

## MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 21 JULY 2005

### AT THE MEETING OF THE SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, KNOWLE GREEN, STAINES ON THURSDAY 21 JULY 2005 AT 7.30PM

Ayers F.	Grant Mrs D.L.	Paton J.M.
Bain Ms M.	Hirst A.P.	Pinkerton J.D.
Beardsmore I.J.	Hyams Mrs M.	Ponton Mrs J.E.
Bhadye S.	Jaffer H.R.	Royer M.T. (Deputy Mayor)
Bouquet M.L.	James P.R.	Searancke E.J.
Ceaser G.S. (Leader)	Leighton Mrs V.J.	Sider R.W.
Chouhan K.	Lorch S.B.S.	Spencer Mrs C.L.
Colison-Crawford R.B.	Madams Mrs M.J.	Strong C.V.
Culnane E.K. (Deputy Leader)	Napper Mrs I.	Trussler G.F.
Davies F.	O'Hara E.	Turner Mrs D.
D'Sa R.V.	Packman J.D.	Weston Mrs P. (Mayor)
Forsbrey G.E.		

Councillor Mrs P. Weston, Mayor, in the Chair

#### **235/05 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs P.C. Amos, J.M. Fullbrook, Mrs J.M. Pinkerton, Mrs J.M. Wood-Dow and from the Independent Co-Opted members Mr Trevor Davies and Mr Murray Litvak.

#### **236/05 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 23 June 2005 be approved as a correct record.

#### **237/05 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE MAYOR**

##### **MAYORS CHARITY LUNCHEON**

The Mayor announced that tickets were still available for the Mayor's Charity Luncheon taking place on 7 August 2005 with full details of the event being obtained from her secretary. The Mayor placed on record her thanks and appreciation to Councillor and Mrs Ceaser for organising this event.

##### **GOLF DAY- ASHFORD MANOR GOLF CLUB**

The Mayor announced arrangement for the Mayor's charity golf day taking place on 16 August 2005 at the Ashford Manor Golf Club. Full details of the event to be obtained from her secretary. The Mayor placed on record her thanks and appreciation to Councillor Mrs Grant for organising the event.

#### **238/05 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Chief Executive reported that in light of the recent terrorist attacks in London all staff had been asked to be extra vigilant. Staff would stop any body entering the secure areas of the Council offices who were not displaying their identification badge. She asked that members support this action by wearing their ID badges when visiting the council offices for both security and customer services reasons.

## **239/05 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Under Standing Order 12, Mrs Caroline Nichols of 143 French Street, Sunbury on Thames asked the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Planning, Councillor Gerry Forsbrey, the following question:

‘Spelthorne, in its Borough Bulletin, quotes the mantra ‘Cleaner, Safer, Greener.’ Under ‘four priorities for Spelthorne’ it makes reference to making an environment that is green.

A fundamental part of ‘green’ is vegetation, to include trees and shrubs. Yet all the evidence is that Spelthorne Borough is acting in the opposite direction: cutting down trees at the smallest sign of decay, tidying fallen logs and ‘untidy’ vegetation out of our public parks, permitting developers to obtain ‘green sites’ (that is sites consisting of private gardens) and then removing the vegetation and replacing with hard surfaces, and failing to insist that developers plant trees as part of new developments.

A recent MORI poll on behalf of CABI established that people get the greatest sense of well being from how a place looks and feels, and they put this higher even than law and order. Stretches of bleak housing and a lack of green environment were key negative indicators in the report. In Sunbury, where I live, we are witnessing the removal of trees and shrubs due both to drought and development pressures, particularly in our most environmentally damaged roads. This is causing extreme distress to young and old alike.

My concerns are these:

1. What are the Council’s policies which guarantee the protection of our trees and shrubs both in public spaces and on private land?
2. What schemes has the Council put in place under these policies that have preserved and/or enhanced the Sunbury residential area?
3. What consultation is the Council engaging in with the public to extend the green environment? (Please give some dates, who has been consulted, and what action has been taken)
4. What record does the Council keep of all the trees that it and Surrey CC are removing, trees lost to drought, and trees lost to development? If no such record exists could the Council give an undertaking to do so in order to inform future planning decisions.
5. How many trees are covered by Tree Preservation Orders? What are the current criteria that the Council is applying in respect of Tree Preservation Orders? What plans does the Council have for the next three years to extend the number of Tree Preservation Orders?
6. Has the Council yet got an urban bio-diversity action plan? To meet the Surrey County Council timetable it was meant to be implemented by 2005? Thank you for hearing my questions.”

Councillor Forsbrey responded as follows:

“Thank you Mrs Nichols for that list of questions, which we received at 11.40am today. It is difficult to provide a much detailed answer in such a short timescale,

so I will summarise my answers and will ensure a more detailed response is sent at a later date.

1. The Council takes its responsibilities for looking after the environment very seriously and we do not take trees down unless they are unsafe or unhealthy. On private land trees, where appropriate, are protected by Tree Preservation Order's. Many trees on verges are the responsibility of Surrey County Council.
2. Friends of Sunbury Park are helping us to look after and enhance the main area of Sunbury Park and the Walled Garden. There has been some planting on verges in the past, but Surrey County Council now have responsibility for verges.
3. For parks and open spaces we are developing management strategies, most recently for six parks, under the Liveability Park Life Project, where consultation has taken place over the last 12 months.

With Friends of Sunbury Park we are developing a management strategy for that park. This strategy includes issues relating to trees and bio-diversity.

We have also set up a Management Committee with local people to oversee Staines Common and Shortwood Common, which are both areas of special scientific interest. Our main aim is to enhance and maintain the bio-diversity of these areas.

The Council is at the early stage of preparing a new plan called a Local Development Framework. We are engaging local people through a variety of means, by asking people about the issues that the plan should be addressed and how people prefer to be contacted, via last September's Borough Bulletin, and at the same time, writing to over 700 local organisations, bodies and individuals and giving presentations to various groups. We fed back a summary of the response to local people in the April Bulletin. Further consultation took place between March and April 2005 on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report for the new plan, which involved contact with over 500 organisations and individuals.

Also, the role of planning in protecting the environment was the subject of a presentation at the last series of Area Forums (March – June of this year). I am pleased to be able to confirm that there will be further public consultation on the new plan in mid September. This will include a Special edition of the Bulletin. There will also be a number of meetings and contacts with our extensive contacts list - a list which any one can be included on.

The Council is currently undertaking a tree audit and survey as part of our new Community Plan. We also record trees that are taken down and try to replace where possible.

4. The importance of keeping good trees is an important consideration in dealing with all developments. All planning applications where there are trees on site, and where trees could be affected by a proposal are shown on the application plans - including the position of any that have to be felled and where new trees are to be planted. However, we do not keep a running count of the total number of trees protected or planted as a result of development proposals, but the details are kept on record should we wish to at a later date. We currently

have records back to 1947 although Tree Preservation Order's only came in during the 1950's.

5. There are currently 213 Tree Preservation Orders in the Borough covering approximately 5,700 trees. Local Plan Policy explains that new Orders are promoted where trees are under threat and they make a significant contribution to public amenity and are in good health. The Council will continue to apply this policy and include a similar policy in its new Local Development Framework.
6. The Council is developing a bio-diversity action plan, for consultation in early 2006 and this will form part of our Environment Strategy. We are also discussing with Surrey County Council, a project to look at enhancement and linkages between our open spaces, which will result in additional planting/landscaping".

The Mayor thanked Mrs Nichols for submitting her question and confirmed that a full response would be sent to her.

#### **240/05 OUTTURN AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2004/2005**

The Council considered a recommendation from the Executive on the Council's Financial Statement of Accounts for 2004/2005.

**RESOLVED** that the Council approve the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2005/2005 signed by the Leader of the Council.

#### **241/05 SUBSTITUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the recommendation of the Executive that no changes be made to the Council's Constitution in relation to Substitutes be approved.

In accordance with Standing Order 18.4, a request was made for the voting on the above matter to be recorded. The vote was as follows:

FOR (30)	Councillors F. Ayers, Miss M. Bain, S. Bhadye, M.L. Bouquet, G.S. Ceaser, K. Chouhan, E.K. Culnane, F. Davies, R.V. D'Sa, G.E. Forsbrey, Mrs D.L. Grant, A.P. Hirst, Mrs M. Hyams, H.R. Jaffer, P.R. James, Mrs V.J. Leighton, S.B.S. Lorch, Mrs M.J. Madams, Mrs I. Napper, E. O'Hara, J.D. Packman, J.M. Paton, J.D. Pinkerton, M.T. Royer, E.J. Searancke, Mrs C.L. Spencer, R.W. Sider, G.F. Trussler, Mrs D. Turner and Mrs P. Weston.
AGAINST (4)	Councillors I.J. Beardsmore, R.B. Colison-Crawford, Mrs J. Ponton and C.V. Strong

#### **242/05 REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor G.S. Ceaser, presented his second report since taking on that office, which outlined the significant matters the Executive had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

#### **243/05 LICENSING COMMITTEE**

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee, Councillor R.W. Sider, presented his report which outlined the matters the Licensing Sub Committee had dealt with since the last Council meeting. He responded to a question relating to the application for conversion and variation of an existing License for the Black Dog Public House.

## **244/05 PLANNING COMMITTEE**

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

## **245/05 QUESTIONS ON WARD ISSUES**

Under Standing Order 13 Councillor P.R. James asked Councillor G. E. Forbsrey the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Planning the following question:

"what is the delay on the road improvements at the junction of Commercial Road/ Laleham Road. Money has been allocated to this project and given to County but no sign of any work: even exploratory work has taken place. Have they still ring fenced the money for those improvement?"

Councillor Forbsrey responded as follows:

"As Councillor James knows the responsibility for Highways was taken back by Surrey County Council from 1 April 2002.

However, we have been able to obtain the latest position from them: At the moment the plans for the work are 'out for design' with the contractor (Ringway). The estimated timescale is that the work will be completed by the end of this financial year, that is March 2006."

## **246/05 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act indicated below

## **247/05 LEISURE CENTRE PROCUREMENT**

### **(Paragraph 9 - Proposed Terms of a Contract)**

The Council considered the recommendation of the Executive on the progress made on the Leisure Centre Procurement including the outcome of the evaluation of the three bids received.

**RESOLVED** that the recommendation of the Executive from its meeting on 19 July 2005 be approved as submitted.