

**MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF
THE COUNCIL
HELD ON FRIDAY 16 JANUARY 2015 FROM 7.00PM TO 7.35PM**

Present:- Alistair Auty, Keith Baker, Chris Bowring, Prue Bray, David Chopping, UllaKarin Clark, Gary Cowan, Michael Firmager, Lindsay Ferris, Kay Gilder, Mike Gore, Pauline Helliard-Symons, Tim Holton, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Dianne King, Tom McCann, Julian McGhee-Sumner, Philip Mirfin, Stuart Munro, Anthony Pollock, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross, Beth Rowland, David Sleight, Rob Stanton, Alison Swaddle and Bob Wyatt

62. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Mark Ashwell, Parry Bath, Guy Grandison, Kate Haines, Mike Haines, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, John Halsall, Philip Houldsworth, Nicky Jerome, Abdul Loyes, Bob Pitts, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, Chris Singleton, Bill Soane, Paul Swaddle, Dee Tomlin, Simon Weeks and Shahid Younis

63. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In case the matter was mentioned Councillor Tom McCann declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 60.00 Timetable of Meetings by virtue of the fact that his daughter worked for a company that did the promotion for Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration. Councillor McCann remained in the Chamber during discussions and voted on the item.

64. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions received.

65. TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2014/15

The Council considered a request from the Liberal Democrat Group to hold an additional Full Council meeting in January 2015 and add this into the 2014/15 Timetable of Meetings. It was also requested that a January Council meeting be added to future Timetables of Meetings in addition to those meetings currently scheduled.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group tabled her recommendation and provided an explanation of why her Group was requesting an additional meeting in January which they wished to be a permanent change for future years. Councillor Bray put forward that there were currently only six scheduled Council meetings and because motions and Member questions were not able to be submitted to the February Council meeting this led to no opportunity being available between the November and March meetings to ask Member questions and submit motions; particularly as some of the matters might be time sensitive. Councillor Bray also stated that there were few opportunities for the public to ask questions and submit petitions between November and February.

During discussion it was highlighted that there had been a need in the last two years to convene a Special Council Executive Committee in January to determine the Council Tax Base, which had to be agreed prior to budget Council, as information on this item had not been available in time for the November Council meeting. This item could be taken to a January Council meeting which would provide an opportunity for all Members to take part in the discussion.

Members also highlighted that at the November 2014 meeting there had not been enough time to consider all the motions that had been submitted to the meeting.

Members of the Conservative Group emphasised that there were actually ample opportunities to ask questions at a number of other public meetings throughout the year. These included Executive meetings, of which there were nine in a year, and also other committee meetings including, Audit, any of the Scrutiny Committees, Health and Wellbeing Board etc; provided the questions related to matters within the scope of the relevant committee. It was noted that very few Member questions were actually asked at these meetings.

It was also pointed out that the motions that had been submitted to the November Council meeting by the Liberal Democrat Group had not appeared to be time sensitive. It was felt that if the motions had been prioritised by importance, and if there had been fewer questions put forward by Liberal Democrat Members, then there would have been at least an additional 30-40 minutes available which would have been sufficient time to have considered at least one other motion.

Councillors Chopping and Cowan raised concerns that Members had not had previous sight of the recommendations put forward by the Liberal Democrat Group and that the second recommendation had not been mentioned in the agenda and therefore could be seen as an amendment to the original proposal. Due to the fact that nothing within the Constitution prohibited what was being proposed the Mayor ruled that the second recommendation was admissible. It was agreed that the Constitution Review Working Group would be asked to review the process that had been followed for this item in order to identify any changes that might be required for the future.

It was proposed by Prue Bray and seconded by Lindsay Ferris that:

- 1) *an additional Council meeting be added to the Timetable of Meetings 2014/15 and that this meeting be held on a date to be agreed in January 2015;*
- 2) *future Timetable of Meetings include a Council meeting in January in addition to those currently scheduled for May, July, September, November, February and March.*

Upon being put to the vote the recommendations were declared by the Mayor to be lost.

These are the Minutes of an Extraordinary meeting of the Council

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