

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Burgess Hall, Westwood Road, St Ives PE27 6UW on Wednesday, 22 September 2021

PRESENT: Councillor L W McGuire – Chairman.

Councillors T D Alban, L A Besley, Mrs M L Beuttell, G J Bull, S Bywater, B S Chapman, J R Clarke, Mrs S Conboy, J C Cooper-Marsh, S J Corney, S J Criswell, Miss R D'Souza, D B Dew, Mrs A Dickinson, R Fuller, I D Gardener, Dr P L R Gaskin, J A Gray, K P Gulson, M Haines, M J Humphrey, Mrs M Kadewere, P Kadewere, D J Mead, J P Morris, J Neish, J M Palmer, K I Prentice, A Roberts, T D Sanderson, C Smith, Mrs S Smith, D Terry, D M Tysoe, S Wakeford, D J Wells, R J West and Mrs S R Wilson.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors B S Banks, S M Burton, E R Butler, D A Giles, Mrs S A Giles, M S Grice, Mrs P A Jordan, D N Keane, C J Maslen, B M Pitt and R G Tuplin.

33 PRAYER

Reverend Mark Amey of All Saints Parish Church, St Ives opened the meeting with a prayer.

34 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 21st July 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

36 CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Council noted those engagements attended by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman since the last meeting (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

The Chairman referred to the recent death of Councillor Trish Shrapnel who sadly passed away in September 2021 following a short illness. Members stood and observed a minute's silence in her memory. Following which the Chairman presented to Members the details of the service that Councillor Ms Shrapnel had made to the District Council following her election in October 2009 until 2011 and re-election in 2018 as a dedicated ward member and champion for Huntingdon.

Councillor Mrs S J Conboy, Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group paid tribute to Councillor Ms Shrapnel as a passionate councillor who cared about the residents she served in Huntingdon and Godmanchester and beyond. Councillor Mrs Conboy also reported that she had managed to convey to Councillor Shrapnel that Council had unanimously agreed to the extension of six-month rule of her non-attendance at meetings that was received well.

Councillor T D Sanderson echoed the sentiments of Councillor Mrs Conboy and remembered Councillor Ms Shrapnel as a good friend and also Member of Huntingdon Town Council who was always passionate about her community she served.

The Leader, Councillor R Fuller, paid tribute to Councillor Ms Shrapnel as a member who was passionate and always engaging and courteous. She cared intensely for her area and the town she represented and would be missed very much by all those present.

In tribute to Councillor Ms Shrapnel, Councillor P Kadewere praised her role as a community person who represented the community well and as a shared ward councillor for Huntingdon.

The Chairman reported upon his chosen charities for the forthcoming year, namely East Anglia's Children's Hospices, Mind and Macmillan.

37 QUESTIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Arising from a question from Councillor J C Cooper-Marsh on the potential water poverty for residents at St Neots Mobile Home Park with the rising water charges and whether water meters could be installed to assist with the rising costs, the Executive Leader, Councillor R Fuller, explained that he did not accept the narrative reported in the press of such issues. He further explained that there was extensive history and reasoning as to why the pitches were not metered individually and undertook to provide to Councillor Cooper-Marsh the background to this with a briefing that had been shared recently. It was further refuted that the District Council had failed to engage with the residents, with the majority of residents understanding why the option of individual water meters had not been pursued.

Councillor J P Morris referred to the intensifying and irreversible effects of climate change. He made reference to the recommendations to address climate emissions in Cambridgeshire put to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) on 30th June 2021 by the Independent Climate Commission and questioned the Executive Leader's abstention from supporting the recommendations of the Independent Commission at the CPCA Board seeking assurance that producing a Climate Change Strategy was still an urgent priority for this Council.

In response, Councillor Fuller confirmed that although the impact of climate change had been increasing the Council had continued to address this. He referred to the production of the Environment Strategy that was approved in 2007, together with the forthcoming consideration of environmental proposals to support the renewal of Huntingdonshire's Strategy for the environment that will

be considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnership) and Cabinet in October 2021.

Councillor Fuller referred to his rationale for abstention from supporting the recommendations and explained that the recommendations were not feasible in the timescales suggested. The Council had already been taking action on climate change by making progress that was achievable and deliverable within appropriate timeframes.

In response to a question from Councillor T D Sanderson on progress with civil parking enforcement, Ms M L Beuttell, Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment, reported that she would be updating Cabinet Members at an informal meeting the following day but it was moving forward at pace.

38 REORGANISATION OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE ORDER - HOLME

Further to Minute Number 19/62 and following consideration of the item at the meeting of the Corporate Governance Committee held on 14th September 2021, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Councillor P L R Gaskin presented to the Council a report by the Elections and Democratic Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). The report provided an update on progress with the Community Governance Review of Holme Parish Council following a request from the Parish Council to increase its size from 7 to 9 Members.

Members were advised that owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the making of the Reorganisation of Community Governance Order would normally have taken effect from an election to be held in May 2020. Given that all polls had been postponed in May 2020, the Parish Council were consulted with regards to their preferred course of action to implement the increase in membership. Having been informed of the Parish Council's preference to hold an election in May 2022 in the normal cycle of scheduled elections, it was necessary to make a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order to reflect these changes. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that a Reorganisation of Community Governance Order be made in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 for Holme Parish Council to increase the size from 7 to 9 parish councillors to take effect from the scheduled elections in May 2022.

39 APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

With the assistance of a report by the Elections and Democratic Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the legislative duty placed upon the Council to appoint a Section 151 Officer, the Managing Director advised Members that the designation was currently held by the Council's Finance Manager, Mrs C Edwards, who would shortly be leaving the Council's service.

The Executive Leader, Councillor R Fuller, placed on record his gratitude for Mrs Edwards expertise during her time at the Council, in particular her work over the recent difficult financial period with the impact of Covid. Councillor J A Gray, Executive Councillor for Strategic Finance echoed the sentiments expressed by the Executive Leader and thanked Mrs Edwards for her partnership and advice to the Council which had left the Council in a strong financial position. Members wished her well for the future. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that Eric Symons, Interim Finance Manager, be appointed as the Council's Chief Financial Officer/Section 151 Officer on an interim basis commencing on 1st October 2021 for a period of time not exceeding 12 months.

40 CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH COMBINED AUTHORITY - UPDATE

Councillor J Neish, Deputy Executive Leader, presented an update of their activities Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) Board at the meeting he attended on 28th July 2021. In doing so, he reported on the use of £1.88M budget for schemes within Wisbech Access Strategy, £350k of funding for a business case for the Peterborough Station Quarter and an in-principle business case for March Town Centre Regeneration Future High Streets Fund Scheme. The Council noted that work was also being undertaken within the estates of the constituent council's and other public sector bodies in the Combined Authority area to secure office space to meet the CPCA's future office needs.

Councillors and S J Corney and D B Dew provided an update on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Corney explained that little progress had been made on overview and scrutiny but the Committee had been addressing items to scrutinise and was awaiting the development of policies under the leadership of the new Mayor. Councillor Dew reported upon the findings of the scrutiny improvement review published by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and the resulting suggestions for a different operating model of scrutiny in the CPCA setting. It was further noted that the Mayor would be in attendance at their meeting in November 2021.

Members were provided with an update on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Audit and Governance Committee by Councillor G J Bull. Councillor Bull drew attention to the large turnover of new members that had joined the Committee and the focus upon the trading companies formed by the CPCA and risk management.

(Councillor Chapman left the meeting at 7.46pm)

41 OUTCOMES FROM COMMITTEES AND PANELS

A copy of the list of meetings held since the last meeting of the Council held on 21st July 2021 is appended in the Minute Book and Members were advised that any issues or questions could be raised in relation to these meetings.

42 VARIATIONS TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

There were no changes to report.

The meeting ended at 7.47pm.

Chairman