

Annual Council



Minutes of the **Annual Meeting** of **Council** held on **Tuesday 17 May 2022** at **7.00 pm** in the **Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU

Present **Councillors**

Chair Margaret Marks

Vice Chair Mike Chester

Richard Alecock	Brian Harvey	Richard Rout
Michael Anderson	Rachel Hood	Marion Rushbrook
John Augustine	Ian Houlder	Ian Shipp
Sarah Broughton	Paul Hopfensperger	Andrew Smith
Simon Brown	Beccy Hopfensperger	David Smith
Tony Brown	James Lay	Karen Soons
Carol Bull	Victor Lukaniuk	Clive Springett
Patrick Chung	Birgitte Mager	Sarah Stamp
Nick Clarke	Joe Mason	Lance Stanbury
Simon Cole	Sara Mildmay-White	Peter Stevens
Dawn Dicker	Andy Neal	Peter Thompson
Roger Dicker	David Nettleton	Jim Thorndyke
Andy Drummond	Robert Nobbs	Julia Wakelam
Robert Everitt	Colin Noble	Don Waldron
Stephen Frost	David Palmer	Cliff Waterman
Susan Glossop	Joanna Rayner	Phil Wittam
John Griffiths	Karen Richardson	
Pat Hanlon	David Roach	

203. **Welcome and introduction**

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all persons present in the Conference Chamber. She explained the rationale behind the precautionary health and safety measures that remained in operation for this meeting which aimed to reduce and restrict the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

(Councillor Paul Hopfensperger left the meeting during the consideration of this item and returned during the consideration of agenda item 4.)

204. **Election of Chair of the Council for 2022 to 2023**

The outgoing Chair called for nominations for the election of Chair for the 2022 to 2023 civic year.

Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council, nominated Councillor Mike Chester, which was duly seconded by Councillor Robert Everitt.

There being no other nominations, the motion was put to the vote and with the vote being unanimous, it was

Resolved:

That Councillor Mike Chester be elected Chair of West Suffolk Council for the 2022 to 2023 civic year.

The retiring Chair acknowledged her year in office. Councillor Marks paid tribute to fellow councillors, officers, volunteers in the community particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic and the work of the charities she had chosen to support during her term of office. Special recognition was given to Ruth Pusterla, Personal Assistant to the Civic Office and to Councillor Mike Chester, Vice Chair for 2021 to 2022.

Councillor Marks then invited Councillor Chester to apply the Chain of Office and take the chair. The incoming Chair signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office before passing to the Monitoring Officer for her signature.

205. Chair's announcements

The Chair acknowledged his forthcoming year in office, which included graciously thanking fellow councillors for his appointment and announcing the charity he wished to support during 2022 to 2023, namely, the GeeWizz Charitable Foundation, a small low cost charity founded in 2015 and based in Fornham St Martin, Bury St Edmunds. Their mission was to support children and young adults, across Suffolk and Norfolk, who were learning disabled or neurodivergent, had a life-limiting illness or cancer, as well as supporting Sarcoma Cancer research and many capital projects.

The Chair then welcomed members to formally join him in paying tribute to the retiring Chair, Councillor Margaret Marks, for her outstanding contribution and dedicated service to the Council during her term of office in 2021 to 2022, and prior to that as Vice Chair for two years following the creation of West Suffolk Council on 1 April 2019.

Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council; together with Councillor Ian Shipp, Leader of the Independent Group; and on behalf of Councillor Diane Hind, Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor David Smith, each paid their own tribute to Councillor Marks.

The Chair then presented Councillor Marks with her Past Chair's Badge.

206. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Trevor Beckwith, Mick Bradshaw, John Burns, Max Clarke, Jason Crooks, Diane Hind, Elaine McManus, Sarah Pugh and Nick Wiseman.

Councillor Aaron Luccarini was also unable to attend the meeting.

The Chair reported with great sadness that Cliff Hind, husband of Councillor Diane Hind, and former Bury St Edmunds Town Councillor, had very recently

died. Members joined Councillor Chester in expressing their deepest sympathies to Councillor Hind, and their family and friends during this extremely difficult time.

207. Election of Vice Chair of the Council for 2022 to 2023

The Chair nominated Councillor John Augustine for the election of Vice Chair for the 2022 to 2023 civic year, which was duly seconded by Councillor Richard Rout.

There being no other nominations, the motion was put to the vote and with the vote being unanimous, it was

Resolved:

That Councillor John Augustine be elected Vice Chair of West Suffolk Council for the 2022 to 2023 civic year.

The Chair invited Councillor Augustine to apply the Chain of Office and acknowledge his year in office. Councillor Augustine then signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office before passing it to the Monitoring Officer for her signature.

(Councillor Paul Hopfensperger returned to the meeting during the consideration of this item.)

208. Appointment of Cabinet members

The Chair called upon Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council to make his announcements.

Councillor Griffiths began by thanking his fellow portfolio holders for their sterling work and continued support before paying tribute to Councillor Sara Mildmay-White who had decided to step down from her role as Deputy Leader of the Council for reasons fully supported by Councillor Griffiths.

Councillor Griffiths thanked Councillor Mildmay-White profusely for her friendship, wise counsel and insightfulness, which together with the care and commitment she had for West Suffolk's communities, had made her an outstanding deputy leader, role model and a champion for all of the district.

Not only had she served as Deputy Leader but also Portfolio Holder for Housing and Strategic Health. A challenging role to do on its own, but one she excelled in. This included reducing rough sleeping, helping prevent people becoming homeless and overseeing the Council's successful Barley Homes company which was building and selling homes, creating affordable homes and income for the Council.

Whilst stepping down as Deputy Leader, Councillor Griffiths was delighted to announce that Councillor Mildmay-White would continue in her role as Portfolio Holder for Housing and Strategic Health.

Councillor Griffiths then announced the role of Deputy Leader would be a joint appointment of Councillors Sarah Broughton and Joanna Rayner. Both Councillors Broughton and Rayner would also continue in their roles as Portfolio Holders for Resources and Property, and Leisure, Culture and Community Hubs respectively.

No further changes would be made to the Cabinet at this stage, which was duly noted by Council.

Upon invitation by the Leader and duly called upon by the Chair, Councillor Sara Mildmay-White placed her thanks on record to the Leader for his and her fellow councillors' faith in her for the significant number of years she had been appointed as Deputy Leader for both West Suffolk Council and the former St Edmundsbury Borough Council. She felt it was a huge privilege to not only serve as Deputy Leader, but also to support West Suffolk's communities in her role as portfolio holder and as a councillor. She was delighted to support both Councillors Broughton and Rayner in their appointment as joint Deputy Leaders, and very much looked forward to continuing her role as Portfolio Holder for Housing and Strategic Health.

209. **Review of the political balance and appointment to committees 2022 to 2023 (Report number: AGM/WS/22/001)**

Council considered this report, which sought approval for the political balance and the allocation of seats to committees for 2022 to 2023.

Members confirmed that they had received copies of the report which had been circulated following the distribution of the agenda for the meeting.

Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council, including that the Constitution required that at each Annual Meeting, Council would decide which committees to establish for the municipal year, the size and terms of reference for those committees, the allocation of seats and substitutes to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules and to receive or arrange the delegation of nominations and appointment of councillors to serve on each committee.

Committees and the terms of reference for those committees were included in Part 3b, section 2 of the Council's Constitution. A link to this could be found within paragraph 2.2 of the report.

Following careful consideration of the rules on calculating political balance, Council was requested to approve the number of seats and terms of reference for the committees. This included an amendment to increase the membership of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to a total of 13 members. This amendment was proposed following a review and careful calculation of the political balance and overall distribution of seats.

On the motion of Councillor Griffiths, duly seconded by Councillor Carol Bull, it was put to the vote and with the vote being unanimous, it was

Resolved: That

1. The Committees for the 2022 to 2023 municipal year and the terms of reference for those committees as per the West Suffolk Council Constitution, Part 3b, section 2: "Responsibility for Council (non-executive) Functions", be approved.
2. An increase to the membership of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee to a total of 13 members, be approved.
3. The political balance and allocation of seats and substitutes on Committees as per Appendix A to Report number: AGM/WS/22/001, be approved.
4. Delegation be given for Group Leaders to nominate members from their Groups to seats and as substitutes on Committees.

210. **Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair of scrutiny committees**

The next item of business was the appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny and Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committees for the 2022 to 2023 municipal year.

a. Appointment of Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor John Griffiths nominated Councillor Ian Shipp as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which was duly seconded by Councillor Margaret Marks.

There being no other nominations, the motion was put to the vote, and with the vote being unanimous, it was

Resolved:

That Councillor Ian Shipp be elected Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2022 to 2023.

b. Appointment of Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor John Griffiths nominated Councillor Stephen Frost as Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which was duly seconded by Councillor Ian Shipp.

There being no other nominations, the motion was put to the vote, and with the vote being unanimous, it was

Resolved:

That Councillor Stephen Frost be elected Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2022 to 2023.

c. Appointment of Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

Councillor John Griffiths nominated Councillor Ian Houlder as Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, which was duly seconded by Councillor Victor Lukaniuk.

There being no other nominations, the motion was put to the vote, and with the vote being unanimous, it was

Resolved:

That Councillor Ian Houlder be elected Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for 2022 to 2023.

d. Appointment of Vice Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

Councillor John Griffiths nominated Councillor Karen Richardson as Vice Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee, which was duly seconded by Councillor Andrew Smith.

There being no other nominations, the motion was put to the vote, and with the vote being unanimous, it was

Resolved:

That Councillor Karen Richardson be elected Vice Chair of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee for 2022 to 2023.

211. Representation on outside bodies 2022 to 2023 (Report number: AGM/WS/22/002)

Council considered this report, which sought approval for various member appointments to represent the Council on outside bodies in 2022 to 2023.

Members confirmed that they had received copies of the report which had been circulated following the distribution of the agenda for the meeting.

Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council, including that the Constitution required that at each Annual Meeting, the Council reviewed its representations on outside bodies.

Following the election in 2019 a comprehensive process was undertaken to review the Council's representation and all members had an opportunity to submit to the Group Leader if they would like to serve on an outside body. The Monitoring Officer confirmed the appointments based on those nominations.

It was expected and anticipated that in most cases, if not all, the current appointments at Appendix A to the report would continue. However, should councillors or Group Leaders wish to review appointments, delegated

authority was sought for the Monitoring Officer to confirm those appointments following consultation with the Group Leaders.

Councillor Griffiths also drew attention to the rationale behind each of the other recommendations contained in the report before highlighting an administrative error to the listing in Appendix A with regards to the Suffolk Police and Crime Panel. Notification had recently been received from Suffolk County Council that West Suffolk Council was entitled to two 'full' members on this Panel and up to two substitutes, as appropriate, which inadvertently had inaccurately been reflected in Appendix A. The representatives would be confirmed with the County Council following the meeting.

With this amendment, on the motion of Councillor Griffiths, duly seconded by Councillor Sarah Broughton, it was put to the vote and with the vote being unanimous, it was

Resolved: That

1. The Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to appoint the Council's representatives on outside bodies, in accordance with the nominations put forward by relevant Group Leaders, or the nominated body, or the individual listed, as detailed in Appendix A to Report number: AGM/WS/22/002.
2. Where no representative is nominated, the Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to seek nominations from other bodies and individuals, to be approved by Council in due course.
3. It be noted that where the outside organisation is discharging executive functions, or the Council is an observer on an organisation, these appointments will be made by Cabinet.
4. It be noted that it is intended to continue to review representation on outside bodies to ensure that it remains beneficial for the organisation and for the Council.
5. It be noted that the nominations to the Suffolk County Council Health Scrutiny Committee, be proposed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for subsequent confirmation by Council.

The meeting concluded at 7.38 pm

Signed by:

Chair
