

COUNCIL
21 APRIL 2021
7.30 - 8.50 PM



Present:

The Mayor (Councillor Ms Merry), Councillors Gbadebo (Deputy Mayor), Allen, Atkinson, Bhandari, Dr Barnard, Bettison OBE, D Birch, Mrs Birch, Brossard, Brown, Brunel-Walker, Dudley, Finch, Ms Gaw, Mrs L Gibson, MJ Gibson, Green, Mrs Hamilton, Harrison, Mrs Hayes MBE, Ms Hayes, Heydon, Mrs Ingham, Kennedy, Kirke, Leake, Mrs McKenzie, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Mrs Mattick, Mossom, Neil, Parker, Porter, Skinner, Temperton, Turrell, Virgo and Wade

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Angell and Tullett

53. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Councillor Birch made a point of personal explanation to correct a statement he made at the Executive meeting on 9 February 2021 which was referred to during the Council meeting on 24 February 2021. He explained that he should have said 'some' and not 'all' and apologised for any offence that may have been caused. Councillor Temperton confirmed that she accepted the correction.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meetings held on 24 February and 16 March 2021 be approved, and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

54. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Brunel-Walker and Heydon declared disclosable pecuniary interests in item 5 in relation to the Site Development Plan for Market Street by virtue of being representatives on the Bracknell Forest Cambium Partnership Board and therefore left the meeting before commencement of that part of the item.

55. Mayor's Announcements

HRH The Queen's Birthday

The Mayor sent birthday wishes to HRH The Queen on her 95th birthday.

Mayor's Charity

The Mayor announced that her online charity auction had been moved to commence on 21 June 2021. The event would be in aid of her two military charities: Soldiers Sailors Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA Berkshire) and the British Forces Foundation (BFF). She encouraged members present to consider pledging an item to be included or bidding for something to help support the charities.

Civic events across the borough

The Mayor updated the meeting on a number of events she had attended including:

- meeting Year 2 of Holly Spring School over Zoom to discuss the role of the Mayor, civic duties and Bracknell
- celebrating World Book Day with Year 6 of Binfield Primary School with Councillor Leake
- assisting a member of the Brownies with a badge-earning project to write about her role as Mayor
- spectating at an online Karate session
- attending the High Sheriff Award Ceremony which recognised those organisations making such as difference to their communities
- the swearing in of the High Sheriff, Mr Willie-Hartley Russell MVO DL
- delivering a formal welcome to new citizens at remote Citizenship Ceremonies
- attending the Annual Crowthorne Parish Meeting

Reopening of the Lexicon

The Mayor reported that she had the pleasure of recording a short video in the Lexicon to encourage residents to support their local businesses and advise shoppers of the arrangements for the re-opening of non-essential shops.

Handprint tree

The Mayor and her granddaughter took part in the Lexicon's community art project to grow its own special Handprint tree in Princess Square which would be in place until 6 June 2021. Members present were encouraged to take part.

HRH Prince Philip

The Mayor advised the meeting that she had the privilege of attending a Civic Service for HRH the Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh at Christ Church Cathedral Oxford. She reflected that this small gathering, to comply with Covid regulations, was a fitting and moving tribute to His Royal Highness and asked the meeting to join her in a minute's reflection.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Bettison OBE

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bettison OBE welcomed Grainne Siggins, Executive Director: People to her first full Council meeting at Bracknell Forest Council.

Councillor Kirke, Ward member for Bullbrook

Councillor Kirke was pleased to report that Bracknell Town Football club and SB Group Sport and Education Academy were working together to provide a series of free professional summer sports camps. The covid secure sessions would be available at Ranelagh School every Saturday commencing on 1 May until 28 August offering rugby, futsal and kwick cricket.

56. **Executive Report**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bettison OBE, presented his report on the work of the Executive since that reported at the Council meeting on 24 February 2021. The Executive had met once on 16 March 2021.

The Leader highlighted the following matters that had been considered:

- The following six recommendations were all agreed from the Education, Skills and Growth Overview & Scrutiny Panel Review on Apprenticeships:
 - 1) Work with Apprenticeship pathways providers to ensure young people have best opportunities and outcomes
 - 2) Adopt Apprenticeship policy setting out expectations around pay, terms and conditions
 - 3) Promote Apprenticeships externally and internal with promotional video
 - 4) Review current Apprenticeship web pages
 - 5) Investigate possible mentoring scheme between large and small/medium businesses
 - 6) Develop partnerships across Berkshire to provide support and guidance to businesses to help use apprenticeship levy.

- Three procurement plans were agreed:
 - 1) South Central Independent Fostering Agency Framework
 - 2) MS Team Telephony
 - 3) Core Network

- To allow Council owned facilities at Bracknell Sports & Leisure Centre, Coral Reef and Downshire Golf Course managed by Everyone Active to reopen in line with Government Roadmap the follow support measures were agreed:
 - 1) Management fee break April – June 2021
 - 2) Underwrite 'open-book' losses for April – June 2021
 - 3) Review in light of Roadmap progress after three months

- The Market Street Development Plan was agreed which supports the overarching Joint Venture Business Plan. Within the Plan there would be four blocks with 25% affordable housing throughout:
 - A – 96 flats, 5070 sq ft retail
 - B & C – 87 flats, 6781 sq ft retail
 - D – outline only but predominantly office with retail on ground floor

The report contained recommendations that the Council was asked to resolve in respect of the following matter:

- Site Development Plan for Market Street

Having declared disclosable pecuniary interests Councillors Brunel-Walker and Heydon left the meeting before this element of the item commenced.

On the proposition of Councillor Bettison OBE, Leader of the Council, seconded by Councillor Birch it was

RESOLVED that:

- i) the proposed Site Development Plan for Market Street, including land drawdown where conditions have been met as set out in confidential Annex B in the Executive agenda be approved; and
- ii) the Council's equal share of funding be made available to undertake this development up to a peak requirement of £15.4m.

Councillor Virgo, Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission presented the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2019 - 21. He thanked all officers and councillors for their hard work and diligence in achieving and delivering the work programme in difficult conditions. The Commission and the three Overview and Scrutiny Panels had adapted to the new ways of working in order to continue delivering the work programme which was focused on the Council Plan, its objectives and effective delivery.

On the proposition of Councillor Virgo, Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Commission, and seconded by Councillor Porter, it was

RESOLVED that the 2019 - 21 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission be adopted.

58. **Champions' Annual Report**

The Council received the Champions' Annual Report for 2020 – 21, and thanked the Champions for their work during the pandemic to support residents.

Each Champion was asked if they had anything to add to their submitted report:

- Councillor Atkinson, Commuters' Champion reflected that as the area came out of lockdown he hoped that public transport services returned to standard service and patronage levels resumed, that promises of new trains from railway providers would be delivered and that advice from government regarding a new season ticket structure would be forthcoming to support commuters whose frequency of travel had reduced.
- Councillor Ms Gaw, Older People's Champion reiterated that the focus had been on supporting older people along with the services and facilities that they rely on throughout the pandemic. She highlighted the local business directory which was being developed and the Big Bingo event to be run on 1 October 2021 which is Older Person's Day.
- Councillor Wade, Small Business Champion added that the combined challenges of Covid 19 and Brexit have had a major impact on small businesses. Many non-essential businesses including travel, hospitality, charities, sport and the High Street were still facing further challenges. The range of government grants had saved many organisations and small businesses had shown resilience, high levels of creativeness and innovation as well as adapting to provide on-line sales. He thanked the Executive Director: Resources for his team's work delivering numerous government grant schemes and associated requirements.
- Councillor Bhandari, Large Business Champion reported that the focus of his first report was on looking forward and opportunities for businesses within Bracknell Forest due to the support systems in place.
- Councillor Gibson, Voluntary Sector Champion recognised that the number of volunteers had increased exponentially during the pandemic and he would focus on how to capitalise on this opportunity. He thanked his councillor colleagues for their additional volunteering roles they had undertaken during the past year.

The Council received the Champions' Annual Report for 2020 - 21, and the Mayor thanked the Champions for their work.

59. **Councillor Development Annual Report**

The Council considered the Councillor Development Annual Report which appraised the meeting of the councillor development activities and their outcomes during 2020-21.

Councillor Allen, Chair of the Member Development Charter Steering Group thanked officers for adapting councillor development to be delivered remotely, the new improved format of the report and the Chief Executive for his well-attended regular covid briefings over this period.

On the proposition of Councillor Allen, Chairman of the Member Development Charter Steering Group, seconded by Councillor Wade, it was

RESOLVED that the Member Development Annual Report 2020 - 21 be noted.

60. **Question Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 10**

Councillor Temperton asked Councillor Harrison, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection the following published question:

Despite more and more volunteers regularly picking litter, deserving our thanks and our gratitude, what more can be done to reduce the increase in the amount of litter?

Councillor Harrison replied that he was grateful to all those who were working hard to keep the borough clean and green and thanked the continuing efforts of the Parks and Countryside Rangers Team, the Council's contractor CLL and all those who were taking the time to litter pick voluntarily. He emphasised that although he valued the efforts of the volunteers this was something they should not need to do. He stated that with sufficient evidence litterers would be prosecuted and he welcomed the recent change in the law which allowed the driver of a vehicle to be prosecuted for litter thrown out of that vehicle without the need to prove which person actually threw it.

He advised the meeting that:

- the litter collection programme was under regular review to target areas where litter was reported or observed as an issue because the volume of litter levels being experienced in certain areas was higher than normal
- capacity of bins had been temporarily increased by hanging spare bin bags on the outside
- the council's own parks staff had increased the amount of time spent collecting litter as a temporary measure to cope with the situation
- large capacity wheeled bins had been placed at the most popular picnic areas at South Hill Park with additional clearing each Monday after current weekend use
- communications messaging was aimed at encouraging all park users not to drop litter and to take their litter home if the bins were full
- Litter signage was being updated to prepare for warmer weather and the predicted increase in use of the council's high-quality green spaces.

He concluded by encouraging his fellow Councillors to reinforce these messages amongst their communities to treat our environment with respect.

Councillor Temperton asked a supplementary question whether it would be possible for the bins to be collected more frequently. Councillor Harrison replied that the

refuse collection schedule was not within his portfolio so he would need to discuss that with Councillor Mrs Hayes MBE, Executive Member for the Environment.

61. **Motions Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 11**

At the meeting the mover of the published motion 04/20 altered the wording with the consent of the meeting. Altered Motion 04/2020 was therefore moved by Councillor Temperton and seconded by Councillor Turrell, with the agreement of Councillor Neil, as follows:

I ask the Council to call upon the Executive to work to increase further the numbers of wildflowers natural to our area on our road verges and roundabouts, having due regard for safety of access, the need for clear visibility for road users, and the ongoing maintenance needs of wild flowers, extending the welcome success of the greening projects and biodiversity initiatives of recent years in increasing such wild flora and habitats.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried.

At the meeting the mover of the published motion 05/20 altered the wording with the consent of the meeting. Altered Motion 05/2020 was therefore moved by Councillor Dudley and seconded by Councillor Brown as follows:

That this Council:

- i) Acknowledges that sprinklers and other Automatic Fire Suppression Systems (AFSS) save lives, protect property, reduce the impact of fire on the environment, reduce interruption to business and improve safety for individuals in the community in general and firefighters. In recognising these benefits support the National Fire Chief's Council position on sprinklers by writing to Central Government to express support for the creation of a legal requirement to fit sprinklers or AFSS in buildings where this is the most practical way to deal with fire safety.
- ii) Commits to installation of sprinklers or other AFSS within its own building stock when planning for and constructing new buildings or as a retrofitted solution when undertaking major refurbishments of existing buildings, where an alternative fire safety strategy cannot be achieved.
- iii) Promotes and supports the installation of sprinklers and AFSS for all public and private developments, which must comply with Building Regulations.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried.

MAYOR