

## 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, 18 July 2024 at 7.00 pm

### Present:

#### Councillors:

J.T.F. Doran	J.P. Caplin	A. Mathur
M. Arnold	R. Chandler	S.C. Mooney
M.M. Attewell	D.C. Clarke	L. E. Nichols
C. Bateson	S.M. Doran	K.E. Rutherford
S.N. Beatty	R.V. Geach	O. Rybinski
M. Beecher	A. Gale	D. Saliagopoulos
S. Bhadye	M. Gibson	J.R. Sexton
M. Bing Dong	K.M. Grant	J.A. Turner
H.S. Boparai	S. Gyawali	B. Weerasinghe
T. Burrell	K. Howkins	H.R.D. Williams
J.R. Boughtflower	N. Islam	P.N. Woodward
J. Button	M.J. Lee	

**Apologies:** Apologies were received from Councillors L.H. Brennan, S.A. Dunn and D.L. Geraci

### Councillor M. Buck, The Mayor, in the Chair

#### 64/24 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 23 May 2024 and the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 10 June 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

#### 65/24 Disclosures of Interest

Councillors Attewell, Boparai, Sexton and Weerasinghe advised they were also Surrey County Councillors.

Councillor Nichols advised that he had an interest in Item 20 on the agenda as he is on the Board of Directors for Knowle Green Estates.

Councillor Saliagopoulos declared a pecuniary interest in Item 8 – Local Plan Resumption of Examination.

## **66/24 Announcements from the Mayor**

The Mayor made the following announcements:

“I am very pleased to report on my mayoral activities over the last two months since I took office on May 23, 2024.

### Visit to Chennestone Primary Community School

I had the opportunity to visit Chennestone Primary Community School in Sunbury for their Annual Funday. I witnessed the young students attempting a Guinness World Record for the Largest Chu Chu Au Dance. The event was well attended by parents, students, and guests, and showcased the vibrant community spirit of our young residents.

### Mayor’s Civic Service and 50th Anniversary Celebration

As per our tradition, the Mayor’s Civic Service was held this year at St. Matthews Church, followed by our 50th Anniversary celebration. I extend my gratitude to Father John for officiating a wonderful service. I also thank all the neighbouring boroughs’ mayors and consorts, past mayors, councillors, guests, and officers who graced the ceremony with their presence.

### Surrey Mayors Association Welcome Event

The Surrey Mayors Association hosted a welcome event for all new and past mayors. I represented Spelthorne Borough Council and was accompanied by my deputy, Cllr John Doran, and our consorts. This event was a valuable opportunity for networking and sharing knowledge and experience with current and former mayors.

### Annual General Meetings (AGMs) –

#### Spelthorne Business Forum

I attended the AGM of the Spelthorne Business Forum. It was a well-attended event with nearly 100 businesspeople from Spelthorne and surrounding areas. A raffle was organized, and the proceeds will support the charities I am endorsing this year.

#### Spelthorne Scouts

I also attended the AGM of the Spelthorne Scouts. I was impressed by their ongoing engagement in supporting young people’s personal development and empowering them to make positive contributions to Spelthorne.

### D-Day Commemoration

We honoured the legacy of the D-Day generation by raising flags to mark the 80th anniversary of the Allied invasion of Normandy. This was a solemn occasion to remember and honour our D-Day heroes.

### Armed Forces Day

I observed Armed Forces Day along with councillors, officers, and the public. Spelthorne Borough Council showed our support by flying the flag outside the Council Offices all week, recognizing the men and women who make up the Armed Forces community.

### Rotary Club of Shepperton & Sunbury

I visited the Rotary Club of Shepperton & Sunbury to celebrate their 75 years of service to the community. This milestone reflects their long-standing commitment to our community's welfare.

### National Roses Show

I attended the National Roses Show hosted by Squires Garden Centre in Shepperton. I was proud to see the blooming roses exhibited by participants from Spelthorne as well as other national participants.

### Staines Upon Thames River Day 2024

I had the pleasure of opening the Staines Upon Thames River Day 2024. It was a day filled with fun and amusements for residents of all age groups. This year, we revived a old tradition by welcoming the Lord Mayor of the City of London to our borough to celebrate an ancient City of London tradition of inspecting the London Stones. The Lord Mayor led a river flotilla to Staines, where the ceremony of touching the London Stone with a sword was carried out. The original stone, kept in the Spelthorne Museum, was also visited. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all councillors, officers, organizations, charities, and the public who have supported me in organising and participating in all the above-mentioned events. I am very proud to acknowledge that everyone is coming together for the greater good of the residents of Spelthorne regardless of which political party you represent.

I thank you very much for your continued support”.

### **67/24 Announcements from the Leader & Deputy Leader**

The Leader made the following announcements:

“Our Residents’ survey is now open to share your views on our services that we deliver in the Borough. This all-inclusive Council are listening to you, and I encourage you to participate and take this opportunity to have your say. Your

views really count, as well as wanting to know what you think about our services and future priorities, the results will help us make the right decisions in how we allocate our resources. So please spread the word and encourage friends and family to take part. The survey is featured on our website, in the Summer Bulletin magazine and available at the Council office, Leisure Centres, libraries and at our Community Centres. Your input is invaluable in shaping the future of your Spelthorne - without your views we cannot action change.

Last month we launched our new digital engagement platform for the Spelthorne Design Code project. The project's purpose is to enhance the future of our Borough by creating a vision for how our buildings, streets, parks, and public spaces should look and feel and to leave a legacy for our future generations, that we can all be proud of. We want you, the residents, to be at the heart of this process. Over the next few months, our team will be meeting with communities across Spelthorne to gather your thoughts and ideas. Your input is crucial in helping us create a Design Code that reflects our shared vision and contribute to the overall wellbeing of our community. For news and alerts please sign up to the Design Code hub on our website, follow our social media channels and look out for banners and posters which will be displayed in towns across the borough.

In June I was honoured to attend two ceremonies to celebrate our Armed Forces Community. Firstly, a dedicated ceremony for the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day, attended by over 100 people, including veterans, residents, and staff. Later in the month, with our Armed Forces Champions, Cllr Clarke and Cllr Doran we raised the Armed Forces flag outside the Council Offices to mark Armed Forces Day.

We have always had a strong tradition of recognising and supporting our Armed Forces community. In 2021, we were privileged to receive the prestigious Gold Award in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. As we came together to observe Armed Forces Day, the Mayor reaffirmed our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, ensuring fairness for those who have served and their families. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who have served, safeguarding our freedoms.

My thanks to the Mayor for his tribute to Caroline Spencer at the start of this meeting. I would also like to pay my respects to past Mayor Caroline Spencer, and I remember her well. Her passion for supporting the community was

evident when during her time as Mayor, raising much needed funds for One-to-One, a friendship scheme for people with learning difficulties and Girl Guiding in Spelthorne. My thoughts remain with her family and friends.

Finally, I would like to convey our best wishes and send positive energy for a full recovery to last year's Deputy Mayor, Elizabeth Baldock”.

The Deputy Leader made the following announcements:

“We have announced the winner of the Spelthorne Business Plan Competition. This event was held at BP in Sunbury-on-Thames on Thursday 27 June and showcased the innovative and entrepreneurial spirit of our residents. Anja Abauraou's Companionship Services Ltd emerged as the winner, securing £4,000 and a year's worth of business support. We congratulate all participants for their hard work and look forward to seeing these new businesses thrive in our community.

Last week, Surrey County Council announced the publication of the Spelthorne parking review. The review evaluated over 120 requests for new or adjusted parking restrictions across the borough. Notable proposals include a paid parking scheme for Ashford Town Centre and a new resident permit scheme near Staines-upon-Thames railway station. Residents and stakeholders are encouraged to visit [surrey](#) website to access the report and provide feedback through an online form. The deadline for submitting comments to Surrey County Council is Friday 2 August and we urge residents to make their voices heard, it will be for the residents to decide whether the proposals proceed or not.

The Household Support Fund remains open to residents to apply for the one-time payment of £50. The fund aims to support vulnerable households in our community and alleviate expenses related to food, energy, and water. This initiative is supported by funding from the UK government to assist households during periods of increased living costs. Please look at our website or contact our customer service team for more information”.

**68/24 Announcements from the Chief Executive**

The Deputy Chief Executive gave the following announcements:

On behalf of Daniel Mouawad as Returning Officer, and the rest of Management Team, I would like to place on record our thanks to all those involved in delivering a smooth and effective process for the recent General Election and the Ashford East by-election. This was a massive team effort, organised and delivered at relatively short notice, involving some 300 people all told, including staff from across the Council and other support from outside our organisation. Our particular thanks go to our Elections Team, whose hard work, commitment and organisational skills made this possible. Together with staff at the polling stations, the count, and all those providing additional support, including our Neighbourhood Services Team, they have been a credit to Spelthorne.

On Tuesday this week, we were pleased announce that Spelthorne has received a Green Flag Award this year for both the Sunbury Walled Garden and Staines Cemetery. This is the 14th year running that this authority has won this coveted award, which is the international quality mark for parks and green spaces. I would like to congratulate our parks team who made this possible, and thank them for all the sterling work they do across our borough to make our open spaces attractive places for everyone to enjoy.

Finally, I would like to advise this chamber that a member of the Burway Rowing Club in Laleham, Tom Barras, will be rowing for Team GB in the men's quad at the Paris Olympic Games, which starts on 26 July. Tom won a silver medal at the Tokyo Olympics 3 years ago. He has been a member of Burway Rowing Club from the age of 12, where he was coached by, amongst others, our very own Councillor Paul Woodward until Tom left to go to university. I am sure we would all like to wish Tom the best of luck on bringing home another medal.

**69/24 Questions from members of the public**

The Mayor reported that, under Standing Order 14, one question had been received from a member of the public.

Question from Mr S Boyle:

“Why is there no dedicated provision for Equestrian facility's under the sports and pastimes articles that will enable horses and riders in all aspects equestrian activities . These are non-existent throughout Spelthorne and all green spaces are now restricted from equine activities. Given the fact that 32 riders per 1000 head of population they have nowhere to go?”

Councillor S Doran, Chair of the Community Wellbeing & Housing Committee provided the following response:

“Spelthorne is blessed with a significant area of designated public open space, however, because our open spaces are used for all kinds of outdoor pursuits, horses are restricted to the bridleway in Laleham Park. This ensures it is safe for riders, horses and members of the public using the park. Whilst there are limited bridleways in the borough, they are part of a much more extensive network of bridleways and byways across Surrey, accessible to horse riders, that total some 1,238 km (769 miles).

Surrey County Council is responsible for providing and maintaining this network and they are currently in the process of creating a new Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2024-34 which will be published on the County Council website once finalised and approved.

In terms of running and maintaining a dedicated equestrian facility specifically for riders, the cost would unfortunately be prohibitive, however we are fortunate in that there are a number of private riding establishments locally. Given the pressures on the Council’s financial resources and the relatively high cost of riding compared to other pursuits, which makes it prohibitive for many, the Council’s focus has been on supporting activities that are affordable and accessible for all.

That said, our Health and Wellbeing Strategy is built on three pillars of People, Place, and Community, enabling residents to take positive action to improve their own physical and mental health, and increasing activity in an accessible and affordable way. Whilst riding is not mentioned specifically in our Health and Wellbeing Strategy, we recognise that riding, and being around horses, has a positive impact on the physical and mental health of people who engage with them. As such, when we produce our updated Leisure Strategy later this year, we will endeavour to include reference to riding and the local offer, and explore how, as a council, we may support more residents to benefit from this pastime”.

#### **70/24 Local Plan - Resumption of Examination**

**Councillor Saliagopoulos left the meeting before this item was considered as she had declared a pecuniary interest in relation to this item.**

**Councillor Gibson declared a pecuniary interest in one of the buildings listed in Appendix C of the report and left the Chamber whilst this item was considered.**

Following an email received from the Environment Agency it was proposed by Councillor Sexton and seconded by Councillor Beecher that the wording within the report at paragraph 3.11 be amended to reflect the wording suggested by the Environment Agency.

The revised wording was as follows:

“The site will not be available for development until a safe route for access and egress can be provided and maintained during a flood event (ie the 1% AEP fluvial flood event and surface water event including an appropriate climate change allowance)”.

Council **resolved** to agree to the amended wording as outlined above.

It was proposed by Councillor Sexton and seconded by Councillor Bateson that Council approve to:

1. Propose a Main Modification to the Inspector to remove Bridge Street Car Park/Hanover House/Sea Cadet building (ST4/002) and Riverside surface car park (ST4/010) as site allocations from the Local Plan,
2. Propose a Main Modification to the Inspector to agree to new policy wording in relation to site allocations at risk from access and egress issues and for such wording to be finalised by the Group Head of Place, Protection and Prosperity in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee; and
3. Agree that the Chair of the Environment & Sustainability Committee write to the Inspector with further proposed Main Modifications (if agreed) in order to progress the Local Plan back to Examination.

Council **resolved** to approve the recommendations as outlined in the report.

#### **71/24 Changes to the Allocations of Seats on Committees**

Council **resolved** to approve the:

- a) Revised representation of the different political groups on Committees,
- b) Revised members to Committees,
- c) Revised Chairs & Vice-Chairs to Committees; and
- d) Revised substitutes to Committees

#### **72/24 Allocation of Seats on Committees**

In pursuant to Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing act 1989, Council **resolved** to agree the representation of the different political groups on Committees.



**73/24 Appointments of Members to Committees**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Council **resolved** to appoint the members to serve on the Committee.

**74/24 Appointment of Chairs and Vice-Chairs**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Council **resolved** to appoint the Chairs and Vice-Chairs to serve on the Committees.

**75/24 Appointment of Named Substitutes to Committees**

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, Council **resolved** to appoint the Substitute Members to serve on the Committees.

**76/24 Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Commercial Assets Sub-Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year**

A recorded vote was requested by Cllr Boughtflower

<b>For</b>	Councillors Buck, J Doran, Arnold, Bateson, Beatty, Beecher, Boparai, Burrell, Button, Caplin, S Doran, Gale, Geach, Gibson, Grant, Gyawali, Nichols, Rutherford, Sexton, Turner, Williams - <b>21</b>
<b>Against</b>	Councillors Attewell, Bhadye, Bing Dong, Boughtflower, Chandler, Clarke, Howkins, Islam, Lee, Mathur, Mooney, Rybinski, Weerasinghe, Woodward - <b>14</b>
<b>Abstain</b>	<b>0</b>

Council **resolved** to approve the appointment of Councillor L Nichols as Chair of the Commercial Assets Sub-Committee and Councillor S Beatty as Vice-Chair of the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2024/25, as agreed at the meeting of the committee on 01 July 2024.

**77/24 Amendment to Members' Allowances Scheme 2024-25**

Council **resolved** to approve the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel to pay an annual allowance of £2,000 to the Independent Member of the Commercial Assets Sub-Committee.

**78/24 Estimated 2024/25 to 2027/28 Capital Programme**

This item was not considered at this meeting.

**79/24 Capital Outturn Report 2023-2024**

**Council resolved:**

1. Note the £1,608k projected underspend against its Estimated Capital Programme for 2023-24, as at 31 March 2024; and
2. Agree that Capital Projects totalling £2,990k (as outlined in Appendix C of the report) be removed from the 2024-25 Estimate Capital Programme.

**80/24 Spelthorne Annual Grants 2025/26**

**Council resolved** to approve the following:

1. To provide indicative grant funding for the five-core funded voluntary organisation (Voluntary Support North Surrey, Citizens Advice Runnymede and Spelthorne, Homestart, Age UK and Shopmobility) for the financial year 2026/27 when the 2025/26 grant award is made,
2. To ring fence a minimum of £3,000 of the grants budget to sport and active lifestyle projects and £3,000 to arts projects (subject to receiving applications from sport and art organisations; and
3. To amend the grant eligibility criteria to exclude schools and Parent Teacher Associations from applying.

**81/24 Sunbury Leisure Centre - Swimming Pool Grant**

Following legal advice, Council were advised that the direct contract would be with Constellia Public Ltd who would then appoint Low Carbon Europe to deliver the Sunbury Leisure Centre Decarbonisation Project.

The Committee were advised that the closure of the swimming pool would be kept to a minimum particularly during school holidays.

**Council resolved** to:

1. Agree to directly award a contract to Constellia Public Ltd to enable them to appoint the Sunbury Leisure Centre Decarbonisation Project, funded by Sport England through the Swimming Pool Support Fund, to Low Carbon Europe,
2. Delegate authority to the Group Head of Corporate Governance to enter into any necessary documentation in connection with the project; and
3. Approve the scheme as a supplementary Capital Estimate for a value of £995,000.

**The meeting was adjourned at 20.46 and re-convened at 21.06.**

**82/24 Urgent Item - Retrospective Approval to Include Ashford Cemetery Lodge Refurbishment Works in the Capital Programme**

This item was considered in the closed session of the meeting.

Council **resolved** to agree the recommendations as approved at the Corporate Policy & Resources Committee meeting on 08 July 2024.

**83/24 Reports from the Committee Chairs**

The Chairs of the Committees presented reports which outlined the matters their Committees had considered since the last Council meeting.

Council **resolved** to note the Chair's reports.

**84/24 Motions**

There were no motions received.

**85/24 General questions**

The Mayor reported that no question had been received.

**86/24 Exclusion of Public & Press (Exempt Report)**

It was proposed by Councillor Bateson and seconded by Councillor Arnold and **resolved** that the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following items (15 & 20), in accordance with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) because it was likely to disclose information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information because, disclosure to the public would prejudice the financial position of the authority in being able to undertake even-handed negotiations and finalising acceptable contract terms:

**87/24 Council Medium Term Financial Support of Knowle Green Estates (KGE)**

Council **resolved** to approve the recommendations as outlined in the report.