

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL held at the Guildhall
Portsmouth on Tuesday, 15 November 2016 at 2.00 pm

Council Members Present

The Right Worshipful The Lord Mayor
Councillor David Fuller (in the Chair)

Councillors

Ken Ellcome	Leo Madden
Dave Ashmore	Hugh Mason
Simon Boshier	Lee Mason
Jennie Brent	Stephen Morgan
Ryan Brent	Gemma New
Yahiya Chowdhury	Robert New
Alicia Denny	Steve Pitt
Ben Dowling	Stuart Potter
John Ferrett	Will Purvis
Jim Fleming	Darren Sanders
Colin Galloway	Lynne Stagg
Paul Godier	Luke Stubbs
Scott Harris	Linda Symes
Steve Hastings	David Tompkins
Hannah Hockaday	Gerald Vernon-Jackson CBE
Suzy Horton	Steve Wemyss
Lee Hunt	Matthew Winnington
Frank Jonas	Neill Young
Donna Jones	Rob Wood
Ian Lyon	Tom Wood

81. Declarations of Interests under Standing Order 13(2)(b)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

82. Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 11 October 2016

It was

Proposed by Councillor Donna Jones
Seconded by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson

That the minutes of the ordinary council meeting held on 11 October 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

83. Communications and Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Julie Bird.

The Lord Mayor gave detailed information concerning filming in the chamber advising that notices had been displayed on the walls concerning the council's rules which strictly prohibit the filming, photographing, or recording of members of the public unless they are addressing the meeting and only then if they do not actively object. Filming from gallery to gallery is also prohibited. The Lord Mayor then gave details of the evacuation procedure and reminded everyone that there are building evacuation signs displayed both inside in the public galleries and in the chamber itself.

84. Save the Animals and Birds at Victoria Park - Petition

The lead petitioner, Mrs Margaret Foster presented the petition as set out on the agenda. The City Solicitor thanked Mrs Foster for her presentation. The Lord Mayor then advised that it was proposed that standing orders be waived in order to allow Mrs Foster to read out the deputation from Mrs Patterson and this was agreed. Mrs Foster then read out the deputation on behalf of Mrs Patterson.

Mr Les Cummings was then invited to make his deputation which he then did.

It was

Proposed by Councillor Donna Jones
Seconded by Councillor Luke Stubbs

That the administration's petition response as circulated in the chamber be approved.

As an amendment it was

Proposed by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson
Seconded by Councillor Hugh Mason

That the following words be added to the administration's response.

"The council asks the Leader of the Council to reconsider her decision to keep the section on page 13 of the Victoria Park Action Plan which is titled "Aviary Removal" and report back to full council."

Following debate the amendment standing in the name of Councillor Vernon-Jackson was put to the vote. This was LOST.

Upon the petition response standing in the name of Councillor Donna Jones being put to the vote, this was CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the administration's petition response as set out below be approved.

"We have seen a spate of petitions being created recently for the attention of the City Council, which we have had no sight of. So to be presented with a petition today originating from the Portsmouth Liberal Democrats and its activists provides a small level of reassurance.

For the official record of this meeting, this city council and its Executive has no plans or proposals, none what so ever, and never has had any plans to remove birds or animals from Victoria Park. I will state that again for the record. We have never had any plans to remove any birds or animals from Victoria Park. Disappointingly the one thing this petition has created is confusion and apprehension needlessly amongst the public in Portsmouth which is deeply regrettable.

As a consequence of the submission of this petition, we took the time to check back through council minutes, including those passed by the previous Liberal Democrat administration and we can see no agreed plan or proposal to remove birds or animals from Victoria Park. We have also taken the liberty of checking with the Parks Manager and there is simply no truth in this.

The Lead petitioner would do well to note that at both of the relevant PRED decision meetings in the last 5 months, we stated categorically, for the minutes and as a record of fact that the animals and the birds would NOT BE removed from the park.

We are delighted to confirm that in the true essence of public engagement something this Conservative administration is absolutely committed to, we have recently concluded a full public consultation on the future of Victoria park. One of those options included moving the aviary and animals to one side of the park, offering animals a quiet shelter in the evenings. The Park is increasingly being used for more events and with some 2700 students moving into living accommodation in the area surrounding the Park, the best living conditions for the animals and birds in our care is paramount. This is a top priority.

So in conclusion, we are committed to making Victoria Park a space that can be enjoyed by all and to ensuring that the birds and animals remain in the park in the best location to offer them peace as the parks use grows."

85. Deputations from the Public under Standing Order No 24 (excluding item 4)

The City Solicitor advised that there were two deputation requests in respect of agenda item 10(c) and one deputation request on item 10(d). Mrs Paula Riches and Ms Sue Gillard made deputations in respect of agenda item 10(c) - Off The Record.

Mr Ross Campbell then gave a deputation in respect of agenda item 10(d) concerning an application by UK Oil and Gas (UKOG) for further development of the oil and gas site at Markwell's Wood, near Rowlands Castle.

The Lord Mayor thanked all those who made deputations.

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86. Questions from the Public under Standing Order 25

There were no questions from members of the public.

87. Appointments

There were no appointments.

88. Urgent Business - To receive and consider any urgent and important business from Members of the Cabinet in accordance with Standing Order No 26

There was no urgent business.

89. Recommendation from the Cabinet Meeting held on 10 November 2016

Minute 56 - Council Tax Support Scheme (known nationally as Council Tax Reduction Scheme)

This was opposed.

It was

Proposed by Councillor Donna Jones
Seconded by Councillor Luke Stubbs

That

- i. The results of the public consultation on the Council Tax Scheme are noted.
- ii. To implement a revised Council Tax Support Scheme for Portsmouth from 1st April 2017, with the following key features:
 - a) To introduce a maximum level of support for all working age applicants to 80%
 - b) To reduce the capital limit from the existing £16,000 to £6,000
 - c) To restrict the maximum level of Council Tax Reduction payable to the equivalent of a Band C
 - d) To set a minimum level of support at £2 per week
 - e) *To bring the working age Council Tax Scheme in line with Housing Benefit changes proposed by Central Government

*note this feature will be implemented from 1st April 2017 or whenever the relevant Government Statutory Instrument/Regulation is enacted

- iii. A Hardship Fund of £250k to be provided for 2017/18, subject to annual review, to give support to households in financial difficulty due to a reduction in the Council Tax Support they receive.

Councillor Hugh Mason confirmed that no amendment was proposed but the minute was opposed in order to debate the matter. Following debate upon the recommendations from Cabinet being put to the vote this was CARRIED.

RESOLVED that

- i. The results of the public consultation on the Council Tax Scheme are noted.
- ii. To implement a revised Council Tax Support Scheme for Portsmouth from 1st April 2017, with the following key features:
 - b) To introduce a maximum level of support for all working age applicants to 80%
 - c) To reduce the capital limit from the existing £16,000 to £6,000
 - d) To restrict the maximum level of Council Tax Reduction payable to the equivalent of a Band C
 - e) To set a minimum level of support at £2 per week
 - f) *To bring the working age Council Tax Scheme in line with Housing Benefit changes proposed by Central Government

*note this feature will be implemented from 1st April 2017 or whenever the relevant Government Statutory Instrument/Regulation is enacted
- iii. A Hardship Fund of £250k to be provided for 2017/18, subject to annual review, to give support to households in financial difficulty due to a reduction in the Council Tax Support they receive.

Council adjourned at 5.00 pm.
Council resumed at 5.15 pm.

90. Notices of Motion

The Lord Mayor advised that there were five notices of motion before council today.

(a) Public Involvement in Decision Making

It was

Proposed by Councillor Suzy Horton
Seconded by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson

That Notice of Motion a) as set out on the agenda be debated today.

Upon being put to the vote this was CARRIED.

It was

Proposed by Councillor Suzy Horton
Seconded by Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson

That notice of motion (a) as set out on the agenda be adopted.

As an amendment it was

Proposed by Councillor Luke Stubbs
Seconded by Councillor Gemma New

"In second sentence, add the word "serious" after "in light of" and

To add the words after "members of the public"

", in particular, over the last 12 years from Mr Les Cummings and "Annie" a vulnerable resident who sought help from this council, and also in light of'

Close the bracket after "Committee" and delete the words "in the first instance), and to ask for a cross party governance review from the LGA" .

Delete the words "also to" in the last sentence."

Following debate upon the amendment standing in the name of Councillor Stubbs being put to the vote, this was CARRIED.
Upon the substantive notice of motion including Councillor Stubbs' amendment being put to the vote this was CARRIED.

RESOLVED that Notice of Motion a) as amended and set out below be adopted

"The City Council actively encourages members of the public to be involved in decision making at many levels including at Full Council meetings. In light of serious concerns raised from members of the public, in particular, over the last 12 years from Mr Les Cummings and "Annie" a vulnerable resident who sought help from this council, and also in light of the experiences of some residents, this Council asks the City Solicitor to initiate a cross party review of standing orders (to be reported to the Governance and Audit and Standards Committee) to see how the actions and procedures of the Council can be improved to encourage public participation in council decision making. If this should result in any suggestion for constitutional change these be reported to Governance and Audit and Standards Committee for consideration."

It was

Proposed by Councillor Neill Young
Seconded by Councillor Donna Jones

That the order on the agenda paper be varied in order to allow notice of motion (c) and notice of motion (d) to be heard next. On being put to the vote this was CARRIED.

The order of the meeting was varied as agreed.

(c) Off The Record

It was

Proposed by Councillor Lynne Stagg
Seconded by Councillor Hugh Mason

That this matter be debated today.

Upon being put to the vote this was CARRIED.

It was

Proposed by Councillor Lynne Stagg
Seconded by Councillor Hugh Mason

That notice of motion (c) as set out on the agenda be adopted.

As an amendment it was

Proposed by Councillor Steve Wemyss
Seconded by Councillor Frank Jonas

In paragraph 1 to replace
"by" in the first sentence with "of"

In Paragraph 1 to replace
" a lack of local funding" with " their failure to win the Futures in Mind contract from Portsmouth CCG."

In Paragraph 1 to replace
", showing a worrying trend of decreasing services for young people in the city." with " but welcomes the replacement of these services by a conglomerate of mental health and counselling organisations, including Relate."

To delete all after "Council" of Paragraph 2 and replace with
" also notes that the grants by the previous Liberal Democrat administration to Off The Record dropped from £32,000 a year to an average of only £4000 a year for their last four years in office. Yet this administration of the City Council has given support to the value of

£6500 a year in the last two years and has gone out of its way to be helpful to Off The Record. It is, even now, trying to help it find suitable alternative accommodation that will match its new circumstances but will still allow it to continue to provide a service.

To delete all of paragraph 3 and replace with
Off The Record are applauded by this City Council for the help they have provided to young people in this City over the years and they are invited, once again, to submit a bid to the City Council's £475k Public Sector Challenge Fund."

Following debate upon the amendment standing in the name of Councillor Steve Wemyss being put to the vote this was CARRIED. Upon the substantive notice of motion incorporating the amendment being put to the vote this was CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the following Notice of Motion as amended and set out below be adopted

"Council is disappointed by the recent announcement of Off The Record to cease their free 1-1 counselling service for young people in Portsmouth due to their failure to win the Futures in Mind contract from Portsmouth CCG. Council also notes the recent closure of the Portsmouth Counselling Service but welcomes the replacement of these services by a conglomerate of mental health and counselling organisations, including Relate.

Council also notes that the grants by the previous Liberal Democrat administration to Off The Record dropped from £32,000 a year to an average of only £4000 a year for their last four years in office. Yet this administration of the City Council has given support to the value of £6500 a year in the last two years and has gone out of its way to be helpful to Off The Record. It is, even now, trying to help it find suitable alternative accommodation that will match its new circumstances but will still allow it to continue to provide a service.

Off The Record are applauded by this City Council for the help they have provided to young people in this City over the years and they are invited, once again, to submit a bid to the City Council's £475k Public Sector Challenge Fund."

- (d) Application (by UK Oil and Gas (UKOG)) for further development of the Oil and Gas Site at Markwell's Wood, near Rowlands Castle**

It was

Proposed by Councillor Hugh Mason
Seconded by Councillor David Ashmore

That this notice of motion be debated today.

Upon being put to the vote this was CARRIED.

It was

Proposed by Councillor Hugh Mason
Seconded by Councillor David Ashmore

That notice of motion (d) as set out on the agenda be adopted.

As an amendment it was

Proposed by Councillor Colin Galloway
Seconded by Councillor Alicia Denny

To replace final paragraph with

"This Council requests the Chief Executive to write to Southdowns National Park Authority and to both Members of Parliament, also apprising the MPs for Havant and Chichester that such exploratory drilling or acid fracking has an unacceptable risk of potentially contaminating our water supply and surrounding conurbations and as such this Council very strongly objects to the UKOG application.

Councillor Galloway agreed to remove the words "exploratory" and "or acid fracking" and on that basis Councillor Hugh Mason as proposer of the original motion agreed to subsume the amendment into his original motion. Upon the original notice of motion incorporating the amendment being put to the vote this was unanimously CARRIED.

RESOLVED that the following Notice of Motion be adopted

"Council notes the Portsmouth Water Company's objection to the application (by UK Oil and GAS (UKOG) for further development of the oil and gas site at Markwell's Wood, near Rowlands Castle, pending a fuller Groundwater Risk Assessment of any possible impact on the water supply source for the City of Portsmouth.

Council supports this precautionary approach and would be greatly concerned were planning permission to be given without the Portsmouth Water Company being entirely satisfied that the development poses no risk to the quality of water supply to the City. Consequently this Council believes the applicant should be required to take all necessary steps to ensure the continued security of pure water from its aquifers in the South Downs

This Council requests the Chief Executive to write to Southdowns National Park Authority and to both Members of Parliament also apprising the MPs for Havant and Chichester that such drilling has an unacceptable risk of potentially contaminating our water supply and surrounding conurbations and as such this Council very strongly objects to the UKOG application."

(b) The Bus Services Bill

In light of updated information, this motion was not moved.

(e) Portsmouth Royal Mail delivery office moving to Voyager Park

It was

Proposed by Councillor Alicia Denny
Seconded by Councillor Stephen Morgan

That this notice of motion be debated today.

Upon being put to the vote this was CARRIED.

It was

Proposed by Councillor Alicia Denny
Seconded by Councillor Stephen Morgan

That notice of motion (e) as set out on the agenda be adopted.

During debate the Leader of the Council pledged to work with Royal Mail to make public buildings available on a temporary basis as collection points.

Upon being put to the vote notice of motion (e) as set out on the agenda was CARRIED.

RESOLVED that as councillors will be aware, Royal Mail has closed its enquiry and delivery offices at Slindon Street in the centre of the city and Northern Road, Cosham, and moved operations to Voyager Park, close to Eastern Road, a change which has caused some concern to residents who need to collect parcels which have not been delivered to them.

This will have particular impact on people without access to cars across the postcode areas PO1 to PO6 since, unlike Slindon Street and Northern Road, Voyager Park has no nearby bus service. Therefore, this Council asks the Executive Member for Traffic and Transportation to write to Stagecoach bus company and request that a certain number of 21 service journeys serving Anchorage Park via Copnor Road be diverted to use Williams Road and Quartremaine Road instead, being the nearest main roads to Voyager Park.

Also, while fully acknowledging that the Royal Mail is a private business, the Leader of the council is asked to write to an appropriate manager asking if a temporary Royal Mail parcel collection facility can be set up in the centre of the city during the forthcoming festive period as a helpful service to those adjusting to this change of premises.

91. Questions from Members under Standing Order No 17

The Lord Mayor advised that there were three questions before council.

Question No 1 was from Councillor Stuart Potter

Parking Permit charges.

Explain in detail the reasoning for the increase in charges for the third parking permit and whether the financial effects it will have on residents already struggling to balance their budgets have been considered?

This and a supplementary question were answered by the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation, Councillor Fleming.

Question No 2 was from Councillor Stephen Morgan to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Safety, Councillor Rob New.

"The Labour Group is concerned by reports that violent crime in Portsmouth is increasing. Not only has there been a 49% increase in recorded violent crime overall compared with a national average rise of 27% in the last year, but it is at the highest level in the city for almost ten years.

Could the Cabinet Member assure Full Council that the administration is doing everything it can to tackle this rise in crime and address the concerns of the communities we serve?"

This and supplementary questions were answered by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Safety.

Question No 3 was from Councillor Yahiya Chowdhury to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Donna Jones

"It is disappointing to learn that the Dunsbury Hill Farm development and much needed access road is delayed.

It is vital that we prioritise bringing into use development sites like Dunsbury Hill Farm, so that we can secure business investment to create much needed new jobs for the people of Portsmouth.

Could the Leader tell us what action is being taken to overcome these delays. Can I also ask the Leader of the Council to prioritise fixing whatever issues are slowing down this vital spending?"

This and a supplementary question were answered by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Donna Jones.

The meeting concluded at 9.15 pm.

Lord Mayor