

## MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26 JUNE 2008

### BOROUGH OF SPELTHORNE

#### AT THE MEETING OF THE SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, KNOWLE GREEN, STAINES ON THURSDAY 26 JUNE AT 7.30PM

Ayers F.	Forsbrey G.E.	Packman J.D. (Leader)
Bain Ms M.M.	Grant Mrs D.L.	Pinkerton Mrs J.M.
Beardsmore I.J.	Hyams Ms N.A.	Pinkerton J.D.
Bell Mrs E.	Jaffer H.R.	Rough Mrs M.W.
Bhadye S. (Mayor)	Leighton Mrs V.J.	Sider R.W.
Bouquet M.L.		Smith-Ainsley R.A. (Deputy Leader)
Budd S.E.W.	McShane D.L.	Spencer Mrs C.L. (Deputy Mayor)
Colison-Crawford R.B.	Napper Mrs I.	Strong C.V.
Crabb T.W.	Nichols Mrs C.E.	Thomson H.A.
Davis C.A.	Nichols L.E.	Trussler G.F.
Dunn Mrs S.A.	O'Hara E.	Weston Mrs P.

Councillor S. Bhadye, The Mayor, in the Chair

#### **214/08 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms P.A. Broom, K. Chouhan, M.J. Collis, A.P. Hirst, C.D.G. Kuun and M.T. Royer and Independent Members, Mr Murray Litvak and Miss Sue Faulkner.

#### **215/08 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2008 were approved as a correct record.

#### **216/08 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR**

##### **Civic Service**

The Mayor invited Members and their partners to attend the Civic Service at St Hilda's Church, Ashford at 3pm on 20 July.

##### **Charity Golf Day**

The Mayor reminded Members of the Charity Golf Day taking place on 5 August at 1.15pm. Non-golfers were invited to join them for dinner at 7pm.

##### **Charity Lunch**

A Charity Lunch was being hosted by Gerry and Zandra Ceaser at 2 Rivermount, Lower Hampton Road, Sunbury on 10th August. The Mayor asked Members to let his secretary know if they would be attending.

**217/08 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

**Surrey Youth Games**

The Leader announced the success of Spelthorne youth who had triumphed in the Surrey Youth Games by achieving the outstanding result of 1<sup>st</sup> place overall. In addition to 3 Gold medals, 7 Silver and 6 Bronze, Spelthorne had also won the Gold medal in Boccia.

In recognition of this achievement, the Leader was in discussions with the Chief Executive to arrange complimentary use of the Leisure Centre Facilities for the teams and their coaches.

Councillor I.J. Beardsmore was also delighted for the youth in their achievement and supported the Council in its recognition of this.

**Surrey Police Authority**

The Leader informed the Council that Government had announced Surrey Police Authority would not be capped in respect of their precept. This meant the Council would not have to send out new Council Tax statements.

**Nick Skellett – CBE**

The Leader of Surrey County Council, Nick Skellett, had received a C.B.E. in recognition of his service as a County Councillor for many years. The Leader would be sending him a letter on behalf of the Council, congratulating him on his achievement.

**218/08 COUNCILLOR CHRISTOPHER KUUN**

The Council considered the recommendation of the Monitoring Officer on the absence of Councillor Christopher Kuun from Council meetings due to ill-health.

Councillor J.D. Packman stated that in answer to concerns raised by Councillor C.V. Strong he proposed to amend the recommendation before the Council, seconded by Councillor M.L. Bouquet, to read:

“That the Council resolve to excuse the absence of Councillor Christopher Kuun from the 5<sup>th</sup> March onwards and that the matter be reviewed at its October meeting.”

**RESOLVED** that Councillor Christopher Kuun be excused from Council meetings from the 5<sup>th</sup> March onwards, and that the matter be reviewed at the October meeting of the Council.

**219/08 REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman, presented his report, which outlined the various matters the Executive had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

The Leader and Councillor G.E. Forsbrey both wished to convey their thanks to Terry Collier, Assistant Chief Executive, for his hard work and successful performance on the Treasury Management, which had been achieved under difficult circumstances.

Councillor R.W. Sider wished to pass his congratulations to Liz Borthwick, Assistant Chief Executive, and her staff for bringing about so many achievements for the Borough as part of the Leisure and Culture Strategy.

**220/08            AUDIT COMMITTEE**

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Councillor Jack D. Pinkerton, presented his report, which outlined the matters the Committee had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

**221/08            LICENSING COMMITTEE**

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

**222/08            PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEE**

The Vice-Chairman of the Performance Management and Review Committee, Councillor S.E.W. Budd, presented the report on behalf of the Chairman, which outlined the matters the Committee had dealt with since the last Council meeting.

**223/08            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.

**224/08            QUESTIONS ON WARD ISSUES**

**Under Standing Order 14, Councillor T.W. Crabb asked the following question:**

"Last March I was given to understand that agreement had been reached with Surrey County Council on the transfer of TP26 to Spelthorne by the beginning of this financial year, that is, last April. However, a resident backing on to TP26 with a query about signage on the strip was told last month by a Surrey County Council Surveyor that, and I quote, *"With regards to your points it has been decided not to spend any further money on signs if we intend to transfer the land."*

**The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman, responded as follows:**

"I am pleased to inform you that the County Council has finally agreed to transfer the land to the Borough Council. Financial provision in the sum of £150,000 has been proposed as part of the Local Transportation Plan for 2008/2012 which will be considered by the Local Committee on 30 June 2008. This means that, subject to the approval of the Local Committee, work can start next year to landscape the area and set out the cycle track which was proposed.

In addition to this capital contribution, the County Council has also agreed to provide revenue funding to the Borough Council for the next 15 years to allow for maintenance. Because this process has taken so long to come to fruition, I anticipate and will provide that a new consultation phase led by Spelthorne Borough Council will now take place.."

**In accordance with Standing Order 14.2, Councillor T.W. Crabb asked the following supplementary question:**

“Can the Leader give some idea of the type of consultation he will provide in order to give assurance to residents and ward councillors that they will be able to participate fully in the proposals?”

**The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman, replied:**

“Everyone will have ample input on the consultation. However, I don’t want to raise residents’ expectations too high as I am mindful of the limit to the amount of money available for the provisions proposed at this location.”

**Under Standing Order 14, Councillor Mrs S.A. Dunn asked the following question:**

“The tennis courts at the Cedars Recreation Ground, Sunbury are currently fenced off due to a Health and Safety issue with the surface. I have flagged this as a serious issue but to date no action has been taken.

With the enthusiasm that will be generated by Wimbledon this week can the Portfolio Holder assure local residents that they will be able to emulate their tennis heroes in the very near future?”

**The Portfolio Holder for Young People and Cultural Services, Councillor Mrs D.L. Grant, responded as follows:**

“Thank you for your question regarding the Cedars Park tennis courts. We have received a number of complaints this season about the tennis courts and on one of our regular inspections it was considered that for health and safety reasons they had to be temporarily closed. It appears the wet weather of last summer and through the winter has speeded up their deterioration and there are a number of uneven patches.

Your concern over the courts not being in use during the “Wimbledon” season is fully recognised and we are endeavouring to seek funds for resurfacing work. As we do not have a specific budget for the work, we are looking to see if we can identify other funds so we can carry out the work as soon as possible.

I am pleased to inform you that, as a result of some scheduled minor maintenance work, two of the three courts were re-opened today.”

**Councillor Mrs C. E. Nichols withdrew her question concerning mobile phone masts as she was happy that the matter had been taken up by the Deputy Chief Executive.**

## **225/08 GENERAL QUESTIONS**

**Under Standing Order 14, Councillor R.W. Sider asked the following question:**

“Will the Leader join me in congratulating the curator and all the volunteer groups associated with Spelthorne Museum on their receiving Full Accreditation under the Libraries and Archive Commission scheme which is accepted as being in the gold

standard world. And will he also note that the museum has now been operating for 25 years, and that this is the first time such status has been awarded, and furthermore since its move to its new location in 2006, the number of visitors has increased dramatically from 2800 to a figure in the region of 12,000 per annum. With this in mind, will the Leader endorse my request for a letter of congratulations to be sent to the curator reflecting the Council's praise for such a magnificent achievement?"

**The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman replied as follows:**

"I should like to endorse everything Councillor Sider has said. The award is indeed a great accolade as there are only a few small museums in the whole country to achieve Accreditation under the Libraries and Archive Commission.

As Councillor Sider has indicated, the new location of the Museum, linked with the library, has been a brilliant move with increased use, increased access for people with disability, and increased hours of opening

I will ensure a letter is sent to congratulate all the people involved, the curator, Spelthorne Archaeological Field group who are the trustees, and friends of Spelthorne Museum."

**Under Standing Order 14, Councillor L.E. Nichols asked the following question:**

"At the December 2007 meeting of the Council it was resolved "That the Council seeks to maintain an overall level of reserves of at least £31m".

What is the current level of reserves? If the reserves are currently below the £31m target level, what steps are being taken to achieve this level?"

**The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, Councillor M.L. Bouquet replied as follows:**

"Thank you Councillor Nichols for this opportune question.

The Executive did indeed agree that it would be prudent to maintain reserve balances of at least £31m at its meeting of 12 December 2007. This would have been made up, broadly speaking, of £15m revenue reserves and £16m capital reserves, totaling £31m.

As I am sure you are aware, there has subsequently been a world wide fall in property values and this has affected the value of the potential receipt from the sale of the Bridge Street car park, which would have considerably helped the reserve balances.

The Chief Executive and senior management team, along with external financial advisers, are currently evaluating the package for the sale of Bridge Street car park because they are not yet satisfied with the offer.

The current level of reserves, reflected in the draft Statement of Accounts (which were approved by the Audit Committee on 24 June) is £20.2m consisting of £15.2m revenue and £5m capital reserves. Depending on the outcome of the Bridge Street deal, the Council may need to reappraise its reserves strategy.

Officers are currently exploring with their treasury management advisers, options to take advantage of the current relatively higher longer term interest rates available in the market to help maximize the level of investment income we generate from the level of reserves balances we have available.”

**Under Standing Order 14, Councillor Mrs C.E. Nichols asked the following question:**

“Spelthorne’s Executive was, last week, asked to agree in principle to the separate collection of food waste. Bearing in mind that there are options to choose from - and potentially significant costs for the Council - what plans are there for Member involvement in this project?”

**The Portfolio Holder for Environment Services, Councillor G.E. Forsbrey, responded as follows:**

“In developing a future food waste collection service, we will be drawing on the experience of other authorities with existing systems, as well as the 2 or 3 Surrey authorities that will implement a system next year.

As information becomes available we will report to Councillors on the issues that arise from these trials. However, officers are unlikely to be able to bring any detailed options to Council for consideration before summer 2009 in order that we can gain some experience of what actually works first. In the meantime, it is also important to continue to encourage waste minimisation as cooked food and prepared food make up 90% of the food waste put in the rubbish bin.

I can assure you that we will consider how to keep members involved. I suspect that we will hold a Member Seminar at the appropriate time, although I doubt this will be for some time as the first trial does not start until March 2009.”

**Under Standing Order 14, Councillor T.W. Crabb asked the following question:**

"There is considerable concern amongst residents in relation to the proposed new GP-led Health Centre (or Polyclinic) at Ashford Hospital.

Foremost amongst the concerns is that the Primary Care Trust is projecting that the new Health Centre will have 6,000 registered patients within five years but that dual registration will not be allowed.

Given the Borough's population is relatively stable, can the Portfolio Holder comment on the effect the new GP-led Health Centre will have on existing GPs in the area and, in particular, the effect on the Health Centre to be built on the Stanwell Day Centre site.”

**The Portfolio Holder for Health and Independent Living, Councillor Mrs V.J. Leighton, responded as follows:**

"When the Council learnt of this proposal there were mixed feelings of concern for how this would affect existing GP services, but also a positive feeling that the health needs of Spelthorne had been recognised and could be further supported.

I and Liz Borthwick met with one of the lead officers to discuss the proposal before the Council replied to the consultation.

One of the key issues is that it is a government directive that each PCT should have a GP led clinic, and funding is being released for this purpose. In some areas where health inequalities are very high there are more GP led clinics.

One of the key concerns of this Council, and highlighted to the PCT, is the need to retain local GP services and that a GP led clinic should complement and enhance these local services.

The PCT have also stated that the 6,000 registered patients are not guaranteed to the selected provider. Any provider will take the contract at risk.

We have had a number of discussions and letters of confirmation that the PCT is committed to Stanwell Health and Community Centre. A meeting was held this week with the GPs and the PCT to resolve the legal issues relating to the lease and it is expected that, subject to the planning conditions being concluded, demolition will commence in July.

It is also very interesting to note that the surgery at St David's (Stanwell) increased its number by 500 last year, and this is prior to the A2 development in Stanwell, so growth of patient numbers is possible.

The message I want to conclude with is that the Council has stated very strongly that any GP led Health Centre services should complement local services. Local services are paramount for the local community, and there has been confirmation from the PCT that the GP led clinic proposal does not affect Stanwell Health and Community Centre."

**Under Standing Order 14, Councillor C.V. Strong asked the following question:**

"Could the Portfolio Holder please outline the decanting process for the residents affected by the regeneration projects at St. Michaels Road, Ashford and Stanwell New Start.

In his answer could he also summarize how the decanting is likely to impact on waiting times for those on our housing list and measures the Council intends to take to mitigate the effects?"

**The Leader of the Council, Councillor J.D. Packman, responded as follows:**

"As you know, the Stanwell development is occurring in phases. The planning brief may change slightly, but, at this stage, it is envisaged there will be 9 tenanted properties affected in Stage 1. A2 have made provision for these, either through

properties they have purchased or void properties. A2 have also put in place an effective consultation programme with their affected residents and they are keeping us informed about the various stages they are at.

In terms of St Michael's Road, Ashford, again the development will occur in phases. Phase 1 affects 10 properties and A2 have already made provision for 6 of these and are seeking arrangements for the remaining 4 as a matter of importance, partly as they need the contractors to commence as soon as possible.

The Council have made it very clear that we do not expect our true void nominations (our basic arrangement) to be affected. Indeed, officers have arranged a meeting for 2 July to try and see if there are any mutually beneficial arrangements we can make to help the process forward; perhaps for example, through use of some of our void temporary accommodation stock.

We are, therefore, acutely aware of the pressures on our housing register and will ensure that the residents' interests are fully protected.”

**226/08            APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES TO CHARITIES**

**Appointment to serve as a Representative Trustee on the Staines Parochial Charity.**

It was proposed by Councillor J.D. Packman and seconded by Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley and

**RESOLVED** that Mr Alexander Forrester of 1 Jamnagar Close, Staines be appointed as a Council Representative Trustee to Staines Parochial Charity for a four year term of office.