

**MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF
THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICHESTER HELD
ON WEDNESDAY 26 APRIL 2021 AT 2.00PM**

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor Plowman)
Deputy Mayor (Councillor J Hughes)
Councillors Apel, Barrie, Bell, Carter, Dignum, Gaskin, Harry,
C Hughes, K Hughes, Joy, Lishman, Scicluna and Sharp

APOLOGIES: Councillor Gershater

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Mayor's Chaplain,
Mayoral/Administrative Assistant and Member Services Support Officer
West Sussex County Councillors Simon Oakley and Jamie Fitzjohn
Mr Simon Lloyd-Williams (resident)
Dr Linda Boize (resident)

ABSENT: Councillor Turbfield

66 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

As recorded above.

67 MINUTES OF COUNCIL

RESOLVED that the minutes of the virtual Meeting of Council held on 17 February 2021 (pages 185-189) and the virtual Meeting of Council-in-Committee held on 10 March 2021 (pages 193-194) having been printed and circulated, be approved, adopted and signed as a correct record at a later date,

68 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (i) The Mayor said that he had attended a Memorial Service held for the late HRH The Duke of Edinburgh at Chichester Cathedral which he said had been a very moving occasion.
- (ii) The Mayor was very pleased to see reference made to the late HRH, The Duke of Edinburgh, by Philip Jackson, at the recent Freedom Ceremony. The Mayor also expressed special thanks to the Member Services Support Officer and officers for all their work in connection with the smooth running of the Freedom Ceremony which he said had been so well received.
- (iii) He mentioned the Council House Portico planning application for the enclosure of the portico which he said had now been withdrawn by the City Council and would be re-presented in the future. The Mayor said, that for this reason, it was not necessary for any further debate to take place at this time.
- (iv) The Mayor wished to thank his fellow Councillors and in particular the Town Clerk and staff who had maintained the smooth running of the office during these challenging times. He referred also to the Chichester Community Network (CNN) which had played an active part during the pandemic.

Councillor Apel, on behalf of Councillors, thanked the Mayor for all his hard work during his Mayoral year throughout these very challenging times.

The Mayor's Chaplain left the meeting.

69 QUESTIONS

To answer questions (if any) from members of the public being residents of the City pursuant to Standing Order 1

The Mayor brought forward Item 11 at this point, as the questions were covering the same topic, namely the Neighbourhood Plan. Dr Linda Boize had presented her question to the Council by email prior to the Council meeting (this is attached to the minutes for ease of reference). Dr Boize was invited to present her question verbally to Council.

The Mayor read the response to the question and advised Council that the Neighbourhood Plan had been through a thorough review by Richard Eastham of Ferria Urbanism. The Mayor said that communication was the main issue that needed to be addressed. The City Council website would be updated regularly with updates and timescales and also a newsletter in electronic and in paper form would be produced.

It was hoped that when restrictions were eased, there would be more public meetings and exhibitions of plans. The Mayor also referred to Facebook as a good platform to promote the Neighbourhood Plan. He said that the PLACE training exercise was very good. He re-iterated that the plan needed to be transparent and would be subject to an independent inspector and also the residents of Chichester.

Dr Boize thanked the Mayor and was pleased to see that the contribution from the public was mentioned. However, she felt that Facebook was a poor medium for discussion and despite the large number of people on it there were limited numbers of people posting. She said that disappointingly only two postings had been made about the Ferria Urbanism PLACE exercise. It was the "how" that needed to be seen as "how" to go about it. She did not know where to send the information and felt that this was lacking and needed to be clearer.

The Mayor said that the re-vamped website would address this issue. It would be very much an interactive website which would be the "how to". He appreciated that many people did not have internet access and said that the proposed Newsletter would help with this.

The Mayor referred to the question received from Councillor Sharp which had not been received in time under Standing Order 8. It was noted that Councillor Sharp had previously circulated her question to members and this is attached to the minutes for ease of reference. However, the Mayor would ask Richard Eastham to respond to Councillor Sharp's question separately.

Councillor Scicluna requested that all Councillors be in receipt of the response from Richard Eastham to Councillor Sharp's question. The Mayor confirmed this.

Councillor Bell wished to refer to the Neighbourhood Plan under Item 9. The Mayor requested Councillor Bell to bring in new points.

Councillor Gaskin, referring to Minute 122(c)/103(c) - Council House Portico - of the Finance Committee Minutes of 6 April 2021, enquired whether the application to enclose the portico/undercroft at the Council House was going to be re-submitted in mitigated form, in light of the weight of objections received from Chichester City Parishioners.

The Mayor said that this would be discussed further at the appropriate time.

70 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

(a) Planning and Conservation Committee

4 March 2021 (pages 190-192)
1 April 2021 (pages 204-208)

It was moved by Councillor Joy, Chairman of the Committee, that the minutes of the meetings held on 4 March 2021 and 1 April 2021 be approved and adopted.

Councillor Scicluna referred to Minute 115 and wished to clarify that she was not a member of Chichester District Council.

The Mayor referred to Minute 104 had said that he had spoken to Gary Herman, the Managing Director of Bartholomews about the Bartholomews sign and said that the original letters would be retained and a new symbol would retain the original lettering.

It was RESOLVED that the original motion put by Councillor Joy that the minutes of the meetings held on 4 March 201 and 1 April 2021 be approved and adopted.

(b) Finance Committee

6 April 2021 (pages 209-215)

It was moved by Councillor Scicluna, as Chairman of the Committee that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 April 2021 be approved and adopted.

Councillor K Hughes referred to Minute 119 and wished to record that he had given apologies for the meeting.

Councillor Scicluna drew the City Council's attention to the following:

To note the following for approval and adoption:

Minute 127 refers - New City Council Financial Regulations

Post meeting note: The Town Clerk has advised that, given the textual changes and significant reformatting since the previous regulations approved in 2017; the revised document should be presented to Full Council on 21 April 2021 (postponed to 26 April 2021) for approval so that the new Chichester City Council Financial Regulations (revised February 2021) can be adopted as the governing document for the City Council.

(i) Property Sub-Committee – 24 March 2021

It was RESOLVED that the original motion put by Councillor Scicluna that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 April 2021 be approved and adopted.

(c) Community Affairs Committee

29 March 2021 (pages 195-203)
12 April 2021 (pages 216-219)

Councillor Scicluna, referring to the Special minutes of 12 April 2021 (Discretionary Grants) expressed thanks to the Chairman for her exemplary Chairmanship of that difficult meeting.

Councillor Apel was pleased to say that several letters of thanks had been received.

It was moved by Councillor Apel, as Chairman of the Committee, that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2021 and 12 April 2021 be approved and adopted.

71 SOUTH DOWNS SAFER ROADS AND THE A27 – CHICHESTER

Councillor Bell said that the information for this item had been previously circulated, he thanked Councillor Sharp, Dr Linda Boize and the Town Clerk for their assistance in preparing a response to the Police outlining the issues, namely anti-social speeding and driving by through traffic (cars and motorcycles) particularly around Stockbridge and Whyke roundabouts. The formal response from the City Council was appended to the agenda. Councillor Bell was particularly concerned about the noise pollution. The Mayor welcomed the initiative and expressed thanks to Councillor Bell for his work.

72 REMOTELY HELD MEETINGS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Town Clerk had prepared a report (appended to the agenda) and the Mayor was eager to have some initial thoughts from the Council prior to the outcome of the Court hearing on 21 April 2021 which would make a decision on the feasibility of continuing with remotely held meetings. The Town Clerk outlined the advantages and disadvantages of holding both remote and face-to-face meetings. The Mayor invited members to address the meeting on this matter.

Councillor Scicluna said that she felt it should be at the discretion of the local authority as to whether they continue with remotely held meetings.

The Mayor was supportive of continuing with remotely held meetings and referred to the safety aspect of holding face-to-face meetings and the ever-changing criteria.

Councillor Joy was hopeful that remotely held meetings continue as there was more public engagement and they were more sustainable regarding travelling etc, and more convenient for those working in different areas who could access the meeting from their place of work if they wished to attend.

After discussion, the Council felt that their preferred approach was to continue with remotely held meetings.

Councillor Dignum said that this was a question of adjusting to different circumstances and felt that the vaccination programme should be enough to allay any fears of holding public meetings with social distancing in place. He was in favour of asking for a mix and match solution.

Councillor Lishman re-iterated Councillor Joy's views on the benefit of being able to attend remote meetings whilst working and commented that more people were engaging in the remotely held meetings, particularly with young people.

Councillor K Hughes indicated his support also.

The Mayor commented on the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic and sought the views of Council on continuing remotely held meetings.

It was put to the vote and **RESOLVED** to continue with remotely held meetings for the time being and noting that the matter may need to be revisited once the Court Judgement had been received.

73 REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Apel, as the City Council's representative on the Chichester Welfare Trust, commented on the valuable financial help given to Mayor's Hardship Fund and also to people most in need.

Councillor Scicluna, as the City Council's representative on the three Twinning Associations, namely: Chartres, Ravenna and Valletta, commented on how valuable the remotely held meetings had been in bringing people together and the international friendship during the pandemic, resulting in extra members.

The Mayor, as the City Council's representative on the Goodwood Airfield Consultative Committee and the Goodwood Motor Circuit Consultative Committee said concerns had been expressed about the Raughmere Farm (Daffodil Field) planning application and safety aspects associated with this.

74 WARD REPORTS FROM CHICHESTER CITY COUNCILLORS

Councillor Bell, as a Central Ward representative, referred to the Neighbourhood Plan and questioned who was leading the production of the Neighbourhood Plan and had thought this to be the Mayor in Office. The Mayor said that the Steering Group was chaired by someone independent as the inspectors needed a degree of independence, he was the lead Councillor, but was happy to defer to the new Mayor if this was the expectation. He commended the good work carried out by the CCN who had been very supportive during the pandemic, particularly with the Mayor's Hardship Fund. He said that the CCN were part of many groups who would be consulted on the Neighbourhood Plan which needed to be inclusive.

Councillor Bell also referred to the concern of Residents Associations to the South of the City about the possibility within the Local Plan for there to be an upgrade of the A27. He said that the resulting disruption of traffic cutting through the city for several years (possibly 2 or 3) was a major concern. The Mayor said that any Neighbourhood Plan would be in line with the Local Plan which was the driving force, and that some policies may be able to be put in place such as restricting certain vehicular access through the city.

Councillor Apel, as a West Ward representative, referred to Whitehouse Farm and the concern expressed due to the developers planting hundreds of trees which appeared to be dying due to lack of watering There was also turf on the roundabout which was also dying due to lack of water The Mayor would write to the directors and express the Council's concerns. Councillor Apel also expressed concern at the unnecessary lighting up of show homes 24 hours a day and the light pollution created by this.

The Deputy Mayor referred to the Neighbourhood Plan and said that he felt that the Mayor, who had driven the Neighbourhood Plan for the past 2-3 years, should continue to be the lead Councillor for the City. The Mayor welcomed this and said that he was keen for the Neighbourhood Plan, as the peoples plan, to proceed.

Councillor Lishman, as an East Ward representative, referring to the recent Community Affairs Committee, enquired as to retirement of the current Treasurer and secretary from the Swanfield Community Centre and as to whether there had been a replacement found. Councillor C Hughes, who was on the Committee, said that a new Treasurer had been found but they were in the process of engaging a secretary for the Community Centre which was in hand. She would be attending a meeting with the management of the Community Centre and that the community was being well looked after. Councillor Lishman was pleased to note this.

Councillor Gaskin, as a South Ward representative, said she had engaged with residents on Charles Avenue Residents Engagement Group. She also wished to re-iterate that at the 1 April 2021 meeting of the Planning and Conservation Committee where a strong objection had been raised regarding the potential loss of the architectural importance of the St Bartholomew's building.

Councillor Fitzjohn wished to correct that the Stockbridge Link Road and the A27 upgrade would be 8-9 years and not as previously stated by Councillor Bell as 2-3 years.

Councillor Bell thanked Councillor Fitzjohn for his correction.

75 REPORTS FROM CHICHESTER DISTRICT AND WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL'S WARD MEMBERS

The Mayor said that at the last Chichester District Council Planning Committee, an Article 7 Direction was passed to remove all the display boards put up by Estate Agents on all buildings in the Conservation Area for a period of 10 years which was welcomed.

Councillor Scicluna was pleased to note this as she said the boards were visually very unattractive. Councillor Bell asked if this decision could be appealed against and the Mayor confirmed that this could not be the case.

Councillor Oakley commented on the Estate Agents boards appearing on City Council street name signs and said this was a continuing problem. He commented on the investment strategy for the A27 improvements. He said that regarding the noise issues that there had been engagement with the police and that to find a legislative solution was a challenge. He said it was important to keep the profile up on this as this was an ongoing issue. He said that the Swanfield area additional parking restrictions were continuing, and mid-May was the planned date for permit schemes. Westhampnett recycling site was not subject to the pre-booking system, other sites in the County with lesser queuing had come forward.

Councillor Apel was disappointed to note the ongoing research in connection with the A27 upgrade which had been in discussion for some years. Councillor Oakley commented that the focus needed to be kept up to provide a long-term solution and prevent through-traffic causing congestion in the city.

Councillor Fitzjohn re-iterated Councillor Apel's comments. He understood the frustration on the daffodil field application but felt concern that if the current Local Plan was accepted that the Stockbridge link road and the A27 improvements would be part of this process. He felt that perhaps in the longer term, reliance on the motor vehicle needed to be addressed.

Councillor Fitzjohn was pleased to announce that the residential care homes residents who had visitors who, because they were not residents of the City, were not eligible for parking permits, that this had now been overturned.

Councillor Fitzjohn wished to express his grateful thanks to the Town Clerk and the officers for all their hard work.

The Mayor expressed his thanks to Councillor Fitzjohn, who was standing down as a County Councillor and said that he would be sorely missed.

76 COMMON SEAL

RESOLVED that Common Seal be affixed to any documents necessary to give effect to the resolutions passed at the meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.34pm.