

## **COUNCIL MINUTES**

Date: Wednesday, 17 October 2018

Time: 7.00pm

Place:

**Present:** Margaret Notley (Mayor), Doug Bainbridge, Sandra Barr, Philip Bibby CC, Lloyd Briscoe, Rob Broom, Jim Brown, Laurie Chester, Michael Downing, John Gardner, Michelle Gardner, Jody Hanafin, Liz Harrington, Roni Hearn, Richard Henry, Jackie Hollywell, Matthew Hurst, Graham Lawrence, John Lloyd, Mrs Joan Lloyd, Lin Martin-Haugh, Andy McGuinness, John Mead, Sarah Mead, Adam Mitchell CC, Sarah-Jane Potter, Ralph Raynor, Graham Snell, Simon Speller, Sharon Taylor OBE CC, Jeannette Thomas and Tom Wren

**Start / End** Start Time: 7.00pm  
**Time:** End Time: 9.00pm

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

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Howard Burrell, Dave Cullen, Jamie Fraser, Lizzy Kelly, Maureen McKay, Robin Parker and Ann Webb.

There were no declarations of interest.

### **2 MINUTES - 25 JULY 2018**

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Council meeting on 25 July 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

### **3 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor announced the sad death of former Mayor and Councillor Alderman Ken Vale.

Councillor Sharon Taylor led the tributes and spoke of Alderman Vale's passion for Stevenage and his great contribution to sport and leisure in the Town in particular his long association with Stevenage Borough Football Club. Councillor Taylor said that her thoughts were with Ken's wife Betty who looked after him so lovingly.

Councillor Jeannette Thomas remembered Alderman Vale as a great local Councillor who had mentored her when she first became a Councillor and was well known by nearly everyone in his ward.

The Mayor read a tribute from Councillor Robin Parker. Councillor Parker knew Alderman Vale for many years as a political opponent in a neighbouring ward and

had served on many Council committees with him over the years. Councillor Parker advised that he had always found Ken knowledgeable and well informed about local issues and referred to his quiet and persuasive sense of humour.

Councillor Lloyd Briscoe referred to Alderman Vale's long involvement with and his love of Stevenage Borough Football Club.

Following the tributes, Council stood and observed a minute's silence in remembrance.

The Mayor presented Councillor John Gardner with a certificate in recognition of his 20 years service as a Councillor to Stevenage Borough Council.

The Mayor then informed Council that since the last meeting the Mayoral Team had attended 52 engagements. She referred to a number of highlights including:

- The Coptic Service held in St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey;
- The 60 year celebration of the Stevenage Male Voice Choir;
- The film - A County At War, Life On The Home Front in Hertfordshire at the Rex Cinema in Berkhamstead - a DVD commissioned by HM Lieutenancy of Hertfordshire;
- The British Empire Medals Presentation which included an award to Stevenage resident Miss Christabel Cofie for her charitable work in the UK and Ghana;
- The Stevenage Reception/Pride Awards which celebrated and honoured the wonderful people of Stevenage who do so much in and for the Community;
- The Strictly Wheelchair Dancing Championships held at Stevenage Leisure Centre which included competitors from Great Britain, The Netherlands and Russia;
- The fundraising Quiz for the Mayor's Charities, with over 120 people taking part.

The Mayor also reminded Members of her upcoming events:

- The Annual Fireworks Display on Monday 5 November;
- Christmas Lights Switch on at 6.30pm town centre on Thursday 22 November;
- Carol Service – 2.30pm – 4.30pm Holy Trinity on Sunday 2 December
- Christingle - 4.30pm Church of St Andrew & St George – 2 December
- Mayors Christmas Social –Daneshill House 7pm – 17 December

#### 4 **MAIN DEBATE - CREATING A 21ST CENTURY YOUTH COUNCIL**

The Council received a presentation from the Stevenage Youth Council (SYC) on the development of SYC over the past 12 months, celebrating and reflecting on the

growth of the group and their work while also presenting the opportunities to develop further, modernise and further increase inclusivity over the next year.

The Mayor thanked the Members of the Youth Council for their well prepared and informative presentation.

A Motion was moved by Councillor Henry and seconded by Councillor Barr.

A full debate ensued, points raised included:

- The Council should work more closely with the Youth Council but also with young people who had disengaged from learning;
- Praise was given regarding the development of the Youth Council and the importance of being responsible for their own governance and constitution was stressed;
- The Council should continue its work with the Youth Council to ensure links with the Twin Towns continued to strengthen;
- The image of young people was often not deserved and the challenge was to become more youth centred and not just youth aware;

After a full debate it was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** "That this Council welcomes the participation of Stevenage Youth Council at Stevenage Borough Council meetings and supports their aspirations for improving the quality of life of young people across the town.

This Council also supports the Youth Council's aspirations to grow and evolve with new engagement mechanisms to continue to meet young people's needs."

## 5 **PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS**

None received.

## 6 **QUESTIONS FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL**

None received.

## 7 **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None received.

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

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked about the current situation regarding Fairlands Valley Farmhouse. He questioned the Council's performance with regards to maintaining the building and not undertaking repairs to it since 2016. He asked what measures were being put in place for the future of the Farmhouse.

In response, the Leader of the Council advised that Government funding cuts had significantly affected the Council's ability to maintain this building. The building had recently been the focus of the Community Right to Bid process which had resulted in

two bids from community groups which unfortunately after full and proper consideration the Council could not progress. The Council was now reconsidering options for a future solution for the Farmhouse.

The Leader stated that a number of security measures had been put in place and that a written reply would be sent to Councillor Bibby regarding the cost of securing the building.

The Leader advised that the Council was committed to the preservation of the older buildings in the Town and she would encourage representations to be made to the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) regarding the unusual position of Stevenage as a New Town and the importance of preserving the very few older buildings in the Town.

The Council then received updates on the following:

- A public showing of the Lord Lieutenants DVD – A County at War, Life on the Home Front;
- Modern Slavery Charter;
- Arts Council Award;
- Stevenage Celebrates 100s years of votes for women;
- Fraud;
- Stevenage MRC (Flat Block Contract);
- Housing Development;
- Older People’s Day 2018;
- SADA Expands to North Herts;
- Play Area Investment;
- Yes Futures;
- Regeneration
- Planning;
- Business and Economy.

Finally, the Leader advised that she would request Officers to provide to Members the results of the Broadwater Parking Survey.

## 9 NOTICE OF MOTIONS

In moving the Motion, the Leader of the Council referred to the national 5 fold increase in hate crimes and the divide within the country since the EU Referendum. She spoke of the good work done in Stevenage which celebrated cultural differences including events such as the Celebrate Annual Event held at the Gordon Craig Theatre and the Holocaust Memorial Service held each year.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Mrs Joan Lloyd welcomed the fact that Stevenage Borough Council was the first Council in Hertfordshire to formally adopt the definition.

After a full debate, it was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED**:

That this Council adopts the full IHRA definition of anti-semitism, together with its examples, as follows.

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.

- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

Anti-Semitic acts are criminal when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of anti-Semitic materials in some countries).

Criminal acts are anti-Semitic when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property – such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

Anti-Semitic discrimination is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.”

In accordance with Section 22 of Part 4 of the Council’s Constitution, a recorded vote was held on this item.

\* Votes for the Motion – Councillors D Bainbridge, S Barr, P Bibby CC, L Briscoe, R Broom, J Brown, L Chester, M Downing, J Gardner, M Gardner, J Hanafin, L Harrington, R Hearn, R Henry, J Hollywell, M Hurst, G Lawrence, Mrs J Lloyd, J Lloyd, A McGuinness, L Martin-Haugh, J Mead, S Mead, A Mitchell CC, M Notley, S-J Potter, R Raynor, G Snell, S Speller, S Taylor OBE CC, J Thomas and T Wren.

Votes against the motion – nil

Abstentions – nil

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

In response to a question received from Councillor Mrs Ann Webb, Councillor Jeannette Thomas, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Older People responded that Stevenage Borough Council had delivered 82 new council homes since 2016 and 54 new homes were currently under construction.

A further 238 homes were currently being consulted on through the planning process and an additional 65 homes were going through the design process, prior to being submitted for planning permission.

## 11 **ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF 2017/18 INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL CODE**

Council considered a report which had previously been presented to both the Executive and the Audit Committee who had recommended that the 2017/2018 Annual Treasury Management Review be approved.

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the Annual Treasury Management Review is approved.

12      **AUDIT COMMITTEE MINUTES**

It was moved, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the minutes from the Audit Committee meetings held on 26 July 2018 and 12 September 2018 be noted.

**CHAIR**