

MINUTES OF COUNCIL

20 APRIL 2021

PRESENT:

The Mayor (Councillor W H Lewis), Councillors Mrs A'Barrow, Bearne, Brader, Mrs Bragg, Mrs Brown, Brown, Butlin, Cade, Mrs Crane, Cranham, Douglas, Miss Dumbleton, Eccleson, Ellis, Mrs Garcia, Gillias, Keeling, Miss Lawrence, Lowe, McQueen, Mahoney, Mistry, Mrs New, Mrs O'Rourke, Mrs Parker, Picker, Ms Robbins, Roberts, Mrs Roberts, Roodhouse, Mrs Roodhouse, Sandison, Shera, Mrs Simpson-Vince, Srivastava and Mrs Timms.

101. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Mrs Allanach, McQueen, Pacey-Day and Poole.

102. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2021 were approved.

103. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interests.

104. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (a) This was the first council meeting since the announcement of the passing of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh on 9 April.

A letter had been sent on behalf of the Borough to Her Majesty the Queen expressing our deepest condolences both to her and her family. Although the national period of mourning had now ended, our thoughts remained with Her Majesty and the Royal Family at this difficult time.

On Saturday 10 April the Mayor laid a wreath in Caldecott Park on behalf of citizens of the Borough of Rugby with a message expressing the Council's deepest condolences. The Mayor thanked others who had laid flowers there and those who had viewed and commented on the social media report describing the occasion.

On Sunday 18 April, a service of thanksgiving for the life of His late Royal Highness was held at St Andrew's Church with the Rector, the Reverend Canon Edmund Newey, presiding over the live streamed service. Due to Covid restrictions attendance was by invitation only. The Mayor and Mayoress attended together with the Mayor's Cadet and representatives of the Mayor's charities. The MP, Mark Pawsey, the Council's Executive Director, political Group Leaders or Deputy Leaders and a number of persons representing other notable local organisations also attended.

- (b) Members had been informed of the sad news that Freeman of the Borough and former Councillor Sydney Needham passed away earlier this month. Sid was conferred with the honour of Freeman in 1992 and was a Councillor from 1967 to 1996, representing Brownsover Ward from 1967 to 1970 and then Caldecott Ward for the remainder of his terms of office. The Mayor had sent a letter on behalf of the Borough of Rugby to Sydney Needham's family expressing our sympathy and our great sadness on his passing.

All Members and officers present at the meeting joined the Mayor in a moment's silence in memory of His Royal Highness Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and in memory of Freeman of the Borough Sydney Needham.

- (c) The last month had seen some much needed positive news about the Covid-19 pandemic. Case numbers, which for some time had been much higher than the national average, had now reduced. More than 50,000 adults from the borough had received a first vaccine dose, and plans were developing on how the next stage of the vaccine programme would be delivered. Last week saw the reopening of shops and outdoor hospitality. Encouragingly, the Council's community safety wardens and commercial regulation teams reported that the town centre had been well supported and that businesses were operating safely. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor thanked all pubs, restaurants and shops for taking their responsibilities seriously, and to wish them every success as the lockdown continued to ease.

105. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10

- A. Councillor Sandison asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lowe, the following question:

"Members recently attended the Member Conversation on 17 March regarding the Town Centre Spatial Strategy. Whilst this was very much a blue sky wish list event concerns were expressed about the current condition of the town centre paving and lack of repair. Particular concern was expressed regarding the pedestrianised areas of the town centre namely High Street, Sheep Street, Market Place, The Pleasance and Castle Street, all of which are in a considerable state of dilapidation and will certainly not wait for 15 years for urgent safety repairs.

When was the last full inspection carried out by the street scene officer or a suitable qualified street paving officer in terms of risk? What risk assessment was reached and when are works planned to start in terms of health and safety for town centre visitors and residents?"

Councillor Lowe, Leader of the Council, replied as follows:

"Highways Maintenance, including safety inspections, remains a function of Warwickshire County Council. I do, however, welcome Councillor Sandison's observations and will ensure that these are relayed to the County Council."

Councillor Sandison requested that Councillor Lowe check this information again as he had been informed that parts of the pedestrianised area in the town centre was the responsibility of this Council. Councillor Lowe informed Councillor Sandison that he had checked this information with officers

previously but would do so again.

- B.** Councillor Sandison asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lowe, the following question:

“Many towns and cities are honouring and remembering the lost souls who fell victim to Covid 19, some by the provision of sculptures, monuments or benches displayed in public open spaces.

How will Rugby commemorate its 184 victims of Covid 19 in easily accessible open spaces and will we use the national campaign logo of a heart?”

Councillor Lowe, Leader of the Council, replied as follows:

"This Council will join others in honouring and remembering those who have lost their lives through the Covid 19 pandemic. However, as we are still in that pandemic and the future course of the pandemic is far from certain, now does not seem to be an appropriate time to consider this.

I recognise that our communities have been profoundly impacted by the pandemic and that many of our residents have lost loved ones. We must ensure that our proposals for honouring and remembering those loved ones meet our communities' wishes and so I would like to invite the leaders of all of the political groups to work with me, at a later date, to develop our plans for achieving this."

Councillor Sandison asked if the Leader of the Council would consider the establishment of a working group to listen to and work with bereaved relatives rather than be a 'top down' exercise. Councillor Lowe emphasised that it was imperative that the Council asked communities for their views on an appropriate memorial and response to those who had lost their lives to Covid. The Leader was happy to work with any Member to facilitate this.

- C.** Councillor Douglas asked the Environment and Public Realm Portfolio Holder, Councillor Roberts, the following question:

“According to Rugby Borough Council's Contact Centre, in 2018 there were 52 graffiti reports, in 2019 there were 63 reports and in 2020 there were 75 incidents of graffiti reported to the Council. Can the Portfolio Holder provide a figure on how much it is costing Rugby Borough Council to clean graffiti each year?”

Councillor Roberts, Environment and Public Realm Portfolio Holder, replied as follows:

“Over the last twelve months, council officers have attended 75 graffiti incidents. A comprehensive cost is not recorded for graffiti removal, however following Councillor Douglas's previous question on this matter an indicative cost of £8,029 has been attributed to cleaning after these 75 incidents.

This indicative cost is based on two officers attending each incident for an average time of 2.75 hours.”

Councillor Douglas asked if the Portfolio Holder considered it alarming to see such a rise in graffiti which would result in extra cost to the Council and asked if he would consider establishing a task group in light of this. Councillor Roberts considered this was a complex issue which required detailed analysis. Councillor Roberts would arrange a meeting with Councillor Douglas to discuss the issue further.

106. REPORT OF OFFICERS

(a) Health and Safety Policy

Council considered the report of the Deputy Executive Director (Part 1 – agenda item 6(a)) concerning the Council’s Health and Safety policy.

RESOLVED THAT –

(1) the Corporate Health and Safety Policy, as attached at Appendix A to the report, be adopted; and

(2) delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director to make any necessary non-material amendments.

107. NOTICES OF MOTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 11

Council considered the following Motion, notice of which had been given pursuant to Standing Order 11.

Councillor Sandison moved and Councillor Roodhouse seconded the motion as set out below.

“This Council recognises the significant contribution that heritage and the blue plaque scheme can play in promoting Rugby as a place to visit.

One example is the contribution made by the expedition of HMS Blonde (1824-1826) to South America, Galapagos Islands and the Hawaiian Islands and that two members of that expedition came from Rugby namely Andrew Bloxam, a naturalist, and his brother Richard Bloxam, who was the Chaplain on this voyage. Andrew Bloxam identified and named many new species on this voyage he also wrote three books on roses, brambles, and fungi. His findings and works are on display in the British Museum. Andrew later went on to be the Rector of Harborough Magna until his death in 1878. The small garden to rear of the Percival Guildhouse and adjacent to the Rugby Art Gallery and Museum would be a fitting place to display a blue plaque to Andrew Bloxam with an information board.

The Town Centre Heritage Task and Finish Group report (November 2017) made a series of recommendations and, in light of the emerging town centre strategy, the Scrutiny Committee be requested to review and, where possible, the recommendations be implemented in order to enhance Rugby as a heritage visitor destination.”

Further to the proposer and seconder speaking and in accordance with paragraph 11.2(d) of Council Standing Orders, the motion stood referred to Scrutiny Committee.

108. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

109. COMMON SEAL

It was moved by the Mayor, seconded by the Deputy Mayor and

RESOLVED THAT - the Common Seal be affixed to the various orders, deeds and documents to be made or entered into for carrying into effect the several decisions, matters and things approved by the Council and more particularly set out in the reports adopted at this meeting.

110. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC UNDER SECTION 100(A)(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

RESOLVED THAT – under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of information defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

111. PRIVATE REPORT OF CABINET – 29 MARCH 2021

RESOLVED THAT – the private report of Cabinet be confirmed and adopted.

112. PRIVATE REPORT OF OFFICERS

(a) Procurement of a digital Health and Safety Management Solution

Council considered the private report of the Executive Director (Part 2 – agenda item 2(a)) concerning the procurement of a digital health and safety management solution.

RESOLVED THAT –

(1) a General Fund Supplementary Capital budget of £23,130 (2021/22) and subsequent supplementary revenue budget request of £16,650 per year for an additional 3 years (2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25) be approved for the procurement of a new Health and Safety digital solution; and

(2) Solution 1 be approved for procurement via the G-Cloud framework as referenced in paragraph 4.1 of the Cabinet report.

MAYOR

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