

MINUTES OF COUNCIL

14 JUNE 2023

PRESENT:

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs O'Rourke), Councillors Mrs A'Barrow, Barnett, Mrs Brown, Daly, Douglas, Miss Dumbleton, Edwards, Mrs Garcia, Gillias, Harrington, Mrs Hassell, Karadiar, D Keeling, J Keeling, Lawrence, Lewis, Ms Livesey, Ms Maoudis, Mrs McKenzie, Mistry, Moran, Mrs New, Mrs Parker, Picker, Poole, Rabin, Ms Robbins, Mrs Roberts, Roberts, Mrs Robinson, Roodhouse, Mrs Roodhouse, Sandison, Mrs Sayani, Slinger, Srivastava, Mrs Timms, Ward, Ms Watson-Merret and Willis.

Note: Prior to the business of the meeting, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Poole, addressed all Members present in light of the new political composition of the Council. Councillor Poole and his Cabinet would seek to work collaboratively with Group Leaders and all Councillors to ensure that this Council continues to do the right thing for its residents and businesses.

10. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence from the meeting was received from Councillor Russell.

11. MINUTES

The minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 26 April 2023 and the annual meeting held on 18 May 2023 were approved and signed by the Mayor.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 6(a) of Part 1 – Making of Monks Kirby Neighbourhood Plan – Councillor Gillias (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being a Ward Councillor).

Item 6(a) of Part 1 – Councillors Mrs Hassell and Roodhouse (non-pecuniary interests as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct for Councillors by virtue of being allotment holders in the borough).

13. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) The Mayor informed the meeting that this year marks the 75th anniversary of the Windrush arrivals. The Windrush day takes place on the 22nd of June and honours a generation of Caribbean immigrants who moved to the UK in the late 1940s at the invitation of the British government. It is a chance to celebrate British Caribbean communities and acknowledge the sacrifices and contributions their generation and their descendants have made to British society.

(b) The Mayor reminded Members that the Armed Forces flag ceremony at the Town Hall was on 19 June starting at 10.30am. It was also her Civic Service on 25 June at St Andrew's Church. All Members had received invitations and details for these and the Mayor looked forward to seeing as many Members as possible at both events.

(c) The Mayor announced that Freeman of the Borough and Past Mayor James Shera was recently honoured by the President of Pakistan with an award for services to Pakistan. Our congratulations go to James on this wonderful achievement.

(d) The Mayor had attended many events since taking office including the Bikefest which was a fantastic day. The whole town was buzzing, with lots of great feedback from residents and businesses. Thank you to all of those who made the day such a success.

The Mayor had attended two events organised by Council staff at the Rugby Art Gallery and Museum. The first was an evening of underwater adventure with swashbuckling pirates and magical mermaids. The Mayor had found it wonderful to see so many families enjoying themselves. As she had arrived at the event a young pirate had run towards her waving his plastic sword and demanding her gold!

The second event was the unveiling of the newly refurbished Rugby ball to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the game of Rugby. The Mayor thanked the staff for these fantastic events and for recognising the importance of working in collaboration with local businesses and other stakeholders.

(e) This week, the Mayor launched her official Facebook and Instagram pages which she would use to promote events in Rugby. Next week the Mayor will be launching the new mayoral blog with the aim of promoting the town and encourage residents and visitors to visit the town and support town centre activities and businesses. The Mayor asked everyone to follow the Rugby Mayor on social media and promote our town.

(f) The Mayor had retired from her employment in the NHS today after 42 years of service. Her work colleagues had kindly arranged a collection and had collected £200 which had been donated to the Mayor's charity, Rugby Myton Hospice.

14. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10

(a) Councillor Slinger asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Poole:

“Will the Leader of the Council support flying the flag of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community from the Town Hall during this month of June 2023, which is Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month? Does the Leader agree flying their flag from the Town Hall, as has been done by other Councils, will help show publicly that: we celebrate the GRT as an integral

part of Rugby Borough's community with whom we wish to work more closely; we encourage people to learn about their history; and we assert our condemnation of prejudice or racism against them?"

Councillor Poole, Leader of the Council, provided the following response:

"I am immensely proud of the work of this Council to ensure that our services are accessible to all our communities, and that all our communities feel safe and supported. Until last month I led this work as Chair of the Council's Equality and Diversity Steering Group. As we know the Equality and Diversity Steering Group comprises of Members across all political parties and it is a key forum to provide a lead on all Council E and D matters.

The month of June is Pride month, and we are proud to fly the Pride Flag in support of our LGBTQ+ communities. We fly this flag to assert our condemnation of prejudice against them; but the main reason we fly this flag is based upon the engagement with the LGBTQ+ communities and the subsequent Action Plan taken via the E&D Steering Group in 2019.

The Council has developed a strong and productive relationship with Warwickshire Pride and are committed to the 2019 Action Plan.

As part of the Council's Corporate Objectives, the E and D Steering Group will be moving towards the formulation of an E and D Strategy and a consideration will be the engagement of all communities and the GRT community will be one of them.

I look forward to the E and D Steering Group continuing its work and bringing forward its proposed E and D Strategy for all Members' consideration."

Councillor Slinger then asked the Leader of the Council if he would consider using the next two weeks in June to fly the flag representing the Gypsy, Romani and Traveller community to display that they are an integral part of the community, to encourage people to learn about the GRT community and to condemn racism against them. Councillor Poole agreed to consult with officers and reply to Councillor Slinger in writing.

(b) Councillor Sandison asked the Leader of the Council and Regulation and Safety Portfolio Holder, Councillor Poole:

"Drivers using EV transport have expressed concerns regarding access to on street charging points because of petrol and diesel users blocking access by parking on such points, for example, in Barby Road.

They have been advised that WCC enforcement officers cannot keep these points clear because Traffic Regulation Orders are not designed to restrict on street parking at such points.

We have discussed with officers if EV Charging points can be considered in Rugby Borough Council surface car parks. Can the portfolio holder advise when will we be making progress on this matter and when can residents expect to see such installations installed?”

Councillor Poole, Leader of the Council and Regulation and Safety Portfolio Holder, provided the following response:

“The Council recognises the importance of improving infrastructure to sustainable transport, including electric vehicle charging points across the Council’s estate.

In advance of installing any infrastructure, it is important that the council fully understands the unmet demand, recognising both the cost of installing EV infrastructure and the significant expansion in private, domestic and public provision in recent years.

Officers are currently investigating the feasibility of installing temporary charging points at Newbold Road car park and potentially Railway Terrace car park. In addition to providing charging points within the car parks, their deployment is flexible and would significantly increase our understanding of the unmet demand, therefore ensuring that future investment has the desired impact.

It was anticipated that the installation of the temporary charging points would be possible through year two of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), however initial investigatory works identified that this timescale would be unachievable. The proposal will now be considered as part of the year three UKSPF spending plan. Recommendations regarding the governance of the UKSPF year three spend will be considered by Cabinet on 26 June.

Furthermore, officers are currently working on a parking review which will give members options for the future of car parking in Rugby and that will include EV charging. It is due to be presented to members in the Autumn.”

Councillor Sandison then asked the Leader of the Council what impact there would be on the Council achieving carbon net zero by 2030 if the Council’s main car parks would not have electric vehicle charging points installed until Years 2 and 3 of the UKSPF funding. Councillor Poole would refer Councillor Sandison’s supplementary question to the Town Centre Regeneration Working Group, of which Councillor Sandison is a member.

(c) Councillor Sandison asked the Leader of the Council in his capacity as Regulation and Safety Portfolio Holder, Councillor Poole:

“Members have frequently asked over recent years for enhancements to pedestrian safety in the pedestrian area in High Street, Sheep Street and Market Place. Rugby First is no longer responsible for the on-street market and the opening and closing of the two safety gates is purely voluntary. Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) are the responsibility of the Warwickshire County

Council (WCC) enforcement team.

Family footfall on Sundays has significantly increased but Rugby First Rangers do not work on a Sunday. Community safety is a key issue at this location.

Can the Portfolio Holder investigate and report back if the “duty” to open and close the gates can be switched to WCC enforcement officers to regularise who is responsible to ensure both gates are closed and opened in line with the TROs for the locality and enforcement action taken where appropriate?”

Councillor Poole, Leader of the Council and Regulation and Safety Portfolio Holder, provided the following response:

“Thank you to Cllr Sandison for raising this issue. As you are aware the improvement of the town centre is a council priority and safety of visitors is a key part of that.

Our officers are already working with Warwickshire County Council on improving safety in the pedestrianised area, therefore, I will direct officers to contact Warwickshire County Council to ask them about opening and closing of the gates and will report back in writing to Members.

The Council’s Town Centre Regeneration Strategy seeks to improve the public realm across the town centre and to create pleasant and safe environments which visitors can enjoy. Work on a public realm masterplan is currently being undertaken which will identify and design individual schemes which will be considered by the Town Centre Regeneration Working Group. An option which is in the early stages of discussion is the potential use of UKSPF or other funding for rising bollards that can be remotely controlled, and which can also be used for additional safety and protection.”

Councillor Sandison emphasised that the gates were not being closed at all on Sundays and asked that this be carried out by qualified enforcement officers who were covered by TROs. The Leader of the Council agreed to look into this matter.

15. REPORT OF CABINET – 5 JUNE 2023

(1) Making of Monks Kirby Neighbourhood Plan

Councillor Picker moved the report of Cabinet dated 5 June 2023 relating to the making of Monks Kirby Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Moran moved and Councillor Mrs Robinson seconded the following amendment (amendment in italics):

“IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT -

(1) the Monks Kirby Neighbourhood Plan be made in accordance with section 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended);

(2) the decision statement required under Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) be approved (draft statement included in Appendix 2);

(3) both the Monks Kirby Neighbourhood Plan and the decision statement be published on the Council’s website, and any required notifications issued; and

(4) delegated authority be granted to the Chief Officer for Growth and Investment to write to Monks Kirby Parish Council to ensure lettings in respect of allotment land are made to the residents of the Parish of Monks Kirby as per its statutory obligations.”

Councillor Roodhouse then moved and Councillor Sandison then seconded the friendly amendment below, which was accepted by Councillors Moran and Mrs Robinson.

“IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT -

(1) the Monks Kirby Neighbourhood Plan be made in accordance with section 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended);

(2) the decision statement required under Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) be approved (draft statement included in Appendix 2);

(3) both the Monks Kirby Neighbourhood Plan and the decision statement be published on the Council’s website, and any required notifications issued; and

(4) delegated authority be granted to the Chief Officer for Growth and Investment to write to Monks Kirby Parish Council to ensure lettings in respect of allotment land are made to the residents of the Borough as per its statutory obligations.”

Further to debate, the Mayor put the friendly amendment to the vote and declared it carried.

The Mayor then put the substantive motion to the vote and declared it carried.

RESOLVED THAT -

(1) the Monks Kirby Neighbourhood Plan be made in accordance with section 38A(4)(a) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended);

(2) the decision statement required under Regulation 19 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) be approved (draft statement included in Appendix 2);

(3) both the Monks Kirby Neighbourhood Plan and the decision statement be published on the Council's website, and any required notifications issued; and

(4) delegated authority be granted to the Chief Officer for Growth and Investment to write to Monks Kirby Parish Council to ensure lettings in respect of allotment land are made to the residents of the Borough as per its statutory obligations.

16. NOTICES OF MOTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 11

There were no motions on notice to consider.

17. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

18. COMMON SEAL

It was moved by the Mayor, seconded by the Deputy Mayor and

RESOLVED THAT - the Common Seal be affixed to the various orders, deeds and documents to be made or entered into for carrying into effect the several decisions, matters and things approved by the Council and more particularly set out in the reports adopted at this meeting.

19. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC UNDER SECTION 100(A)(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

RESOLVED THAT - under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of information defined in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

20. PRIVATE REPORT OF OFFICERS

(a) Environmental Health and Community Safety Restructure

Council considered the private report of the Chief Officer – Regulation and Safety (Part 2 – agenda item 1(a)) concerning a restructure of the Environmental Health and Community Safety Restructure team.

Councillor Poole moved and Councillor Picker seconded the recommendation as detailed in the report.

Councillor Roodhouse moved and Councillor Mrs New seconded an amendment from the Liberal Democrat Group which had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting.

Councillor Karadiar then moved and Councillor Mistry seconded a friendly amendment which had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting. Councillors Roodhouse and Mrs New accepted the friendly amendment.

Further to debate, the Mayor put the friendly amendment to the vote and declared it carried.

Councillor Poole then moved and Councillor Picker seconded an amendment to the substantive motion which had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting.

The Mayor put the amendment to the vote and declared it lost.

The Mayor then put the substantive motion to the vote and declared it carried.

RESOLVED THAT – to ensure that we maintain the current level of Community Wardens staffing level -

- (1) the proposed amended structure for the Environmental Health and Community Safety Teams as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be approved subject to the amendment to the community Warden from 7.5 FTE to 8 FTE;
- (2) recommendation 2 as set out in the report be deleted; and
- (3) following a recent report by Warwickshire County Council's Business intelligence showing an upward trend in the crimes in 2021 and 2022, a feasibility study be undertaken to make an evidence-based decision on the future direction of the Environmental Health and Community Safety Teams.

MAYOR