

MINUTES OF COUNCIL

20 NOVEMBER 2024

PRESENT:

The Mayor (Councillor Ward), Councillors Barnett, Brown, Daly, C Edwards, S Edwards, Freeman, Garcia, Gillias, Harrington, Hassell, Henderson, Howling, Karadiar, D Keeling, J Keeling, Lewis, Livesey, McKenzie, Mistry, Moran, New, O'Rourke, Parker, Picker, Poole, Robinson, Roodhouse, Russell, Sandison, Simpson-Vince, Srivastava, Thomas, Timms, Trimble and Willis.

42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillors Bennett, Dumbleton, Lawrence, Maoudis, Sayani and Slinger.

43. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2024 were approved and signed by the Mayor.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 6(a)(2) of Part 1 – Warwickshire Local Councils' Charter – Councillor Gillias (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being the Council's Parish Champion).

Item 6(a)(2) of Part 1 – Warwickshire Local Councils' Charter – Councillor Willis (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being Chair of Wolston Parish Council).

Item 7(b) of Part 1 - Item 6(a)(2) of Part 1 – Councillor Gillias (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being the Council's Parish Champion).

Item 8(a) of Part 1 – Notice of Motion - Councillor Sandison (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being a regular patient at St Cross hospital).

Item 8(a) of Part 1 – Notice of Motion - Councillor Roodhouse (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being a director of Healthwatch Warwickshire).

Item 8(a) of Part 1 – Notice of Motion - Councillor Srivastava (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being a member of the Board of Friends of St Cross).

Item 8(a) of Part 1 – Notice of Motion - Councillor S Edwards (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being an independent healthcare advocate relating to St Cross).

Item 8(a) of Part 1 – Notice of Motion - Councillor O'Rourke (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being a member of the Health and Wellbeing Board).

Item 8(a) of Part 1 – Notice of Motion - Councillor Robinson (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of her employment at a local optical committee support unit).

Item 8(b) of Part 1 – Notice of Motion - Councillor Timms (non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being Warwickshire County Council Portfolio Holder for Environment, Climate and Culture).

Councillor Timms left the meeting during the item in which she had declared an interest and took no part in the voting and discussion thereon.

Item 6(1) of Part 1 - Corporate Strategy 2025 – 2035 – Councillor Claire Edwards declared retrospectively a non-pecuniary interest as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being an employee of EQUIP. This declaration does not affect her participation in the item.

45. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor had been honoured, alongside the Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire, to lead the civic party at the annual Remembrance Sunday service this month. It had been wonderful to see so many cadets participating in the parade at the service, as well as serving and ex-service personnel, to remember those who have given the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom and to also give thanks for those who continue to serve in our armed forces today.

The Mayor had attended the Diwali celebrations on Sunday 27 October which were full of colour, music, dancing, and a had a real energy and vibrance. He had found it wonderful to celebrate and embrace different cultures and communities within our borough. The Mayor wished to give a special mention to Councillor Mistry and everyone who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make sure the event was such a success and only in its second year. The Mayor looked forward to next year's celebrations.

The Mayor had also attended the Christmas lights switch on last Sunday. It was a real celebration of local talent from the Borough with local Indian dancing and music, singing from the Rugby Ukrainian Community, Impact Dance, Rugby Philharmonic Choir, Rugby's got talent winner Lee Sturm, Courthouse band, Thea Watson and finally the Mockingjays. The Borough's three local Olympians joined Naomi Issitt from the Mayor's charity, Our Jay Foundation, and the Mayor as the special guests for the lights switch on. This was the first time that Lauren, Kimberley, and Chelsie had all met in person so it was a special occasion for them. The Mayor was honoured to share the stage with such amazing local inspirational women. It was great to see several thousand people in the audience showing their support for the ladies and of course there to celebrate the occasion too.

The Mayor looked forward to all the upcoming festivities in the build-up to Christmas over the next few weeks and further events in the town including the Small Business Saturday and Lantern parade plus many concerts, shows, carol services, Christmas markets and so much more.

46. QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10

There were no questions.

47. REPORT OF CABINET – 4 NOVEMBER 2024

RESOLVED THAT – the report of Cabinet be confirmed and adopted.

48. REPORTS OF OFFICERS

(a) Constitution Review and Update

Council considered the report of the Chief Officer – Legal and Governance (Part 1 – agenda item 7(a)) concerning an update and proposed review of the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED THAT –

- (1) the Constitution of the Council be amended to incorporate the changes set out in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (2) the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make such typographical amendments as required to facilitate this.

(b) Urgent Decision under Delegated Powers – Temporary appointment to Princethorpe Parish Council

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive (Part 1 – agenda item 7(b)) concerning an urgent decision taken under delegated powers with regard to a temporary appointment to Princethorpe Parish Council

RESOLVED THAT – the report be noted.

(c) Urgent Decision under Delegated Powers – Tanser Court - replacement boiler and repair of roof

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive (Part 1 – agenda item 7(b)) concerning an urgent decision taken under delegated powers with regard to the replacement of a boiler and repairs to the roof at Tanser Court.

RESOLVED THAT – the report be noted.

49. NOTICES OF MOTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 11

Councillor Sandison moved and Councillor Trimble seconded the following motion, notice of which had been given in accordance with Standing Order 11.

(a) "This Council welcomes improved service delivery of elective surgery at the Hospital of St Cross that should help reduce overall surgical waiting lists. Following a recent scrutiny task and finish group study into emergency health care it has become clear that good preventative social care can help reduce hospital admissions for those with long term conditions and affordable extra care provision can assist in the discharge and freeing up of beds much needed for urgent trauma patients helping to break the undignified and protracted spectacle of ambulance and corridor care.

We therefore call for this Council to:

- (1) Whilst partial demolition (1907 extension) will enable the new development to come forward; this Council wants to see the retention of the façade of the 1884 extension and that structure to be included into the Rugby School /Town Centre Conservation area in the emerging local plan*
- (2) this Council places on record its disappointment at the recent announcement at the withdrawal of services at Hoskyn Ward without prior notice*
- (3) Rugby Liberal Democrats request that a partnership feasibility study with UHCW and other care providers be undertaken on the future of St Cross, for example how the site could provide of extra care residential provision and a supportive hub for those with long term conditions to better help patients manage their conditions."*

Councillor O'Rourke moved and Councillor Moran seconded the following amendment:

"This Council welcomes improved service delivery of elective surgery at the Hospital of St Cross that should help reduce overall surgical waiting lists. Following a recent scrutiny task and finish group study into emergency health care it has become clear that good preventative social care can help reduce hospital admissions for those with long term conditions and affordable extra care provision can assist in the discharge and freeing up of beds much needed for urgent trauma patents helping to break the undignified and protracted spectacle of ambulance and corridor care.

We therefore call for this Council to:

- (1) Whilst partial demolition (1907 extension) will enable the new development to come forward; this Council wants to see the retention of the façade of the 1884 extension and that structure to be included into the Rugby School /Town Centre Conservation area in the emerging local plan*
- (2) this Council progresses the recent Cabinet decision on urgent care and places on record its disappointment at the recent announcement at the withdrawal of services at Hoskyn Ward without prior notice and writes to the Chair and Trust Board Members of UHCW to expresses its disappointment about the process leading to the decision taken to close*

Hoskyn Ward. Given the lack of any consultation or engagement with local stakeholders prior to the decision being taken, we urge the Chairman and Trust Board Members to urgently review their decision to close Hoskyn Ward. We believe a consultation process, in line with the 'Gunning principles' should have been carried out prior to a decision being taken. If the Board is unwilling to review this decision then this Council gives notice that it will refer the matter to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, asking him to intervene, given the lack of due process and a published impact assessment.'

- (3) *request that a partnership feasibility study with UHCW and other care providers be undertaken on the future of St Cross, for example how the site could provide of extra care residential provision and a supportive hub for those with long term conditions to better help patients manage their conditions."*

[Note:

The Gunning principles are:

1. Consultation must take place when the proposal is still at a formative stage.
2. Sufficient reasons must be put forward for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and response.
3. Adequate time must be given for consideration and response.
4. The results of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account.]

Further to debate, Councillor Garcia moved and Councillor Russell seconded the following amendment to the original motion:

"This Council welcomes proposals from University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust to improve service delivery of elective surgery at the Hospital of St Cross that should help reduce overall surgical waiting lists. Following a recent scrutiny task and finish group study into emergency health care it has become clear that good preventative social care can help reduce hospital admissions for those with long term conditions and affordable extra care provision can assist in the discharge and freeing up of beds much needed for urgent trauma patients helping to break the undignified and protracted spectacle of ambulance and corridor care. We therefore call for this Council to:

(1) explore opportunities for the retention of the façade of the 1884 extension through reviewing the Rugby School /Town Centre Conservation area in the emerging local plan.

(2) place on record its disappointment at the recent announcement at the withdrawal of services at Hoskyn Ward without prior notice.

(3) request that a partnership feasibility study with UHCW and other care providers be undertaken on the future of St Cross, for example how the site could provide of extra care residential provision and a supportive hub for those with long term conditions to better help patients manage their conditions.”

Following further debate, the Mayor put the first amendment to the vote and declared it carried.

The Mayor then put the second amendment to the vote and declared it carried.

The Mayor put the substantive motion to the vote and declared it carried.

RESOLVED THAT - this Council to:

- (1) explore opportunities for the retention of the façade of the 1884 extension through reviewing the Rugby School /Town Centre Conservation area in the emerging local plan;
- (2) progress the recent Cabinet decision on urgent care and place on record its disappointment at the recent announcement at the withdrawal of services at Hoskyn Ward without prior notice and write to the Chair and Trust Board Members of UHCW to express its disappointment about the process leading to the decision taken to close Hoskyn Ward. Given the lack of any consultation or engagement with local stakeholders prior to the decision being taken, we urge the Chairman and Trust Board Members to urgently review their decision to close Hoskyn Ward. We believe a consultation process, in line with the 'Gunning principles' should have been carried out prior to a decision being taken. If the Board is unwilling to review this decision then this Council gives notice that it will refer the matter to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, asking him to intervene, given the lack of due process and a published impact assessment; and
- (3) request that a partnership feasibility study with UHCW and other care providers be undertaken on the future of St Cross, for example how the site could provide extra care residential provision and a supportive hub for those with long term conditions to better help patients manage their conditions.

Councillor McKenzie moved and Councillor S Edwards seconded the following motion, notice of which had been given in accordance with Standing Order 11:

“Rugby Borough Council recognises that we have seen a dramatic decrease in biodiversity across the Uk (and globally). We further recognise that Parliament is currently considering Roz Savage’s Private Members Bill on Climate and Nature Bill.

As a custodian of 70 parks and open spaces within the borough of Rugby, RBC is already playing an important role in, not just halting the decline locally, but also increasing biodiversity. We have already formed some partnerships with local groups such as Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Warwickshire Ecology Unit and we wish to build on that good work.

But this must be an active action in all Council activities.

Rugby Borough Council resolves to:

- declare a biodiversity climate emergency to complement the existing climate emergency*
- that the Chief Executive ensures that ALL activities within the Council takes biodiversity into account*
- work with residents and key stakeholders to improve biodiversity within private land and RBC land.*
- ensure that developers maximise the biodiversity net gain on each and every development.”*

Councillor Livesey then moved and Councillor Freeman seconded the following amendment:

“Rugby Borough Council recognises that we have seen a dramatic decrease in biodiversity across the UK (and globally). We further recognise that Parliament is currently considering Roz Savage’s Private Members Bill on Climate and Nature.

This builds upon previous work such as the Government’s Environmental Audit Committee (2021), which acknowledged that the UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world.

Subsequent reports such as and the ‘State of Nature’ (2023) report have demonstrated the general loss of species and habitats in the UK, with key statistics including that since 1970:

- The abundance of 753 terrestrial and freshwater species has on average fallen by 19%. 16% of species are now threatened with extinction.*
- The distributions of 54% of flowering plant species and 59% of bryophytes have decreased across Great Britain.*
- Distributions of 4,979 invertebrate species have on average decreased by 13%.*
- The distributions of half of flowering plant species have declined.*

The Dasgupta Review (2021) demonstrated that nature and biodiversity help to sustain our economies, livelihoods and well-being – all of which are priorities within the Corporate Strategy being considered by Council. This adds further weight to the argument that we must act now to support nature’s recovery.

The UK Government introduced the Environment Act (2021) which placed a strengthened 'biodiversity duty' on local councils. This requires all public authorities in England to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity. As a custodian of 70 parks and open spaces within the borough of Rugby, the Council is already playing an important role in, not just halting the decline locally, but also increasing biodiversity. We have already formed some partnerships with local groups such as Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Warwickshire Ecology Unit and we wish to build on that good work. However, we must do more and this must be an active action in all council activities.

Rugby Borough Council therefore resolves to:

- Declare an Ecological emergency to complement the existing climate emergency*
- Request that the Chief Executive ensures that ALL activities within the Council take biodiversity into account*
- Provide leadership and the necessary resources to develop specific local measures to protect and enhance biodiversity including, but not limited to:*
 - 1. Commissioning a Rugby specific 'state of nature' report to identify the assets and risks regarding biodiversity within the Borough and guide future activity.*
 - 2. Reinforcing the commitments made in the Climate Change and Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document to promote green infrastructure, landscaping and biodiversity in future developments;*
 - 3. Seek to adopt a new Local Plan which supports the delivery of biodiversity enhancements through our future planning policy for the borough*
 - 4. Ensuring that the provisions of the Environment Act 2021 for Biodiversity Net Gain are implemented in developments within the Borough.*
 - 5. Ensuring that all Council assets are better utilised to create habitats for a wide range of plants and animals.*
 - 6. Working with the Environment Agency, Severn Trent and others to improve the biodiversity of areas supported by the natural water systems in the Borough including the development of natural flood management and drought resistant water courses and bodies of water.*
 - 7. Working with Warwickshire County Council and other partners in the development and delivery of the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Warwickshire.*
 - 8. Utilising the Warwickshire Natural Capital Investment strategy to identify and fund investment in a range of natural assets to bring about benefits for biodiversity, flooding and carbon sequestration.*
 - 9. Liaising with government departments to support the delivery of national commitments on biodiversity and lobby for change where required."*

Following debate, the Mayor put the amendment to the vote and declared it carried. He then put the substantive motion to the vote and declared it carried.

RESOLVED THAT - Rugby Borough Council resolves to:

- declare an Ecological emergency to complement the existing climate emergency
- request that the Chief Executive ensures that ALL activities within the Council take biodiversity into account
- provide leadership and the necessary resources to develop specific local measures to protect and enhance biodiversity including, but not limited to:
 1. Commissioning a Rugby specific 'state of nature' report to identify the assets and risks regarding biodiversity within the Borough and guide future activity.
 2. Reinforcing the commitments made in the Climate Change and Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document to promote green infrastructure, landscaping and biodiversity in future developments;
 3. Seek to adopt a new Local Plan which supports the delivery of biodiversity enhancements through our future planning policy for the borough
 4. Ensuring that the provisions of the Environment Act 2021 for Biodiversity Net Gain are implemented in developments within the Borough.
 5. Ensuring that all Council assets are better utilised to create habitats for a wide range of plants and animals.
 6. Working with the Environment Agency, Severn Trent and others to improve the biodiversity of areas supported by the natural water systems in the Borough including the development of natural flood management and drought resistant water courses and bodies of water.
 7. Working with Warwickshire County Council and other partners in the development and delivery of the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Warwickshire.
 8. Utilising the Warwickshire Natural Capital Investment strategy to identify and fund investment in a range of natural assets to bring about benefits for biodiversity, flooding and carbon sequestration.
 9. Liaising with government departments to support the delivery of national commitments on biodiversity and lobby for change where required.

MAYOR