

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 23 January 2014 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor David Bard – Chairman

Councillors: Richard Barrett, Val Barrett, Trisha Bear, Francis Burkitt, Brian Burling, Tom Bygott, Nigel Cathcart, Jonathan Chatfield, Pippa Corney, Kevin Cuffley, Neil Davies, Simon Edwards, Alison Elcox, Andrew Fraser, Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Tumi Hawkins, Mark Hersom, Roger Hickford, James Hockney, Mark Howell, Clayton Hudson, Caroline Hunt, Peter Johnson, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, Raymond Matthews, David McCraith, Cicely Murfitt, Charles Nightingale, Robin Page, Alex Riley, Deborah Roberts, Neil Scarr, Tim Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Peter Topping, Robert Turner, Buntly Waters, Aidan Van de Weyer, David Whiteman-Downes, John Williams and Nick Wright

Officers:	Graham Aisthorpe-Watts	Democratic Services Team Leader
	Alex Colyer	Executive Director, Corporate Services
	Jean Hunter	Chief Executive
	Fiona McMillan	Legal & Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sue Ellington, Sebastian Kindersley, Tony Orgee, Jim Stewart, Edd Stonham, Susan van de Ven and Tim Wotherspoon.

70. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Robin Page declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute number 78(a) in relation to proposed development at Bourn Airfield as Chairman of the Countryside Restoration Trust.

71. REGISTER OF INTERESTS

The Chairman reminded Members that they needed to update their register of interests whenever their circumstances changed.

72. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2013 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

73. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported some slight changes to the agenda running order for this meeting.

74. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Council noted that one question from the public had been received, but had been rejected by the Chairman on the grounds that it was not submitted in accordance with the prescribed deadline.

75. PETITIONS

No petitions had been received.

76. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:**76 (a) Localised Council Tax Support Scheme 2014/15 (Cabinet, 12 September 2013)**

Councillor Simon Edwards, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, proposed that the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/15 be approved.

Councillor Edwards reported that new Regulations had been laid before Parliament on 20 December 2013 and came into force on 13 January 2014. Minor amendments to the Council's Scheme had therefore been necessary as a consequence of the new legislation. He reflected on the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2013/14, which he reported had been extremely successful, and took this opportunity to praise the Council's officers for its development and introduction.

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, seconded the proposal.

A copy of the Cabinet report from its meeting held on 12 September 2013 was attached to the agenda for information. Reference was made to a recommendation within the report regarding the parish grant. It was noted that Cabinet made a decision on 12 September 2013 that the parish grant would not be payable in 2014/15. This would feature in Cabinet's proposed budget scheduled for consideration at the next meeting of Council on 27 February 2014.

Council unanimously **APPROVED** the Localised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/15.

76 (b) Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places (Civic Affairs Committee, 5 December 2013)

The Civic Affairs Committee considered a review of polling districts and polling places at its meeting on 5 December 2013 and recommended that no changes be made. A copy of the report and an extract of the draft minutes from that meeting were attached to the agenda for information.

Councillor David Bard, in his capacity as Chairman of the Civic Affairs Committee, proposed that no changes be made to the polling districts and places currently in place in South Cambridgeshire.

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, seconded the proposal.

Council unanimously **AGREED** that no changes be made to the polling districts and places currently in place in South Cambridgeshire.

76 (c) Annual Pay Policy Statement 2014-15 (Employment Committee, 13 January 2014)

(Jean Hunter, Chief Executive, and Alex Colyer, Executive Director (Corporate Services), left the meeting for the duration of this item)

Council considered a report which appraised Members of the requirements of the Localism Act in relation to pay policy statements.

The Employment Committee considered the Council's Pay Policy Statement for 2014-15 at its meeting on 13 January 2014 and recommended its adoption.

Councillor Val Barrett, Chairman of the Employment Committee, proposed that Council approved the Pay Policy Statement for 2014-15.

Councillor Simon Edwards, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, seconded the proposal and reflected on discussion at the Employment Committee regarding the National Minimum Wage and the Living Wage. Councillor Edwards reported that the Employment Committee had agreed for a review to be undertaken of the Council's lowest pay group to take account of the National Minimum Wage and the Living Wage and that he would consider a report on this review at a future Portfolio Holder Meeting.

Council unanimously **APPROVED** the Pay Policy Statement for 2014-15.

76 (d) Members' Allowances 2014/15 (Independent Remuneration Panel)

Council considered a report by the Independent Remuneration Panel which set out a review of the Members' Allowances Scheme for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of the Council, proposed the recommendations set out in the report and reported his intention to discuss the frequency of such reviews at the next meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee.

Councillor Simon Edwards, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Staffing, seconded the proposal.

Council unanimously:

- (1) **ENDORSED** the Independent Remuneration Panel's report.
- (2) **AGREED:**
 - a) that during 2014, the Independent Remuneration Panel reviews the basis and process for determining and allocating Special Responsibility Allowance payments against the need to demonstrate transparency, consistency, objectivity and fairness and with reference to benchmarked best practice in other comparable authorities for consideration by Council in 2015;
 - b) that Members' Allowances be increased by the equivalent percentage amount as the Council agrees to apply to the pay rates of council staff, effective from the same date as staff;
 - c) that Councillor induction material is updated so as to ensure that all Councillors are both aware of the expenses addressed through the payment of the Basic Allowance and also of the other expenses to which they are entitled to make claims for reimbursement.

77. QUESTIONS ON JOINT MEETINGS

No questions on joint meetings were raised.

78. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**78 (a) From Councillor Tumi Hawkins**

Councillor Tumi Hawkins asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

“In recent weeks, statements have been made by the Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy and Localism and indeed from officers that after the consultation responses to the draft Local Development Plan have been collated and considered, this Council will only be looking to make ‘minor’ changes to the draft plan. In view of the significant opposition to parts of the draft plan, and the flaws that have been documented in some of the responses received particularly in relation to Bourn Airfield, it would seem that the Administration has already pre-determined the outcome of the consultation, a stance that makes a mockery of the consultation process.

Can the Leader please tell us if the proposals for Bourn Airfield are a ‘done deal’, and if not, why are we being told only minor changes to the draft proposals will be considered?”

Councillor Pippa Corney, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy and Localism, responded to the question on behalf of the Leader and began by questioning the statements that she and officers were supposed to have made.

Councillor Corney informed Members that a report would be submitted to her Portfolio Holder Meeting on 11 February 2014 in relation to last summer’s public consultation on the proposed Submission Local Plan. She explained that at that meeting she would consider the issues raised in those representations and assess whether she considered the Local Plan was ready for submission to the Secretary of State. If only minor changes were needed to the Plan, then it would be ready for submission and would be considered at the extraordinary meeting of Council on 13 March 2014 with her recommendation being to submit the document to the Secretary of State. If, however, she decided that major changes were needed, those changes would need to be published for public consultation. This would mean that the extraordinary meeting in March would be cancelled and the Local Plan would not be submitted until the autumn at the earliest and possibly longer depending on the scale of any changes.

Councillor Corney reminded the Council that all of this was communicated by letter to those who made representations in the summer and was also included in the winter edition of the South Cambs Magazine, as well as being on the Council’s website.

She concluded by emphasising to Council the importance of her Portfolio Holder Meeting on 11 February 2014 and the extraordinary Council meeting on 13 March 2014, or later depending on her decision.

Councillor Tumi asked the following question as a supplementary:

“Are you going to be taking steps to take some action on responses that you have had?”

Councillor Corney reiterated the process that would be followed at her Portfolio Holder Meeting on 11 February 2014 and the extraordinary meeting of Council on 13 March 2014 should she decide to recommend the Local Plan for submission to the Secretary of State.

78 (b) From Councillor Bridget Smith

Councillor Bridget Smith asked the Leader of the Council the following question:

“It is just over a year since this Council agreed to spend £45,000 on new furniture for the Council Chamber. It was claimed at the time that this decision was informed and driven by a firm business case which demonstrated that the new furniture would make the chamber attractive to outside bodies to use for corporate events and that would generate significant revenue for the Council. Can the Leader please tell us how much we have earned this financial year from hiring out the Chamber, how many bookings are currently taken for the forthcoming calendar year and what the expected income is for the next financial year?”

Councillor David Whiteman-Downes, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Customer Services, responded to this question and said that, in checking the minutes of the relevant Council meeting, one of the main reasons for replacing the furniture was for health and safety reasons due to it not adhering to Fire Regulations. He reflected on the growth of the internal population at South Cambridgeshire Hall which meant that the Council Chamber was seeing an increase in use and reported that it had been used for external training sessions. Since August 2013 when the new furniture was installed, out of 105 usable days, the Council Chamber had been used 60 times for internal use, nine times externally and was unused for 36 days.

Councillor Whiteman-Downes added that the Facilities Manager, who would have taken this work forward, left the Council in October 2013 and it was anticipated that his replacement would be in post by the end of March 2014.

Councillor Bridget Smith asked the following question as a supplementary:

“How much money has been earned by the nine external events, what is the marketing strategy for earning more and could I have sight of the document?”

Councillor Whiteman-Downes responded by saying that the Council Chamber was a great facility and the Council needed someone to manage it and move things forward. The new Facilities Manager should be in place by the end of March to do this. He added that rates for full-day and half-day rental of the Council Chamber were in place, with full-day rental being set at £189 excluding VAT.

79. NOTICES OF MOTION**79 (a) Standing in the name of Councillor Roger Hickford**

Councillor Roger Hickford moved the motion as set out on the agenda and proposed

“That this Council:

- a) demands that Central Government issues regulations to remove the permitted development rights for change of use of pubs if they have been successfully registered as community assets;
- b) lobbies local Members of Parliament, the Local Government Association and other relevant bodies to support the proposed change.”

Councillor Kevin Cuffley seconded the proposal.

In debating the motion, reference was made to the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 16 January 2014 where the circumstances of the Pear Tree pub in Hildersham were considered relating to its change of use to a furniture shop. Councillor Trisha Bear stated that the Council had no power to protect community assets and felt that the authority would be failing as a Council if it did not lobby Government in this way. Councillor Deborah Roberts made the point that lots of pubs had closed in the district, but other amenities such as post offices and shops had also closed which were equally as important to local communities.

Councillor Douglas de Lacey felt that the term 'demand' would not portray the right message to Government from the Council when lobbying on this issue. He was also keen to protect all pubs and not just those that had been successfully registered as community assets. In view of these two points he proposed an amendment to the first part of the motion to replace the word 'demands' with the words 'strongly requests' and remove the words 'if they have been successfully registered as community assets' so it read:

"That this Council:

- a) strongly requests that Central Government issues regulations to remove the permitted development rights for change of use of pubs;
- b) lobbies local Members of Parliament, the Local Government Association and other relevant bodies to support the proposed change."

Councillor Neil Scarr seconded the amendment.

Responding to the amendment, Councillor Roger Hickford was of the view that the Council should demand these regulations from the Government. He was also concerned that if these regulations were applied to all pubs, rather than just to those registered as community assets, there was a real danger that villages could see unsustainable pubs standing as empty buildings.

Further points raised in discussing the amendment were noted as follows:

- those communities who had not registered their local pubs as community assets should not be impeded. By restricting the regulations to only those pubs registered as community assets meant that there would be inequality across the district;
- the fact that certain pubs in the district had already been registered as community assets demonstrated how much local value was placed on the pubs themselves by the local people that used them;
- the Council should stand up and be heard on this issue and should demand rather than request the issuing of these regulations.

Voting on the amendment, with 7 votes in favour, 38 votes against, 3 abstentions and 1 not voting, the amendment was lost.

(Councillor Mark Hersom joined the meeting at this stage of the item)

Voting on the original motion, with 47 votes in favour, 1 against and 2 not voting, Council **AGREED** the following motion:

That this Council:

- a) demands that Central Government issues regulations to remove the permitted development rights for change of use of pubs if they have been successfully registered as community assets;
- b) lobbies local Members of Parliament, the Local Government Association and other relevant bodies to support the proposed change.

The required number of Members, as defined in the Council's Constitution, demanded the undertaking of a recorded vote. Votes were therefore cast as follows:

For

Councillors David Bard, Richard Barrett, Val Barrett, Trish Bear, Francis Burkitt, Tom Bygott, Nigel Cathcart, Jonathan Chatfield, Pippa Corney, Kevin Cuffley, Neil Davies, Simon Edwards, Alison Elcox, Andrew Fraser, Jose Hales, Roger Hall, Lynda Harford, Tumi Hawkins, Mark Hersom, Roger Hickford, James Hockney, Mark Howell, Clayton Hudson, Caroline Hunt, Peter Johnson, Douglas de Lacey, Janet Lockwood, Mervyn Loynes, Ray Manning, Mick Martin, David McCraith, Cicely Murfitt, Charlie Nightingale, Robin Page, Alex Riley, Neil Scarr, Timothy Scott, Ben Shelton, Bridget Smith, Hazel Smith, Peter Topping, Robert Turner, Bunty Waters, Aidan Van De Weyer, David Whiteman-Downes, John Williams and Nick Wright.

Against

Councillor Brian Burling.

Not Voting

Councillors Raymond Matthews and Deborah Roberts.

79 (b) Standing in the name of Councillor Hazel Smith

Councillor Hazel Smith moved the motion as set out on the agenda and proposed:

"That this Council asks that the Portfolio Holder for Health and Environmental Services prepares a response to the consultation on behalf of this Council that would support a change to the legislation to compel water companies to give traveller sites more equal treatment."

Councillor Smith referred to her experience in 2007 of petitioning Anglian Water to investigate whether they had a duty to provide a mains sewerage connection to a dense and low lying development in Fen Road, Chesterton. There were over 250 traveller plots in that area at the time and the owners each had to make their own arrangements for sewage disposal. She was of the view that if all of the caravans had counted as houses there would be no question that Anglian Water would have been required to provide a sewer. The Ministerial guidance was now up for review by the Welsh Government and Councillor Smith had been informed that once the Welsh guidance was adopted, the Environment Agency would like the relevant Government Department in England to either adopt the same document or use it for their own new guidance. Councillor Smith was keen for the legislation to change so that any caravans occupied as permanent

residences with full planning permission were treated in the same way as bungalows or other permanent dwellings.

Councillor Lynda Harford seconded the motion.

Councillor Mick Martin, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, welcomed the motion and reported that he had already set up a working group to consider a response to this consultation, which was scheduled to meet shortly. Any final response would be considered at his public Portfolio Holder Meeting before being submitted to the Welsh Government.

Voting on the motion, with 44 votes in favour, 1 vote against, 1 abstention and 3 not voting Council **AGREED** the following motion:

That this Council asks that the Portfolio Holder for Health and Environmental Services prepares a response to the consultation on behalf of this Council that would support a change to the legislation to compel water companies to give traveller sites more equal treatment.

80. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

Council noted those engagements attended by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman since the last Council meeting, as set out on the agenda.

Councillor David Bard, Chairman, thanked the Vice-Chairman for attending a number of engagements on his behalf during November and December whilst he recovered from a hip replacement operation.

In response to a question about The Great War commemorations later this year, Councillor Bard informed Members that he had recently attended the Annual General Meeting of the British Legion's Cambridgeshire branch. He was pleased to report that lots of events were being held in villages across South Cambridgeshire and asked Members to inform the Council's Communications Team of anything that was taking place in the villages or communities that they represented.

The Meeting ended at 3.15 p.m.
