

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON  
THURSDAY 11TH DECEMBER, 2003**

**At the Meeting of the SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines, on 11th December 2003 at 7.30 p.m.**

Amos Mrs. P.C.	Forsbrey G E	Pinkerton Mrs J.M.
Ayers F	Fullbrook J.M	Pinkerton J D
Bain Miss M	Grant Mrs D L	Ponton Mrs J E
Beardsmore I J	Hirst A P	Royer M R
Bhadye S	Hyams Mrs M	Sider R W
Ceaser G S [Mayor]	James P R	Spencer Mrs C L
Chouhan K	Leighton Mrs V J	Strong C V
Colison-Crawford R B	Lorch S.B.S.	Trussler G F [Deputy Mayor]
Culnane E K	Madams Mrs M J	Turner Mrs D
Davies F [Leader]	O'Hara E	Weston Mrs P
D'Sa R V	Packman J D [Deputy Leader]	Wood-Dow Mrs J M

G S Ceaser, Mayor, in the Chair

**290/03 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M L Bouquet, H R Jaffer, Mrs I. Napper, J M Paton and E J Searancke.

**291/03 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd October, 2003 be approved as a correct record, subject to the name of "Colison-Crawford RB" in the list of those present being substituted for "Colinson-Crawford RB".

**292/03 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE MAYOR**

The Mayor announced that there would be a Strauss evening at St Mary's Church, Sunbury, in aid of the Mayor's Charity Fund on 10th January 2004 and on the 14th January, the Mississippi Jazz Band would be playing at the Riverside Arts Centre.

The Charity Ball would not be held at Kempton Park this year to avoid controversy over planning proposals, instead there would be three events: - breakfast at Ashford Manor Golf Club on 13th March, lunch at the Thames Club, Wheatsheaf Lane in April and dinner and dance at Ashford Manor Golf Club in April.

**293/03 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**New Web Site**

The Chief Executive announced that the Council's new web site and intranet had now gone live. She thanked Steria and the Council staff involved for their hard work on this project and said that work would continue with the migration of information from the old site to the new.

**Surrey Jobs Information Award.**

The Chief Executive announced that the [www.surreyjobs.info](http://www.surreyjobs.info) recruitment website had been short-listed for 2 prestigious national awards.

A Highly Commended Award was received at the Local Government IT Excellence Awards presented in October at the SOCITM conference. The website had also been short-listed for the Personnel Today Awards, which had been awarded for the personnel and recruitment industry on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2003. The two awards highlighted the use of best practice in local

government and how IT had been used effectively and innovatively to deliver best practice public services.

[www.surreyjobs.info](http://www.surreyjobs.info) was a state of the art recruitment web site developed by a range of public sector organisations in Surrey to e-enable the recruitment process and to attract and retain new staff. It was developed by the Surrey Partners e-Recruitment Pathfinder Project, involving a group of public sector employers in Surrey including Spelthorne. It featured a 'once-only' application form, employer brochure pages, sophisticated job search functionality and applicants could obtain information and apply on-line. The Surreyjobs.info web site was being used by an increasing number of applicants for job vacancies at Spelthorne, which had been using the web site for e-recruitment since April 2003.

### **The British Council of Shopping Centre's Town Centre Environment Award for 2003 for Staines Town Centre.**

The Chief Executive referred to the recent improvements to Staines Town Centre, which had been nominated for the prestigious Town Centre Environment Awards organised by the British Council of Shopping Centres. These were specifically to highlight work by government, civic bodies, communities and/or town centre management teams involved in regenerating town centres

Thirty towns and cities across the UK had entered the competition, and from the short list of 6 final schemes, which included completed regeneration projects in Coventry, Birmingham, Romford, Middlesbrough and Blackburn, the Chief Executive expressed her delight in announcing that Staines Town Centre had been awarded the overall top prize to receive the National Town Centre Environment Award for 2003.

At the Annual BCSC Conference and Awards event in Birmingham, attended on behalf of Spelthorne by the Leader of the Council, the judges panel remarked that the principal achievement had been the: -

"Metamorphosis from an uninviting High Street into a vibrant shopping and business centre with about 35,000 sq ft of new shops and leisure facilities. This was brought about by the delivery of a well planned vision that places the High Street at the heart of the town and lets pedestrians breathe new life into the Centre; from the shopping area itself and then via links to the new park alongside the River Thames".

The improvements to the Town Centre would continue with a £7.5million project to refurbish and extend the Elmsleigh Centre. The Borough had also been awarded the safer shopping award: the first to be awarded in Surrey.

The Mayor together with the Leader, the Head of Corporate Governance and the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy were presented with the Award.

### **294/03 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER**

The Leader Councillor F. Davies announced that feedback from the CPA inspection would take place at 1.00pm on Friday 12th December in the Council Chamber.

### **295/03 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE**

#### **Review of Financial Strategy and Outline Budget 2004/2005 - 2007/2008**

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on the Council's financial strategy and on proposals for the spending plans for the period 1st April 2004 to 31st March 2008 and on the proposed level of Council Tax to be levied in 2004/2005.

During the course of debate on paragraph 2(l) of the recommendation Members were advised that the government had put forward new proposals on the funding of war widows exemptions and it was agreed that this part of the recommendation be referred back to the Executive for further consideration.

## **RESOLVED**

- (1) That the Council Tax increase for 2004/2005 be set at 25p per week for a band D property.
- (2) That the following key principles be agreed:-
  - (a) That future council tax increases be set at or above the level assumed in the revenue support grant settlement. That for planning purposes this figure be assumed to be 7.5%.
  - (b) That the principle of having a minor works programme should be discontinued; items to be treated as growth in the revenue budget or included within the capital programme.
  - (c) That the other services capital programme should be set at maximum of the projected receipts from the reserved right to buy.
  - (d) That no further schemes be approved from the New Schemes Fund, unless they meet spend to save principles.
  - (e) That no further contribution be made to the Good Causes Fund.
  - (f) That charging policies be reviewed for all service areas, to ensure that those who can pay the full cost of a service do so.
  - (g) That a "profit" target be set for the car parking service.
  - (h) That the principle of self-management of village halls and bowling greens is supported.
  - (i) That the principle of investing to achieve the governments recycling targets is agreed at an approximate cost of £150,000 per annum in 2004/2005, and increasing in future years.
  - (j) That the Executive would carefully consider any requests for supplementary estimates and would maintain a running total of those approved.
  - (k) That Independent Living services be reconfigured to deliver savings of £0.5m over the outline budget period.
- (3) That in addition to the basic principles at (2) above, that the Officers would review the investments policy and the principle of remaining debt-free and report back to the Executive.
- (4) That paragraph 2(l) of the recommendations of the Executive which proposed that "no additional discretionary war widow exemptions be granted in respect of future conflicts", be referred back to the Executive for further consideration in the light of new government proposals.

In accordance with Standing Order 18.4 Councillor James requested that voting on the motion to be recorded. Of those present, 28 voted in favour of the recommendation, 4 against and 1 abstained.

### **For - 28**

Amos Mrs. P.C.

Ayers F

Bain Miss M

Bhadye S  
Chouhan K  
Culnane E K  
Davies F  
D'Sa R V  
Forsbrey G E  
Fullbrook J.M  
Grant Mrs D L  
Hirst A P  
Hyams Mrs M  
James P R  
Leighton Mrs V J  
Lorch S.B.S.  
Madams Mrs M J  
O'Hara E  
Packman J D  
Pinkerton Mrs J.M.  
Pinkerton J D  
Royer M R  
Sider R W  
Spencer Mrs C L  
Trussler G F  
Turner Mrs D  
Weston Mrs P  
Wood-Dow Mrs J M

#### **Against 4**

Beardsmore I J  
Colison-Crawford R B  
Ponton Mrs J E  
Strong C V

#### **Abstention 1**

Ceaser G S [Mayor]

#### **Capital Programme 2004/2005 - 2007/2008**

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on the Capital Programme for the years 2004/2005 to 2007/2008, covering the Housing Investment Programme (HIP), Other Services and New Schemes Fund.

**RESOLVED** that the Council approve the Capital Programme for the years 2004/2005 to 2007/2008, covering the Housing Investment Programme (HIP), Other Services and New Schemes Fund, as set out at Appendix A to the report of the Strategic Director (Support).

#### **Housing Strategy 2004-2009**

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on the Housing Strategy 2004-2009, following its consideration of the response to consultation. The Strategy required approval by the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) towards achieving a 'Fit for Purpose' housing strategy.

**RESOLVED** that the Council agree the following proposals:-

- (a) That in light of the overwhelming support for the housing priorities they remain as agreed by Members.
- (b) That Priority 6 on meeting the needs of black and minority ethnic people be retained as a separate priority to ensure that the issues are not overlooked.
- (c) That the draft Housing Strategy be amended to include commitments on physical disability as mentioned in the report of the Strategic Director (Community).
- (d) That the draft Housing Strategy be amended to include reference to 'Secured By Design'.
- (e) That the revised action plan be adopted.
- (f) That the revised Housing Strategy be approved and progressed to the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) for approval.

### **Leisure and Culture Strategy 2001 – 2005 Update**

The Executive had considered the Leisure and Culture Strategy achievements for 2002-2003, the actions planned for the forthcoming year 2004-2005 and the need to update the Strategy to reflect how the Leisure and Culture work and its various initiatives would continue supporting the Council's four corporate aims and priorities.

**RESOLVED** that the Council endorse the achievements to date of the Leisure and Culture Strategy and agree the implementation of an updated Strategy, which reflects the latest position on the various initiatives which are supporting the Council's four key priorities

### **Electoral Pilots at European Parliamentary Elections June 2004**

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive following its consideration of the Government's Consultation on plans to hold electoral pilots, based on Regions, for the next European Parliamentary Elections to be held in June 2004, subject to Parliament enacting the Local Government Bill and any other necessary legislation to facilitate these pilots.

**RESOLVED** that the Council agree, in response to the Consultation Papers, to oppose the principle of "enforcing" pilots on any Region and that if they do go ahead the South East should not be selected as a pilot Region.

### **Council Tax Base for Tax Setting 2004/2005**

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on recent changes in the legislation about how the tax base had been set.

**RESOLVED** that the Council note the position and authorise the Strategic Director (Support) to determine the tax base, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as amended, following a further detailed report on this matter to the Executive on 13th January 2004.

### **Code of Corporate Governance**

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements and its recommendation to adopt a formal Code, which reflected

the approach agreed by the Council in April 2002, to be included in the Council's Constitution.

**RESOLVED** that the Council adopt the Code of Corporate Governance, as attached at Appendix A to the Report of Strategic Director (Support), and this be included in the Council's Constitution.

### **Spelthorne Pay and Reward 2004**

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on proposals for Spelthorne Pay and Reward 2004 under the extended local pay pilot.

**RESOLVED** that the Council approve an overall increase of 3.75% on the 2004/2005 Salary Budget, to include a pay award of 3.25% for all Spelthorne Staff, with effect from 1st April 2004, and a further 0.5% ring fenced for recruitment and retention initiatives and the staff review.

### **296/03 REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor F. Davies, presented his report that outlined the various matters the Executive had dealt with since the last Council meeting. In moving the report the Leader invited comments or questions from Members that either he or the relevant Portfolio Holder would respond to, as necessary.

### **297/03 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE**

The Chairman of the Performance Management and Review Committee, Councillor Mrs. M. Hyams, presented her report that outlined the matters the Committee had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

### **298/03 LICENSING COMMITTEE**

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee, Councillor R. W. Sider, presented his report that outlined the matters the Sub-Committees had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

### **299/03 PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor E. O'Hara, presented his report that outlined the matters the Committee had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

### **300/03 QUESTIONS ON WARD ISSUES**

Councillor O'Hara asked the Leader of the Council, the following question:-

"This Authority has, at enormous expense, successfully completed the Pedestrianisation of Staines High Street. It is a project of which we can be justly proud.

One of the essential ingredients of the project was the elimination of all but Emergency Vehicles from the High Street, since other means of access would be available to each property with High Street frontage.

I understand that all alternative access facilities are now in place, and yet vehicles in some numbers are almost constantly using the High Street, in many cases for quite trivial reasons.

I am advised that occupiers of premises, who have code numbers to access the barriers, are making them available to others, thus defeating the very objective of the system.

Could I ask (1) What action is being taken to remedy the situation and (2) Can a date be given, by which time Pedestrians will be able to use the High Street, safe in the knowledge that Emergency vehicles AND ONLY EMERGENCY VEHICLES will have access?"

Councillor Davies, Leader of the Council, replied as follows:-

"Firstly, the bollards to both the entrance and the exit to the High Street have been not working correctly recently and are currently being repaired by the contractor. The reason for the extended delay on the exit bollards is due to ordering a new hydraulic motor. These repairs should be complete within two weeks time. The codes will be changed as soon as the repairs are completed, which will allow access to the emergency services and security services and restrict the access for all other users.

Furthermore, a report will be put before the Executive in the new year, following our ongoing discussions with Surrey County Council, on access issues in the High Street."

### **301/03 GENERAL QUESTIONS**

Councillor James asked the Leader of the Council, the following question: -

" Please can pressure be put on Surrey Transportation to remove the empty B/T telephone cubicle outside Bon Marche in the Staines High Street and the damaged Telephone boxes outside Lunn Poly. They have had telephone details of who to contact passed on by myself [Councillor James] for over 9 months and still there is no sign of them being removed."

Councillor Forsbrey, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Planning, replied as follows:-

"Yes. We are in discussions with Surrey County Council and will continue to urge them to resolve the situation as soon as possible."

### **302/03 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

#### **(a) Ashford Relief in Need Charities**

**RESOLVED** that the current representative, Mrs. Mary Haarer be re-appointed to serve as the Nominative Trustee of the Ashford Relief in Need Charities until 11th December 2007.

#### **(b) Laleham Church of England Primary School. Laleham**

**RESOLVED** that the current representative, Mrs. Eileen Kearsey be re-appointed to serve as the Governor Representative of Laleham Church of England Primary School until 31st August 2004.

### **303/03 SEASONS GREETINGS**

The Mayor, G.S. Ceaser, wished those present at the meeting a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.