

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, 14 July 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present:

Councillor S.M. Doran, The Mayor, in the Chair

Councillors:

D. Saliagopoulos	J. Button	S.C. Mooney
C.L. Barratt	R. Chandler	L. E. Nichols
R.O. Barratt	J.T.F. Doran	R.J. Noble
C. Bateson	R.D. Dunn	O. Rybinski
I.J. Beardsmore	T. Fidler	J.R. Sexton
M. Beecher	M. Gibson	R.W. Sider BEM
J.R. Boughtflower	K.M. Grant	V. Siva
A. Brar	V.J. Leighton	B.B. Spoor
S. Buttar	A.J. Mitchell	J. Vinson

In attendance:

Mr I. Winter.

Apologies: Apologies were received from Councillors M.M. Attewell, C.F. Barnard, S.A. Dunn, N.J. Gething, A.C. Harman, H. Harvey, I.T.E. Harvey, N. Islam and S.J Whitmore.

80/22 Minute's silence for Richard Smith-Ainsley

Council held a minute's silence and tributes were paid to the late Councillor Richard Smith-Ainsley who had recently passed away.

81/22 Minutes

The minutes of the Council meeting held on the 26 May 2022 and the continuation meeting held on 08 June 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

82/22 Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

83/22 Announcements from the Mayor

The Mayor made the following announcements:

"I am thoroughly enjoying my time as Mayor. Since I was elected on 26 May, I have carried out 28 different meetings and events. The Jubilee Weekend was very busy with six events to go to plus a trip on the Gloriana which was wonderful. The Mayor of Runnymede was invited to that, and she invited me and we had great fun.

I have been to a variety of events, one of them was the 60th anniversary of White Lodge which many residents go to. What was very touching and interesting was some of the past people that have used White Lodge, what difficulties they have had to overcome. One gentleman was 52 and couldn't speak. He had severe cerebral palsy, but he, through their help and with technology, was able to say how he felt. Another woman was 27 and was now in a part-time job through their help.

I have also been to two rotary club events, and I have been invited by two rotary clubs (one in Staines, one in Ashford) to be an honorary member. I've been to schools. I went to St. Paul's Catholic College in Sunbury on their feast day to attend a mass.

I have done many other things: attended five civic services and attended different clubs. I am going to the Cricket Club, and I have been to Scouts. It has been fun and good to meet residents in their "home situation".

I have one announcement to make about the Mayor's Charity Events. The first event will be 15th October from 19:30-22:30 at Stanwell Village Hall. It will be an evening with Elvis and there will also be young people doing Asian dancing and a raffle. Please keep that date in your diaries".

84/22 Announcements from the Leader

The Leader made the following announcements:

"We have been working hard to raise awareness of the Local Plan and Staines Development Framework consultation which is running until the 5th of September. The Local Plan affects everyone in the Borough as it is concerned with things such as housing, green spaces, public facilities and infrastructure such as education and healthcare. It also identifies where development should take place and areas where it should be restricted. It really does shape the Borough, so please take part if you haven't already.

We had a very productive meeting on the 20th of June with representatives from Residents Associations across the Borough where we had the opportunity to discuss a wide range of topics including the new Local Plan. We also shared the performance indicators we currently use as a Council and have invited the RAs to let us know if there are other performance statistics they would like us to share.

The Spelthorne Youth Hub has opened a facility in the Elmsleigh Centre in Staines to help young people aged 16 – 24 access work, training and education. The team can give tailored advice based on the individual's

circumstances, helping with things like drafting a CV and linking young people to local businesses offering work experience or permanent employment.

I am a strong believer in residents having a say over building developments in their area and we have been running a number of consultations on plans to build new homes in the borough. The consultations for Phase 2 of the Benwell House development in Sunbury and 91-93 Staines High Street are still open for comments and we would like to hear your views on the proposals.

The Veterans' Hub at Fordbridge Fire Station recently celebrated their first anniversary. The Hub provides a welcoming environment for ex-service personnel and their families and offers support on a range of issues at their monthly drop-in sessions. Thank you to everyone who has supported this excellent initiative.

Finally, I attended the memorial service held on the 18th of June to remember for the victims of the 1972 Staines air disaster. I personally found the service extremely moving and the tragic loss of life was brought into sharp focus when the names of the 118 victims were read out, reminding us just how many people died that day. In some cases, entire families were lost. Our thoughts and sympathies are always with the families and friends of the victims, and the emergency workers who were called upon to help that day."

85/22 Announcements from the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive made the following announcements:

"Spelthorne Borough Council has worked with the Local Government Association to understand our employee experience at work through our annual survey that focussed on cultures and values, wellbeing and recruitment and retention. Their holistic approach is developed by the sector, for the sector and the intelligence received from last month's survey will improve this authority's understanding of colleagues' perceptions and views of working for this Council.

Next week, and again in conjunction with the LGA, this Council will launch a Councillor survey, as we are equally committed to hearing from our democratically elected members of this Chamber. Content will be around values, engagement, influence and governance and I urge all members of this chamber to complete the survey and feed into the engagement process.

Madam Mayor, effective communications and engagement will ensure that our vision, priorities, and outcomes are clearly understood by residents, our workforce, partners and stakeholders. Since the start of the year our Council website has had over 240,000 views and is a key digital platform for residents to keep connected. I can announce that in the latest Sitemorse independent government index - which compares web digital capabilities based on accessibility and user experience - the Council's website has been assessed and ranked 25th out of the 411 local authority websites in the UK, putting Spelthorne in the top 6% bracket. This also follows the launch of our website

accessibility tool that enables users to choose any language as well as font, size, and colour of text for a better overall experience.

Accessible and varied communication tools are at the forefront of how we share our messages. With over 40% of local authorities nationally and 50% of boroughs in Surrey no longer producing a printed magazine, Spelthorne still produces, on recycled paper, a magazine delivered to all households across the Borough crammed full of informative community news. Our social media channels have also seen an exponential growth in audience equating with a 112% rise in little under two years.

Good communication is often the bridge between confusion and clarity. Whether we want to encourage greater self-service and promote understanding of local priorities, effective communication has the potential to engage communities, overcome challenges and help this Council to achieve its priority to put our communities at the heart of everything we do”.

86/22 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 Andrew McLuskey:

“Given the controversy surrounding recent planning decisions in Spelthorne how does the Council plan to benefit from new, environmentally friendly measures such as the amended National Planning Policy Framework and the Office for Place?”

Response from Councillor J Boughtflower, Leader of the Council

“Whilst a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was announced when the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill was published, there is no date for when it will be produced and no detail on what it will contain. We can expect more on the environment, but the new Local Plan needs to be consistent with the existing NPPF.

However, we have pushed further than ever to respond to the climate emergency with policies that will deal with carbon emissions, water usage, active and sustainable travel, green and blue infrastructure, biodiversity and walkable neighbourhoods. We will also look to develop design codes for Spelthorne once we have adopted the new Local Plan and Staines Development Framework.”

87/22 Petitions

There were none.

88/22 Civic Engagement Platform

Council considered a report on the proposed Civic Engagement Portal following a recommendation from the Administrative Committee. Council **resolved** to agree the expenditure for the following:

1. the expansion of the Granicus Civic Engagement platform, to merge existing self-service portals into one and offer a wider range of features and functions to Spelthorne's communities and customers through that portal,
2. the direct award for a call off contract via the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) GCloud 12 (RM1557) procurement framework to system vendor Granicus-Firmstep Limited "Lot 2:Cloud Software". The contract to run for a minimum of 2 years with the option to extend the contract for up to 2 periods of 12 months each; and

The Group Head of Corporate Governance was authorised to enter into any legal documentation necessary to implement the new contract.

89/22 Minor changes to the constitution

Council considered a recommendations from the Interim Monitoring Officer that sought agreement of the following, as outlined in the report:

1. the proposed terms of reference for the Appointments and Appeals Committee and associated changes to the Constitution at Appendix 2,
2. the associated changes to the Pay Policy Statement, arising from the above recommendation,
3. the removal of nomination arrangements for the Development Sub-Committee and Administrative Committee,
4. the proposed changes to the Substitutions Scheme; and
5. to request the Independent Remuneration Panel to review the provisions of a special responsibility allowance for substitutes on Development Sub-Committee when it undertakes its review of the Members' Allowance Scheme for 2022-23.

It was proposed by Councillor Boughtflower, seconded by Councillor Mitchell and **resolved** to approve the recommendations as set out in the report.

90/22 Membership of the Development Sub-Committee

Council considered the proposed appointments to the Development Sub-Committee, as nominated by group leaders.

It was proposed by Councillor Boughtflower, seconded by Councillor Mitchell, and **resolved** that the membership of the Development Sub-Committee, as set out in the agenda, be agreed.

91/22 Appointment of named substitutes to Development Sub-Committee

Council considered the proposed named substitutes to the Development Sub-Committee, as nominated by the Group Leaders.

It was proposed by Councillor Boughtflower, seconded by Councillor Mitchell, and **resolved** that the named substitutes to the Development Sub-Committee, as set out in the agenda, be appointed.

92/22 Report from the Leader of the Council

The report of the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 11 July 2022, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting, was presented.

93/22 Report from the Chair of the Administrative Committee

The report of the Administrative Committee meeting held on 07 July 2022, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting, was presented.

94/22 Report from the Chair of the Audit Committee

No meeting of the Audit Committee had taken place since the last Council meeting.

95/22 Report from the Chair of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee

The report of the Community Housing and Wellbeing Committee meeting held on 14 June 2022, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting, was presented.

96/22 Report from the Chair of the Economic Development Committee

The report of the Economic Development Committee meeting held on 09 June 2022, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting, was presented.

97/22 Report from the Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Committee

The report of the Environment and Sustainability Committee meeting held on 05 July 2022, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting, was presented.

Councillor Beecher advised Council that the borough's response to the Mayor of London's consultation on the proposed extension to the London low-emission zone was being written and would be submitted before the consultation deadline.

98/22 Report from the Chair of the Licensing Committee

The report of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 12 July 2022, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting, was presented.

99/22 Report from the Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Committee

The report of the Neighbourhood Services Committee meeting held on 30 June 2022, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting, was presented.

It was confirmed that, following consideration by the Neighbourhood Services Committee, that the Ashford Multi-storey Car would remain closed following recent vandalism.

100/22 Report from the Chair of the Planning Committee

The report of the Planning Committee meetings held on 27 April 2022, 1 June 2022 and 29 June 2022, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting, was presented.

101/22 Report from the Chair of the Standards Committee

The report of the Standards Committee meeting held on 22 June 2022, which outlined the matters the Committee had decided since the last Council meeting, was presented.

102/22 Motions

In accordance with Standing Order 16 the Council had received one written Notice of Motion moved by Councillor Mooney and seconded by Councillor Beecher.

Following a request by Councillor Mooney to alter the motion, the Monitoring Officer advised Council that the requested alteration was not in accordance with Standing Order 18.7. As the motion was not moved, the motion was considered to be withdrawn, in accordance with Standing Order 16.7.

103/22 General questions

The Mayor reported that two general questions had been received, in accordance with Standing Order 15, from Councillor R Sider:

Question 1 -

“The Shepperton Village Fair is the largest community event in the borough attracting a throughput of between eight and nine thousand people each year, and in the past many years ago was the leading event in what was called the Spelthorne Fortnight. The council have insisted on security and a no alcohol policy as a result of an incident which took place some 10 years ago on the river bank two hours after the Fair had closed and was nothing to do with the Fair in any way shape or form. The cost of security is now £2000 which the volunteer Fair committee endeavour to raise. At the Fair this year on the 11th of June, two men were found to be drinking wine in Manor Park close to the

main public access corner to the park. They were asked to stop drinking and informed that there was a No Alcohol policy in place and asked to move off site. They refused, and when Security insisted they comply, they showed signs of escalation. They were told that the police would be called but showed no concern. After a further warning, and in consultation with the Chairman of the Fair committee, security called 999 for assistance. At the end of a 15-minute conversation with the police, the police told them that this was nothing to do with them unless public order was breached, that no law had been broken, and it was up to the council to prosecute. Since the Chairman did not wish the incident to escalate to the point of public disorder and possible violence in the middle of families enjoying themselves, he agreed to Security backing off, whereby the men continued drinking. One of the duties of the security company is to monitor any violation of the No Alcohol policy. It now seems that this policy is unenforceable either by the Fairs security contractors who this year were former Gurkhas, or the police, and is a policy which has no impact on anyone who chooses to ignore it.

Will the Leader of this council share my concerns that this incident could well have escalated into public disorder and that police should have attended in the interest of public safety?"

Response from Councillor J Boughtflower, Leader of the Council

"In situations such as this, Surrey Police have to make their own assessment as to any response required based on the information available to them. Our officers have spoken with the Borough Commander, Maxine Cilia, who has checked the records of the call received by Surrey Police at the time of the incident you have referred to. She has advised that when the call was made to the police, the person who contacted them from the fair security team advised that there were no issues with the two males drinking wine, who were sitting drinking and not causing any issues.

The security operative stated that the only issue was that they should not be in the location drinking, which was not covered by any law, but only by the private rules of the event. This meant that the police could only get involved when, and if, there was a breach of the peace, which in this case was not mentioned. The police have powers to eject people from a licensed premises or venue but not in this type of situation. Inspector Cilia has therefore concluded that the police call-taker in this instance gave the right advice with the information presented to them."

Question 2 –

"In an email of the 8th of June 2022, emanating from the Head of Communications at Spelthorne Council, all councillors were advised that on the 9th of June, Ashford Multi Storey Car Park would be closed until further notice because of recent substantial vandalism, that meant that it was now not safe for residents to use. In its communication to residents for such action, the council apologised for such closure, and went on to say ' The car park at Church Road has been the subject of targeted and systematic vandalism

which has resulted in significant damage to the fire doors, stairs, shutters, barriers and lighting'. In conclusion, a council spokesperson added 'We are very sorry for the inconvenience that this will cause for some people but hope that everyone will understand that we had no choice in the matter.

In view of the foregoing, can the Leader of the Council inform me what action has been taken by the police to combat such wanton vandalism and destruction of council property?"

Response from Councillor J Boughtflower, Leader of the Council:

"Thank-you for your question, Councillor Sider.

In a previous statement issued by Surrey Police they have advised that their Ashford team are certainly well-aware of the multi-storey car park and they were deployed regularly to cases of anti-social behaviour there, as well as proactively patrolling the area. They have stated that they are working hard to target various ongoing low-level crimes in the area, and tackling anti-social behaviour in the car park formed part of that work.

The Police also work with the Council's Community Safety Team and JET officers to identify hotspot areas of ASB so that physical resources can be deployed to areas where increased ASB is identified. This would include reported vandalism of any property within the Borough. The Annual Community Safety Review will be reported to the Neighbourhood Services and Enforcement Committee in September and the Borough Commander, Inspector Cilia, will provide additional detail as to how the Police are tackling such matters."

104/22 Appointment of a representative Trustee

Council considered a request from The Staines Parochial Society to appoint Denise Turner-Stewart and Nick Wood-Dow as representative trustees for a further term of four years.

Council **resolved** that Denise Turner-Stewart and Nick Wood-Dow be appointed as Council representative trustees to serve on The Staines Parochial Society for a further 4 year term of office.