



Minutes of the **MEETING** of the Council of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough held on **Monday 15th July 2019 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House.

Present

Councillor P. Bott (Mayor) in the Chair

Councillor R. Burley (Deputy Mayor)

“ G. Ali
“ B. Allen
“ A.J.A. Andrew
“ D.J. Barker
“ H. Bashir
“ M.A. Bird
“ C. Bott
“ O. Butler
“ B. Chattha
“ A.G. Clarke
“ S.J. Cooper
“ D. Coughlan
“ S.R. Craddock
“ C.U. Creaney
“ S.K. Ditta
“ B.A. Douglas-Maul
“ K. Ferguson
“ J. Fitzpatrick
“ M. Follows
“ N.Z. Gultasib
“ A.D. Harris
“ L.A. Harrison
“ A.J. Hicken
“ K. Hussain
“ L.D. Jeavons
“ S. Johal
“ T.J. Jukes

Councillor P. Kaur

“ M. Longhi
“ Mrs. R.A. Martin
“ F. Mazhar
“ J. Murray
“ S. Nasreen
“ A.A. Nawaz
“ A.S. Nazir
“ S.L. Neville
“ G. Perry
“ W. Rasab
“ L.J. Rattigan
“ I.C. Robertson
“ S. Samra
“ H.S. Sarohi
“ K. Sears
“ I. Shires
“ G. Singh Sohal
“ C.A. Statham
“ M.A. Statham
“ C.D.D. Towe
“ A. Underhill
“ S. Wade
“ M. Ward
“ V.J. Waters
“ T.S. Wilson
“ R.V. Worrall
“ A. Young

21. **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors James and M. Nazir.

22. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20th May 2019 copies having been sent to each member of the Council, be approved as a correct record and signed.

23. **Declarations of interest**

The Monitoring Officer advised members that in relation to item 14 – Notice of Motion (Fossil Fuels), it was his view that there was not a requirement for members to declare a disclosable pecuniary interest. However, the decision relating to declaring interests remained with members.

Councillor D. Coughlan declared a personal interest in Item 17 – Local Government Act 1972 - attendance at meetings.

24. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items to be considered in private session.

25. **Petitions**

The following petitions were submitted:

- (a) Councillor Martin – “Land grab” and planning application 19/0566 Newquay Close, Walsall.
- (b) Councillor Nawaz – Changing parking arrangements in Caldmore Road.
- (c) Councillor Rattigan – Rushall Playing Fields and Radleys Park – unauthorised encampments.
- (d) Councillor Underhill – Wood Street, Darlaston – noise pollution and anti-social behaviour.
- (e) Councillor Worrall – Save Walsall Acorns Children’s Hospice.

26. Petition: Support Walsall Arboretum dedicated team

A report was submitted.

Fiona Macmillan of the Walsall Arboretum User Group presented the petition. In doing so, she highlighted that the arboretum was the second most visited attraction in the Midlands and well supported by a dedicated team. She stated that the restructure would have a detrimental impact upon the future success of the park and the number of events held there. Reducing staff would also have safety implications, as they would be less visible. In closing, she urged the Council to preserve the posts and save the Arboretum.

Resolved

That the petition and representations be noted.

27. Questions

(a) From members of the public

There were no questions from members of the public.

(b) From members of the Council

Councillor Rattigan asked the following question of Councillor Perry:

“Can the portfolio holder confirm whether or not he supports residents calls for an injunction at Rushall Playing Fields/Radleys Park to prevent further UE's and can he confirm any progress relating to this matter?”

Councillor Perry replied confirming that he would support the call for an injunction and commended ward members for their work on the issue. He explained that the evidence submitted as part of the petition would be critical to assess the need for such an injunction.

28. Recommendation of Audit Committee – independent member

The report to Audit Committee on 15 April 2019 was submitted.

Resolved

That Mr. A. Green's term of office be extended commencing from the start of the 2019/20 municipal year and ending at the conclusion of the 2020/21 municipal year.

29. **Portfolio holder briefing**

A report was submitted.

Councillor Bird, Leader of the Council gave a presentation.

Members asked questions in relation to the presentation which were responded to by Councillor Bird.

30. **Personnel Committee membership**

The Council noted that Councillor Harris had replaced Councillor Kaur as a member of the Personnel Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

31. **Appointments on outside bodies and charities**

(a) **Walsall Museum and Art Galleries Development Trust**

The Council noted that Councillor Follows had replaced Councillor Chattha as the Council's representative on the Trust for the remainder of the municipal year.

(b) **Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education**

The Council noted that Councillor Ali had replaced Councillor Chattha as a member of SACRE for the remainder of the current municipal year.

A list of nominations to the following bodies was circulated around the Council Chamber which was **moved** by Councillor Bird, seconded by Councillor Andrew and:

(c) **West Midlands Combined Authority**

Resolved

That members be appointed to serve on the undermentioned Boards of the West Midlands Combined Authority for the municipal year 2019/20 as follows:

(i) **Investment Board**

Councillor Bird

(ii) **Wellbeing Board**

Councillor Longhi
Councillor Martin (substitute)

(iii) **Public Service Perform Board**

Councillor Bird
Councillor Andrew (substitute)

(d) **Catherine Walker Charity**

Resolved

That Councillor Waters be appointed a Trustee of the Catherine Walker Charity for the balance of the period expiring on 24 May 2021 in place of former Councillor Rochelle.

(e) **Pelsall (Staffs) Mining Accident Fund**

The Council was informed that the term of office of Councillors Neville and Perry expired in September 2019.

Resolved

That Councillors Neville and Perry be appointed Trustees of the Pelsall (Staffs) Mining Accident Fund for a period of 5 years expiring on 14th September 2024.

32. **Notice of motion – Fossil fuels**

A report was submitted.

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Shires and seconded by Councillor Barker:

“Council notes reports on BBC News 12 June 2019 by Roger Harrabin Environmental Analyst that the UK Government was to commit to almost zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and Prime Minister Theresa May’s comments that:

There was a “moral duty to leave this world in a better condition than what we inherited” and that “Cutting emissions would benefit public health and cut NHS costs”.

Council recognises that:

1. Burning fossil fuels poses a serious risk to the stability of the climate upon which our wellbeing and our economy depend.
2. Research demonstrates that up to 80% of proven fossil fuel reserves will have to remain unburnt if we are to have a reasonable chance of keeping global warming to less than 2 degrees Celsius, the globally agreed target for climate change mitigation.
3. Since 80% of fossil fuel must remain in the ground, the reserves of the fossil fuel industry risk becoming “stranded assets” with little or no value – representing a substantial financial risk for those that invest in them.

4. The West Midlands Pension Fund currently has over £490 million invested in the oil, coal and gas industries.
5. As of January 2019 1000+ institutions with assets totalling in excess of £8.05 trillion have made divestment from fossil fuel commitments.

Council pledges to:

- A. Review its investment strategy and develop and implement a Responsible Investment Policy which rules out new investment in fossil fuel companies.
- B. Call on West Midlands Pension Fund to divest from fossil fuels by mandating its representative on the West Midlands Pension Fund Committee to call for the development and adoption of Responsible Investment Policies which:
 - i Immediately freeze any new investment in the top 200 publicly traded fossil fuel companies;
 - ii Divest from direct ownership any co-mingled funds that include fossil fuel equities and corporate bonds within 4 years;
 - iii Set out an approach to quantifying and addressing climate change risks affecting all other investments; and
 - iv Focus future investments on areas that minimise climate change risk.”

On being put to the vote the motion was declared **lost** – the voting at the request of several members of the Council being recorded as follows:

**For the motion –
25 members**

Cllr: Nawaz
Shires
Barker
Bashir
C. Bott
P. Bott
Burley
D. Coughlan
Creaney
S. Ditta
J. Fitzpatrick
Gultasib
Hussain
Jeavons
Jukes
Mazhar
Nasreen
A. Nazir
Robertson
Sarohi
Underhill
Ward

**Against the motion –
32 members**

Cllr: Bird
Ali
Allen
Andrew
Butler
Chattha
Clarke
Cooper
Craddock
Douglas-Maul
Ferguson
Follows
Harris
Harrison
Hicken
Johal
Kaur
Longhi
Martin
Murray
Neville
Perry

Wade
Worrall
Young

Rasab
Rattigan
Samra
Sears
Sohal
C. Statham
M. Statham
Towe
Waters
Wilson

33. **Notice of motion – Walsall Arboretum**

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Nawaz and seconded by Councillor Hussain:

“This Council recognises the improvements made in the quality and in the increased use of the arboretum over the past several years.

This Council further acknowledges the crucial role played by all the front line staff and the on site Arboretum Manager and the Arboretum Events Manager in achieving the improvements to our premier park in Walsall.

In recognising and acknowledging the above, this Council calls upon the Cabinet to maintain the posts of a site based Arboretum Manager and a site based Arboretum Events Manager. Both these posts being essential in the continuation of the success of a well-used and high quality Walsall Arboretum Park.”

On being put to the vote the motion was declared **lost** – 25 members voting in favour and 31 against.

34. **Notice of motion – Traveller transit site**

A report was submitted.

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Nawaz and seconded by Councillor Hussain:

“This Council recognises the disruption, anxiety and fear caused to the residents of Walsall by the continuing instances of unauthorised encampments across the Borough.

This Council acknowledges the loss of confidence of the residents of Walsall in Walsall Council’s ability to deal with unauthorised encampments and the disruption, ASB, littering and general annoyance that they create.

This Council further recognises the fact that Sandwell Council, by setting up a Traveller Transit Site, has eliminated unauthorised encampments from its borough.

This Council therefore calls upon the administration to consult local residents and Councillors in order to designate, open and operate a traveller transit site in the borough of Walsall, based on the Sandwell model, and to do this urgently – within 3 months – to resolve this major issue for the people of Walsall.”

On being put to the vote the motion was declared **lost** – the voting at the request of several members of the Council being recorded as follows:

**For the motion –
25 members**

Cllr: Nawaz
Shires
Barker
Bashir
C. Bott
P. Bott
Burley
D. Coughlan
Creaney
Ditta
Fitzpatrick
Gultasib
Hussain
Jeavons
Jukes
Mazhar
Nasreen
A. Nazir
Robertson
Sarohi
Underhill
Ward
Wade
Worrall
Young

**Against the motion –
32 members**

Cllr: Bird
Ali
Allen
Andrew
Butler
Chattha
Clarke
Cooper
Craddock
Douglas-Maul
Ferguson
Follows
Harris
Harrison
Hicken
Johal
Kaur
Longhi
Martin
Murray
Neville
Perry
Rasab
Rattigan
Samra
Sears
Sohal
C. Statham
M. Statham
Towe
Waters
Wilson

35. **Local Government Act 1972 – Attendance at meetings**

A report was submitted.

Resolved

That approval be granted for an extension of absence until May 2020 to Councillor Sean Coughlan as a consequence of ill health.

The meeting terminated at 7.55 p.m.