

MINUTES OF THE SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting of Spelthorne Borough Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames on Thursday, 26 April 2018 at 7.30 pm

Present:

Councillors:

M.M. Attewell	M.P.C. Francis	S.C. Mooney
C. Barnard	A.E. Friday	J.M. Pinkerton OBE
R.O. Barratt	N.J. Gething	O. Rybinski
J.R. Boughtflower	A.L. Griffiths	D. Saliagopoulos
R. Chandler	A.C. Harman	A. Sapunovas
S.M. Doran	I.T.E. Harvey	J.R. Sexton
S.A. Dunn	A.T. Jones	R.W. Sider BEM
P.C. Edgington	J.G. Kavanagh	R.A. Smith-Ainsley
Q.R. Edgington	M.J. Madams	H.A. Thomson
T.J.M. Evans	A.J. Mitchell	H.R.D. Williams

Councillor V.J. Leighton, The Mayor, in the Chair

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillors I.J. Beardsmore, S. Capes, C.A. Davis, N. Islam, D. Patel and B.B. Spoor.

96/18 Minute's Silence for former Mayor, Gerry Ceaser

The Mayor invited those present to stand and join her in a minute's silence as a mark of respect, and in memory of former Mayor, Leader and Honorary Freeman, Gerry Ceaser who passed away on 25 February 2018.

97/18 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 February 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

98/18 Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

99/18 Announcements from the Mayor

The Mayor thanked everyone who had supported her Mayoral Ball at BP.

On Wednesday 2nd May, the Mayor's Ladies Lunch is being held at London Irish in Sunbury upon Thames and all ladies are welcome. There will, as usual, be entertainment provided rather than a speaker.

The Mayor has entered the Rotary 10k walk in support of her charities on Sunday 6th May 2018 and is seeking sponsors for this.

The Mayor ended by expressing her appreciation of all those who had assisted throughout her year in office.

100/18 Announcements from the Leader

The Leader made the following announcements:

"I would like to invite everyone to attend the memorial service being held for the late Gerald Ceaser at noon on Friday 11 May at St. Peter's Church in Staines. A former Mayor and Leader of Spelthorne Council, Gerry was an important local figure and is sadly missed by all who knew him.

I am also sorry to have to announce the death of Fred Smith, former Councillor and Freeman of the Borough, following a long illness. Fred's funeral will take place in Lancashire but his family will also be holding a church service in Stanwell - more details to follow.

It has since been announced that a memorial service will be held on Friday 11 May at noon at St. Mary's Church in Stanwell.

All Councillors will have received an email inviting them to a briefing session for an update on the work being undertaken to plan for a new leisure facility to replace the existing Spelthorne Leisure Centre, which is coming to the end of its useful life.

The White House, situated next to the Council's refuse depot on the Kingston Road, has been demolished and the Council is progressing with plans to develop the site to provide accommodation to support homeless people. The Council's Housing team has also recently introduced new processes to ensure that people in danger of losing their homes are being offered help at an earlier stage.

A networking forum for landlords is being held on Tuesday 8 May at Shepperton Studios.

A parking study is to be undertaken in Ashford to establish current parking habits and potential future needs.

Councillors will be aware that the Council has formally responded to the recent Heathrow consultation exercise and outlined a list of ten key requirements. We will be looking to engage further with Heathrow over the next few months to discuss a number of these requirements, including the need to obtain a better compensation package for those residents most

affected by the proposals and to secure effective controls to minimise the effects on our residents during construction and operation of an expanded airport. I have appointed Councillor Boughtflower to chair an internal working group to take these things forward.

Members will be aware of the forthcoming changes to data protection legislation, known as GDPR. The Council is working towards implementing the requirements and has already provided four training sessions for Councillors and staff, the most recent of which took place earlier this evening.

Money from the Leader's Windfall Grant, councillors' Better Neighbourhood Grants and a contribution from County Councillor Richard Walsh's Members Allocation has been used to improve Shepperton Lock, enhancing the area in time for the summer season. The makeover includes new signage, groundworks, resurfacing and remarking of the parking area and refurbishment of the toilet block.

Gardeners and residents attended the launch of this year's Spelthorne in Bloom on Monday 16 April at Notcutts Garden Centre in Staines.

The Council has made use of powers in the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations to recover a substantial of £300,000 outstanding debt from a developer following the implementation of a housing scheme in the borough. Although the developer had been reluctant to settle the outstanding debt, the Council continued to pursue the matter and succeeded in securing full payment of the Levy which, with costs and late payment interest, amounted to more than £300,000.

Again we have shown that Spelthorne Means Business!!”

101/18 Announcements from the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive made the following announcement:

“I should like to thank the Neighbourhood Services and Community Wellbeing teams for their tremendous efforts to keep frontline services running normally during the challenging low temperatures and heavy snowfall at the end of February and beginning of March. Their professionalism and determination to look after our residents is as always very much appreciated.”

102/18 Questions from members of the public

There were none.

103/18 Petitions

There were none.

104/18 Review of the Code of Corporate Governance

The Council considered the recommendation of Cabinet from its meeting held on 21 March 2018 on the review of the Code of Corporate Governance.

The Code of Corporate Governance is a standard of good governance which details the systems, processes and policies in place at Spelthorne. Following updates to the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government framework, the code was reviewed and updates proposed to reflect the new principles.

Resolved to approve the updated Code of Corporate Governance.

105/18 Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy

The Council considered the recommendation of Cabinet from its meeting on 25 April 2016 to approve the changes to the Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy following its annual review.

The Strategy forms part of the Council's Constitution and in line with best practice, the Strategy underpins the Council's commitment to prevent all forms of fraud, bribery and corruption, demonstrating the important role it plays in the overall corporate governance framework.

Resolved to approve the changes to the Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption Strategy.

106/18 Report from the Leader of the Council

The Leader of the Council, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey, presented the reports of Cabinet meetings held on 21 March 2018 and 25 April 2018, which outlined the matters Cabinet had decided since the last Council meeting.

107/18 Report from the Chairman of the Audit Committee

The Chairman of the Audit Committee, Councillor M.J. Madams, presented her report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

108/18 Report from the Chairman of the Licensing Committee

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

109/18 Report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor S.C. Mooney, presented her report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

110/18 Report from the Chairman of the Planning Committee

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Councillor R.A. Smith-Ainsley, presented his report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting.

He also advised members that a Seminar had been arranged on the subject of 'Design Training' on 30 April 2018 at 7.00pm in the Council Chamber. The focus for the seminar would be on design and high rise buildings. The design training will be undertaken by Bob Allies of Allies Morrison, an architecture and urban planning practice.

111/18 Motions

There were no motions.

112/18 Questions on Ward Issues

There were no questions on Ward issues.

113/18 General questions

The Mayor reported that three general questions had been received, in accordance with Standing Order 15, from Councillors Quentin Edgington, Howard Williams and Alfred Friday.

1. Question from Councillor Q.R. Edgington:

"A week's notice is required to submit a general question to Full Council but the reply is only provided to the Councillor who asked the question at the Meeting. So that a considered supplementary question can be asked (if the Councillor considers that the response to his/her question is inadequate). Does the Leader agree with me that the reply should be given to the Councillor concerned at least 24 hours before the Meeting?"

Response from the Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey:

"No I do not agree."

In accordance with Council Standing Order 15.2, Councillor Q.R. Edgington asked the following supplementary question:

"I would say is the Leader aware of Surrey County Council's procedure where the ruling is four days' notice for all questions asked and replies to be provided 24 hours before the meeting?"

The Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey, gave the following response to the supplementary question during the meeting:

"Thank you for your supplementary question, however this is Spelthorne Borough Council and not Surrey County Council. What someone else does is not our concern. We will follow our own constitution."

2. Question from Councillor H.R. Williams:

"Those in the chamber may not be aware that the Members' Code of Conduct Committee has no authority over Spelthorne councillors who insult or attack other Spelthorne councillors. It is toothless and can do nothing when

councillors act in ways to other councillors that would not be tolerated if those offenders were targeting members of the public with their aggressive, offensive emails and social media messages.

In the light of recent physical attacks and threats to councillors, the Council introduced extra security measure for councillors.

What is the Council doing to protect councillors from email and social media bullying by other councillors and when is the Members' Code of Conduct Committee going to be given the remit to investigate and punish attacks by councillors on other councillors?"

Response from the Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey:

"Sadly there have been several instances recently of online abuse of Spelthorne councillors including from other councillors. I am sure you and indeed all members will join me in condemning this.

As regards councillors complaining about other councillors, the Members' Code of Conduct Committee procedure is that such complaints are directed to the relevant Group Leaders to resolve in the first instance. Clearly there is a particular problem where the Member being complained about is indeed a Group Leader.

If Group Leaders cannot resolve matters or if there is a bigger issue affecting the reputation of the Council generally then the matter can still be referred to the Members' Code of Conduct Committee.

The Members' Code of Conduct has recently been reviewed but in the light of some recent abuses in social media we may well need to revisit this. The ruling Conservative Group will consider this again in the near future if further abuse occurs.

I hold a very clear view that members of my group should behave themselves in accordance with accepted standards of civility and professionalism and I have liaised with the opposition Group Leader about such an instance recently and taken action to ensure that the offending conduct is addressed.

I am now delighted to announce that all Members of the Conservative Group have signed up to an "online conduct pledge" of conducting ourselves in a civil and professional manner.

I will shortly be passing details of this pledge to all other Group Leaders and Independent Members inviting them and their Group to join us in this pledge. There is no room for abuse of any kind within Spelthorne Council, and with Council's support I will do my best to eradicate it."

There was no supplementary question.

3. Question from Councillor A.E. Friday:

“As both my wife and I have Jewish grandparents who came to this country in order to avoid persecution in Europe we fully understand the growing concern about the anti-Semitism that has been expressed by sections of the Labour Party and the ambivalent attitude of the Leader of that party. I would ask the Leader of the Council to re-assure the Jewish community in Spelthorne that we believe there is no place for such attitudes in our Borough and that we will make sure that Spelthorne is a place where all faiths are able to enjoy freedom from harassment and can expect a peaceful and secure future.”

Response from the Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey:

“Thank you for your Question Cllr Friday.

I am delighted to assure the Jewish community in Spelthorne that there is no place for anti-Semitism here. The Staines Synagogue which Madam Mayor, Cllr Friday, I and other councillors visited a few months ago, enjoys our full support and we will do all we can to support and protect them and the wider Jewish community in Spelthorne. Let me be very clear, I believe that all peaceful faith groups should be able to practice their faith in Spelthorne without any fear or concerns.

I find it particularly disappointing, given recently emerging information on the perceived anti-Semitic view of the Leader of the Labour Party and senior members, that despite me twice inviting Spelthorne Labour Party to join us in condemning anti-Semitism, they have failed to do so. We can draw our own conclusions from this.

Please let me clarify, I do not for one moment believe Cllr Sue Doran, the only Labour member of this Council personally holds those views.

Cllr Friday I hope this clarifies our position but I will be happy to respond should you have a follow on question.”

In accordance with Council Standing Order 15.2, Councillor A.E. Friday asked the following supplementary question:

“I appreciate the Leader has a very busy diary but members of the local Jewish synagogue are frightened to publicise their own events and activities. I hope he can find time to visit the local Rabbi with me and help put his fears to rest.”

The Leader, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey, gave the following response to the supplementary question during the meeting:

“I would be delighted to do so.”

Councillor Doran advised Council that Spelthorne Labour Party passed a motion that it is totally against anti-Semitism in any form. That motion was passed by everyone who attended the meeting.