

GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Guildford Borough Council held at Council Chamber, Millmead House, Millmead, Guildford, Surrey GU2 4BB on Tuesday 11 October 2022

- * The Mayor, Councillor Dennis Booth
- * The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Masuk Miah

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Councillor Paul Abbey * Councillor Tim Anderson * Councillor Jon Askew <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Councillor Christopher Barrass * Councillor Joss Bigmore * Councillor David Bilbé * Councillor Chris Blow * Councillor Ruth Brothwell <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Councillor Colin Cross * Councillor Guida Esteves * Councillor Graham Eyre <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Councillor Andrew Gomm * Councillor Angela Goodwin <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Councillor David Goodwin * Councillor Angela Gunning * Councillor Gillian Harwood <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Councillor Jan Harwood * Councillor Liz Hogger * Councillor Tom Hunt * Councillor Diana Jones <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Councillor Steven Lee <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Councillor Nigel Manning * Councillor Ted Mayne | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Councillor Julia McShane <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Councillor Ann McShee * Councillor Bob McShee <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Councillor Marsha Moseley * Councillor Ramsey Nagaty * Councillor Susan Parker * Councillor George Potter * Councillor Jo Randall * Councillor John Redpath * Councillor Maddy Redpath * Councillor John Rigg * Councillor Tony Rooth * Councillor Will Salmon * Councillor Deborah Seabrook * Councillor Pauline Searle * Councillor Paul Spooner * Councillor James Steel * Councillor Cait Taylor * Councillor James Walsh * Councillor Fiona White * Councillor Keith Witham * Councillor Catherine Young |
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*Present

CO51 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Christopher Barrass, Colin Cross, Andrew Gomm David Goodwin, Steven Lee, Nigel Manning, Julia McShane, Ann McShee, and Marsha Moseley, and also from Honorary Aldermen Catherine Cobley, Jayne Marks, Terence Patrick, Tony Phillips, Lynda Strudwick, and Jenny Wicks.

CO52 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

CO53 MINUTES

The Council confirmed, as a correct record, the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 22 September 2022. The Mayor signed the minutes.

CO54 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported that he recently had the pleasure, together with the children of Wyke School Council, of burying a time capsule commemorating Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's II reign. This would be recovered and opened in 70 years' time.

The Mayor was disappointed that not more councillors were able to be present for the Service for the Judiciary held on 7 October 2022. The Mayor noted that it had been a fine occasion supporting the High Sheriff, a former Honorary Recorder of Guildford.

The Mayor informed councillors that the next event in support of his nominated Charity was Call My Wine Bluff on Saturday 19 November 2022, for which tickets were still available from Kate Foxtan. The Mayor hoped that councillors would raise teams to participate in the event.

The Mayor reminded councillors that a short service would be held at the Guildhall at 10.30am on Friday 11 November 2022 to mark Armistice Day, and that Guildford's Annual Service of Remembrance would take place at Holy Trinity Church at 9.45am on Sunday 13 November 2022. The Mayor asked councillors who had not yet responded to the annual request for volunteers to sell poppies in the town over the 4 and 5 November 2022 to please do so as soon as possible.

CO55 ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Following the resignation of Councillor Joss Bigmore as Leader of the Council on 22 September 2022, the Democratic Services and Elections Manager reported that Councillor Tom Hunt had proposed, and Councillor Joss Bigmore had seconded, the nomination of Councillor Julia McShane for election as the Leader of the Council.

Following comments from councillors in respect of the nomination, the Council

RESOLVED: That Councillor Julia McShane be elected Leader of the Council for a period ending on the day of the next post-election annual meeting of the Council.

CO56 LEADER'S COMMUNICATIONS INCLUDING APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY LEADER AND LEAD COUNCILLORS ON THE EXECUTIVE

The Mayor informed the Council that Councillor Julia McShane had indicated that, upon her election as Leader, it was her intention to announce the appointment of Councillor Joss Bigmore as Deputy Leader and to make no other changes to the Executive. That being the case, the Mayor asked the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore to comment on the Leader's communications on behalf of the newly elected Leader of the Council.

The Deputy Leader made a statement in response to a number of enquiries from councillors regarding how the Council, together with other authorities and partners, could help residents across the borough with the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

The Household Support Fund was about to enter a third tranche of central government funding that would be administered by the Community Services team to those in need. Residents would be able to access the simple application process online via the Council's website and for those who were unable to access internet services, there would be team based at the Hive able to help residents complete the process on the telephone or in person. Details of the application process for this third tranche of funding would be shared via the website and through community and partnership contacts. Residents in need were encouraged to get in touch if they required support. All applications would be treated confidentially.

All residents across the borough were also able to access the community fridge and thrive at the hive pre-loved donation bank for help with food and household items and clothing. Residents could also seek help from the Community Services team to access other community fridges in the borough as well as food bank support. To help the foodbanks reach as many people as possible, the Council would also provide delivery support to the North Guildford Foodbank via its community transport, for those who were unable to collect food parcels in person from the foodbank.

With rising energy costs placing many residents at risk of fuel poverty, the Council would be offering the Hive as a warm space during working hours for those in need, as well as the fuel voucher support scheme in partnership with Warmth Matters. A free cup of coffee or tea would be available and on Wednesdays the team would be offering soup. Surrey County Council were coordinating warm hubs across the county and this Council was supporting them in identifying other warm hubs in Guildford. At these hubs, including the Hive, the County Council would provide energy and debt advice as well as supplies of hot water bottles and blankets.

To further help residents access the support they need, the Council was hosting a community forum for partnership agencies and community groups that would coordinate a cost-of-living support offer so that residents could be directed to the most appropriate source of support.

In response to comments and questions from councillors, the Deputy Leader:

- (a) confirmed that a list of warm hubs to be established across the borough would be provided on the Council's website;
- (b) outlined the support that was available from voluntary and charitable groups for residents in the west of the borough;
- (c) confirmed that Thrive at The Hive, was not only a food bank and community fridge, it was also a bank for pre-owned clothes, and children's toys;
- (d) emphasised the need to ensure that the Council's resources were targeted to the most vulnerable residents; and
- (e) acknowledged the important role that local parish councils could play in supporting residents and indicated that he would raise this with parish clerks at the forthcoming Parish Liaison meeting on 14 October 2022.

CO57 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no questions or statements from the public.

CO58 QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- (a) **Councillor George Potter** asked the Lead Councillor for Regeneration, Councillor John Rigg, the following question:

"A new sewage treatment works for Guildford was due to be completed by 2025 as part of the Weyside Urban Village project. However, this has now been delayed and is sufficiently behind schedule that the Weyside Urban Village project now has an Amber-Red ranking due to these delays.

The current Moorfield sewage treatment works has a maximum capacity of 89,810 pe (people equivalent). As early as 2018 figures show that the works was serving 99,200 pe, meaning that it has been significantly overcapacity for many years.

What is the latest estimated completion date for the replacement sewage treatment works?

What actions are being undertaken to ensure adequate supply of sewage capacity for Guildford until the new sewage treatment works is completed?

What discussions are the lead member and officers, as representatives of the municipal authority, having with Thames Water about ensuring Thames Water meets their obligations under Section 93 of the Water Industry Act?

What has been the outcome of any such discussions to date?

The Lead Councillor's response to the question is as follows:

The Thames Water New Sewage Treatment Works (NSTW) is funded by the Weyside Project however, programme and delivery is the responsibility of Thames Water. The amber risk rating relates to the delivery of the facility and is a prudent industry measure at this stage of the project.

Delay to submission of the Thames Water Planning Application to SCC has been caused by a late consultation response from the Environment Agency.

Thames Water Programme milestones as below;

*Contractor procurement; August 2021 – Achieved
 Planning application submission; January 2022 – Achieved
 Planning Committee; August 2022 - Delayed
 Revised Planning Committee; 26 October 2022 – Subject to SCC report
 Planning Consent issue; November 2022- Subject to SCC Planning Committee
 Site Establishment; January 2023
 Construction start; February 2023
 Construction end; April 2025
 Commissioning; August 2026
 Transfer Existing Sewage Treatment Works to GBC; September 2026*

To summarise, Thames Water are targeting completion of the NSTW in April 2025 with commissioning completed by August 2026, as per the original programme. This will be achieved by re scheduling initial site activities subject to achieving a timely consent from SCC.

The Weyside team and GBC officers manage the relationship and monitor both financial and milestone progress of design and construction of the NSTW, as set out in the legal agreement dated 30 April 2019 between The Council and Thames Water.

The team do not have any jurisdiction to discuss Thames Water's obligations under Section 93 of the Water Industry Act. This is the role of the Water Services Regulation Authority; Ofwat."

In response to a supplementary question which sought clarification in respect of the Amber-Red status and a response in relation to the Council's obligations under Section 78 of the Water Industry Act 1991, and the likelihood of sewage pollution of the River Wey due to the water authority not meeting its statutory obligations, the Lead Councillor stated that all of the Council's projects were colour coded which meant that those which were Amber-Red required close monitoring. The new water sewage works, to be constructed by the water authority was being progressed as quickly as possible, but there had been delays because the Environment Agency had not responded promptly to consultations, which was why the project was amber rated. The Lead Councillor indicated that, generally, the project was progressing very well, but that he would contact the water authority in respect of the dumping of sewage and inform Councillor Potter accordingly.

- (b) **Councillor Tony Rooth** asked the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, the following question:

“Could the Lead Councillor confirm agreement that presentations slides/graphs on agenda items for all Council and committee meetings will be distributed to relevant/all councillors and published on the Council’s website at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting date/time. These presentations etc. are usually delivered at the meeting itself without prior inclusion in agenda or distributed prior to the meeting. At least 24 hours pre meeting distribution will give councillors and residents/public the time and opportunity to view, consider and comment on agenda items (with the benefit of prior sight of presentations etc.) in order to demonstrate openness and transparency to councillors and residents/the public alike.”

The Deputy Leader’s response to the question was as follows:

“I thank Cllr Rooth for his question.

Although we do not have control over third party providers, we do endeavour to circulate presentation slides for committee meetings to councillors and publish them online as soon as we can. However, occasionally it is not possible to do this for various reasons, for example where important information to be included in the presentation is not available.

I’m happy to confirm that we will always try to circulate such presentations to councillors and, where permissible, publish them online at least 24 hours before the Council/committee meeting.”

By way of a supplementary question, the Deputy Leader was asked to clarify his statement that “we do endeavour to circulate presentation, slides for committee meetings to councillors”, and to state which committee meetings such endeavour had been carried out. The Deputy Leader was also asked why this long overdue approach towards openness, and transparency had taken two years to introduce.

In response, the Deputy Leader indicated that Councillor Rooth had misunderstood the answer to his question, and that the approach had not changed over the past two years. The Deputy Leader reiterated that we would always try to circulate such presentations to councillors and, where permissible, publish them online at least 24 hours before a Council or committee meeting.

CO59 REVIEW OF COUNCILLORS’ ALLOWANCES 2023 - APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

The Council noted that it was required to conduct the next review of councillors’ allowances in 2023 following the local elections. Under The Local Authorities (Members’ Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (“the 2003 Regulations”), the Council must appoint an independent remuneration panel to make recommendations as to the type and level of allowances to be included in the next scheme of allowances for councillors. The Council had a duty to have regard to the panel’s recommendations.

Waverley Borough Council was also committed to conduct a review of allowances for its councillors following next year’s local elections.

Taking account of the current collaborative arrangements for joint working between Guildford and Waverley, the Corporate Management Board had supported the principle of establishing a Joint Independent Remuneration Panel to conduct separate reviews of the allowances payable to councillors of both authorities and make separate recommendations to both councils. The

panel would also act as a parish remuneration panel and would be required to produce a separate report collectively for the parish councils in Guildford borough and another report for the town and parish councils in Waverley borough.

The Council considered a report which set out a proposal to establish a joint independent remuneration panel, and had sought approval of its proposed terms of reference, a process for the recruitment of members to the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel (including the suggested re-appointment of three persons who had served previously on the independent remuneration panels for both Guildford and Waverley), level of honorarium to be paid to each panel member, and a proposed timetable for the appointment process and for the review itself next year.

Waverley Borough Council had delegated authority to its Monitoring Officer to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel. Waverley's Monitoring Officer would be invited to agree the process for the appointment of a Joint Independent Remuneration Panel as described in the report.

At its meeting on 22 September 2022 the Executive had considered this matter and had endorsed the recommendations in the report.

Upon the motion of the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, seconded by the Councillor Tom Hunt, the Council

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Council agrees to establish jointly with Waverley Borough Council a Joint Independent Remuneration Panel to conduct a review and make recommendations to each council on their respective scheme of allowances for councillors in 2023.
- (2) That the draft terms of reference of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel, attached as Appendix 1 to the report submitted to the Council, be approved.
- (3) That, subject to confirmation of their continued eligibility for appointment, Vivienne Cameron, Dennis Frost, and Gordon Manickam be appointed to the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel for a period of up to four years commencing with the 2023-24 municipal year.
- (4) That the Democratic Services and Elections Manager be authorised to advertise for candidates from the general public and a wide range of organisations, including the local business community and voluntary organisations, for the appointment of up to two other members of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel to serve for a period of up to four years commencing with the 2023-24 municipal year, and together with the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of both councils to shortlist, interview, and recommend for selection up to two nominees for appointment to the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel.
- (5) That the nominees for appointment to the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel referred to in paragraph (4) above be subject to formal approval by the Council at its full council meeting in February 2023.
- (6) That the honorarium to be paid to each Panel member be set at £1,500, the cost of which shall be divided equally between the two councils.
- (7) That the proposed timetable for appointment of the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel and review of Guildford's allowances set out in paragraph 4.13 of the report, be approved.

- (8) That provision be made in the 2023-24 revenue budget of £6,200 for the review of councillors' allowances.
- (9) That the Joint Monitoring Officer be authorised to make all arrangements for the establishment and appointment of future independent remuneration panels, including approval of terms of reference, honoraria for panel members, and timetables for appointment and reviews of allowances.

Reason:

To comply with the requirements of The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.

CO60 REVIEW OF NUMERICAL ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES TO POLITICAL GROUPS: 2022-23

The Council received a report on the review of the allocation of seats on committees, which had been conducted following receipt by the proper officer (Democratic Services and Elections Manager) on 27 September 2022 of notice in writing from Councillor Diana Jones that, with immediate effect, she no longer wished to be treated as a member of the Residents for Guildford and Villages group and wished to be regarded as a member of the Green Party.

Consequently, the political balance on the Council was now:

Guildford Liberal Democrats: 16
 Residents for Guildford and Villages: 15
 Conservatives: 8
 Guildford Greenbelt Group: 4
 Labour: 2
 Green: 1
 Independent: 1
 Vacancy: 1

Under Council Procedure Rule 23, whenever there was a change in the political constitution of the Council, the Council must, as soon as reasonably practicable, review the allocation of seats on committees to political groups.

The report included a suggested numerical allocation of seats on committees to political groups that would best meet, as far as reasonably practicable, the requirements for political balance.

Upon the motion of the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, seconded by the Councillor Tom Hunt, the Council

RESOLVED: That the numerical allocation of seats on committees to each political group on the Council, and to the single Green Party member and independent member, as set out below be approved pending a further review at the 6 December Council meeting following the outcome of the Tillingbourne ward by-election:

Committee	Guildford Liberal Democrats	Residents for Guildford & Villages	Conservatives	Guildford Greenbelt Group	Labour	Green	Independent
Total no. of seats on the Council (47 + 1 vacancy)	16	15	8	4	2	1	1
% of no. of seats on the Council	34.04%	31.91%	17.02%	8.51%	4.25%	2.13%	2.13%
Notional number of seats on committees (Total: 95)	32	30	16	8	4	2	2
Corporate Governance & Standards Committee (7 seats)	2	2	1	1	1	0	0
Employment Committee (3 seats)	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Service Delivery EAB (12 seats)	4	4	2	1	0	1	0
Strategy and Resources EAB (12 seats)	4	3	2	1	1	1	0
Guildford Joint Committee (10 seats)	3	3	2	1	0	0	1
Joint Appointments Committee (3 seats)	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Joint Governance Committee (6 seats)	2	2	1	1	0	0	0
Licensing Committee (15 seats)	6	5	2	1	0	0	1
Overview & Scrutiny Committee (12 seats)	4	4	2	1	1	0	0
Planning Committee (15 seats)	5	5	3	1	1	0	0
Total no. of seats on committees	32	30	17	8	4	2	2

CO61 TIMETABLE OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2023-24

The Council considered a report on the proposed timetable of Council and Committee meetings for the 2023-24 municipal year.

The proposed timetable had been drafted in consultation with Waverley Borough Council to avoid, as far as practicable, diary conflicts for the Joint Management Team.

The Executive had also considered the report at its meeting on 22 September 2022 and had recommended approval of the timetable as appended to the report.

Upon the motion of the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, seconded by the Councillor Tom Hunt, the Council

RESOLVED: That the proposed timetable of Council and Committee meetings for the 2023-24 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.

CO62 APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY FREEMAN

The Council considered a report on a nomination received for the appointment of Mr Keith Churchouse as Honorary Freeman of the Borough. Councillors were reminded that, under the Council's adopted Protocol on the appointment, role, status, rights and obligations of Honorary Freeman and Honorary Aldermen, a person shall be deemed eligible for appointment as an honorary freeman provided that they met all of the following requirements:

The person shall:

- be a person of distinction
- have given eminent service to the borough; and
- have a strong and continuing connection with and commitment to the borough of Guildford, or have made a major contribution to national life and in doing so have enhanced the reputation of the borough.

Details of Mr Churchouse's eminent and distinguished service to the Borough, were appended to the report submitted to the Council.

Councillor John Redpath proposed, and Councillor Paul Spooner seconded the following motion:

“That a special meeting of the Council be convened on Thursday 1 December 2022 at 7pm at the Guildhall for the purpose of conferring upon Mr Keith Churchouse the title of Honorary Freeman”.

During the debate on the motion, Councillor George Potter proposed, and Councillor Tony Rooth seconded, a procedural motion in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12 (x), to postpone consideration of the above-mentioned motion until the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

Following a debate on the procedural motion, it was put to the vote and was lost.

The Council therefore continued the debate on the original motion, and

RESOLVED: That a special meeting of the Council be convened on Thursday 1 December 2022 at 7pm at the Guildhall for the purpose of conferring upon Mr Keith Churchouse the title of Honorary Freeman.

Reason:

To recognise formally Mr Churchouse's eminent and distinguished service to the Borough of Guildford.

CO63 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE

The Council received and noted the minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 23 June, 21 July, and 25 August 2022.

CO64 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Upon the motion of The Mayor, Councillor Dennis Booth, seconded by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Masuk Miah the Council

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of the business contained in agenda item 15 on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraphs 1 and 4 of Schedule 12A to the 1972 Act.

CO65 APPROVAL OF TERMINATION PAYMENT ABOVE £95,000

In accordance with the Council's adopted Pay Policy Statement, the Council was invited to consider a proposed redundancy termination payment which exceeded the £95,000 threshold.

Upon the motion of the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Joss Bigmore, seconded by Councillor Tom Hunt, the Council

RESOLVED: That the Council approves the proposed termination payment associated with the redundancy of Post No. PO10033, in the total sum referred to in the table in paragraph 3.1 of the report submitted to the Council.

Reason:

The post-holder had been invited to express his interest in an Executive Head of Service post; however, he confirmed that he did not wish to be considered for these appointments. Approval for his redundancy termination pay was therefore needed.

CO66 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 8.16 pm

Signed

Mayor

Date