

Council

A meeting of Council was held on Wednesday, 21st September, 2022.

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Cllr Ross Patterson); Cllr Louise Baldock, Cllr Jim Beall, Cllr Pauline Beall, Cllr Jacky Bright, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Lisa Evans, Cllr Dan Fagan, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr John Gardner, Cllr Lynn Hall, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Tina Large, Cllr Steve Matthews, Cllr Mrs Ann McCoy, Cllr David Minchella, Cllr Mick Moore, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Michael Smith, Cllr Lee Spence, Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Hugo Stratton, Cllr Ted Strike, Cllr Marilyn Surtees, Cllr Hilary Vickers, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Alan Watson, Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Cllr Paul Weston, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

Officers: Julie Danks (MD), Beccy Brown, Julie Butcher, Peter Bell, John Devine, Michael Henderson (CS), Garry Cummings (F,D&R&DMD), Martin Gray (ChS), Reuben Kench (CS,E&C), Ann Workman (A&H).

Also in attendance: Members of the public.

Apologies: Cllr Helen Atkinson, Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Luke Frost, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Steve Walmsley and Cllr Julia Whitehill.

C **Welcome** **42/22**

The Worshipful the Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the arrangements for the meeting.

C **Declarations of Interest** **43/22**

There were no interests declared.

C **Minute's Silence** **44/22**

This was the first full Council meeting following the passing of the late Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth II. On hearing of her passing the Worshipful the Mayor wrote to Her Majesty's Private Secretary to send deepest condolences on behalf of members and residents of the Borough.

Sadness at this time had been shared by people across the globe as everyone remember with great affection and gratitude the lifetime of service given by the longest reigning Monarch.

Her Majesty was an extraordinary person, who lived an extraordinary life: a constant presence and example, guiding and serving the country.

Throughout her reign, and seven decades of extraordinary change and challenge, Her Majesty was the epitome of duty, stability, wisdom and grace.

In 1947, before she ascended to the throne, she stated that "My whole life, whether it be long or short, will be devoted in service."

Her Majesty honoured that promise. Hers was a life of service which would echo through the ages. The Borough would be forever grateful.

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

C Minutes

45/22

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 20 July 2022 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

C Show Racism the Red Card

46/22

Show Racism the Red Card was a charity that delivered training, workshops, and other resources to tackle racism across the UK. The Council would be supporting their “Wear Red Day” on Friday 21 October by holding an all-day fundraising event for staff including wellbeing sessions, rounders, and 5-a-side football.

The Worshipful the Mayor thanked everyone for showing their support by participating in the photograph before the meeting and encouraged Members to wear red on 21st October and donate to the charity.

The Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety reported that Show Racism the Red Card was the UK's leading anti-racism educational charity. Established in England in January 1996, the charity harnesses the high-profile nature of footballers as anti-racist role models to educate against racism throughout the Country. Through their educational workshops, training sessions, multimedia packages, and a whole host of other resources, “Show Racism the Red Card” delivered training to more than 50,000 individuals a year.

At Stockton the Council was proud, once again, to support the Show Racism the Red Card campaign.

C Public Question Time

47/22

The Head of Legal Services informed Members that no Public Questions had been received.

C Consideration of the provision of free school meals for all primary school children in the Borough – Response from Cabinet

48/22

The Worshipful the Mayor advised Members that the motion on the consideration of the provision of free school meals for all primary school children in the Borough – Response from Cabinet would not be moved and seconded to enable further clarity on the procedure to be provided and therefore the matter was deferred to a later meeting.

RESOLVED that the item be deferred.

C Appointments to Committees

49/22

At its Annual Meeting, held on Wednesday 22 May 2019, the Council approved appointments to its Committees, Panels and Joint/Outside Bodies for 2019/23. Council was asked to consider the following:-

Planning Committee – Remove Cllr Norma Stephenson – Add Cllr Barry Woodhouse

Executive Scrutiny Committee – Remove Cllr Ken Dixon – Add Cllr Kevin Faulks

RESOLVED that the above amendments be agreed.

**C
50/22**

Motion

The following motion had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 3.40 by Cllr Niall Innes, seconded by Cllr Tony Riordan:-

"As a Borough we have many green and open spaces that we all enjoy. Some of these areas have received their names not through any formal process, but through generations of local residents referring to them based on their locality.

With the tragic passing of Her Majesty the Queen, there could be no greater tribute for local areas to make than to be able to name our parks and open spaces after our longest serving and greatest monarch should we wish. Currently no such option is available to us.

I therefore ask that this council produce and implement a procedure that allows applications for the naming of areas of public greenspace and parks as a means of providing a lasting memorial."

Moved by Councillor Bob Cook, seconded by Councillor Lisa Evans that the substantive motion be amended as follows:-

"Replace the last paragraph of the motion with one that reads:-

"Council expands the remit of the Commemoration Working Group to consider applications for the naming of areas of public greenspace and parks."

Following a debate a vote took place and it was agreed that the amendment be carried and therefore the amendment became the substantive motion.

No further amendments were moved so a vote then took place on the substantive motion.

The substantive motion was unanimously carried as follows:-

"As a Borough we have many green and open spaces that we all enjoy. Some of these areas have received their names not through any formal process, but through generations of local residents referring to them based on their locality.

With the tragic passing of Her Majesty the Queen, there could be no greater tribute for local areas to make than to be able to name our parks and open spaces after our longest serving and greatest monarch should we wish. Currently no such option is available to us.

I therefore ask that Council expands the remit of the Commemoration Working

Group to consider applications for the naming of areas of public greenspace and parks.”

C
51/22 **Members Question Time**

The following question had been submitted by Councillor Tony Riordan:-

“Due the inflammatory/libellous newsletter sent to residents of the Bishopsgarth and Elm Tree Ward in August of this year, is it your intention to take the matter further and seek legal advice?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

“I am not aware of the specific leaflet to which you are referring. However I can confirm that if you have any concerns about any publication then I would encourage you to submit a complaint through the appropriate channels.”

Councillor Tony Riordan asked the following supplementary question:-

“If I could bring this to your attention Councillor Cook, this newsletter that was circulated by Councillor Minchella in August this year, it contains defamatory statements saying that a leading member of the Conservative Party is complicit in lawbreaking, it goes on that the Conservative Party from top to bottom stood in a public place and lied to their faces, so this question is exactly the same wording as you were asked last year about a libellous defamatory newsletter on that occasion you said you would be taking legal advice, are you going to take legal advice or are you not because I’m a Conservative member raising an issue?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

“No, I won’t be taking legal advice, the leaflet that you are taking about had your name on it and was circulated in the Fairfield Ward and referred to Labour Members and Councillor Perry, I didn’t seek legal advice from the Council I sought legal advice from the Labour Party. If you think that that is a libellous newsletter you should seek legal advice from the Conservative Party. The Council isn’t there to give legal advice on political newsletters. I would suggest that it’s my view that all newsletters and communications should abide by the Nolan Principles and the guidance in our code of conduct.”

As a point of order Councillor Tony Riordan asked for the clarification as to whether last year had Councillor Bob Cook responded as the Leader of the Council or as the Leader of the Labour Party. Councillor Bob Cook responded that he had responded as the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Labour Party.

The following question had been submitted by Councillor Tony Riordan:-

“It had recently been reported that the Globe Theatre, in the last quarter, saw over £1 million in ticket sales. How much of this money will come back to the council coffers?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

“The financial arrangements for the operation of the Globe, by the Ambassador Theatre Group, were set out in Cabinet and scrutinized further through Executive Scrutiny.”

Councillor Tony Riordan asked the following supplementary question:-

“You published a newsletter recently and you quoted a million-pound figure, where did you get that million-pound figure from?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

“The Globe has sold over a million pounds worth of tickets sales so that is where that figure has come from.”

The following question had been submitted by Councillor Tony Riordan:-

“In August, the Globe Theatre put on only two shows. Do you think this a good return for the vast amount of money that is gifted to the company, by this council, each year, for promoting and attracting acts to the venue?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

“The plan for the Globe is based on an annual schedule of events. August is a quiet month not just at the Globe but most theatres and venues, but I can assure Councillor Riordan that there are well over 100 events planned throughout the year, each bringing significant footfall and spend to the Town.”

Councillor Tony Riordan asked the following supplementary question:-

“The taxpayers of this Borough have been burdened with a hefty £1.65 million to support the Ambassador Theatre Group and audience development and the attraction of artists in years one to five. The bill for last year was £400k which in monthly figures is nearly £33,333. Each show costs the taxpayer of this Borough £16,666, do you think this represents good value?”

The Leader of the Council responded with:-

“When we made the decision about The Globe it was about regeneration and encouraging the night-time economy of the town centre and obviously it is doing that job of bringing footfall into the town centre. Over the last year people from within the Borough and from outside the Borough have come into the town centre.”

C
52/22

Forward Plan and Leader’s Statement

The following Forward Plan and Leader’s Statement was circulated to Members.

Council last met on the 20th July. Since then, Cabinet met on the 15th September when it considered the following matters:

- A report on the Financial Update and Medium-Term Financial Plan (Quarter 1 2022/2023)
- The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) - Local Authority Report for Stockton-on-Tees for 2021/22 and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIPA) Act 2000 - 2021 Annual Return
- The annual Early Years Childcare Sufficiency Assessment
- Consideration of the provision of free school meals for all primary school children in the Borough
- The final report of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee on their Scrutiny Review of Bonfires on Public Land

Cabinet would next meet on the 13th October and then the 17th November before next full Council. At these meetings Cabinet was scheduled to consider:

- An update on the investment strategy for schools, SEN and Early Years
- The mid-year update on the 2022-25 Council Plan
- The 2021-22 school performance report
- An update report on the Stockton on Tees Care Academy approach to support recruitment and retention in the Adult Social Care sector in the Borough
- The annual review of the Constitution
- The annual report on the Armed Forces Covenant

After that the Leader of the Council looked forward to seeing Members all at next full Council meeting on the 23rd November. Before then there was a couple of events taking place on the High Street in Stockton - the Stockton & Darlington Railway 197th Anniversary Specialist Market takes place this Saturday and then Chic Vintique on the 15th October 2022.