MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WELLINGBOROUGH HELD VIRTUALLY ON TUESDAY 26 MAY 2020


Officers present: Mrs L Elliott (Managing Director), Mr S Darcy (Director), Mr B Gill (Monitoring Officer), Mrs C A Mundy, Mrs F Hubbard (Democratic Services Officers) and Mrs E Robinson (Democratic Services Assistant).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

RESOLVED to note that an apology for absence was received from Councillor Watts.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED to note that there were no declarations made by councillors.

3. ELECTION OF THE MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020-2021 AND THE APPOINTMENT OF HIS CHAPLAIN(S)

Nominations were invited for the election of the mayor of the borough of Wellingborough for the municipal year 2020-2021.

It was moved by Councillor Partridge-Underwood, seconded by Councillor Emerson and RESOLVED that Councillor Jon-Paul Carr be elected to the office of the mayor of the borough of Wellingborough for the municipal year 2020-2021.

Councillor Carr made his declaration of acceptance of office, received the insignia of office, and took his place as mayor.

The mayor asked members to note the appointment of his three chaplains, namely Reverend Catherine Lomas, Reverend Lesley Dinham and Pastor Jim Aldwinkcle.

The mayor then thanked his fellow councillors for bestowing the honour of mayor on him for the last year of the borough council.

RESOLVED that:

(i) Councillor Jon-Paul Carr be appointed as mayor of the borough of Wellingborough for 2020-2021;
(ii) the appointment of Reverend Catherine Lomas, Reverend Lesley Dinham and Pastor Jim Aldwinkcle as his chaplain(s) for 2020-2021 be noted.
4. **ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020-2021**

Nominations were invited for the election of the deputy mayor for the municipal year 2020-2021.

It was moved by Councillor Partridge-Underwood, seconded by Councillor Henley and **RESOLVED** that **Councillor Joanne Clare Beirne** be appointed to the office of the deputy mayor of the borough of Wellingborough, for the municipal year 2020-2021.

The deputy mayor made her declaration of acceptance office.

**RESOLVED** that Councillor **Joanne Clare Beirne** be appointed as deputy mayor for the borough of Wellingborough for the year 2020-2021.

5. **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25 FEBRUARY 2020**

The minutes of the council meeting held on 25 February 2020 were received.

The mayor proposed that the minutes be adopted and this was seconded by Councillor Griffiths. On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the council meeting held on 25 February 2020 be approved.

6. **REPORT OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR ON COMMITTEE ARRANGEMENTS, SEAT ALLOCATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020-2021; APPROVAL OF THE CALENDAR OF MEETINGS; TO AUTHORISE THE USE OF THE COMMON SEAL and to AGREE A DELEGATION TO THE MANAGING DIRECTOR IN RELATION TO THE ABSENCE OF COUNCILLORS FROM MEETINGS.**

The report of the managing director was received in relation to the committee seat allocations, appointments to committees, appointment of lead advisers, the appointment of representatives on outside organisations, the calendar of meetings from June 2020 to March 2021, the use of the common seal; along with a request to note the appointment of the leader and deputy leader and the leader and deputy leader of the opposition and to give delegated authority to the managing director, in relation to a councillors non-attendance at council meetings over a period of six consecutive months.

Councillor Griffiths presented the report. He asked members to note that there was an amendment to appendix C and the membership of the Arts & Leisure Services Sub-Committee in that Councillor Gough would be replaced by Councillor L Lawman. He also reminded members that the climate change working group would continue to meet to consider the climate impact of council activities through the process of transition to a unitary council. It was expected that the next meeting would be in late August/early September. He also spoke about the work and considerable achievements of the borough council during the municipal year. A copy of his report is appended to these minutes. He then proposed the recommendations therein with the amendment to appendix C.
Councillor Scarborough welcomed Councillor Griffiths’ report and seconded the proposal.

The mayor put the proposals, as detailed in the report, and with the amendment to appendix C, to the vote which were declared carried.

RESOLVED to:

(i) approve the committee arrangements, seat allocations and appointments (and updates) for the municipal year 2020-2021 as detailed in appendices A, B, C, D and E with an amendment to appendix C that Councillor Gough be replaced by Councillor L Lawman;
(ii) approve the calendar of council and committee meetings for the period June 2020 to March 2021 as detailed in appendix F;
(iii) authorise the use of the common seal of the Borough Council of Wellingborough for the sealing of documents to give effect to any of the business of the proceedings of the council for the municipal year 2020-2021;
(iv) note the appointment of Councillor Martin James Griffiths as leader of the council and Councillor Stephen Thomas Partridge-Underwood as deputy leader of the council for the municipal year 2020-2021;
(v) note the appointment of Councillor Andrew Michael Julian Scarborough as leader of the opposition and Council Brian Emerson as deputy leader of the opposition for the municipal year 2020-2021;
(vi) approve that delegated authority be given to the managing director, in consultation with the leader of the council and the leader of the opposition, to agree to a dispensation to a councillor for non-attendance at council meetings over a period of six consecutive months, until he/she is able to return to active duty as a councillor, for the reasons detailed within the report.

(One councillor abstained from voting on (i) and (iv); in addition five councillors abstained from voting on (iv) above.)

7. CORRESPONDENCE, COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE DIRECTION OF THE MAYOR OR THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING

The mayor reminded members that there would be a virtual council meeting on Tuesday 16 June 2020 to discuss the items deferred from the meeting of 26 March 2020 which was postponed.

He thanked members for attending the first virtual meeting of the council and wished everyone a good evening.

RESOLVED that the above be noted.

Mayor

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.
Wellingborough Annual Council Leader’s Speech

I am honoured and privileged to continue as Leader of the council for a fifth year. I am proud to represent our borough now more than ever, as we come together to support our communities throughout this pandemic. I would like to thank everyone who has played a vital role in our local response, and we will now begin to focus on how we recover as a borough and move forwards together.

The Borough Council of Wellingborough is celebrating a number of achievements, successes and milestones it has accomplished over the last 12 months through a range of initiatives, strategies and collaborative working with partner organisations to provide high-quality services for residents and businesses.

The council committed £3.8 million to purchase temporary homes, and has bought 19 properties so far and this is expected to increase further in 2020, with the purchase of its first house in multiple occupation to provide supported accommodation to vulnerable people.

The housing team has worked with residents facing homelessness to dramatically reduce number of people in temporary accommodation from 91 at 31 December 2017 to 42 as at 31 August 2019 (to a three year low), and kept numbers static around 48, supported by the recruitment of three new employees. Tackling homeless and rough sleeping is one of the council’s key priorities for 2020 and so far during we have received over £364K in funding from the Government’s rough sleeping initiative programme to provide housing and support for rough sleepers, with 35 rough sleepers being encouraged to ‘come in’ during the pandemic.

It has been a fantastic year for growth in the borough and the planning team has completed 100% of minor, household and major planning applications within Government set targets, in recognition of excellence the planning service has been nominated for a Royal Institute of Town Planning award and currently, it is ranked in the top 5% of local authorities nationally.

Furthermore, the planning department is working with developers to deliver 7,000 much needed homes between 2011-23 which is worth £2.5 billion to the local economy and Wellingborough became the first council in Northamptonshire to adopt its Local Plan. One of the benefits of having an adopted local plan is that the council can better protect its local villages from unwanted character changing over-development. We are also making sure our homes are built to the best standard and have achieved the LABC quality management and ISO accreditation audit award for our building control services.

Local land charges and Gazetteer have a lot to celebrate after achieving gold status for the land and property gazetteer again and continue to complete 100% of all searches within four working days again this year. They were nominated for a land data award for digital capture of the local land charges register, which shows how good we are at managing our data.

Officers have worked with partners to address anti-social behaviour, new groups have been formed to improve multi agency working, including the Hate and Anti-Social Behaviour Action Group (HASBAG) and Cuckooing Forum. Our new Community Protection Enforcement Officers are visual in the town with the Police, and the housing outreach workers to deal with issues of anti social behaviour, and managing an increasing case load.
To support the borough’s community groups the council has awarded £90,000 community capital grants and celebrated the opening of the town’s first 3G all-weather pitch at Redwell Leisure Centre, which has proved to be a very popular facility already in its short time being open, and late last year it was agreed the Redwell Leisure Centre should be redeveloped and a pre planning application has been submitted recently for a new leisure centre on the site and to become the first purpose built health and wellbeing hub in the county. To make sure we can meet the health and community needs of residents we have bolstered the community support offer by bringing the sports development function back in house.

Pre-Covid 19 businesses in our Borough were at the highest in our history. We have been very pro-active in supporting these businesses through this difficult period and have distributed over 80% totalling circa £15m to over 1,300 businesses so far. We have also started our discretionary scheme to support businesses that were not eligible for the initial grants that desperately need our support to continue which includes B&B’s, Charities, Market Traders with fixed building costs and small businesses with shared or flexible workspaces.

There have been a number of exciting improvements to the town centre, including the rebuild and transformation of Wellingborough’s Tresham College campus which will boast a revitalised curriculum for students and adults across the borough.

We continue to work with SEMLEP and EEH to ensure the key infrastructure schemes are delivered in and around the area that positively impacts transport and housing links for residents, businesses, visitors and people working in the area alike including key support by the council towards the Isham Bypass to prioritise and maximise the likelihood of this scheme being successfully implemented.

Our events have had to take a pause for now but we are looking at what may be able to take place from Autumn onwards.

Again our leisure and theatre providers have been hit hard during this time and we’re working closely with them to support them appropriately to remain stable and be able to continue during the recovery phase of this scenario.

The refurbishment of the Multi-Storey Car Park is also progressing well under the circumstances and is still on target to complete during the winter period and will provide much needed improved parking facilities within close proximity to the Town’s shopping area and nightlife and which continue to be free for residents and visitors to use.

The council continues to develop its vision for the town centre undertaking a consultation on this in March/April. Alongside this we are have started projects to enhance the town centre including providing grants for shops (non-heritage related), refurbishing the Castle car park, improvements to the area outside the Tithe Barn are just about to start and relocating the market to make it more visible. We are working on new plans and are continuing to improve the town’s heritage buildings with work progressing well on the Hind Hotel and grants being awarded for the heritage shop front improvement project for example for works at 12-13 Cambridge Street.

Projects are also progressing outside of the town centre with work being undertaken to replace play areas and undertake other improvements in a number of parks, alongside that
further work will shortly be undertaken to clear and improve the brooks within our open spaces and we've added officer support to the Wellingborough Waterside Group.

Stanton Cross continues to develop further and our other large urban extension at Glenvale Park has really taken shape. Both of these developments are providing much needed housing and in the future will also provide schools, medical facilities and leisure provision and both will feature large areas of accessible green open space something that we know is important to our residents. We have also worked with Network Rail to deliver the electrification of the railway line and supported the renovation of the goods shed ensuring the heritage aspect of the site is maintained.

Work is well underway on the construction of the brand new flagship prison that will not only provide a huge boost to the local economy but also 850 long term jobs and a large number of apprenticeships throughout the construction stage before its final completion next year. The naming of the prison will be announced in the coming weeks.

The Resources Committee on 5 February approved that community funding of £300,000 be allocated for voluntary grants (£100k), health and wellbeing (£50k), community support (£50k) and homeless prevention (£100k).

The year ahead should be an interesting one, that’s for sure and I am particularly proud of the support we receive from the opposition group of this council who work with us on the vast majority of our projects who share our PRIDE objectives and put the resident first and foremost.

“We will continue to work with our excellent team of officers to tackle our challenges and to provide high-quality and good value for money services.

Finally, it’s worth remembering that this has all been achieved alongside the huge amount of work our members and officers are contributing towards the future northants programme and helping to shape a better culture and service delivery model for the benefit of our residents moving forwards together.

I want to take a moment to remember Cllr Lloyd who has sadly been taken from us and I wanted to state my thanks for all of his work and support for the Borough and pass on my sincere condolences to his family and friends. He will be greatly missed.