



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 8TH day of JULY, 2013 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House, Walsall.

Dated this 28th day of June, 2013.

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 meeting of the Council held on 20th May, 2013.
4. Declarations of interest.
5. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended):**
To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.
6. Mayor's announcements.
7. To receive any petitions.

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

(a) From the public

Mr. T. Gray, The Jerome K. Jerome Society – Arboretum boating lake

"Now that the work to the arboretum is finished, when will the rowing-boats be reinstated in the boat house for the enjoyment of fresh air and exercise by the people of Walsall?"

(b) From members of the Council

(1) Councillor Oliver – Business rates

"Could this Council and the people of Walsall be given an explanation of the Council's under-performance in failing to collect the sum of £2,346,833 in business rates due in 2012/2013, and as to the impact on our Council's finances should this be repeated in the current financial year?"

(2) Councillor Russell – Town centre swimming baths

"Following the recent remarks by the Leader of the Council (Express and Star 20th March 2013) should the people of Walsall be concerned that they are about to lose our town centre swimming baths?"

(3) Councillor Worrall – 20 mph speed limits

"New Government speed limit guidance asks all local traffic authorities to consider 20 mph limits as a 'priority for action', the intention being to reduce road casualties and encourage walking and cycling. Could the portfolio holder advise the Council of what actions, or plans for action, are being taken in this regard within the Borough?"

(4) Councillor Anson – Fryers Road waste centre

"Will the portfolio holder for waste disposal explain to me why staff at Fryers Road waste centre have been instructed not to help residents to unload, this even applies to disabled people who are instructed to go away and come back with a person to help them?"

(5) Councillor Oliver – Community hubs

"Whilst welcoming the social capital and financial investment in the disadvantaged areas of Darlaston South and Blakenall, could the portfolio holder explain to Council:

- how much has been spent and committed to the two pilot 'community hubs' in these wards
- the detail of the selection process for the two pilot projects
- the proposed timescale for this pilot project to be rolled out to other disadvantaged areas of the borough
- which other areas are to be considered for the roll out of this project?"

(6) Councillor Smith – Town centre toilets

"Following the Resolution of Council (22/5/13), amended by Councillor Smith and carried unanimously as a substantive motion, which not only opposed Centro's proposals to introduce charges for the use of Walsall town centre toilets but also requested Walsall Council's 3 Councillor representatives on the Transport Authority to make the strongest representations on the issue in support of Walsall Council's concerns, could this Council and the public have a statement from the Council informing us what action has been taken by the Council and its Transport Authority representatives following this resolution and what has been the outcome of such action?"

9. Annual report of Audit Committee 2012/13. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting. The Chairman of Audit Committee to present the report for noting.

10. Children's services update. Report to follow.

11. Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

12. Report of Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

13. Portfolio holder briefing. To receive a 5 minute presentation from the portfolio holder for Resources (Councillor Towe):

(Note: A member of the Council may ask the portfolio holder any question and another associate question without notice upon the each report. Questioning by members is limited to 10 minutes for each report presented.)

14. **Appointments on outside bodies and charities:**

- (a) To appoint members to the following bodies in place of the late Councillor Ansell for the remainder of the municipal year:
- (i) River Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee
 - (ii) Steps to Work (Walsall) Limited
 - (iii) Walsall and Wolverhampton Transport Users Advisory Committee
 - (iv) Joint Committee for Civil Parking Enforcement and Parking and Traffic Regulations
 - (v) West Midlands (Metropolitan Area) Road Safety Partnership Board
- (b) Catherine Walker Charity:
- (i) To report the resignation of Councillor Phillips as a trustee of the charity.
 - (ii) To appoint a trustee for a period of 4 years from 13th September 2013.

15. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by **Councillors P. Bott, C. Bott and Smith:**

Walsall Council calls on the Government to stop the cull of badgers on the following grounds:

- Over 70% of the badger population in large areas of the country will be killed, many of them healthy and many of them injured and suffering before death as a result of being shot.
- The method of free-shooting badgers could cause severe stress, suffering and pain to many thousands of badgers.
- Independent scientific studies have shown that culling would be of little help in reducing bovine TB, and even suggest that it could make things worse in some areas.
- The go-ahead for the killing of badgers might provide an excuse for a general “free for all” attack on badgers, wherever their habitats may be.

and therefore Walsall Council urges the Government to stop the cull and implement the more sustainable and humane solution of both a vaccination programme for badgers and cattle, along with improved testing and biosecurity. *(Good biosecurity practice refers to a way of working that minimises the risk of contamination and the spread of animal and plant pests and diseases, parasites and non-native species.)*

(Note: Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

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

“Given that this Council at a recent Council meeting on 8 April 2013, unanimously expressed its opposition to the so called “bedroom tax” and resolved to call on the Government to scrap the “bedroom tax”, this Council now calls upon the Walsall Housing Group (whg) and other social landlords of properties in the Borough of Walsall to give assurances that they will take no eviction action against any of their tenants, solely as a result of arrears resulting from the imposition and impact of the “bedroom tax.”

(Note: Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

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

This Council, cognisant of the fact that those who have been informed and those who might be informed in the future, by the Council’s Housing Benefits office of a requirement to pay Bedroom tax, do indeed have a right of appeal in relation to the benefit decision following the implementation of ‘bedroom tax’, therefore resolves to ensure that this right of appeal is made much more clearly to those affected as it has become apparent that many of those affected by the bedroom tax are not aware of their right of appeal.

(Note: Report to follow.)

Private session

18. To confirm the following recommendation of **Cabinet**:

Phoenix 10 project

That approval be given to capital expenditure (not currently identified in the capital programme), an estimate of which is set out in paragraph 3.6 of the report, to fund the comprehensive reclamation of the Phoenix 10 site subject to confirmation that the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership Board will fully reimburse that expenditure from anticipated business rates from sites within the Black Country Enterprise Zone, subject to approval of a detailed business case by Cabinet.

(Note: Reports to Cabinet on 24th April 2013 reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

[Exempt information under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)]