

# DRAFT

Note: These Minutes will remain DRAFT until approved at the next meeting of the Committee

## COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 2018

**Councillors Present:** Steve Ardagh-Walter, Peter Argyle (Vice-Chairman), Howard Bairstow, Pamela Bale, Jeremy Bartlett, Jeff Beck, Dominic Boeck, Graham Bridgman, Jeff Brooks, Paul Bryant, Jeanette Clifford, Hilary Cole, James Cole, Jason Collis, Richard Crumly, Lee Dillon, Lynne Doherty, Billy Drummond, Sheila Ellison, Marcus Franks, James Fredrickson, Dave Goff, Manohar Gopal, Paul Hewer, Carol Jackson-Doerge (Chairman), Marigold Jaques, Mike Johnston, Graham Jones, Rick Jones, Alan Law, Tony Linden, Mollie Lock, Gordon Lundie, Alan Macro, Tim Metcalfe, Ian Morrin, Graham Pask, Anthony Pick, James Podger, Garth Simpson, Richard Somner, Virginia von Celsing, Quentin Webb, Emma Webster and Laszlo Zverko

**Also Present:** John Ashworth (Corporate Director - Environment), Joanne Bassett (Public Relations Assistant), Tandra Forster (Head of Adult Social Care), Shiraz Sheikh (Principal Solicitor), Gabrielle Mancini (Group Executive - Conservatives) and Jo Reeves (Principal Policy Officer)

**Apologies for inability to attend the meeting:** Councillor Dennis Benneyworth, Nick Carter, Councillor Anthony Chadley, Councillor Keith Chopping, Councillor Adrian Edwards, Councillor Clive Hooker, Honorary Alderman Royce Longton and Councillor Anthony Stansfeld

**Councillor Absent:** Councillor Rob Denton-Powell

#### PART I

#### 34. Chairman's Remarks

The Chairman reported that she, the Chairman's consort and Vice-Chairman had attended 26 events between them since the last Council meeting. Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge made specific mention of the Family Hubs second birthday celebration.

The Chairman noted the launch of the Community Champion Awards asking Members to promote the awards and to submit nominations.

Finally, the Chairman announced that Dr Kevin Hawkins OBE had sadly passed away that week. Dr Hawkins was Vice-Chairman of Pangbourne Parish Council. The Council sent thoughts and sympathy to his wife and thanks for his contribution as a Parish Councillor.

#### 35. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 03 July 2018 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 36. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

#### 37. Petitions

There were no petitions presented to the meeting.

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### 38. Public Questions

A full transcription of the public and Member question and answer sessions are available from the following link: [Transcription of Q&As](#).

- (a) A question standing in the name of Mr Gabriel Stirling on the subject of why Councillor Boeck had not been removed from the Executive was answered by the Leader of the Council.
- (b) A question standing in the name of Mr Simon Pike on the subject of the Council's participation in the Rural Connected Communities project was answered by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development and Communications.

*(Councillor Jeremy Bartlett joined the meeting at 7.07pm.)*

### 39. Membership of Committees

There had been no changes to the membership of Committees since the previous Council meeting.

### 40. Licensing Committee

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Licensing Committee had not met.

### 41. Personnel Committee

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Personnel Committee had not met.

### 42. Governance and Ethics Committee

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Governance and Ethics Committee had met on 30 July 2018 and the special meeting on the 08 August 2018.

### 43. District Planning Committee

In a correction to the information provided on the summons, the Council noted that since the last meeting, the District Planning Committee had met on 11 July 2018.

### 44. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had met on 10 July 2018.

### 45. Joint Public Protection Committee

The Council noted that, since the last meeting, the Joint Public Protection Committee had not met.

### 46. Family Hub Fees and Charges (C3633)

The Council considered a report (Agenda Item 14) which set out a request to change the fees and charges for Family Hubs part way through the year.

**MOTION:** Proposed by Councillor Lynne Doherty and seconded by Councillor Rick Jones:

That the Council:

1. "approves the proposed in-year changes (to introduce new fees and charges for activities) to the fees and charges within Family Hubs across West Berkshire.
2. Introduces the charges in two phases. The first from September 2018 until March 2019 providing a transition from voluntary contributions to fixed charges and a booking system. This would be followed by a review of the booking system,

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income generation and feedback moving to a full programme of charges from April 2019.”

Councillor Lynne Doherty noted that since 2016, voluntary contributions had been made towards activities at Family Hubs. By setting Fees and Charges, the Council would ensure that the amounts requested were made consistent across the District. It was proposed to trial the system and undertake a review in advance of the Council meeting in March 2019.

Councillor Mollie Lock expressed concern that the fees and charges were not made clear in the report and requested that the proposal be worked on further.

Councillor Lee Dillon stated that the Council was being asked to approve ranges, rather than specific fees and charges, which was not usual practice. He questioned the legality of the proposal.

Councillor Alan Macro asked how low income families would be supported to access activities at Family Hubs. He expressed the view that the consultation should have been repeated since 2016.

Councillor Doherty responded that the Family Hubs would continue to offer activities that were good value for money, for example a voluntary contribution of £6 would be requested for baby massage which was £20 on the open market. The range of £2 to £6 would offer flexibility to trial the system before incorporating set fees and charges into the Council's budget. Any child with a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need status would be exempt from fees and referring agencies would be asked to provide information regarding any vulnerabilities. Targeted activities would remain free. Feedback was continuously sought from users of the Family Hubs and the Family Hubs Advisory Board, of which Councillor Lock was a member, had received that information.

At the request of the Chairman, Shiraz Sheikh confirmed that Legal Services were satisfied with the proposals.

Councillor Rick Jones express his support for the recommendations and stated that he recognised that Family Hubs were a valuable resource which support good health and wellbeing outcomes for children. The proposals would improve the sustainability of Family Hubs.

The Motion was put to the meeting and duly **RESOLVED**.

### 47. Notices of Motion

#### (a) Unauthorised Encampments

The Council considered the under-mentioned Motion (Agenda item 15a refers) submitted in the name of Councillor Alan Macro relating to the assessment of the susceptibility of the Council's green areas in towns and villages to unauthorised encampments.

The Chairman informed the Council that the Motion would be referred to the Executive without debate.

**MOTION:** Proposed by Councillor Alan Macro and seconded by Councillor Lee Dillon:

That:

- “1) There were a large number of unauthorised encampments in the district this year.
- 2) Several of these were on land owned by the Council.
- 3) There are many green areas in towns and villages that are owned by the Council and that are vulnerable to unauthorised encampments.

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4) The police are restricted by guidance from the Chief Police Officers Council in their use of their powers under Section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 to direct persons to move off unauthorised sites.

The Council therefore resolves that an assessment of the susceptibility of each of its green areas in towns and villages to unauthorised encampments be urgently carried out. The assessment should assess each site on its vulnerability to incursions and the likely impact on nearby homes. The assessment to be used to prioritise a programme to improve the security of the sites against future incursions.”

### **(b) Sky Lanterns**

The Council considered the under-mentioned Motion (Agenda item 15b refers) submitted in the name of Councillor Jeanette Clifford relating to the use of sky lanterns on land controlled and operated by the Council.

The Chairman informed the Council that the Motion would be debated at the meeting.

**MOTION:** Proposed by Councillor Jeanette Clifford and seconded by Councillor Tim Metcalfe which included the amendment tabled in writing at the meeting

That the Council:

“agrees that the use of sky lanterns on properties which are controlled and operated by West Berkshire Council should be banned.

It calls on the Leader to write to West Berkshire MPs, other Berkshire authorities, West Berkshire town and parish councils, the LGA, DEFRA and MHCLG confirming a ban in West Berkshire and calling for a ban throughout England and Wales.

Also known as ‘Chinese’, ‘Wish’, ‘Floating’ and ‘Party’ Lanterns, Sky Lanterns are made from paper over wire or bamboo frames and have an open flame heat source.

Increasingly popular, it is estimated that 200,000 are released in the UK each year but - beautiful though they are - they are deadly to wildlife, present a real risk of fire to buildings and land, can be mistaken for emergency flares, and end up littering our lovely countryside.

The RSPCA has called for a ban, as have the Marine Conservation Society, the NFU and others. West Berkshire should heed that call and members are urged to support this Motion.”

The Motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

### **(c) Councillors’ Behaviour**

The Council considered the under-mentioned Motion (Agenda item 15c refers) submitted in the name of Councillor Jeff Brooks relating to Councillor’s behaviour.

The Chairman informed the Council that the Motion would be debated at the meeting.

**MOTION:** Proposed by Councillor Jeff Brooks and seconded by Councillor Lee Dillon:

That the Council:

“Goodwill and respect is essential from all Councillors to achieve the good working needed to best represent the people of West Berkshire.

Accordingly, this Council resolves to remain respectful at all times to members of the public and Councillors of both political Parties, acknowledging their right to disagree and have different policies and objectives, without resorting to unpleasant and vituperative comments which simply sour relations and undermine political goodwill.”

The Motion was put to the vote and declared **CARRIED**.

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### **48. Members' Questions**

No questions were submitted by Members.

*(The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and closed at 8.07pm)*

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature** .....