

COUNCIL

18 October 2021

Present: Councillor B Mauthoor (Chairman)
Councillor A Grimston (Vice-Chair)
Councillors P Taylor, D Allen-Williamson, N Bell, K Clarke-Taylor,
K Crout, M Devonish, J Dhindsa, A Dychton, F Ezeifedi,
S Feldman, I Hamid, P Hannon, M Hofman, P Jeffree, S Johnson,
A Khan, P Kloss, R Martins, T Osborn, M Parker, J Pattinson,
A Saffery, G Saffery, N Shah, R Smith, B Stanton, J Stiff,
I Stotesbury, S Trebar, M Turmaine, D Walford, M Watkin,
D Watling, R Wenham and T Williams

Also present: Freemen of the Borough, Mavis Tyrwhitt and Norman
Tyrwhitt

Officers: Managing Director
Group Head of Democracy and Governance
Democratic Services Manager
Senior Democratic Services Officer
Democratic Services Officer (OE)

32 Freeman of the Borough Ceremony - Luther Blissett DL

The Freedom of the Borough was formally conferred on Luther Blissett DL.

33 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

34 Disclosure of Interests

There were no disclosures of interest.

35 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 July 2021 were submitted and signed.

Sir David Amess MP

The meeting noted with shock and sadness the fatal stabbing of Sir David Amess, MP for Southend West, which occurred on 15 October 2021, during a local constituency surgery. A minute's silence was held in his honour.

Remembrance Service

The Chairman informed councillors of this year's remembrance service to be held on 14 November 2021 at the Peace Memorial.

Watford Green Flag Parks and Green Space

The Chairman noted and commended the Council on being awarded 17 Green Flags in this year's Keep Britain Tidy announcement.

Watford Rough Sleeper Count

Councillors were notified about preparations for the annual Rough Sleeper Count. There was a call for volunteers for the event and councillors were signposted to the appropriate channels should they wish to participate.

Black History Month

The town was marking Black History Month with a series of events, including two exhibitions, "Trailblazers" and "Covid and Me", at Watford Museum. The Chairman informed councillors that information on other events could be found on the Watford Black History Month website.

16 days of action for White Ribbon

Councillors were informed about the global #16DaysOfAction challenge running from 25 November to 10 December 2021. Watford Women's Centre were calling on local residents and businesses to take action and help raise funds. Further information could be found on the Watford Women's Centre Plus website.

Chairman's events

The Chairman informed the council of events she had attended since the last Council meeting. These events included her book launch at Watford Museum, a visit to Watford Grammar School for Girls, and the Overseas Pakistan Lovers Hertfordshire Organisation's Covid-19 Champion Appreciation Award 2021. The latter event honoured

local charities for their hard work helping the community throughout the pandemic. She thanked Councillor Hamid for his hard work in organising the event.

37

Mayor's Report

A report of the Mayor had been circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman invited members to indicate whether they wished to ask a question of the Mayor. Councillors Bell and Martins indicated that they wished to ask questions.

Before responding to members' questions, Mayor Taylor welcomed the students visiting from Watford Grammar School for Girls. Mayor Taylor also expressed his condolences over the passing of Sir David Amess MP. He commented that the council had discussed the issue of members' safety with the police and the way members operated would be continually reviewed to ensure their accessibility and safety.

1. Councillor Bell asked if following the brutal attack of a local resident and her subsequent petition with 350 signatures, the Mayor felt that enough work had been done to ensure women's safety in the Oxhey Park area. Councillor Bell mentioned in particular, the impact that insufficient CCTV footage had on the police's ability to apprehend the perpetrator.

The Mayor responded, stating that there were numerous CCTV cameras around the town. The Mayor also advised that a visit had recently taken place in Oxhey Park with the Head of Community Safety and continuous work was taking place around Bushey Station in collaboration with the police.

Councillor Bell welcomed the Mayor's response and as a supplementary question commented that he felt the need for security had become ever more important in light of recent murders of young women in the UK.

2. Councillor Martins commended the Mayor of his Dementia Friendly work and the council's Local Government Chronicle Award nomination. Councillor Martins then asked whether the Mayor would be encouraging businesses to invest in improving mental health.

The Mayor responded by mentioning that Cabinet now had a portfolio holder for Health and Wellbeing. The new portfolio holder, Councillor Pattinson would be working to address mental health and was happy to work on these issues with

fellow councillors. The Mayor also noted that he recognised the importance of championing mental health especially now given the impact of the pandemic.

38 Questions by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 10.0

Questions had been received from Councillor Bell. The questions and answers had been circulated as part of the supplementary agenda and published on the internet.

39 Questions by Members of the Public under Council Procedure Rule 11.0

No questions had been received.

40 Petitions presented under Council Procedure Rule 12.0

No petitions had been received.

41 Business especially brought forward by the Chairman or the Head of Paid Service which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered as a matter of urgency.

There was no urgent business.

42 Sustainable vehicle options for Street Cleansing and Parks

A report had been received from the Contract Manager for Parks and Streetcare regarding the purchase of electric/hybrid vehicles for replacements to the street cleaning and parks services vehicle fleet. It requested approval for the transfer of funds to cover the additional costs.

RESOLVED-

That £200,000 of the capital budget for Woodside Community Sports Village project be vired into the capital budget for vehicle replacements for the Veolia contract.

43 Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles 2022- 2025

Council received a report from the Licensing Committee, which had taken place on 30 September 2021. An updated version of the Statement of Principles had been published prior to the meeting, as the date of the Council decision had needed to be altered.

RESOLVED -

1. That Council, acting as the licensing authority for the Borough of Watford, adopts the Statement of Principles under the Gambling Act 2005 as set out at appendix 1, to take effect from 6th January 2022 upon the expiry of the existing policy.
2. That Council resolves under section 166 of the Gambling Act 2005 that it will continue with the policy not to issue any casino premises licences as it believes a casino would detract from its aspiration to create a safe, prosperous and family-friendly town centre.

44

Motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13.0

Council was informed that one motion had been received.

The motion was proposed by Councillor Turmaine and seconded by Councillor Trebar. Following the publication of the agenda an amendment was submitted by Councillor Pattinson. As a result of discussions between Councillor Pattinson and Councillor Turmaine the amendment was agreed and became the substantive motion.

“This council notes:

UK companies are using the COVID-19 pandemic to change working practices and embark upon a concerted attack on employee pay and benefits with nearly one in ten workers being told to re-apply for their jobs on worse terms and conditions than before.

Across Britain, thousands of workers are facing a “levelling down” of pay, overtime, holiday benefits and working conditions as a result of “Fire and Re-hire” tactics. These tactics are being deployed by companies in Watford and across the country, in stark contrast to the government’s stated promises and priorities.

Workers are being given an ultimatum to either accept reduced pay and benefits or face the sack. This cannot be right. It is neither morally defensible, nor synchronised with creating a high wage, highly skilled economy.

Labour and Liberal Democrat politicians in parliament have united with trade unions and others, across the political spectrum, to condemn this disgraceful attack on workers’ rights and day to day behaviour.

This council resolves to:

Write to Watford's MP and request them to support the banning of fire and re-hire practices.

Write to the prime minister and urge him to bring forward legislation that prohibits fire and re-hire as is synonymous with his "levelling up" agenda. Refuse to enter into contracts doing business with companies using these tactics, in so far as this is legally possible, utilising and updating all necessary policies to achieve this."

Members debated the motion.

RESOLVED-

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Chair

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm
and finished at 8.40 pm