

## **MINUTES OF THE SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting of Spelthorne Borough Council  
held remotely by skype for business conferencing call on Thursday, 18  
June 2020 at 6.00 pm**

### **Present:**

#### **Councillors:**

M.M. Attewell	S.M. Doran	M.J. Madams
C.F. Barnard	R.D. Dunn	J. McIlroy
C.L. Barratt	S.A. Dunn	A.J. Mitchell
R.O. Barratt	T. Fidler	L. E. Nichols
C. Bateson	N.J. Gething	R.J. Noble
I.J. Beardsmore	M. Gibson	O. Rybinski (Deputy Leader)
J.R. Boughtflower	K.M. Grant	D. Saliagopoulos
A. Brar	A.C. Harman	J.R. Sexton
S. Buttar	H. Harvey	R.W. Sider BEM
R. Chandler	I.T.E. Harvey (Leader)	R.A. Smith-Ainsley
N.L. Cornes	N. Islam	B.B. Spoor
J.H.J. Doerfel	T. Lagden	J. Vinson
J.T.F. Doran	V.J. Leighton	

#### **Independent member:**

Mr Murray Litvak, Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee

Councillor M. Madams, The Mayor, in the Chair

**Apologies:** Councillor V. Siva

### **95/20 Election of the Mayor**

The retiring Mayor, Mrs. M. Madams, welcomed all members and those watching online to the Annual Meeting of the Council and invited the Reverend Chris Henley, to lead the meeting in prayer.

The Council agreed to suspend Standing Orders 6.2, 20.8, 22.3, 24.1 and 27 which were impracticable to comply with at a remote Council meeting.

The Mayor thanked the officers of the Council, her Consort, and the Mayor's secretary, Mrs. Sheila Kimpton, for their hard work and support during her Mayoral year. Reflecting on her year in office the Mayor reported she and her consort, Andrew Hopgood were delighted and honoured to attend many

interesting and worthwhile events across the Borough in spite of the curtailed opportunities to attend functions and hold fundraising events due to the coronavirus. She hoped the funds raised for charities would help them continue their superb work and support for vulnerable residents.

It was moved by Councillor R.W. Sider BEM and seconded by Councillor A.C. Harman that Councillor C. Barnard be appointed Mayor for the Municipal Year 2020-2021.

It was moved by Councillor J. Sexton and seconded by Councillor I.J. Beardsmore that Councillor D. Saliagopoulos be appointed Mayor for the Municipal Year 2020-2021.

**Resolved** that Councillor Colin Barnard be appointed Mayor for the Municipal Year 2020-21.

Councillor Colin Barnard made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Mayor of the Borough of Spelthorne and took the Chair. A short video was shown highlighting moments from Councillor Madams' Mayoral year followed by the handing over of the chains of office from Councillor Madams to the new Mayor, Councillor Barnard.

Councillor Barnard thanked his proposer and seconder and the Council for supporting him in his election as Mayor.

He announced that his wife, Barbara Barnard would be the Mayoress and he had appointed a Chaplain for his Mayoral Year, the Reverend Chris Henley, Associate Vicar at St Stephen's Church, Hounslow. The Mayor said that both would be presented with their badges at a formal occasion later in the year.

The Council joined the Mayor in a vote of thanks to Councillor Madams for her efforts over the past year. The Mayor reported it had been a pleasure for himself and his wife to work with her for the benefit of the Borough's residents.

## **96/20     Minutes**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 February 2020 and the extraordinary Council meeting held on 21 May 2020 were agreed as correct records.

## **97/20     Disclosures of Interest**

There were no disclosures of interest.

## **98/20     Election of the Deputy Mayor**

It was moved by Councillor M. Gibson and seconded by Councillor J. Boughtflower that Councillor Tony Harman be appointed Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2020-21.

Councillor H. Harvey proposed that Councillor I.J. Beardsmore be appointed Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2020-21. The nomination was seconded by Councillor S. Dunn.

**Resolved** that Councillor Tony Harman be appointed Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2020-21.

Councillor Tony Harman made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Spelthorne and announced that his wife Daphne Harman would be the Deputy Mayoress.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Tony Harman, briefly addressed the Council and thanked his proposer and seconder for their support. He said it was a great honour to be elected as Deputy Mayor and looked forward to supporting the Mayor in his Mayoral year.

#### **99/20     Announcements from the Mayor**

The Mayor, Councillor Colin Barnard, advised the charities he would be supporting for his Mayoral year were Spelthorne District Scouts and Guides, as he strongly believed in the importance of guidance and development in the early years for future success in life.

#### **Items carried over from the Council meeting held on 27 February 2020**

The following items of business were carried over from the Council meeting held on 27 February 2020.

The reports from Chairmen in relation to Committee meetings held after 27 February 2020 would be reported to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

#### **100/20     Report from the Leader of the Council**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor I.T.E. Harvey, presented the reports of the Cabinet meetings held on 29 January 2020 and 26 February 2020, which outlined the matters the Cabinet had decided between the December and February Council meetings.

#### **101/20     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 between the December and February Council meetings. He thanked the members of the Committee who had supported him in the work of the Committee over the past year.

**102/20 Report from the Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee**

The Chairman of the Members' Code of Conduct Committee, Mr. Murray Litvak, presented his report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided between the December and February Council meetings.

**103/20 Report from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor V.J. Leighton, presented her report which outlined the matters the Committee had decided between the December and February Council meetings.

**104/20 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 between the December and February Council meetings. He thanked the Planning officers and members of the Committee for their work over the past year.

**105/20 Announcements from the Leader**

The Leader congratulated the Mayor on his appointment and, on behalf of the Council and residents, thanked the retiring Mayor, Cllr Mary Madams for her fantastic Mayoral year, which she achieved in spite of the difficulties caused by the COVID19 lockdown which had resulted in her Mayoral year being very much curtailed.

The Leader made the following announcements:

He sent his deepest condolences to all those who had lost a friend or loved one to coronavirus. He commented on how the difficult situation had brought out the best in people with thousands of volunteers in Spelthorne stepping forward to give their time to support others offering to deliver food, collect prescriptions, check on vulnerable neighbours and provide other vital support. It had been truly heart-warming to see such kindness.

He paid tribute to Spelthorne Council's own staff for their dedication and professionalism in working tirelessly to support residents, safeguard the most vulnerable people in the Borough and maintain public services during the three months since the pandemic began.

He reminded members of the Council's financial situation in 2014-15 when it faced the possibility of having to sell its own Town Hall for building and move to an industrial estate. Cllr Watts, the then Leader, initiated the "Towards a

Sustainable Future” scheme to save £140,000 with more significant proposed cuts to Government funding on the horizon.

The Council seized the opportunity when contacted by BP about its sale and leaseback plan to raise capital for further exploration, to make prudent investments. These and the loans which supported them enjoyed cross party support and unanimous Cabinet approval.

The Leader set out the benefits of the Council's investment strategy which had enabled it to increase its service provision to residents whilst other Boroughs and Surrey County Council faced deep cuts. The Council Tax increase this year was the lowest in Surrey, without the need for sales of assets or drawing on reserves. The Council had embarked on an ambitious, and ground breaking, scheme to build homes for those who need our help, providing: emergency family accommodation, a single homeless hostel, affordable homes and a whole development dedicated to Key Workers. Our net investment income, having paid all costs including interest, sinking fund contributions and capital repayments equated to over 50% of the income towards the Council's Revenue account, to pay for services to residents.

These financial resources enabled the Council to move very quickly when COVID19 struck, without relying on Government handouts. Staff morale was very high and we received many plaudits for our efforts, including from the Local Government Association and thanks from grateful residents.

The Leader confirmed that our property investments were continuing to support the services the Council provides to residents. He said that total collections from the March Quarter were in excess of 90% with another 8% on agreed staged payments. This was well above the industry average of about 74% and was backed by a £20 million plus sinking fund to buffer any delayed receipts. This meant the Council was not going to have to cut services, residents were not going to see their Council Tax go up, and contrary to a recent comment from a councillor, the Council was not going to go bankrupt!

The Leader was pleased to announce that following a competitive tender process and unanimous agreement of the Council's Cabinet, the Arora Group had been awarded the contract to develop Bridge Street Car Park and Hanover House in Staines-upon-Thames for a hotel-led mixed use development. This landmark development was set to greatly enhance the river frontage at one of the main gateways into Staines-upon-Thames, providing an upscale (4 star) hotel with over 300 guest rooms, substantial conferencing/banqueting facilities, spa, restaurants, bars, leisure and retail facilities together with serviced apartments and residential units. The development would provide a massive economic boost for Spelthorne's main town and gave a strong signal that even in these challenging times, businesses like the Arora Group can see the untapped potential of the town and were keen to invest in Spelthorne. It was anticipated that over 350 new jobs would be created, providing new career opportunities for Spelthorne's residents.

The Leader referred to his recent announcement that the Council would be setting aside a special defence fund of £900,000 to enable it to challenge applications from developers wanting to build in the Green Belt. The Council had always been fiercely protective of the Borough's Green Belt and was known for taking a stance against aggressive developers looking to build on green spaces. As the planning process currently stands, whilst Spelthorne makes decisions on Planning applications and can refuse those which affect the Green Belt, developers can appeal to the Planning Inspector. Fighting these appeals was not only lengthy, they could also be very expensive. Thanks to the success of the Council's investment strategy over the last four years, Spelthorne Borough Council was now in a stronger financial position and had generated a significant budget surplus which had enabled this defence fund to be established.

Production of a Masterplan for Staines-upon-Thames was underway which would provide a framework to shape and transform the town. Consultants, David Lock Associates, were leading on this work and a new Working Group had been set up to help steer the project. Membership of the Working Group included cross party membership focusing on Staines, as follows:

Leader of the Council, Councillor Ian Harvey  
Councillor Helen Harvey, Portfolio Holder for Investment Portfolio  
Management and Regeneration  
Councillor Ian Beardsmore, Portfolio Holder for Planning  
Councillor Olivia Rybinski, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic  
Development, Customer Service, Estates & Transport  
Councillor Chris Bateson, Staines South ward  
Councillor Veena Siva, Staines ward  
Councillor Tom Lagden, Staines ward

The Leader concluded by noting there would be a Council meeting to determine the Leader of the Council going forwards on 25 June. He thanked everyone who had worked with him to make Spelthorne a great place to live, work and play. He said it had been a genuine privilege to have served all to date.

## **106/20 Establishment of Committees 2020-21**

Details of the Committees and their size and the political allocation of seats (Appendix A) and the members to serve on the various Committees (Appendix B) were circulated in a supplementary agenda prior to the meeting.

It was moved by Councillor I.T.E. Harvey and seconded by Councillor O. Rybinski to agree:

- a) the appointment of the Committees shown at Agenda Item 9 of the size indicated and with the terms of reference and functions set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution;
- b) the allocation of seats as shown on Appendix A;
- c) the Councillors to serve on Committees as shown on Appendix B; and
- d) that Mr. Murray Litvak be appointed as Chairman of the Members' Code

of Conduct Committee.

Members queried the nominations of Councillors to serve on Committees as shown on Appendix B, stating that it did not accord with the Constitution due to the nomination of Cabinet members to take seats on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Principal Solicitor advised that it was recognised that members of the Cabinet could not sit on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but that the seats allocated to the United Spelthorne Group on that Committee would remain vacant until the issue of the removal and appointment of the Leader, to be considered at an extraordinary Council meeting on 25 June, had been resolved.

As there was no consensus by the Council for the Motion, a vote was taken and the Motion was lost.

The Mayor advised that the matter would come before the Council again, at a later date.

#### **107/20 Appointment by the Council to Outside Bodies**

##### **South West Middlesex Crematorium Board**

It was moved by Councillor J. Boughtflower and seconded by Councillor J. McIlroy that Councillor R.J. Noble be appointed as the Council's representative on the South West Middlesex Crematorium Board.

**Resolved** that Councillor R.J. Noble be appointed as the Council's representative on the South West Middlesex Board.

It was moved by Councillor S. Dunn and seconded by Councillor C. Bateson that Councillor R.D. Dunn be appointed as the Council's deputy representative on the South West Middlesex Crematorium Board.

**Resolved** that Councillor R.D. Dunn be appointed as the Council's deputy representative on the South West Middlesex Board.

##### **Surrey Police and Crime Panel**

It was moved by Councillor J. Boughtflower and seconded by Councillor J. McIlroy that Councillor R.O. Barratt be appointed as the Council's representative on the Surrey Police and Crime Panel

Councillor T. Fidler proposed that Councillor B. Spoor be appointed as the Council's representative on the Surrey Police and Crime Panel. The nomination was seconded by Councillor R. Dunn.

Councillor T. Lagden proposed that Councillor J. Doerfel be appointed as the Council's representative on the Surrey Police and Crime Panel. The nomination was seconded by Councillor J. Vinson.

A vote was taken and there was no clear majority. The Councillor with the least votes, Councillor Doerfel was taken off the list and a further vote taken.

**Resolved** that Councillor B. Spoor be appointed as the Council's representative on the Surrey Police and Crime Panel.

**108/20 Exempt Business**

**Resolved** to move the exclusion of the Press and Public for the following item in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.

**109/20 Report from the Leader of the Council on exempt matters**

*(Paragraph 3 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))*

The Leader responded to questions on item 5 of the report for the Cabinet meeting held on 29 January 2020 which related to a partially exempt matter and the question was likely to reveal exempt information as defined by Paragraph 3. of the Act above.