warby, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:- That

- (1) St Edmundsbury Borough Council's (SEBC) existing Health and Safety Policy be amended to enable its development into a joint Health and Safety Policy relevant and applicable to both SEBC and Forest Heath District Council, as detailed in Paper C165; and
- (2) the Health and Safety Manager be authorised to make minor typographical, factual or grammatical changes to the Health and Safety Policy in consultation with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for health and safety and the Chairman of the current Central Safety Working Party and any subsequent body.

(B) Referrals from Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee:  
21 October 2011

(B)(1) Treasury Management Report and Investment Activity:  
1 April to 30 September 2011

It was a requirement of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) revised Code of Practice for Treasury Management that Council was provided with regular reports on the performance of the Council's Treasury Management function. A six monthly report had been presented to the Treasury Management Sub-Committee and then to the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Hale, Chairman of both the Treasury Management Sub-Committee and Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Council. In particular he emphasised the low rates of return received by the Council on its investments. For the six month reporting period the return on investments was 1.44% against the target rate of 1.5%, which reflected the continuation of historically low interest rates during the period.

(C) Referrals from Democratic Renewal Working Party:  
24 November 2011

(C)(1) Amendments to the Constitution

On the motion of Councillor Mrs P A Warby, seconded by Councillor Clements, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:-

That the amendments to the Constitution detailed in Report C243 be approved.

**70. Independent Remuneration Panel: Recommendations for Members' Allowances 2011/2012 and Subsequent Years**

The Council considered Report C257 (previously circulated) which detailed the Independent Remuneration Panel's (IRPs) Report and recommendations for Members' Allowances for 2011/2012 and subsequent years.

The Borough Council was required *'before an authority makes or amends a scheme, it shall have regard to the recommendations made in relation to it by an independent remuneration panel'*.

Attached as Appendix A to the Report was a copy of the Panel's full report and attached as Appendix B was the proposed Members' Allowances Scheme with effect from 3 January 2012 taking into consideration the recommendations made by the Panel.

Dr Lower, Chairman of the IRP, drew relevant issues to the attention of the Council. Dr Lower stated that this was the first report of the newly appointed IRP, but assured the Council that the Panel was provided with substantial amount of background information in order that new members could understand the principles associated with the scheme. The Panel wished to thank all those Councillors who completed the 'timesheets' and made individual and group representations. This provided some useful information and the 'timesheets' showed tremendous amount of variation in time commitment of Councillors. Comparison of the Borough Council's scheme with 25 similar local authorities showed that only 4 had a basic allowance above that within the Borough Council scheme. The Panel recommended no change to the basic allowance, which was also a factor in the calculation of the Special Responsibility Allowances. Changes had been recommended for the Special Responsibility Allowances for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee and the Chairman of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee. Recommendations were also made in respect of changes to the interpretation of the payment of Subsistence Allowances. He emphasised that the Panel had also recommended that the allowances continued to be linked to payments made to officers and that this indexation be for a period of 4 years, which was the maximum allowed under the regulations.

On the motion of Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, seconded by Councillor Everitt, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:- That

**1. Basic Allowance**

The Basic Allowance continue to be payable at £5,184 per annum and be index linked to the pay award received by officers for four years up until 30 November 2015.

**2. Special Responsibility Allowances**

**2.1 Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee**

The Chairman and Vice Chairman receive an allowance equivalent to that of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, currently £3,114 and £1,557 respectively, and payable from 19 May 2011.

**2.2 Licensing and Regulatory Committee**

The Chairman receive a Special Responsibility Allowance equivalent to that payable to the Chairman of the Standards Committee, currently £1,035, and payable from 13 June 2011.

**2.3 Deputy Leaders' Allowance**

The Deputy Leaders' Allowance of £5,964 be deleted from the Scheme.

**2.4 Indexation**

As the Special Responsibility Allowances are calculated as a factor of the Basic Allowance these continue to be index linked to the pay award received by officers for four years until 30 November 2015.

**3. Travel and Subsistence Allowances**

**3.1 Use of non privately owned vehicles**

Where a Member who uses a non privately owned vehicle wishes to claim re-imbusement for travel expenses then the Head of Legal and Democratic Services will, in consultation with the Councillor and the Independent Remuneration Panel if considered appropriate, determine an appropriate rate.

**3.2 Travel and Subsistence Allowances**

Reimbursement of expenses with effect from 3 January 2012 be in accordance with Appendix 1 of this report.

### 3.3 Indexation

Travel and subsistence rates to be re-imbursed and index linked to the rates payable to officers until 30 November 2015.

### 4. Childcare Allowance

4.1 The Childcare Allowance continue to be linked to the National Minimum Wage, currently £6.08 an hour, until 30 November 2015.

## 71. Standards Committee

### (a) Report from Viscount Leathers, Chairman of the Standards Committee

The Council received and noted Report C258 (previously circulated) which was the Annual Report from Viscount Leathers, Chairman of the Standards Committee.

Viscount Leathers reported that since his last report the Committee had considered just three complaints, which were under investigation. Two complaints involved Parish Councillors and one involved a Borough Councillor. In 2011 two investigations were completed and reported to the Committee; in both cases members agreed with the Investigating Officer's findings that there had been no breach of the Code of Conduct. Two further reports by the Investigating Officer would be put before the Committee on 14 December 2011.

Viscount Leathers then continued to provide an overview of the key issues contained within the Localism Act which would have a significant impact on the standards regime as it currently stood. It was understood that information on transitional arrangements would be set out in regulations before the end of January 2012. The date would be confirmed in commencement orders but it was anticipated that this would occur on 31 January 2012. The Standards Committee would give consideration to the most appropriate way to implement the requirements of the Act so that it promoted the continuance of the high standards of conduct enjoyed in St Edmundsbury without being unduly onerous in terms of procedures or resources, and would make recommendations for the Council to consider. Viscount Leathers concluded his presentation by thanking the Democratic Services Team, and in particular the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, for the support and advice they had given over the last seven years in which he had been on the Committee.

Councillor Ray reported that with the introduction of the Localism Act this was, sadly, the last time that Viscount Leathers would report to the Council as he would be unable to continue as an independent member of the Standards Committee. He paid tribute to his work as Chairman and the diligent and comprehensive manner on which the Committee gave valuable independent advice and judgement.

### (b) Meetings

No questions were asked.



72. **Shared Services: Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council**

*(The Chief Executive, Corporate Director for Community Services, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment and Chief Finance Officer left the meeting for the consideration of this item.)*

*(With the agreement of the Mayor, the following two items were taken out of order from that published on the Agenda.)*

**(a) Shared Services Steering Group**

The Council considered a narrative item which sought approval for the Leaders of both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council to be authorised, in addition to the existing membership, to attend such meetings of the Shared Services Steering Group and vote at their respective discretions.

On 25 October 2011 a special meeting of full Council was held which considered issues associated with the Shared Services agenda with Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and passed appropriate resolutions (Report C184, Shared Services: Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council, minute 59 refers). On 19 October 2011 FHDC also held a meeting of full Council to consider the Shared Services agenda and passed appropriate resolutions. Both Councils passed resolutions concerning the development of a common payline, which would initially be considered by the Shared Services Steering Group. FHDC considered it appropriate that, given the significance of this and other issues, the Leaders of both Councils should be able to attend meetings of the Shared Services Steering Group in an ex-officio capacity and be able to vote when they considered it appropriate to do so. However, the Borough Council's resolutions did not specifically approve changing the governance arrangements in respect of the Shared Services Steering Group.

On the motion of Councillor Ray, seconded by Councillor Cockle, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:-

That the Leaders of both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council each be authorised, in addition to the existing Membership, to attend such meetings, ex-officio and vote, as and when, in their respective discretions, they consider it appropriate to do so at meetings of the Shared Services Steering Group.

**(b) Recruitment of Joint Chief Executive**

The Council considered Report C259 (previously circulated) sought approval for the recruitment process and salary of a Joint Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service to serve both St Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District Councils.

On 19 October 2011 Forest Heath District Council and on 25 October 2011 the Borough Council resolved to move towards a shared staffing structure, which would include one Management Team and a Joint Chief Executive. In preparing these proposals advice had been taken which indicated that the Joint Chief Executive role would be substantially and

significantly different from those undertaken by the current Chief Executives.

A synopsis of the Job Purpose was set out in the report and a recommended salary was made after a comparison exercise had been undertaken to include local, regional and national pay levels. Attached as Appendix 1 to the Report was a table showing the details of the comparison. The recommendation was that a spot salary within the range of £105k to £115k per annum be established.

The new job profile did not fall within the category of suitable alternative employment which would have to be offered to the post holders of the existing Chief Executive roles. As a result, the existing posts were at risk of redundancy and this gave rise to a potential reason for dismissal. The report indicated that the maximum redundancy and pension costs as at 31 March 2012 were in the region of £204,000.

It was proposed to set up a Joint Appointments Committee of both authorities. This would oversee the process and carry out interviews before making a recommendation to both Councils to appoint the selected candidate and deal with any resulting dismissals. It was proposed that the Joint Committee would comprise three Councillors from each authority, with a named substitute from each authority. The quorum would be two Members from each authority. Where a Joint Committee contained more than two Members from each authority the appointments to it must be politically balanced, unless that requirement was specifically waived. For both Councils this meant that there would be three Conservative Members appointed.

It was proposed that delegated authority be given to the Heads of Human Resources, in consultation with the Leaders of both Councils, to undertake the appointment of a recruitment consultancy to provide appropriate advice, planning and management of a structured recruitment campaign.

The Leaders had considered the options regarding the employment arrangements of a Joint Chief Executive and had agreed that the Councils would enter into a secondment agreement under Section 113 Local Government Act 1972. One of the Councils would employ the Chief Executive with an agreement in place between the two Councils under which the officer was placed at the disposal of the other authority for one half of the time. Under the arrangement the employing authority would receive payment to cover half of the employment costs.

Councillor Griffiths drew relevant issues to the attention of full Council. He stated that a similar report was being considered by full Council at Forest Heath District Council the following evening, 14 December 2011. He emphasised that the Council was being asked to:-

- (1) approve recruitment to the new post and the salary band;
- (2) agree the composition of a Joint Appointments Committee and its Terms of Reference; and
- (3) make delegations that would enable the process to take place quickly and efficiently.

Councillor Griffiths emphasised that because the job was significantly and substantially different from those being carried out by the existing Chief Executives the position had to be advertised, with a possible consequence that either or both of the current post holders may become redundant. However, he stressed that there would be a fair and transparent recruitment procedure and both existing Chief Executives were fully entitled, if they wished, to apply for the new post.

In response to questions, Councillor Griffiths informed the Council that as many Councillors as possible would be involved in the recruitment process. He also informed the Council that the process would involve a significant amount of additional work for the Heads of Human Resources and together with the need for the necessary expertise it had been decided to engage employment consultants. There had been a robust tendering process and, although the final decision had not yet been taken, it was extremely likely that the cost of the consultants would be far below that paid in the recruitment of the Borough Council's current Chief Executive. Councillor Griffiths also informed the Council that a decision had not yet been taken as to which of the two authorities would be the employing authority.

Some concern was expressed at the level of salary being proposed, but it was emphasised that this salary had been determined using benchmarking on a local and national basis.

On the motion of Councillor Griffiths, seconded by Councillor Stevens, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:-

That, subject to the passing of these resolutions by Forest Heath District Council,

- (1) the recruitment of a Joint Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service to serve both St Edmundsbury Borough and Forest Heath District Councils at a spot salary within the range of £105k to £115k per annum and on the further terms set out at 3.2.3 above be approved;
- (2) the Joint Chief Executive be employed by one council and seconded to the other council, and the existing post of Chief Executive be deleted;
- (3) (a) a Joint Appointments Committee be established for the purpose of recommending to full Council the candidate for appointment and where necessary to recommend any consequential dismissals; and  
(b) the Joint Committee have the following Terms of Reference:-
  - (i) to carry out the process of appointing a Joint Chief Executive, including conducting interviews of applicants

and recommending the person to be appointed to Full Council; and

- (ii) to recommend any consequential dismissals.
- (4) the Joint Appointments Committee comprise three full members and one substitute member of each authority, including at least one member of the Cabinet, to be appointed by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services upon the nomination of the Leader of the Council;
- (5) authority be delegated to the Head of Human Resources in agreement with the Head of Human Resources at Forest Heath District Council:-
  - (a) in consultation with the Leader of the Council to:-
    - (i) draw up a Job Description and Person Specification;
    - (ii) arrange for advertising/recruitment;
    - (iii) undertake long listing of candidates; and
    - (iv) procure the services of a recruitment consultant.
  - (b) in consultation with Members of the Joint Committee to undertake short listing of candidates.

### 73. **Notice of Motions**

(a) **Local Government Act 1972: Section 249 Honorary Freedom of the Borough**

Councillor Griffiths reminded the Council that on 27 September 2011 it presented former Councillor David Lockwood with a Long Service Award for his dedicated public service of 28 years to the Council and the Community. He re-emphasised the senior positions that Councillor Lockwood held within the authority and that, in addition, he had served the community as a Justice of the Peace since 1987, and had been Court Chairman since 1996, and had also been a County Councillor for approximately 34 years. Furthermore, he had represented the Council on numerous Outside Bodies, including many School Governing Bodies and was still a Governor of the Tollgate School, which he joined in 1983.

On the motion of Councillor Griffiths, seconded by Councillor Cockle, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:-

That in recognition of the eminent services rendered to the area by David Lockwood, a special meeting of the Council be convened for the purpose of conferring upon the said David Lockwood the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of St Edmundsbury.

(b) **Local Government Act 1972: Section 249 Honorary Alderman**

Councillor Griffiths again reminded Council that on 27 September 2011 it had recognised 20 years dedicated public service that Nigel Aitkens had undertaken on the Council. Councillor Aitkens had served two terms on the Council recently as Deputy Leader, a Member of the Cabinet and Chairman of the Policy Development Committee. In his previous term he was Leader of the Council and Chairman of the influential Policy and Resources Committee.

On the motion of Councillor Griffiths, seconded by Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, it was

RESOLVED:-

That in recognition of the eminent services rendered to the Council by Nigel Baber Aitkens, a special meeting of the Council be convened for the purpose of conferring upon the said Nigel Baber Aitkens the title of Honorary Alderman of the Borough of St Edmundsbury.

74. **Quarterly Report on Special Urgency**

The Council received and noted a narrative item, as required by the Council's Constitution, in which the Leader of the Council reported that at the time the Council Agenda was published no executive decisions had been taken under the Special Urgency Provisions of the Constitution.

75. **Reports and Questions**

(a) Report from the Leader of the Council: Councillor Griffiths (Report C260)

*(Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White declared a prejudicial interest as the family of her son's wife had an interest in land associated at East Close, Bury St Edmunds and left the meeting for the consideration of this item.)*

The following topic was the subject of a question put to Councillor Griffiths, who duly responded:-

- (1) that steps be taken to ensure that Bloor Homes, the developers of Hamlet Croft in Haverhill, did not take as long over completing this scheme as the development at Tayfen Meadows in Bury St Edmunds.

Councillor Griffiths agreed to provide a written response.

*(Councillor Cockle left the meeting at the conclusion of the discussion on this item.)*

(b) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Culture and Sport Portfolio: Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White (Report C261)

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White informed the Council that the Active People Survey (APS) was the largest ever survey of Sport and Active Recreation to be undertaken in Europe. The survey provided by far the largest sample size ever established for a Sport and Recreation Survey and allowed levels of detailed analysis previously unavailable. Once again the St Edmundsbury figures were impressive, especially as nationally the

results of the APS were quite poor, with most categories suffering a decline in participation. However, St Edmundsbury had once again 'bucked the trend' with significant gains in many areas. St Edmundsbury was one of only three in the East of England to increase overall and the only one in Suffolk to do so. The figures incorporated active recreation, and included cycling and walking. Here the numbers were even better and St Edmundsbury had the seventh highest percentage participation figure, with the highest percentage increase in the whole country.

The following topic was the subject of a question put to Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White, who duly responded:-

- (1) the refurbishment of the Abbey Gardens Play Area, specifically the canopy/event area and the stepping stones.

Councillor Mrs Mildmay-White agreed to provide a written response.

- (c) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Environment and Waste Management Portfolio: Councillor Stevens (Report C262)

Councillor Stevens emphasised that the Council had achieved a recycling and composting rate of 51.9% in 2010/2011, which was a 1.2% improvement on the previous year. This achievement was impressive when considered against the cost of collecting waste for each household, which fell in 2010/2011 to £41.90 per household compared to £44.44 in 2009/2010. He considered that these highly credible achievements were a credit to the partnership working with Forest Heath District Council on waste management.

Councillor Stevens also informed the Council of the successful Member Development Session held the previous evening on Sustainable Energy. The purpose of the seminar was to help Members gain a better understanding of renewable and low carbon energy generation, energy efficiency and local energy generation.

No questions were asked.

- (d) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Housing, Licensing and Environmental Health Portfolio: Councillor Mrs Gower (Report C263)

No questions were asked.

- (e) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Performance and Resources Portfolio: Councillor Ray (Report C264)

Councillor Ray reminded the Council that it had achieved the East of England Local Government Association Charter for Elected Member Development and then presented the actual certificate for Members to view.

No questions were asked.

- (f) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Planning and Transport Portfolio: Councillor Clements (Report C265)

Councillor Clements informed the Council that the Car Parking Service recorded that over the three days of the recent Christmas Fayre in Bury St Edmunds car parking events rose by 7.9% to 22,500. This was a

record, and excluded the Park and Ride Service. He wished to place on record his thanks to all the staff associated with the successful Christmas Fayre.

The following topics were the subject of questions put to Councillor Clements who duly responded:-

- (1) the number of Ward Information planning applications that had been called in for consideration by the Development Control Committee in 2011 and whether he considered the number would increase in 2012;
- (2) that the Council should be encouraging environmental forms of transport into Bury St Edmunds;
- (3) proposed car parking charges at Hardwick Heath and Nowton Park; and
- (4) what measures were being undertaken to prevent cars illegally using St Andrews Street South as these level of incidents seemed to be increasing.

Councillor Clements agreed to provide a written response to questions (1) and (4) above.

- (g) Report from the Cabinet Member for the Tourism and Community Services Portfolio: Councillor Everitt (Report C266)

The following topics were the subject of questions put to Councillor Everitt, who duly responded:-

- (1) the successful transfer of the Southgate Community Centre to the Southgate Partnership and the need to actively involve the Local Ward Members in the process of transferring community centres to local community groups;
- (2) the funding of the road enhancements in St Andrews Street South, Bury St Edmunds; and
- (3) the apparent exclusion of the Saturday Market Traders from the Sunday Markets held in Bury St Edmunds.

Councillor Everitt agreed to provide a written response to questions (2) and (3) above.

- (h) Report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Councillor Nettleton (Report C267)

Councillor Nettleton informed the Council that in Paragraph 5.2 of his report it referred to the transfer of 'Weston' Community Centre but it should have referred to 'Westbury Community Centre'.

No questions were asked.

- (i) Report from the Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee: Councillor Hale (Report C268)

No questions were asked.

(j) Questions to the Chairmen of Other Committees

No questions were asked.

76. **Conclusion of Business**

The Mayor reminded Members that his Carol Service would be held the following day, 14 December 2011, in the reception area at West Suffolk House and all Members were invited to attend this and his New Years Eve Ball. He then wished all Members, officers and their families a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

The meeting concluded at 9.04 pm.

**MAYOR**