

Minutes of the **MEETING** of the Council of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough held on **Monday 4th November 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.P. Coughlan
“ S.R. Craddock
“ 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
“ D. James
“ L.D. Jeavons
“ S. Johal

Councillor T.J. Jukes

“ P. Kaur
“ M. Longhi
“ Mrs. R.A. Martin
“ F. Mazhar
“ J. Murray
“ S. Nasreen
“ A.A. Nawaz
“ M. Nazir
“ 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
“ S. Wade
“ M. Ward
“ V.J. Waters
“ T.S. Wilson
“ R.V. Worrall
“ A. Young

52. **Apology**

An apology for non-attendance was submitted on behalf of Councillor Underhill.

53. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2019 copies having been sent to each member of the Council, be approved as a correct record and signed.

54. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no items to be considered in private session.

56. **Petitions**

Councillor Martin submitted a petition relating to parking, the introduction of a one-way traffic management system and resurfacing of roads in Chuckery.

57. **Questions**

Removal of weeds from the highway

Councillor Shires asked the following question:

“In welcoming the belated attempts by Clean and Green at removing the build-up of weeds on our highways as a direct result of budget cuts agreed by Cabinet ahead of the Special Budget Council meeting in February of this year.

I would like to ask the following question of the portfolio holder for Clean and Green:

Can he share with this Council the schedule of which roads have, to date been cleared of weeds, and the plan going forward to clear the remaining roads in the borough and how the priority in which the work is being carried out was decided upon; and

How much funding has been set aside to complete this task and from where the funding was sourced. Given the fact that this is extra work than what was originally planned, what planned work will now either be delayed or cancelled?”

Councillor Butler replied:

- “(a) Reducing highway weed spraying to once per annum has allowed weed growth to flourish. Control of weeds on roads and pavements is linked to street cleansing activities. Regular sweeping removes detritus in which weeds can grow and prevents seedlings from maturing.

Perennial and annual weed seeds can establish themselves to a mature plant in as little as six to eight weeks. The growing season traditionally has ranged from April to October, however this is notably being extended from March to November given milder weather conditions. In a 30-week growing season, three generations of dandelions can grow.

Weeds are being removed in accordance with the ongoing planned cleansing schedules across the 20 wards and detailed on the Council’s website. This schedule ranges from three times to nine times per annum depending on ward and levels of deterioration.

This cleansing programme will continue and include the removal of weeds within existing available resources.

This year’s annual herbicide treatment was undertaken by an external contractor. Work commenced on 10 June 2019 and was completed within six weeks. A five day return visit was undertaken in mid-August to address concerns over weed kill rate. The treatment is a contact herbicide (glyphosate) that kills existing visible weed growth. This treatment does not kill or prevent weed seeds from establishing.

- (b) The 2019/20 weed spraying contract cost circa £13k. Funding for weed removal comes from existing street cleansing budgets and is carried out by existing resources as part of the scheduled deep cleans. Cleansing work, including weed removal will continue in each scheduled area over the allocated four-day period and be focussed on the area of most need. This work will be supported by the channel sweeper with more aggressive brushes, removing weeds from the highway channel which will improve drainage, particularly in periods of heavy rainfall.

Budgets for weed control have been significantly reduced over recent years, resulting in only one spray in 2019.

As agreed by Cabinet in September, budgets will be increased in 2020/21 by £55k allowing three sprays which will be carried out at optimum times to minimise the visible weed growth. Additionally, increased herbicide treatments will take place in car parks and other council maintained locations.

Community payback teams will also be used to work with Clean and Green to strengthen operative numbers.”

Councillor Shires asked the following supplementary question:

“When were the footpaths cleaned and how much did it cost”?

Councillor Butler replied:

“The footpaths were cleaned in March 2019”

58. Recommendation of Cabinet – Safer Walsall Partnership Plan 2020

The report to Cabinet on 23 October 2019 was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Bird, seconded by Councillor Perry and:

Resolved

That the Safer Walsall Partnership Plan 2020 be approved as the Community Safety Plan for the borough.

59. Annual Scrutiny report 2018/19

The Annual Scrutiny report was submitted.

Councillor Murray presented the report.

Resolved

That the Annual Scrutiny report 2018/19 be noted.

60. Amendment to Constitution – Code of Conduct for Employees

A report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Bird, seconded by Councillor Andrew and:

Resolved

That Part 5.2 of the Constitution be replaced with the amended Code of Conduct for Employees.

61. **Proposed amalgamation of Polling Districts KE and KF**

A report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Bird, seconded by Councillor Andrew and:

Resolved

- (1) That Polling District KE and KF be amalgamated and renamed Polling District KE.
- (2) That it be noted that the polling place for Polling Station KE be St. Thomas Church Hall, St. Thomas Close, Aldridge.

62. **Portfolio holder briefings**

(a) **Adult Social Care**

A report was submitted.

Councillor Martin, the portfolio holder for Adult Social Care gave a presentation.

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

(b) **Children's**

A report was submitted.

Councillor Wilson, the portfolio holder for Children's gave a presentation.

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

63. **Notice of motion – Reducing grass cutting and introducing areas of seeded wildflowers**

A report was submitted.

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

This Council notes that there are many main roads across the borough with grassed areas to either a central reservation or roadside or both.

Therefore this Council requests that officers undertake a review of all roads with a view to reducing the need for grass cutting wherever possible and areas seeded with wildflowers subject to the maintenance of satisfactory sight lines for drivers and pedestrians.

Further that consultation on the recommendations of this review be the subject of a Community Consultation through each of the four Strategic Locality Partnership Boards (SLPB). That the feedback from the four SLPBs be referred to the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the pre-decision scrutiny process before going to Cabinet.

This Council believes that this approach will:

- Improve bio-diversity
- Provide areas for pollinating insects
- Add to the visual amenity appeal of many of our main thoroughfares
- Saves money which can be used for other environmental activity.

Amendment moved by Councillor Butler and seconded by Councillor Bird:

This Council notes that there are many main roads across the borough with grassed areas to either a central reservation or roadside or both.

Therefore this Council requests, that officers conduct a trial with two major roads with a view to reducing the need for grass cutting wherever possible, and areas seeded with wildflowers subject to the maintenance of sight lines for drivers and pedestrians in accordance with Councillor Butler's instructions dated 14th June 2019.

Further that consultation on the recommendations of this review be the subject of a Community Consultation through each of the four Strategic Locality Partnership Boards (SLPB). That the feedback from the four SLPBs be referred to the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

This Council believes that this approach will:

- Improve bio-diversity
- Provide areas for pollinating insects
- Add to the visual amenity appeal of many of our main thoroughfares
- Saves money which can be used for other environmental activity.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared carried – 29 members voting in favour and 21 against.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared carried and it was:

Resolved

This Council notes that there are many main roads across the borough with grassed areas to either a central reservation or roadside or both.

Therefore this Council requests, that officers conduct a trial with two major roads with a view to reducing the need for grass cutting wherever possible, and areas seeded with wildflowers subject to the maintenance of sight lines for drivers and pedestrians in accordance with Councillor Butler's instructions dated 14th June 2019.

Further that consultation on the recommendations of this review be the subject of a Community Consultation through each of the four Strategic Locality Partnership Boards (SLPB). That the feedback from the four SLPBs be referred to the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

This Council believes that this approach will:

- Improve bio-diversity
- Provide areas for pollinating insects
- Add to the visual amenity appeal of many of our main thoroughfares
- Saves money which can be used for other environmental activity.

64. **Notice of motion – Kashmir**

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

This Council recognises the worry, anxiety and heartfelt concern felt by residents of Walsall, particularly by the substantial Kashmiri community in the Borough who have relations in Kashmir, on the continuing human rights abuses being committed by Occupying Indian Forces in Kashmir.

This motion calls upon the Council to condemn strongly:

- The widely reported abuse of Kashmiri men, women and children by occupying Indian Armed Forces
- The lock down of Kashmir – resulting in the imprisoning of 8 million people within the occupied territory
- The arrest of the Kashmiri Political leaders by occupying Indian authorities
- The widely reported continuing persecution and forced conversions of minorities by the Indian Government led by Prime Minister Modi.

This Council therefore calls for:

- Walsall Council to write to the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister to express the concerns of Walsall residents, particularly those of Kashmiri heritage, regarding the ongoing reported abuses against the people of Kashmir by Indian Armed Forces caused by the policies of the Indian Government.
- That Walsall Council call upon Walsall's Members of Parliament to publically condemn the abuses of the Kashmiri people by Indian Occupation Forces and support the right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir and the removal of Indian armed forces from Kashmir.

Amendment moved by Councillor Bird and seconded by Councillor Andrew:

This Council recognises the worry and heartfelt concern felt by the residents of Walsall, particularly the substantial Kashmiri community in the Borough, and therefore this Council requests that officers write to the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister to express the concerns of Walsall residents, particularly those of Kashmiri heritage with regards to the situation in Kashmir.

Further, that this Council call upon Walsall Members of Parliament to publicly condemn the situation in Kashmir and support the right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir.

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

For the amendment – 30 members	Against the amendment – 23 members	Abstain – 1 member
Cllr: Bird	Cllr: Nawaz	Cllr: Rasab
Ali	Shires	
Allen	Barker	
Andrew	Bashir	
Butler	C. Bott	
Chatta	P. Bott	
Clarke	Burley	
Cooper	Ditta	
Craddock	Gultasib	
Douglas-Maul	Hussain	
Ferguson	James	
Follows	Jeavons	
Harris	Jukes	
Harrison	Mazhar	
Hicken	Nasreen	
Johal	A. Nazir	
Kaur	M. Nazir	
Martin	Robertson	
Murray	Sarohi	
Neville	Ward	
Perry	Wade	
Rattigan	Worrall	
Samra	Young	
Sears		
Sohal		
C. Statham		
M. Statham		
Towe		
Waters		
Wilson		

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared carried – the voting at the request of several members of the Council being recorded as follows:

**For the motion –
30 members**

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

**Against the motion –
23 members**

Cllr: Nawaz
Shires
Barker
Bashir
C. Bott
P. Bott
Burley
Ditta
Gultasib
Hussain
James
Jeavons
Jukes
Mazhar
Nasreen
A. Nazir
M. Nazir
Robertson
Sarohi
Ward
Worrall
Young

Abstain – 1 member

Cllr: Rasab

and it was:

Resolved

This Council recognises the worry and heartfelt concern felt by the residents of Walsall, particularly the substantial Kashmiri community in the Borough, and therefore this Council requests that officers write to the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister to express the concerns of Walsall residents, particularly those of Kashmiri heritage with regards to the situation in Kashmir.

Further, that this Council call upon Walsall Members of Parliament to publicly condemn the situation in Kashmir and support the right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir.

65. Notice of motion – Period poverty

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

This Council recognises:

- The excellent work undertaken by the government, Period Poverty charities and the NHS to reduce period poverty and support women and schoolgirls.
- The government has established a Period Poverty Taskforce, which will focus its efforts on tackling the issue of period poverty and related stigmas.
- It is important that girls in secondary schools receive free sanitary products as recognised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Spring Statement 2019.
- In April 2019, the government announced that free sanitary products will be offered to girls in all primary schools in England from early 2020.
- All women and girls being cared for by NHS England are now given, on request, appropriate sanitary products free of charge.

This Council commends:

- Its Cabinet for supporting the free provision of sanitary products in primary and secondary schools.
- Its Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for bringing the issue of period poverty to Cabinet.
- All organisations and individuals working to tackle period poverty and shame that can be associated with periods both in the UK and around the world.
- The Conservative government for taking the lead in this area to improve life opportunities for young girls across the country.

This Council resolves to request that the Director of Public Health write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, asking the Government to:

- Scrap the VAT levied on female hygiene products as soon as is practicable after the UK leaves the EU, and, in the meantime use the VAT collected on these products to fund the provision of free sanitary products for girls and women in need;
- Support the work of the Period Poverty taskforce;
- Encourage all schools to provide free sanitary products to schoolgirls.

Amendment moved by Councillor Nawaz and seconded by Councillor Hussain:

This Council recognises:

- The excellent work undertaken by the government, Period Poverty charities and the NHS to reduce period poverty and support women and schoolgirls.

- The government has established a Period Poverty Taskforce, which will focus its efforts on tackling the issue of period poverty and related stigmas.
- It is important that girls in secondary schools receive free sanitary products as recognised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Spring Statement 2019.
- In April 2019, the government announced that free sanitary products will be offered to girls in all primary schools in England from early 2020.
- All women and girls being cared for by NHS England are now given, on request, appropriate sanitary products free of charge.

This Council commends:

- Its Cabinet for supporting the free provision of sanitary products in primary and secondary schools.
- Its Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for bringing the issue of period poverty to Cabinet.
- All organisations and individuals working to tackle period poverty and shame that can be associated with periods both in the UK and around the world.
- The Conservative government for following the lead of Amika George and the Union Movement in this area to improve life opportunities for young girls across the country.

This Council resolves to request that the Director of Public Health write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, asking the Government to:

- Scrap the VAT levied on female hygiene products as soon as is practicable after the UK leaves the EU, and, in the meantime use the VAT collected on these products to fund the provision of free sanitary products for girls and women in need;
- Support the work of the Period Poverty taskforce;
- Encourage all public spaces including schools, colleges, G.P surgeries, Council leisure centres, Council buildings and private establishments such as supermarkets, department stores, leisure venues etc to provide free sanitary products to schoolgirls and women who cannot afford to buy them.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost – 20 members voting in favour and 28 against.

The motion was put to the vote, declared carried and it was:

Resolved

This Council recognises:

- The excellent work undertaken by the government, Period Poverty charities and the NHS to reduce period poverty and support women and schoolgirls.
- The government has established a Period Poverty Taskforce, which will focus its efforts on tackling the issue of period poverty and related stigmas.

- It is important that girls in secondary schools receive free sanitary products as recognised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Spring Statement 2019.
- In April 2019, the government announced that free sanitary products will be offered to girls in all primary schools in England from early 2020.
- All women and girls being cared for by NHS England are now given, on request, appropriate sanitary products free of charge.

This Council commends:

- Its Cabinet for supporting the free provision of sanitary products in primary and secondary schools.
- Its Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for bringing the issue of period poverty to Cabinet.
- All organisations and individuals working to tackle period poverty and shame that can be associated with periods both in the UK and around the world.
- The Conservative government for taking the lead in this area to improve life opportunities for young girls across the country.

This Council resolves to request that the Director of Public Health write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, asking the Government to:

- Scrap the VAT levied on female hygiene products as soon as is practicable after the UK leaves the EU, and, in the meantime use the VAT collected on these products to fund the provision of free sanitary products for girls and women in need;
- Support the work of the Period Poverty taskforce;
- Encourage all schools to provide free sanitary products to schoolgirls.

The meeting terminated at 8.40 p.m.