



# 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 FOURTEENTH day of JANUARY, 2008 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House, Walsall.

Dated this 4th day of January, 2008.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Interim Chief Executive.

The business to be transacted is as follows:-

1. Apologies.
2. To elect a person to preside if the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not present.
3. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 5th November, 2007.
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.

None

(b) From members of the Council.

**(1) Councillor Oliver - Walsall Society of Artists (Councillor O'Hare)**

Has the Leader of the Council yet issued an apology for statements made at the Council meeting on 10th September 2007, as requested by the Walsall Society of Artists?

**(2) Councillor Robertson – European Social Fund grants (Councillor Perry)**

What assurances can you give that the Programme Performance Management Board are successfully monitoring progress and success of the use of European Social Fund grants by this Council and will you make public the records of their meetings with decisions made and if there is any change in profiling what effect will this have on the community and voluntary sector?

**(3) Councillor Cassidy – Radio interview re: Peter Francis Case (Councillor O'Hare)**

Will the Leader please explain why he took the decision to deny the BBC Radio 4 File On Four team an interview following the full Council meeting held on 27th September to debate the Peter Francis affair; furthermore, can he tell us why his initial response was to grant an interview then withdraw only to re-grant and refuse again at a later date?

**(4) Councillor Roberston – NRF grant (Councillor Griffiths)**

Do you accept that there is a requirement of receipt of NRF grant for 2006/2007 was that the Chief Internal Auditor complete a certificate confirming that the statement of use "in all material respects, fairly presents the eligible expenditure in the specified period in accordance with the definitions and conditions in this determination" and therefore has the Chief Internal Auditor been able to complete such a certificate and if he has how did he come to his judgement. For example is he able to explain how each project listed for funding in 2006/2007 supported the aims of NRF in reducing the gap between the poorest residents and the rest?

**8. Mayoralty 2008/2009.** Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 2(vi) to nominate the Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect for 2008/2009 in accordance with the powers contained in Sections 3 and 5 of the Local Government Act, 1972.

**9. Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.** Report of Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel reproduced in the report booklet for this meeting.

**10. Welfare Rights Service.** Report of Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel Report reproduced in the report booklet for this meeting.

**11. Independent member on Standards Committee.** Report reproduced in the report booklet for this meeting.

**12. Appointment of Electoral Registration Officer, Returning Officer and Deputy Electoral Registration Officer.** Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

**13. Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) Annual Report.** Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

**14. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by Councillors Oliver and Walker:**

This Council welcomes the growing concern and consensus at the damaging and wasteful impact on our environment of excessive and unrecyclable packaging.

We note that:

- A recent research shows that up to 40% of household shopping cannot be recycled and that 5% of the total weight of shopping baskets is packaging.
- The lowest levels of packaging and highest proportion of recyclables are through independent retailers and markets, whilst despite efforts already being made it is in supermarkets and large chains stores where most urgent action is needed.

The Council therefore resolves:

- To publicly campaign for a reduction in packaging and “throwaway” non-degradable plastic bags.
- To work with retailers to target consumers in shops as they are making their choices.
- To contact all supermarkets/chains operating in the Borough seeking their co-operation, comments and policies.

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

This Council notes:

- (1) the proven major economic and regeneration benefits of canal restorations that result from the ability to accommodate volumes of through canal cruising traffic;
- (2) that the Borough of Walsall’s links to national canal network are poor, and the scope for through cruise navigation traffic is nil, as its northward connections between Ogley Junction and Huddlesford (the “Lichfield Canal”), and the Hatherton Branch of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal were severed many years ago;
- (3) that the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Restoration Trust has been campaigning for a number of years to achieve the restoration of these two canal links;
- (4) the Trust’s many successes on the ground, in particular the negotiation and construction of two toll motorway crossings, a navigable culvert at Churchbridge, and an aqueduct north of Brownhills, thus conserving the possibility of the future restoration of these canals when this can be achieved;
- (5) that the Council have recently met with representatives of the Trust.

The Council accordingly:

- (1) confirms its policy position as being supportive of the restoration of the said canal links, in recognition both of the regeneration benefits to Brownhills and the whole Borough, and the enhanced leisure and employment opportunities for local people that restoration will bring;
- (2) accordingly expresses its in-principle support for the aims and work of the Canal Restoration Trust;
- (3) requests that further discussions take place aimed at:
  - (i) identifying and budgeting for a modest amount of grant aid, for example, from regeneration funds, to demonstrate tangible support for the Trust’s ongoing work;

- (ii) with LHCRT, taking the initiative in seeking to create a wider partnership of interested parties to take the restoration project to the next level, involving the following: the British Waterways Board; Staffordshire County Council; Cannock Chase, Lichfield and South Staffordshire District Councils; the Inland Waterways Association; and any others as deemed appropriate by the partners;
- (iii) taking forward, with partners, an up-to-date feasibility report, to include an economic impact assessment, of the restoration of the Brownhills - Lichfield canal, similar in scope to the Arups' 2006 study for the Trust of the Hatherton Canal Restoration.

16. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by **Councillors Oliver and I. Shires:**

This Council is pleased to note the recent visit to our Borough by a delegation from Koubah in Palestine, which was welcomed to Walsall by the Mayor, the Labour Group and the Liberal Democrat Group. We would therefore send a message of friendship to the people of Koubah on behalf of the Council, and our hopes toward a just and peaceful solution for a land in turmoil.