

TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road East, Oxted on the 16th December 2021 at 7.30 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Morrow (Chair), Wren (Vice-Chair), Allen, Blackwell*, Bloore*, Botten, Caulcott, Connolly*, Cooper*, Crane, Davies*, Dennis*, Duck, Elias*, Farr, Gaffney*, Gillman, Gray, Hammond, Langton, Lee, Jones, Lockwood, Mansfield*, Mills, Moore, North*, O'Driscoll, Prew, Pursehouse, Ridge, Shiner, Steeds, Stamp, Swann*, C.White and N.White*

** participated via Zoom and could not vote*

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Black, Bourne, Flower, Groves and Sayer

209. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 21ST OCTOBER 2021

Councillor Morrow advised that a correction needed to be made to Minute 166 regarding the voting on the Planning Committee's recommendations of the 29th July 2021, i.e. that Councillor O'Driscoll abstained from voting on the recommendation to grant planning permission for the proposed Council house development at Windmill Close, Caterham as opposed to Auckland Road.

Councillor Cooper, seconded by Councillor Ridge, also proposed an amendment regarding Minute 165 (questions submitted under Standing Order 30). This concerned the format of the text in connection with his second supplementary question to Question 2 in Appendix A to the minutes, namely that the last two sentences be shown in italics. The reason for this was to make the presentation consistent with that for the other questions and answers within the appendix. Upon being put to the vote, the proposal was lost.

Subject to the above-mentioned correction regarding Councillor O'Driscoll's abstention from the vote to grant planning permission for the proposed Council house development at Windmill Close, Caterham, the minutes were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

210. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Former colleagues

The Chair was sorry to announce that a former long serving Councillor and two ex-officer colleagues had passed away since the previous Council meeting, namely:

Tony Dalrymple, who served as a District Councillor for the Lingfield & Crowhurst Ward between 1986 and 2007. He was Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group (and 'de-facto Leader of the Council') for a period in the early 1990's and became Chairman of the Council in 1995/96. He was also Chairman of the former Policy & Finance and Planning & Environment Committees at different times and was made an Honorary Alderman in July 2007. Tony passed away on the 22nd October 2021.

Philip Thomas, who was the Council's longest serving Chief Executive, having been in post from the end of 1991 until his retirement in December 2003. Philip continued to live in the District until his untimely death on the 31st October 2021.

David Homewood, who served as a Committee Administrator and Committee Services Manager between 1989 and 2011. He died on the 6th December 2021 after a long period of ill health.

Members stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

Civic events

The Chair confirmed that, subject to the implications of possible Covid restrictions, the following civic fundraising events were planned:

- Saturday, 22nd January 2022 - Caterham Food Bank meal and quiz at the Westway Centre
- Friday, 11th February 2022 – St. Valentine's dinner dance at Bletchingley Golf Club
- Saturday, 19th March 2022 – concert at the Oxted United Reformed Church performed by members of the Robert Bouffler Music Trust.

211. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair, together with Councillors Bloore, Prew and Pursehouse, declared non-pecuniary interests in Minute 204 (CIL Working Group – 8th November 2021), the nature of their interests being that they were members of Warlingham Parish Council which had submitted the successful CIL application for financial assistance towards the Warlingham Green improvement project.

Councillor Botten declared a non-pecuniary interest regarding the fact that he was a founder trustee of the Westway Centre in Caterham, the Council's financial support for which was being considered as part of the budget setting process for 2022/23.

212. QUESTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER STANDING ORDER 30

Three questions were submitted by Councillor O'Driscoll, the contents of which are set out at **Appendix A**, together with responses from the relevant committee Chairs.

213. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

RESOLVED – that the reports of the following meetings be received, and the recommendations therein be adopted:

Audit & Scrutiny Committee - 2nd November 2021 (subject to Councillor Botten being added to the list of those present as a substitute member of the Committee)

Licensing Committee - 16th November 2021

Community Services Committee - 23rd November 2021

Planning Policy Committee - 25th November 2021 (subject to Councillor O'Driscoll being added to the list of those 'also present')

Housing Committee - 30th November 2021

Strategy & Resources Committee - 2nd December 2021

Rising 8.57 pm

Full Council 16th December 2021 – Standing Order 30 questions from Councillor O'Driscoll and responses from relevant Committee Chairs

1. Concerns have been raised about the construction materials shortage and its potential impact on construction of new homes in the District. Indeed, in the Housing Committee reports pack, there was talk of forecast delays of the construction of new Council homes at both Uplands and Bronzeroak House. Is there a possibility that further construction delays could be caused by this shortage in the short and medium term and is there a possibility of increased costs for the Council as a result of this?

Response from Councillor Pursehouse:

The shortage of materials and consequent rising costs in the construction industry has been well-publicised in the sector, and officers have reported previously on delays to handovers at Uplands and Bronzeroak as a direct result of this.

In Tandridge, contractors are doing all they can to keep delays to a minimum, including reprogramming the order of works, where possible, and stock-piling materials where it is practical to do so. The Council uses 'design and build' contracts for the council house building programme, and these involve fixed contract sums where, in the main, any cost increases during construction are absorbed by the contractor rather than the Council. Therefore, the contractor carries the risk.

However, we are expecting the uncertainty around supplies and pricing to continue well into 2022; with steel, cement, blocks, glass and ceramics impacted the most, especially where these products involve import from outside the UK.

We can anticipate contractors building this uncertainty into their tenders and, as a result, we expect construction costs to increase and officers will be carefully monitoring existing budgets and increasing contingencies on new schemes in response.

2. Residents are concerned about the reduction of service by Southern Rail on the Caterham Branch Line serving Caterham and Whyteleafe that took effect earlier this week, reducing the number of trains an hour from 4 to 2. While I'm hopeful this is only temporary during the pandemic, residents are also concerned about the removal by stealth of the direct Caterham to London Victoria services, which is requiring residents to change at East Croydon to get to Victoria. I share these concerns residents have. Will the Leader of the Council join us in expressing concern at these service reductions and take steps to address these concerns with Southern Rail?

Response from Councillor Wren (on behalf of the Leader of the Council)

Myself and other Members have become very aware of the adverse impact of Southern Rail's service reductions upon Tandridge commuters. This is a District wide issue and the Leader will make representations to Southern Rail to express the Council's concerns on behalf of its residents. We will also seek the support of Claire Coutinho MP in submitting these representations and would encourage residents to write to Claire to demonstrate the depth of feeling within our communities.

3. Many in our District, myself included, enjoy watching and playing football. In recognition that next year is a FIFA World Cup year, what can this Council do to arrange an event in Tandridge to celebrate the World Cup next year?

Response from Councillor Wren

There are no plans at the moment to celebrate the World Cup but I would be happy to work with you, as Chair of the Community Services Committee, to pursue ideas ... officers are busy with key council priorities so it would be good to make this a Member led initiative, possibly including an in-house sweep stake(s) with proceeds being allocated to the Chair of the Council's chosen charities for 2022/23. Members are welcome to approach me with ideas and we could work together to raise some money and make it something to remember.