

## **TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, duly convened and held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1RS, at 6.30 pm on Wednesday, 26 April 2017

### **PRESENT:**

**The Mayor Councillor David Neve (Chairman)**

**Councillors Backhouse, Dr Basu, Bland, Bulman, Chapelard, Mrs Cobbold, Dawlings, Elliott, Gray, Dr Hall, Hamilton, Hannam, Heasman, Hill, Hills, Horwood, Huggett, Jamil, Jukes, Lewis-Grey, Lidstone, Mackonochie, March, McDermott, Moore, Munn, Noakes, Nuttall, Oakford, Ms Palmer, Podbury, Rankin, Reilly, Simmons, Sloan, Mrs Soyke (Vice-Chairman), Stanyer, Stewart, Mrs Thomas, Uddin, Weatherly, Williams and Woodward**

**IN ATTENDANCE:** William Benson (Chief Executive), Keith Trowell (Senior Lawyer and Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Mike McGeary (Democratic Services Officer)

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

FC75/16 Apologies for absence were reported from Councillors Barrington-King, Hastie, Holden and Scholes.

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

FC76/16 There were no declarations of interest made, within the provisions of the Code of Conduct for Members.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

FC77/16 The Mayor advised that a list of events which he had attended since the last meeting of the Full Council had been tabled, for members' information. He added that the list included a number of forthcoming events, up until the date of the Annual General Meeting, i.e. 24 May.

There were no announcements made by the Leader of the Council, or by Cabinet members or by the Chief Executive.

### **THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

FC78/16 The minutes of the Full Council meeting dated 22 February 2017 were submitted.

The following corrections were made:

The Civic Complex Project (minute FC70/16) – page 14

Councillor Moore asked that the word “completely” be inserted in between “to” and “de-risk”, in the seventh paragraph, to reflect her actual wording more accurately.

Councillor Reilly said that he had voted against the amendment and thus his name needed to be added to the list of dissenters at the top of page 14.

Councillor Stewart referred to the sixth paragraph on this page. She said that she had been referring to a phrase used by the Director of Finance and

Corporate Services when she said “no appetite for cuts” and asked that the minutes be accordingly amended.

The Chief Executive asked that, if members had similar issues to raise in the future, it would be helpful if these could be discussed with the committee administrator in advance, in order that the precise details could be checked.

**RESOLVED** – That, with the above three amendments, the minutes of the meeting dated 22 February 2017 be approved as a correct record.

## **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

FC79/16 The Mayor advised that one question had been submitted by a member of the public under Council Procedure Rule 8, as follows:

### **Question from Mr Brian Ransley**

“Can the Portfolio Holder for Finance provide a Business Plan, with cash-flow projections for the full period of the £72m loan, showing that the Civic Centre Development Project is financially viable?”

### **Reply from Councillor Jukes (in the absence of Councillor Barrington-King)**

“Thank you for the question Mr Ransley.

As all current members are aware we are still in RIBA Stage 3 (developed design) and following the completion of this stage we will bring forward a report to Full Council in the Autumn, as planned.

This will include a funding strategy for elected members to weigh up the benefits and risks of this project before progressing any further.”

Mr Ransley was asked if he had a supplementary question, arising from the reply he had received. He asked if the Leader of the Council felt that, before the Council committed to a sum of this magnitude, it made more sense to establish the financial viability of the project first, especially as he understood that the Conservative Group had voted against approval of the scheme.

Councillor Jukes said that, while some members of the Conservative Group wished to defer a decision on the project, that had not been the majority opinion. He added that, to be able to make a fully-informed decision on this scheme, it was necessary to expend further sums on consultants’ reports – for which a budget existed. Councillor Jukes stressed that, for the authority to decide whether to proceed with this important scheme and to make a firm financial commitment, the provision of consultants’ evidence-based advice was an absolutely essential requirement.

Councillor Jukes extended an offer to Mr Ransley to view all of the RIBA Stage 1 and 2 documents that had been commissioned by the Council, if he would find that helpful.

## **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

FC80/16 The Mayor advised that there had been no questions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 10.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PLAN

FC81/16 The Mayor advised that, if members had any questions relating to the CCTV element of community safety, it should be remembered that the proposed new contract was not due to begin until 2018.

Councillor Weatherly, Portfolio-holder for Communities and Wellbeing, moved that the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2017/18 be approved. She explained how the Plan set out how the Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Partnership would address local priorities to reduce crime and disorder across the Borough. Councillor Weatherly added that the Partnership Plan had been developed after full consultation with a range of partners; she said it had also been designed to continue to complement and support the delivery of the Kent Police and Crime Plan, published by the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

The motion to approve the Plan was seconded by Councillor Jukes, who reserved his right to speak on the matter.

There were no speakers on this proposal and members unanimously voted to approve the Plan.

**RESOLVED** – That the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2017/18 be approved.

## APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR 2017/2018

FC82/16 Councillor Jukes proposed, and Councillor McDermott seconded, that Councillor Len Horwood be appointed as Deputy Mayor for 2017/18.

Councillor Jukes described Councillor Horwood's experience, achievements and suitability for the role; Councillor McDermott added that Councillor Horwood fully deserved this opportunity.

Councillor Hills voiced his full support for Councillor Horwood and underlined how deserving he was of the appointment.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** – That Councillor Len Horwood be appointed as Deputy Mayor for 2017/18.

## TO RECORD THE COUNCIL'S APPRECIATION FOR THE MAYOR

FC83/16 The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs Soyke, assumed the chair for this item. She invited the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jukes, to speak.

Councillor Jukes wished to place on record his grateful thanks to Councillor David Neve, for what he had achieved as Mayor for 2016/17 for the benefit of residents and businesses in the Borough. He described the Mayoral year as having been colourful and eventful and the Mayor as having been a great ambassador for the Council. Councillor Jukes also said how grateful the Council was for the support provided by the Mayoress, Mrs Jill Neve. Together, he added, they had also achieved great success for Beat, their selected 'beating eating disorders' charity.

On behalf of the Council, Councillor Jukes thanked the Mayor for his excellent

year of office.

Councillors Hill and Chapelard, on behalf of their respective political groups, also thanked the Mayor for his hard work and commitment and expressed their grateful thanks to the Mayoress. Councillor Hill said she had enjoyed the sense of adventure which the Mayor had brought to his year; Councillor Chapelard said he had appreciated how Councillor Neve had paid great attention to understanding the people behind the many organisations he had come into contact with and how he had also made the office of Mayor more approachable.

Councillor Hills acknowledged the significant work the Mayor and the Mayoress had undertaken in support of their charity. He presented an autographed boxing glove signed by the former light welterweight and welterweight world champion, Ricky Hatton, to be auctioned at the Mayor's end-of-year dinner dance that week.

In response, Councillor Neve thanked councillors for their kind words, adding that he had been very grateful for the support he had received from the Mayoral officer team. Councillor Neve reminded councillors that he would greatly appreciate their presence at the end-of-year dinner dance, taking place that week.

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY** – That the Borough Council formally records its appreciation of the valuable services rendered by the Mayor and the assistance given to him by the Mayoress during his period of office.

#### **COMMON SEAL OF THE COUNCIL**

FC84/16      **RESOLVED** – That the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to any contract, minute, notice or other document arising out of the minutes or pursuant to any delegation, authority or power conferred by the Council.

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

FC85/16      It was noted that the next meeting of the Full Council would be the Annual Meeting, taking place on Wednesday 24 May at 10am.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 7.02 pm.