

# STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

## COUNCIL MINUTES

**Date: Wednesday 1 October 2008**

**Time: 7.00 p.m.**

**Place: Council Chamber**

**Present:**

Councillors:

Michael Patston, (Mayor), John Lloyd, CC, (Deputy Mayor), Sherma Batson, MBE, CC, Howard Burrell, Monika Cherney-Craw, Laurie Chester, Bob Clark, Dilys Clark, Graham Clark, David Cullen, CC, Michael Downing, CC, James Fraser, Pam Gallagher, John Gardner, Liz Harrington, Richard Henry, Matthew Hurst, Bruce Jackson, Lis Knight, Carol Latif, Mrs Joan Lloyd, Lin Martin-Haugh, Marion Mason, Sue Myson, Margaret Notley, Robin Parker, CC, Jack Pickersgill, Ralph Raynor, Graham Snell, Simon Speller, Pam Stuart, Sharon Taylor, CC, Jeannette Thomas, Brian Underwood, Vickie Warwick and Ann Webb.

Agenda Item:

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**In Attendance:**

Rachel Culley (Youth Council)

**Start/End Time:**

Start Time: 7.00 p.m.

End Time: 9.30 p.m.

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Kissane, Strange and Hollywell.

Councillors Taylor, CC, Chester and Notley declared a Non Prejudicial Interest in item 14, the Symonds Green Association Lottery Application.

Councillor Henry declared a Prejudicial Interest in item 9, Notice of Motions, and indicated he would not be in attendance for the debate as he was a Non-Executive Director of the East and North Herts Primary Health Trust.

Councillor Chester declared a Prejudicial Interest in item 9, Notice of Motions, as she was an employee within the National Health Service. She informed the meeting that she would be leaving the room and not participating in the debate on this item.

### **2 MINUTES - 25 JUNE, 2008**

A revised version of the Minutes of 25 June 2008 was circulated at the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the revised Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 25 June 2008, having been circulated around the Chamber subject to the first bullet point on page 3 being amended to read ' the effect of the west of Stevenage....', be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

### **3 MINUTES - EXTRAORDINARY MEETING - 22 JULY 2008**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Council held on Tuesday 22 July 2008, having been circulated, be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

### **4 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATION**

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the Meeting.

The Mayor then called on the Leader of the Council, Councillor Taylor, CC to say a few words of tribute to Reg Smith, MBE, DL who had passed away in July.

Councillor Taylor, CC described Reg Smith as a fantastic ambassador and an excellent advocate for Stevenage. She also agreed that wherever he worked, either at national, regional, county or local level, he was so widely respected irrespective of class, age, political persuasion and social standing.

The Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Graham Clark and Councillors Parker, Pickersgill and Jackson also spoke in tribute.

The Mayor drew Members' attention to the report circulated around the Chamber that detailed the result of the recent By-Election for the Pin Green Ward. Councillor Jackson was congratulated and welcomed back into the Chamber.

The Mayor then advised the meeting that he had amended the order of business and would take item 11 before item 9.

The Mayor then gave his apologies as he had another engagement and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor John Lloyd, CC, chaired the remainder of the meeting.

### **5 MAIN DEBATE - MAKE STEVENAGE SPARKLE - KEEP THE TOWN LITTER FREE**

The Council received a presentation from Nick Parry, Strategic Director, Stevenage Borough Council.

The Presentation detailed the challenges of the Council in keeping Stevenage clean and tidy. He highlighted the cost to the local residents in clearing up litter within the town and in particular fly tipping.

The Strategic Director suggested a three pronged approach in addressing this anti social activity to include an education programme, extensive publicity and an appropriate level of enforcement.

The Deputy Mayor thanked the Strategic Director for his presentation.

At this juncture, it was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that Standing Order 17 be amended to allow for revised time limits for speakers for the main debate. The mover and seconder of the Motion, together with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition be allowed up to six minutes and everyone else up to three minutes.

Councillor Gardner opened the debate by moving a motion. He advised of a letter received by the Council from a Stevenage resident expressing his appreciation to its employees who keep the streets litter free and collect the rubbish every week.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Burrell.

A full debate ensued with input from the public gallery.

Issues raised during the debate included:

- An open competition inviting the public to invent a device that might encourage people not to leave litter.
- Advising and educating fast food outlets and pubs on their responsibilities for cleaning their surroundings.
- Cleaning times should reflect busier periods or be extended beyond official hours.
- Install good quality bins with lids to prevent overspill of litter.
- Designate a day for environmental cleaning in Stevenage.
- Robust prosecutions especially for fly tipping and the introduction of a fixed penalty for littering in the town centre.
- Publicity campaign to introduce a concept of civic and neighbourly duty.

Councillor Gardner in response thanked everyone for their positive contributions to the main debate. He assured members of the public that their ideas would be taken into account by the Council and for those who asked specific questions during the debate, Officers would respond to them in writing.

The Motion was put to the vote and it was **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Council launches a campaign to make Stevenage 'Sparkle' by working in partnership with local residents, community groups and business and, if necessary, to increase its enforcement activities to improve the cleanliness and therefore the environmental quality of the town.
2. The Council understands the pride felt by the majority of residents and visitors in keeping our town 'Clean and Sparkling' and welcomes the opportunity to work with the community to minimise the amount of Council Tax payers money spent on clearing up litter through the lack of social responsibility of a small minority.

## **6 PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS**

None Received.

## **7 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None Received.

## **8 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S UPDATE**

The Deputy Mayor called upon Councillor Graham Clark, the Leader of the Opposition to raise one matter relevant to the Borough.

The Leader of the Opposition wanted to know why the invitation to the workshop for the Community buildings had been overwhelmingly attended by Members of the Labour Group.

In response, Councillor Myson said the invitation was extended to the members of the working group and Council's representatives on the Community Centres in Stevenage.

The Leader of the Council updated the meeting on the financial situation of the Council and wanted to commend the in-house treasury team for their performance in the year 2007/08. Also she mentioned that, in light of the recent global economic downturn and its impact on the residents of Stevenage, it was important for the Council to be the first point of call, especially with the imminent cases of redundancies and insolvencies.

Councillor Myson updated the meeting about the Anglia in Bloom and Britain in Bloom Awards. She presented the Deputy Mayor with the various plaques and certificates that had been awarded.

Councillor Webb informed the meeting of the recently announced £200 million Mortgage Rescue Scheme. Councillor Webb advised that details of the scheme were presently not available but the scheme offered a number of options for home owners to remain in their property.

Councillor Burrell informed the meeting that five young musicians from Stevenage would be visiting the twin town of Ingelheim in Germany on 19 October 2008 for a music festival. He also advised the meeting of the recent accreditation received by Stevenage Museum for its good works, and of the well attended 'picnics in the park' during the summer which were funded by both the Area Committee and Stevenage Homes Limited.

Councillor Speller advised the meeting that the works to the BTC extension were ahead of schedule. He said the BTC would receive and incubate companies and when necessary assist them to move to permanent sites.

Councillor Mrs Lloyd recommended the meeting to visit the new indoor market cafe which had recently opened. She said that this was a reflection of the vibrancy of the town with its various cuisines. She informed the meeting that the food market was completed on budget and it was anticipated that it would generate some revenue for the Council.

## **9 NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

Councillors Henry and Chester, having declared a prejudicial interest on this item,

left the meeting before the debate commenced.

Councillors Myson and Cullen moved and seconded the Procedural Motion detailed in the agenda. A vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED** that in accordance with standing order 15(f) Council considers the motion on this occasion.

Under the provisions of Standing Order 15, Councillor Myson moved the motion as set out in the agenda. Councillor Cullen seconded the motion.

Following debate it was **RESOLVED**:

1. That this Council note that thanks to investment in the NHS and greater partnership working, progress had been made on reducing health inequalities in Stevenage and that over the next five years, with investment of over £100 million, the Lister Hospital would undergo a phased development that would see the hospital transformed as all specialist acute services serving east and north Hertfordshire were brought together. The health of Stevenage people had also benefited from the national investment that had provided 5000 more GPs and 4000 more practice nurses.
2. That the Council also welcomes the Government's intention to accept the recommendations of the Darzi Review which would make health services in Stevenage more accessible, with proposals that include -
  - the provision of an additional GP health centre in each of the 152 Primary Care Trust Areas, complementing, but not replacing, existing GP provision, and providing a wide range of GP, diagnostic and other services open 12 hours a day all year; and
  - ensuring that at least half of all GP practices offer extended hours in the evenings and/or during weekends.

## **10 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS/PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

Councillor Downing, CC, had submitted a question of the Executive Member (Community, Health and Older People), detailed in the Agenda in accordance with Standing Order 14.

Councillor Myson, Executive Member for Community, Health and Older People gave a detailed response to Councillor Downing.

Councillor Downing asked a supplementary question asking whether Councillor Myson agreed that there was now more involvement of older people in the community when services were being planned. Councillor Myson agreed.

## **11 MATTER REFERRED FROM THE EXECUTIVE - STEVENAGE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2008/2011**

This item was taken immediately following the Mayor's Communications.

The Council considered a recommendation from the Executive concerning the report 'Stevenage Community Safety Partnership Plan 2008/2011'.

The recommendation was moved and seconded and following debate, it was **RESOLVED** that the 'Stevenage Community Safety Partnership Plan 2008/2011 be approved.

## **12 MATTER REFERRED FROM THE EXECUTIVE - TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW 2007/08**

Council considered a recommendation from the Executive concerning the review of progress made towards achieving the objectives in the 2007/08 Treasury Management Strategy.

The recommendation was moved and seconded and following debate, it was **RESOLVED** that the 2007/08 Treasury Management Review be approved.

## **13 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was **RESOLVED** that, under Section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1-7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by SI 2006 No.88

## **14 KEY DECISION TAKEN UNDER THE COUNCILS URGENCY PROCEDURE**

The meeting considered a Part II report for information concerning Symonds Green Association Lottery Application.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.