

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Guildford Borough Council held remotely via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 8 December 2020

Councillor Richard Billington (Mayor)

* Councillor Marsha Moseley (Deputy Mayor) – in the chair

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|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| * Councillor Paul Abbey | * Councillor Ted Mayne |
| * Councillor Tim Anderson | * Councillor Julia McShane |
| * Councillor Jon Askew | * Councillor Ann McShee |
| * Councillor Christopher Barrass | * Councillor Bob McShee |
| * Councillor Joss Bigmore | * Councillor Masuk Miah |
| * Councillor David Bilbé | * Councillor Ramsey Nagaty |
| * Councillor Chris Blow | * Councillor Susan Parker |
| * Councillor Dennis Booth | * Councillor George Potter |
| * Councillor Ruth Brothwell | * Councillor Jo Randall |
| * Councillor Colin Cross | * Councillor John Redpath |
| * Councillor Graham Eyre | * Councillor Maddy Redpath |
| * Councillor Andrew Gomm | * Councillor Caroline Reeves |
| * Councillor Angela Goodwin | * Councillor John Rigg |
| * Councillor David Goodwin | * Councillor Tony Rooth |
| * Councillor Angela Gunning | * Councillor Will Salmon |
| * Councillor Gillian Harwood | * Councillor Deborah Seabrook |
| * Councillor Jan Harwood | * Councillor Pauline Searle |
| * Councillor Liz Hogger | * Councillor Paul Spooner |
| * Councillor Tom Hunt | * Councillor James Steel |
| * Councillor Gordon Jackson | * Councillor James Walsh |
| * Councillor Diana Jones | * Councillor Fiona White |
| * Councillor Steven Lee | * Councillor Catherine Young |
| * Councillor Nigel Manning | |

*Present

The Council observed a minute's silence in memory of Honorary Alderman Gordon Bridger who had passed away on 27 November 2020, Honorary Alderman Tony Page who had passed away on 8 October 2020, and former Councillor Jessica Page who had died shortly after Tony Page.

CO41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from The Mayor, Councillor Richard Billington.

CO42 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

CO43 MINUTES

The Council confirmed, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020. The Deputy Mayor signed the minutes.

CO44 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Deputy Mayor read out a personal message from the Mayor, Councillor Richard Billington, who was convalescing following his recent surgery. The Mayor had thanked everyone who had sent so many good wishes for his speedy recovery.

The Deputy Mayor reminded the Council of the forthcoming online carol concert by the Vivace Chorus on 13 December 2020 in aid of one of the Mayor's chosen causes, the Coronavirus Response Fund.

CO45 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Leader thanked the Borough for its continued diligence observing the Tier 2 Covid restrictions and noted that infection rates locally had been steadily falling. Whilst there had been a huge amount of optimism from the vaccines, it was important to continue to respect this deadly virus and stop our hospitals being overrun before the vaccination programme made significant inroads into the population.

The Leader also urged everyone to show their support to local shops and restaurants, by shopping locally but safely. He announced that our High Street markets had been relocated to the Portsmouth road car-park so that there was more space for shoppers to browse whilst observing social distancing.

The public consultation which would help to inform the Council's spending review had been open for a week and encouraged as many people as possible to complete the online survey, and thanked the communications team for publicising the context behind our budget gap and encouraging residents to help guide our choices.

The Leader recalled the sizeable contributions from Tony and Jessica Page, and Gordon Bridger to our community and commented that he would like to mark their passing by asking the Corporate Governance Task group to look at the wording in the Constitution regarding restrictions in the rights and privileges of Honorary Aldermen, specifically the provision restricting Aldermen's speech and requiring them to be apolitical in public. The Leader looked forward to the Council considering new nominations for Honorary Aldermen or Freemen in the New Year.

Finally, the Leader wished councillors a Merry Christmas at this last Full Council Meeting for the year, and commented that 2020 would certainly be a year that lived long in memory, a year of terrible loss, but also a year where the community had repeatedly shown its strength in the face of adversity.

CO46 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- (a) Honorary Freeman Jen Powell, in her capacity as chairman of the Friends of Guildford Museum asked the Lead Councillor for Environment, Councillor James Steel, the following question:

"The Friends of Guildford Museum, whilst realising the financial constraints of Guildford Borough Council, have real concerns about the future of Guildford Museum. Could the Lead Councillor please assure The Friends that every possible avenue would be explored and discussed before any decision is taken?"

The Lead Councillor's response was as follows:

"The Council are currently developing and reviewing options for the way in which we deliver the full range of services, including the museum and heritage service. Following Covid, the Council's financial position is significantly compromised meaning we have to address expenditure and reduced income for 2021 and beyond

The situation has been exacerbated by the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF) no longer considering funding bids, including the GBC application to refurbish and extend

the museum. The NHLF's position was a nationwide approach, due to the need to redirect funding in response to Covid. This is disappointing as significant work was carried out to underpin the bid including public consultation and engagement with stakeholders/partners, including the Friends of Guildford Museum.

Guildford's heritage is valuable and intrinsic to the fabric and story of our town, but these are challenging times for the Council and the borough. I can assure you that officers within the heritage service will be discussing the future of the museum with Friends of Guildford Museum as longstanding advocates and supporters of our heritage."

Councillor James Steel
Lead Councillor for Environment

- (ii) Gavin Morgan, on behalf of Guildford Heritage Forum, asked the Lead Councillor for Environment, Councillor James Steel, the following question

"Given the letters in the press about the potential sale of Guildford Museum and collections will the Lead Councillor for Environment issue a clear, unambiguous statement that historic buildings, museum collections and borough art collected and purchased over decades and centuries and unique to Guildford will not be disposed of even if the services supporting them have to be reduced?"

The Lead Councillor's response was as follows:

"We are not in a position to issue a clear and unambiguous statement because we are currently in a consultation about where the Council's funds should be prioritised.

As I have confirmed in my response to the previous question this evening, officers are at this time developing options for the heritage service for the Council to review. As I have stressed, our heritage is important and of value to our town, but we are being faced with many difficult choices around finance for all of our services. Every part of the Council has an importance to individuals, the whole or various parts of the community. No decision will be taken lightly or without proper consideration.

Our collection is held in trust, along with Surrey Archaeological Society's own collection which we provide a home for; this prevents any disposal and would step outside the Museum Association's code of ethics."

Councillor James Steel
Lead Councillor for Environment

In response to a supplementary question arising from the written responses given, in which the Lead Councillor was asked:

- (i) whether he could ensure that, in the context of the Council's public consultation on its spending review, proper consideration is given as to what the museum could and should be offering for the benefit of the town's visitor experience rather than the contribution it currently makes; and
- (iii) given that the Council had put a lot of work into the new vision for the museum, whether he would consider possible improvements that could be made at a relatively low cost.

the Lead Councillor recognised the huge amount of work that had been done so far by the Heritage Team and Friends of Guildford Museum in terms of the new museum project and that the Covid situation and withdrawal of NHLF funding had been very unfortunate. The Lead

Councillor reiterated that any decisions that are made arising from the Council's spending review, would be properly consulted on and due consideration given to the Council's current and future priorities.

CO47 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were no questions from councillors.

CO48 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2021-22

The Council received a report on its statutory duty to consider annually whether to revise its Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS), replace it with another or make no changes. The Council was obliged to consult with interested parties if it wished to revise or replace the scheme. A stakeholder consultation carried out during September to October 2020 had received a low response rate, but Surrey County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey supported the changes proposed for 2021.

The Council noted that the LCTSS currently helped around 4,500 households by providing £5.7 million of support. The cost of the scheme was shared with Surrey County Council, with Guildford's share being around 10%.

In 2020-21, a number of minor changes were made to the scheme. For 2021-22 the following changes with a revenue cost of £65,000 had been proposed:

- Increase Personal Allowances and Premiums to match inflation.
- Increase Non-Dependant Deductions to reflect an expectation that their contribution to the household expenses should increase each year.
- Remove the cap on Band E entitlement for 2021-22, to provide additional help during the pandemic.

It was also proposed to increase the discretionary hardship fund to support any applicant suffering adversely from the consequences of savings to the Local Council Tax Support put in place over the past eight years, in addition to the proposed changes for 2021-22. It was proposed that the fund be increased from £40,000 to £60,000 for 2021-22.

During 2020 the government had provided COVID19 Council Tax Hardship Funds allowing the Council to support taxpayers with additional Council Tax discounts. It was proposed that any funds remaining at the end of the year would be carried over into 2021.

The Council was required to approve a scheme for the 2021-22 financial year by 31 January 2021 to enable annual bills to be calculated correctly. It was noted that the review of the LCTSS for 2022-23 would be included on the work programme for the Service Delivery Executive Advisory Board in 2021.

The Executive had considered the report at its meeting on 24 November 2020 and had endorsed the recommendation therein.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Resources, Councillor Tim Anderson, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Caroline Reeves, the Council:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the current Local Council Tax Support Scheme be amended for 2021-22, as set out in detail in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, with effect from 1 April 2021.

- (2) That the Council continues to maintain a discretionary hardship fund in 2021-22, increases it to £60,000, and carries forward any residual 2020 COVID19 Council Tax Hardship Funds.

Reasons:

- (1) To ensure that the Council complies with legislation to implement a Local Council Tax Support Scheme from 1 April 2021.
- (2) To maintain a discretionary fund to help applicants suffering from severe financial hardship.

CO49 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020-21

The Council was informed that the Public Sector Exit Pay Cap regulations (Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations 2020) came into force on 4 November 2020. The regulations would apply to all exit payments that fell due on or after that date. The regulations implemented a £95,000 cap on exit payments and the Council was awaiting the publication of the Guidance and Directions documents to accompany the regulations.

Consequently, the Council considered a report on proposed amendments to the Pay Policy Statement for the current financial year that were required to reflect the new regulations.

Upon the motion of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, seconded by the Lead Councillor for Resources, Councillor Tim Anderson, the Council:

RESOLVED: That the amendments required within the Pay Policy Statement for the 2020-21 financial year, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, be approved.

Reason:

To comply with the Restriction of Public Sector Exit Payments Regulations 2020.

CO50 LICENSING ACT 2003 - REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

In its role as the Licensing Authority under the Licensing Act 2003, the Council had a duty to prepare and keep under review its Statement of Licensing Policy. The purpose of a policy was to set out how the Licensing Authority sought to promote the four licensing objectives during the licensing process.

The Council's current policy was due for review by January 2021 and, following a public consultation exercise, the Licensing Committee at its meeting on 25 November had recommended that the Council adopts a new Statement of Licensing Policy for the period 2021-2026, a draft copy of which was appended to the report submitted to the Council.

Upon the motion of the Lead Councillor for Environment, Councillor James Steel, seconded by the Chairman of the Licensing Committee, Councillor David Goodwin, the Council

RESOLVED: That the Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-26, attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, be adopted.

Reason:

To ensure the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy is revised in line with statutory timescales.

CO51 PERIODIC ELECTORAL REVIEW BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Council noted that the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) had given notice that it would be undertaking an electoral review of the Council in its 2020-21 programme. The LGBCE intended to carry out electoral reviews of all English local authorities that had not been reviewed in twelve or more years. Guildford was last reviewed in 1998.

The purpose of an electoral review was to consider the total number of councillors elected to the council, the names, number and boundaries of the wards, and the number of councillors to be elected to each ward.

The Council considered a report which summarised the process for the review, the first stage of which was an invitation from the LGBCE to make a Council Size Submission, that is the total number of councillors to be elected to the Council. The LGBCE would consider all submissions received and decide on the Council Size number for the purpose of the second stage of the review (warding patterns) by considering three broad areas:

- The **governance arrangements** of the Council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities.
- The Council's **scrutiny functions** relating to its own decision making and the council's responsibilities to outside bodies.
- The **representational role of councillors in the local community** and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the council on local partner organisations.

The LGBCE emphasised that any submission to them on council size (whether for an increase, reduction or maintaining current arrangements), should ensure that it addressed these areas and that the view on council size is backed up by evidence.

A copy of the draft Submission, which proposed a small reduction in the number of councillors to 44, was appended to the report.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore proposed, and the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Caroline Reeves seconded the following motion:

“That the Council Size Submission, attached as Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Council, and its stated preference for a Council size of 44 Councillors, be approved and presented to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). “

Under Council Procedure Rule 15 (o), Councillor Bigmore as the mover of the original motion, indicated that, with the consent of his seconder and of the meeting, he wished to alter his motion so that it read as follows (*changes shown in italics*):

- “(1) That, *subject to paragraph (2) below*, the Council Size Submission, attached as Appendix 2 to the report submitted to the Council, and its stated preference for a Council size of 44 Councillors, be approved and presented to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), *subject to the inclusion of the following amendment to Part 5 of the Submission (Local Authority Profile) on page 165 of the agenda*:

*“Guildford town centre is a principal regional shopping centre, with a vibrant night-time economy, **and is the only town in Surrey to be awarded Purple Flag status**”.*

- (2) *That the Democratic Services and Elections Manager, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make such minor alterations to improve the clarity of the draft Submission document as they may determine.”*

The proposed alteration to the motion was put to the vote and was carried. Under the Remote Meetings Protocol, a roll call was taken to record the vote on the proposed alteration, the results of which were 21 councillors voting in favour, 7 against, and 18 abstentions, as follows:

| <u>For the alteration</u> | <u>Against the alteration</u> | <u>Abstentions</u> |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cllr Tim Anderson | Cllr David Bilbé | Cllr Paul Abbey |
| Cllr Jon Askew | Cllr Graham Eyre | Cllr Christopher Barrass |
| Cllr Joss Bigmore | Cllr Andrew Gomm | Cllr Dennis Booth |
| Cllr Chris Blow | Cllr Nigel Manning | Cllr Ruth Brothwell |
| Cllr Colin Cross | Cllr Jo Randall | Cllr Angela Goodwin |
| Cllr Jan Harwood | Cllr Paul Spooner | Cllr David Goodwin |
| Cllr Gillian Harwood | Cllr James Walsh | Cllr Angela Gunning |
| Cllr Tom Hunt | | Cllr Liz Hogger |
| Cllr Diana Jones | | Cllr Gordon Jackson |
| Cllr Ted Mayne | | Cllr Steven Lee |
| Cllr Julia McShane | | Cllr Marsha Moseley |
| Cllr Ann McShee | | Cllr Ramsey Nagaty |
| Cllr Bob McShee | | Cllr Susan Parker |
| Cllr Masuk Miah | | Cllr George Potter |
| Cllr John Redpath | | Cllr Tony Rooth |
| Cllr Maddy Redpath | | Cllr Pauline Searle |
| Cllr Caroline Reeves | | Cllr Fiona White |
| Cllr John Rigg | | Cllr Catherine Young |
| Cllr Will Salmon | | |
| Cllr Deborah Seabrook | | |
| Cllr James Steel | | |

The motion, as altered, therefore became the substantive motion for debate.

Following the debate on the substantive motion, Councillor Ramsey Nagaty proposed, and Councillor Tony Rooth seconded, the following amendment:

“That the Council refers this matter for further consideration by the Corporate Governance Task Group on Monday 14 December 2020 for the purpose of:

- (a) giving further consideration to the requirements of the review generally and in particular to that referred to on pages 137-138, 146, and 154 of the agenda
- (b) reviewing the contents of the Council Size Submission
- (c) consideration of the forecast increase in electorate by 2026

and reference back to an extraordinary (virtual) meeting of the Council on Thursday 17 December for final approval of the Council Size Submission”.

Following the debate on the amendment, it was put to the vote and was carried. Under the Remote Meetings Protocol, a roll call was taken to record the vote on the amendment, the results of which were 32 councillors voting in favour, 8 against, and 6 abstentions, as follows:

For the amendment

Cllr Paul Abbey
Cllr Jon Askew
Cllr Christopher Barrass
Cllr David Bilbé
Cllr Dennis Booth
Cllr Ruth Brothwell
Cllr Colin Cross
Cllr Graham Eyre
Cllr Andrew Gomm
Cllr Angela Goodwin
Cllr David Goodwin
Cllr Angela Gunning
Cllr Gillian Harwood
Cllr Liz Hogger
Cllr Gordon Jackson
Cllr Diana Jones
Cllr Steven Lee
Cllr Nigel Manning
Cllr Ann McShee
Cllr Bob McShee
Cllr Masuk Miah
Cllr Ramsey Nagaty
Cllr Susan Parker
Cllr George Potter
Cllr Jo Randall
Cllr Tony Rooth
Cllr Will Salmon
Cllr Pauline Searle
Cllr Paul Spooner
Cllr James Walsh
Cllr Fiona White
Cllr Catherine Young

Against the amendment

Cllr Tim Anderson
Cllr Joss Bigmore
Cllr Chris Blow
Cllr Jan Harwood
Cllr Tom Hunt
Cllr Marsha Moseley
Cllr John Redpath
Cllr John Rigg

Abstentions

Cllr Ted Mayne
Cllr Julia McShane
Cllr Maddy Redpath
Cllr Caroline Reeves
Cllr Deborah Seabrook
Cllr James Steel

Following the vote on the amendment, the Council

RESOLVED: That the Council refers this matter for further consideration by the Corporate Governance Task Group on Monday 14 December 2020 for the purpose of:

- (a) giving further consideration to the requirements of the review generally and in particular to that referred to on pages 137-138, 146, and 154 of the agenda
- (b) reviewing the contents of the Council Size Submission
- (c) consideration of the forecast increase in electorate by 2026

and reference back to an extraordinary (virtual) meeting of the Council on Thursday 17 December for final approval of the Council Size Submission.

Under the Remote Meetings Protocol, a roll call was taken to record the vote on the substantive motion, as amended, the results of which were 31 councillors voting in favour, 8 against, and 7 abstentions, as follows:

For

Cllr Paul Abbey
Cllr Jon Askew
Cllr Christopher Barrass
Cllr David Bilbé
Cllr Dennis Booth
Cllr Ruth Brothwell
Cllr Colin Cross
Cllr Graham Eyre
Cllr Andrew Gomm
Cllr Angela Goodwin
Cllr David Goodwin
Cllr Angela Gunning
Cllr Gillian Harwood
Cllr Liz Hogger
Cllr Gordon Jackson
Cllr Steven Lee
Cllr Nigel Manning
Cllr Ann McShee
Cllr Bob McShee
Cllr Masuk Miah
Cllr Ramsey Nagaty
Cllr Susan Parker
Cllr George Potter
Cllr Jo Randall
Cllr Tony Rooth
Cllr Will Salmon
Cllr Pauline Searle
Cllr Paul Spooner
Cllr James Walsh
Cllr Fiona White
Cllr Catherine Young

Against

Cllr Tim Anderson
Cllr Joss Bigmore
Cllr Chris Blow
Cllr Jan Harwood
Cllr Tom Hunt
Cllr Marsha Moseley
Cllr John Redpath
Cllr John Rigg

Abstentions

Cllr Diana Jones
Cllr Ted Mayne
Cllr Julia McShane
Cllr Maddy Redpath
Cllr Caroline Reeves
Cllr Deborah Seabrook
Cllr James Steel

CO52 SELECTION OF THE MAYOR AND THE DEPUTY MAYOR 2021-22

It was noted that it was the Council's normal practice for the nominees for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the next succeeding municipal year to absent themselves from the meeting for consideration of this item of business. As the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley (who was in the chair for the meeting in the absence of the Mayor), would have to leave the meeting, the Council

RESOLVED: That Councillor Gordon Jackson be elected chairman of the meeting for this item of business.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley and Councillor Dennis Booth both left the meeting.

Councillor Jackson in the chair.

The Council considered a report on nominations received for election of Mayor and appointment of Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2021-22. The Executive had also considered the report at its meeting on 24 November 2020, and had commended the nominations of Councillors Moseley and Booth respectively for Mayor and Deputy Mayor in 2021-22.

Upon the motion of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Caroline Reeves, the Council

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley be nominated for the Mayoralty of the Borough for the 2021-22 municipal year.
- (2) That Councillor Dennis Booth be nominated for the Deputy Mayoralty of the Borough for the 2021-22 municipal year.

Reason:

To make early preparations for the selection of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the municipal year 2021-22.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley and Councillor Dennis Booth both returned to the meeting.

CO53 TIMETABLE OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2021-22

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Marsha Moseley in the chair.

The Council considered a report on the proposed timetable of Council and Committee meetings for the 2021-22 municipal year. The Executive had also considered the report at its meeting on 24 November 2020, and had recommended approval of the timetable as appended to the report.

Upon the motion of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, seconded by the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Caroline Reeves, the Council

RESOLVED: That the proposed timetable of Council and Committee meetings for the 2021-22 municipal year, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, be approved.

Reason:

To assist with the preparation of individual committee work programmes.

CO54 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Council received and noted the minutes of the meetings of the Executive held on 22 September and 27 October 2020.

CO55 COMMON SEAL

The Council

RESOLVED: That the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to any documents to give effect to any decisions taken by the Council at this meeting.

The meeting finished at 9.05 pm

Signed
Mayor

Date