

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

COUNCIL

**Minutes from the Meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 28th September, 2023 at 5.00 pm in the Assembly Room,
Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ**

PRESENT: Councillor P Bland – Deputy Mayor in the Chair
Councillors B Anota, B Ayres, M Bartrum, A Beales, S Bearshaw, P Bland,
R Blunt, A Bubb, A Bullen, R Coates, Mrs J Collingham, S Collop, C J Crofts,
S Dark, M de Whalley, T de Winton, P Devulapalli, S Everett, D Heneghan,
P Hodson, B Jones, C Joyce, A Kemp, J Kirk, P Kunes, S Lintern, B Long,
J Lowe, C Morley, S Nash, T Parish, J Ratcliffe, S Ring, C Rose, J Rust,
A Ryves, S Sandell, Mrs V Spikings, S Squire, M Storey, D Tyler and A Ware

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Barclay, P Beal,
J Bhondi, F Bone, A Dickinson, H Humphrey, A Jamieson, A Lawrence,
J Moriarty, J Osborne and M Wilkinson (Mayor)

C:41 PRAYERS

Prayers were led by Rev Canon Ling

C:42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

C:43 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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The Deputy Mayor reported he had received the following communication from Councillor Dark:

“Mr Deputy Mayor, at our last Full Council, when seconding a motion by the Labour Leader, I informed Councillors that a formal vote had previously occurred at CPP rejecting the recommendations/paper under consideration and at the time of the vote members present were predominantly not of the Conservative Group. Whilst all of this statement and the major narrative of it remains correct, I mistakenly believed at the time I said this that this vote was ‘unanimous’ and also stated such. Since, I have found that two members of CPP voted ‘for’ the recommendation and paper and so I am very happy to apologise to you, council and them and correct the record that I should have said ‘the overwhelming majority of councillor’s present voted against’ in this otherwise true statement rather than ‘unanimous’. Thank you.”

C:44 **URGENT BUSINESS**

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The Deputy Mayor had agreed that the appointment of the Chair of Planning after the resignation of Councillor Jo Rust from the position following her appointment to Cabinet, be treated as urgent business.

Councillor Bone was nominated by Councillor Joyce, seconded by Councillor Parish. The proposal was put to the vote and approved.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Bone be appointed as Chair of Planning Committee for the remainder of the Municipal year.

Arising from the resolution above, Council was invited to appoint to the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee. Councillor Parish proposed Councillor Lintern to the position. This was seconded by Councillor Squire.

Councillor Dark proposed Councillor Spikings, seconded by Councillor Blunt.

On being put to the vote, Councillor Lintern was appointed Vice Chair.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Lintern be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee for the remainder of the Municipal year.

C:45 **TO CONSIDER THE BUSINESS NOT DEALT WITH AT THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

i **CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS**

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Council was reminded that at the previous meeting Councillor Parish had proposed the Cabinet Member's and Leader's reports en masse.

Councillor Anota in responding to Councillor Blunt's question regarding a Car Parking strategy, confirmed it was a priority.

In response to Councillor Bullen's question regarding policies relating to the West Norfolk part of the Wash coastline, Councillor Squire listed the areas of the Shoreline Management Plan and gave an update on the current work programme. She offered to give a further update if members requested it.

Councillor Sandell asked Councillor Rust for an update on her role as the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Governor. Councillor Rust informed members that she had tendered her resignation to it so she could continue her role as a campaigner for the hospital.

Councillor Ryves asked Councillor de Whalley his view on the Cranswick large farm planning application bearing in mind the work being done to reduce the carbon footprint. Councillor de Whalley undertook to respond in writing.

Councillor Kunes asked when the carbon audit would be published, Councillor de Whalley confirmed it should be within the next few months.

Councillor Ratcliffe drew attention to the benefits Downham Market Heritage Centre was drawing from West Norfolk Wins Lottery. She asked Councillor Morley how the review of it was progressing. Councillor Morley commented that he was unaware of it previously, but was looking at it with the promoter and also to link with the Norfolk Community Foundation who dealt with grant applications.

Councillor Joyce asked if there were any potential benefits with the relaxation of rules on on-shore windfarms. Councillor de Whalley responded that the Council would look at potential site selections, and he hoped Companies would look to offer incentives to those affected by them.

Councillor de Winton asked how much Councillor Morley had been consulted on the staff pay increases and whether he had agreed with it. Councillor Morley undertook to respond in writing.

Councillor Kemp asked Councillor Rust how the Borough could help to remedy the state of dentistry in the Borough. Councillor Rust informed members that whilst the Council didn't control dentistry, she had submitted a motion for the next Council meeting to try and influence the provision going forward.

In response to a question from Councillor Kunes, Councillor de Whalley confirmed that he was reviewing the Climate Change Strategy.

Councillor Lintern asked that as Freebridge were carrying out a stock survey to see which of their empty homes were viable to update, what were the Council doing to encourage empty homes to be brought back into use. Councillor Rust confirmed that discussion had been held with Freebridge on this challenge, and help offered, but the Council would continue to work with them going forward.

Councillor Blunt asked for views on second home owners and their relationship with tourism and the local economy. Councillor Ring drew attention to the difference of second homes which were rarely visited leaving the area a quiet spot and those regularly visited or let out which brought money into the local economy.

Councillor Devulapalli asked if the Council considered if was on track with the housing needs assessment figures from 2020. It was noted

that this was a question to Councillor Moriarty who was not present so the question should be emailed to him for a written response.

Councillor Sandell sought assurance that the children's holiday club concessions at leisure centres would continue. Councillor Rust undertook to look into it and respond.

Councillor Nash asked if the growing number of fires caused by electronic vehicles had resulted in risk assessments being carried out on the proximity to buildings of the charge points. Councillor de Whalley undertook to respond in writing.

Councillor Spikings sought an update on the Wisbech Incinerator and that the Council still continued to oppose it. Councillor de Whalley confirmed that he was monitoring the situation awaiting for the outcome of the Inspector's report to the Secretary of State. He confirmed that the Secretary of State could still be lobbied.

Councillor Ryves asked what plans were in place to obtain funding for the Guildhall. Councillor Beales responded that the Administration would make every effort to obtain external funding.

Councillor Spikings asked for assurance that the funding for the Parkway "Florence Fields" site would remain to provide the properties with their green elements. Councillor Beales re-confirmed the assurance given at the last meeting.

Councillor Joyce asked if Councillor Rust would take all reasonable steps to support the Mart and its showmen. Councillor Rust reminded members that Councillor Ring was the portfolio holder for events.

Councillor Lintern asked what measures were being made to ensure the information re Home Energy Support grants was disseminated. Councillor Rust gave an update on the application received, explained that the Environment and Community Panel were having an update on the matter, and it was being sent to parishes.

Councillor Long asked how Councillor Squire would hold Norse to account if she was a director, as he had previously declined the position when he was the Cabinet member. Councillor Squire reassured Council that she always do the best for west Norfolk, and would discuss it with Councillor Long.

Councillor Bullen drew attention to the installation of bat, bee and swift bricks on the development in Hunstanton, councillor de Whalley confirmed he was keen to take up the recommendations of the Urban Wildlife Group.

Councillor Dark asked if the Council had written to the new Minister regarding the Wisbech Incinerator. Councillor de Whalley undertook to check.

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Leader's Questions

Councillor Collingham asked Councillor Parish about comments on the Council's finances which allegedly said the Council was in real financial difficulty. The Leader responded that he had said on several occasions that in 3-4 years the Council would not be able to spend as it currently was as it would be using reserves over the coming years.

Councillor Kemp asked what solution had been decided upon for the West Lynn ferry following the review by Mott McDonald. Councillor Parish confirmed it was still on the agenda for the Borough and County Councils to see if money could be made available.

Councillor Long sought assurance that no unilateral approach had been taken by the administration on County Deal without Council having an input. Councillor Parish confirmed noting had been submitted except support for a letter saying that the monetary offer was not enough. He confirmed a report would be brought to the next Cabinet and Council.

Councillor Ryves asked what support was being offered by the Borough to parishes suffering from vexatious complaints. The Leader confirmed that a support model was being considered and he was having discussions with parishes at a meeting on 3 October.

Councillor Sandell asked what the situation was with Councillor Kemp's departure from the cabinet and reporting in the press. Councillor Parish confirmed that there had been personality clashes on both sides, but they were moving forward.

Councillor Bullen referred to the fact that the administration was 100 days in, and asked if the Leader welcomed an approach of working together for the benefit of the Borough. Councillor Parish confirmed that he welcomed that approach and had tried to engender that in the seating arrangements. He explained that the views expressed in the press were his as an Independent Councillor. He stated that he would work with all members for the benefit of the Borough.

Councillor Blunt asked if the Leader felt that the promotion of tourism should be the right tourism in the right locations. The Leader confirmed he was not against tourism, but not necessarily in all locations, and that people should be encouraged to other areas so they could be more evenly distributed.

Councillor Lintern asked if a review of car parking fines could be undertaken. Councillor Parish reminded Councillors that there was a strict process for dealing with parking fines and Councillors should not delay the process.

Councillor Tyler asked the Leader for information on the away day with the LGA, to which the Leader confirmed some time had been spent at the town hall with the LGA reps who were Independent representatives and who were offering guidance on how the Group of Independents could best work together to deliver services for the council. He confirmed that the opportunity came as part of the LGA membership. He offered the same process to other groups if they felt they needed support.

Councillor Sandell asked for an update on the Ukrainian Welcome Centre. She undertook to send in the question on email.

ii **MEMBERS QUESTION TIME**

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The Deputy Mayor invited any questions of Chairs other than Cabinet.

Councillor Blunt asked the Planning Chair what process the Committee was going through to ensure the Committee was familiar with the changing requirements of planning. Councillor Rust, as Chair of Planning until this point confirmed that she had discussed forthcoming training with officers, including carbon capture reductions.

Councillor Kemp asked Councillor Collop as the Chair of Environment and Community Panel if she would join with her in thanking the Chief Executive for the work behind the scenes to set up the Purfleet Pantry. Councillor Collop confirmed she had been to the opening the previous day where she had learnt a lot about the process, and had contacted a residents group in her ward about it and brought away forms for people to join it.

The meeting closed at 6.32 pm