



COUNCIL

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THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THE MEETING

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday 17th October 2006 at the Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham, commencing at 7.00pm.

Present:

Chairman.....Councillor P.R. Davis

Councillors D.B. Allen, P.G. Allnatt, T.A.P. Briggs, C. R. Coleman, S.R. Coy, H.M. Dixon, K.A. Dixon, S.K. Doubell, P.J. Goldstone, V.H. Greenman, G.R. Greenaway, M.E.M. Groom, M.P. Hatton, I.J. Henderson, R.J. Henning, A.S.R. Jackson, S. Meadowcroft, S.D. Meadows, D.M. Moore, T.J.A. Northey, C. O’Gorman, G. Offord, C. Reid, P.S. Roberts, J.H. Rooke, T.R. Sturgis, O.J. Thomas, J.P.S.S. Thomson, R.L. Tonge, A.J. Trotman, S.R. Walls, J. Webb, M.J. West and J.M. Wood.

Officers Present: D. Burbidge (Chief Executive), N. Fenwick (Strategic Manager Customer Services), P. Jeremiah (Team Leader Legal Services), L. May (Policy & Democratic Services Assistant), W. Oulton (Policy & Democratic Services Officer)

C50. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors H.R. Barton, N.S. Bryant, A.M. Bucknell, D.J.E. Evans, P.G. Green, H.T. Jones, N.T. Maidment, N.M. Phillips, J.M. Read, M. Rousell, J.A. Scott, S. L. Scruton and C. Wannell.

C51. Minutes

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 5th September 2006 were considered.

Resolved that the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 5th September 2006 be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- a) That attendance of Councillors P.J. Goldstone and C. Wannell be recorded;



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

- b) That Councillor S.K. Doubell's name be replaced by Councillor M.E.M. Groom's name in the 2nd line of the table in minute C36.

C52. Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

Name	Item	Type of Interest	Nature of Interest	Action
Councillor C. Reid	8 (f) – Question regarding Car Parking in Corsham	Personal	Personally affected by the parking scheme.	Remained in the Chamber for item.

C53. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman made the following announcements:

“Member Event – Improving Wiltshire

Improving Wiltshire - A Members' Event will be held in The Corn Exchange, Devizes on Friday 3 November 2006 - 10 am to 2 pm.

It is an opportunity for you to hear more about the Local Government White Paper and how Members' roles will be affected, to influence the National and Regional agenda and to help ensure Wiltshire's views are understood. There will also be lots of opportunities to learn and network.

The event will: explore the changing relationship between central and local government; investigate the future expectations being placed on Councils; and consider what this means for local authorities and members within Wiltshire.

Please contact Sue Pangbourne if you would like to attend.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005

Following requests from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and queries from Parish Councillors, Officers will be giving a presentation prior to each of the Area Committees in the November/December round regarding the legal and practical implications of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

Invitations will be sent to all Parish Clerks and Chairmen.

Leavers

The Chairman recorded his thanks for the work of Council officers Helen Braid, Will Oulton and Kathryn Spencer who would all be leaving the Council shortly.”

C54. Public Question Time/Receipt of Petitions

Councillor F. Winup Vice Chairman of Castle Combe Parish Council asked the following questions:

- (A) Parking:

The Leader of the Council recently agreed that Castle Combe has a particular problem with parking offenders including weekends/evenings.

Could Castle Combe Parish Council be provided with a regular summary of:

- a breakdown of the numbers of tickets issued within their area.
- the locations (e.g. split between car park extended stays/yellow line offences)
- the timings (e.g. weekdays/weekends/evenings).

The Leader Councillor C. O’Gorman responded that this would be done.

(B) Communications:

There have been numerous occasions on which no acknowledgement is received, nor action taken, following letters and phone calls to the Council, even where attempts are made to follow up the issue.

This applies at all levels, including officers, department heads and even the Leader.

Will the Council consider issuing a simple pro-forma questionnaire to Parish Councils requesting them to comment upon the level, speed and effectiveness of responses given by the various departments. This would at least provide a starting point from which to address the perceived problem.

The Leader Councillor C. O’Gorman responded that this would be done.

(C) Street Cleaning:

Until recently our roads were swept by the large mechanical sweeper on a weekly basis. It does not appear to have visited for several months.

What is the reason and what steps are in hand to rectify this?

The Lead Member for Environment, Councillor S.K. Doubell responded with surprise that the question had been put as she stated that she had believed she had already answered a similar question adequately. She stated that there had never been an agreement for a weekly sweep.

C55. Question Time

(A) Councillor R.J. Henning – Devolution Task Group – O46

“Can the Chair of the Devolution Task Group please inform the Council as to when Task Group will be recalled?”

Councillor R.L. Tonge, Chairman of the Task Group responded that as the Executive had recently taken decisions on play areas and public conveniences, the Overview & Scrutiny Committee would be requesting that the Task Group be disbanded.

(B) Councillor J. Webb – Climate Change – O59

“Following the successful first meeting of the Climate Change Working Group, could the Leader of the Conservative Group let the Council know what their new policies will do to help reduce the Carbon Footprint of North Wiltshire for both the Council and residents?”

Councillor R.L. Tonge, Leader of the Conservative Group stated that the Carbon Trust Report had been requested by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at the suggestion of Councillor P.S. Roberts and that he expressed disappointment at the progress made by the Executive in the implementation of its recommendations.

(C) Councillor P.S. Roberts – Nottingham Declaration – C47

“Will the Council be signing the Nottingham Declaration?”

The Leader Councillor C. O’Gorman stated the Declaration had been signed.

Admin Note: It was agreed at the meeting on 5th December 2006 that this answer was incorrect and in fact the Nottingham Declaration had not been signed on behalf of this District Council at that point in time.

(D) Councillor P.G. Allnatt – Public Conveniences – O48

“Can the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee please explain what financial and other limits he envisages on the “incentives for Town & Parish Councils to engage in discussions concerning operation of facilities; as stated in the minute referred to above”?

Does he agree with Cllr R.L. Tonge that in the final analysis if the Town and Parish Councils do not wish to manage these facilities then they will have to close?”

Councillor T.R. Sturgis, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee stated that the question should be directed at the Lead Member.

(E) Councillor P.G. Allnatt – Play Areas – O46

“Can the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee please explain if each of the resolved items have been deal with satisfactorily by the Executive, in his view?

Can he also explain what, exactly, “a package to incentivise Towns and Parish Councils to take on play areas” would include and what would be the financial cost to the District Council?”

Councillor T.R. Sturgis, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee stated that he could not answer a question on behalf of the Executive.

(F) Councillor P.G. Allnatt – Chippenham Bus Station – O45

Can either the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee or Councillor J.R. Ireland please inform the Council whether “sufficient collaborative information to consider the matter” is now at hand and if so what does it comprise?

Councillor T.R. Sturgis, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee referred Councillor P.G. Allnatt to the information circulated to all Councillors in an email regarding the matter.

(G) Councillor P.G. Allnatt – Health Update – O60

Can the Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee please amplify upon the minute at the second bullet point: i.e. was the reduction from 32 to 14 PCTs thought by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be a good move or not and why?

Councillor T.R. Sturgis, Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee stated that the reduction in PCTs referred to in the minutes was a statement of fact and that no view was taken by the Committee.

(H) Councillor P.G. Allnatt – Area Committees – C45

Can the Chairs of the five Area Committees please explain what action has been taken to respond to resolved items 3 to 6 ?

The Chair's of Area Committees responded with a list of some of the actions taken and those under consideration.

Admin Notes: A report will be going to the November and December Area Committees that will present feedback from the review and a discussion paper on the implementation of the recommendations agreed by Council.

(I) Councillor C. O’Gorman – Audit Commission Report – FA27

“As Chair of the Final Accounts & Audit Committee, which do you feel are the most serious issues raised by the Audit Commission’s reports nos 9 – 14 and what does the Chair intend to do about them?”

Councillor R.L. Tonge responded that the misallocation of £2.4M in the budget was the most serious issue identified in that report and that the Executive were responsible for the implementation of any recommendations.

(J) Councillor V.H. Greenman – FA24

“Will a regular Medium Term Finance Plan be furnished?”

“A table of impairments would add value to the accounts. Will it be provided in the future?”

Councillor C. O’Gorman stated that human resources issues had impacted on the production of financial information but that these were being addressed. Councillor O’Gorman assured the member that the information referred to would be made available.

C56. Sustainable Communities Bill

Consideration was given to Report No. 7, which provided information regarding the campaign to reintroduce the Sustainable Communities Bill to Parliament.

Issues discussed included:

- That the issues identified in the Bill enjoyed broad cross part support; and
- That both Mr J. Gray MP and Mr M. Ancram MP had supported the Early Day Motion

Resolved

- (1) That the Sustainable Communities Bill be supported;

- (2) That the Leader write to the Secretary of State expressing support for the Bill.

C57. Questions from Councillors – Council Procedure Rule 14

- (a) Councillor R. L. Tonge

A question was received in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. The question and response were circulated at the meeting.

Councillor R.L. Tonge asked the following supplementary question:

When would the Lead Member be writing to the National Trust and would the letter express the concern that this recent action was the thin end of the wedge?

Could the Lead Member clarify what a significant housing provider is and can this be used to pressurise the National Trust?

Councillor O.J. Thomas stated that she would be writing shortly to the National Trust and that as the National Trust owned 20% of affordable stock in North Wiltshire they were considered to be a significant housing provider and that she would welcome assistance from the local member in efforts to lobby the National Trust.

- (b) Councillor S. D. Meadows

A question was received in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. The question and response were circulated at the meeting.

- (c) Councillor A. M. Bucknell

A question was received in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. The question and response were circulated at the meeting.

- (d) Councillor R. L. Tonge

“Could the Leader confirm that she has a copy of the Audit Commissions booklet entitled 'Performance Management for Councillors'?”

Councillor C. O’Gorman responded that she had a copy.

Councillor R.L. Tonge as a supplementary question referred the Leader to page 6 of the booklet and quoted that as good performance management was “intimately linked to good political decision-making” could the Leader respond to the Audit Commissions comment in recommendation 18 of the Report on Performance Management that “Councillors are not consistently providing strong leadership or direction in delivering corporate aims and priorities”

The Leader Councillor C. O’Gorman stated that she would give a written response.

- (e) Councillor S. D. Meadows

A question was received in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. The question and response were circulated at the meeting.

Councillor S. D. Meadows asked the following supplementary question:

Was the policy going to be applied universally and had the impact on rural communities been considered?

The Leader Councillor C. O’Gorman responded that these issues had been identified and that consideration would be given to how the policy could be flexibly applied to reduce the impact.

(f) Councillor C. Reid

A question was received in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. The question and response were circulated at the meeting.

Councillor C. Reid asked the following supplementary question:

How was the decision to allocate permits arrived at and why were local members not consulted.

The Leader Councillor C. O’Gorman stated that the Lead Member would give a written response.

(g) Councillor A.J. Trotman

A question was received in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. The question and response were circulated at the meeting.

Councillor A.J. Trotman asked the following supplementary question:

When would the public and all Councillors be able to debate the issues?

Councillor D. Moore the Lead Member for Leisure responded that a debate would take place at the earliest opportunity.

C58. Notices of Motion – Council Procedure Rule 15

There were no motions received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm.

There were 3 members of the public present.