



Walsall Council

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall to be held on **MONDAY the SIXTH day of JULY, 2009 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House, Walsall.

Dated this 26th day of June, 2009.

Yours sincerely,

Chief Executive.

The business to be transacted is as follows:-

1. To elect a person to preside if the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not present.
2. Apologies.
3. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the annual meeting of the Council held on 18th May 2009.
4. Declarations of interest.
5. Mayor's announcements.
6. To receive any petitions.

7. To answer any questions in accordance with Council procedure rules:

(a) From the public

Mr. K. Watkins (Councillor Sanders)

“Will the Council stand by its own declared principle, to increase accessibility to, and participation in, the arts, with priority for the people of the borough of Walsall, and formally agree to my request for a retrospective exhibition for Graham Benton at the New Art Gallery?

(b) From members of the Council.

Councillor Robertson

(1) **Councillor Robertson - Advertisements on roundabouts in Walsall (Councillor Ansell)**

“How can advertisements be placed by Leisure Services on a number of roundabouts in Walsall without planning permission when most similar adverts on lamp posts to make up the shortfall in the lighting contract were refused, so costing the Council taxpayers of Walsall £7m in lost revenue?

(2) **Councillor Oliver – Illegal car washes (Councillor Andrew)**

“We read with great interest in the Express & Star (12.6.09) that the Council will force illegal car washes across the borough of Walsall with legal action for setting up these operations without planning permission:

- how many illegal car washes have been closed to date across the borough of Walsall;
- how many car washes have continued to operate after they have had planning permission refused;
- and how will the Council enforce these future actions in light of the Council making redundant enforcement officers in Public Protection and other highly important officers in relevant departments?”

(3) **Councillor Robertson - Building Schools for the Future (Councillor Walker)**

“What consultation occurred with both Governors and Head Teachers of primary schools before a decision was taken by the Schools Forum to remove funds from their school budget to contribute towards the Building Schools for the Future agenda and what effect will this have on each individual school?”

(4) **Councillor Oliver – Civil parking enforcement (Councillor Ansell)**

“We welcomed Civil Parking Enforcement in the borough of Walsall, but along with many residents would query the lack of common sense shown in its initial implementation. I would therefore ask:

- since Civil Parking Enforcement came in force in Walsall borough this year how many parking tickets have been issued to date;
- how many appeals have been lodged where parking tickets have been issued;
- how many appeals have been won;
- how many appeals are pending or in the system;
- how much is the annual income target set for our parking enforcement officers (traffic wardens)?”

(5) **Councillor Robertson - Community Association buildings and resource centres (Councillor Andrew)**

“When will a condition survey be funded on community association buildings and resource centres to allow the implementation of a fair lease system to these organisations who can then have much greater opportunity to apply for external funds?”

(6) **Councillor Robertson - European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund (Councillor Bird)**

“What problems face this Council from the lack of an audit trail in our submissions for the European regional development fund and the European Social fund claims, as warned by Peter Francis, where we are the accountable body and how much are the potential losses to Walsall Council Tax payers?”

8. Amendments to the Constitution. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

9. Cabinet portfolio responsibilities. Schedule of portfolio holder responsibilities reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

10. Appointment of independent members on Standards Committee. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

11. Children and Young People's Plan 2009-2012. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting

12. Walsall Partnership Constitution. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

13. Anti-Social behaviour scrutiny review. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

14. Changes in membership of Committees:

- (a) **Development Control Committee:** To note that the Conservative Group has appointed Councillor McCracken in place of Councillor Arif on the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.
- (b) **Audit Committee:** To note that the Conservative Group has appointed Councillor Ault in place of Councillor Aftab on the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.
- (c) **Health Scrutiny and Performance Panel:** To note that the Conservative Group has appointed Councillor Aftab in place of Councillor Martin on the Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.

15. Appointment to Fishley Charity. To appoint a trustee to the Fishley Charity for a period of 5 years.

16. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by **Councillor Smith:**

This Council notes the new school admissions code that states with regard to school uniform and other related items that:

- Costs should be limited and uniforms available in high street shops and a range of retail outlets.
- No family should feel unable to apply for admissions on account of high costs of uniform, sports kit and any other specialist equipment.
- Schemes helping with costs should be widely publicised and administered discreetly.

This Council furthermore notes the Citizen Advice Bureau's campaign "Adding up" (a campaign on education costs) and its key objectives:

- to encourage schools to adopt the best practice initiatives on uniforms, specialist equipment and school trips as outlined in government guidance.
- to lobby local and central government for the widespread availability of school uniform grants so that financial assistance is made available and effectively promoted to those in need
- to press for the guidance and good practice that exists to be made enforceable through law and effectively regulated by the appropriate body.

In noting both the new school admissions code and the Citizen's Advice Bureau's "Adding Up" campaign, this Council pledges to:

- (a) Request all Walsall schools to consider adopting the best practice initiatives on uniforms, specialist equipment and school trips as outlined in government guidance.
- (b) Request central government to make provision for the widespread availability of school uniform grants, together with the full funding for such, so that financial assistance is effectively promoted and made available to those in need.
- (c) Call on the Government to ensure that the guidance and good practice that exists be made enforceable by law and effectively regulated by the appropriate body.

(Note: Report to follow.)

17. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by **Councillors Cassidy, Wilkes, Roberston and Chambers**:

(1) The Council welcomes the findings of the Association of Train Operating Companies' (ATOC) report "Connecting Communities: Expanding Access to the Rail Network" which appraised 70 English communities of over 15,000 population who are unconnected by rail and identified nine areas ripe for reconnection - two of which were Aldridge, and Pelsall, Brownhills.

(2) The Council notes:

- (a) that the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) score for these two rail restorations exceeds The Department for Transport (DfT) pass mark for new schemes;
- (b) that ATOC's analysis indicates a strong positive business case for each scheme;
- (c) that the focus of the ATOC report is on "opportunities to connect communities which could be delivered relatively quickly", and assumes a decision to proceed by 2014.

(3) The Council confirms its unequivocal commitment to the earliest possible development and implementation of these two schemes, and its wish to work with the necessary urgency to achieve this end with all parties, in particular ATOC, Centro, interested local authorities and the DfT. It accordingly instructs that:

- (a) a positive response be made to ATOC by the 31st July consultation deadline in the first instance; and
- (b) expresses its commitment to work thereafter with ATOC and all interested parties on developing these two schemes to the point of decision at the earliest possible date..