

COUNCIL

Wednesday, 21st February, 2007

Councillor A.A. Clarke (Mayor)

Councillors:

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| P.G. Barnes | S.J. Barnes |
| D.N. Beeston | A.S. Bexon (a) |
| P.M. Blandamer | F.J.D. Boot |
| V.H. Bradley | T.R. Chandran (a) |
| G.V. Clarke (a) | W.J. Clarke |
| J.M. Cole | S.M. Creamer |
| R.T. Day (a) | A.M. Dunkin |
| M.S. Dunkin | P. Feeney |
| A.J. Gillam | J.F. Glass |
| W.H. Golland | I.S. Gollop (a) |
| R.J. Goodwin | W.T. Grainger |
| G.J. Griffiths (a) | R.G. Kempster |
| S.M. Lane | C.M. Lockett |
| H. Maddock | J.J. McCauley |
| V. McCrossen (a) | G.L. Millar |
| R.J. Nicholson | J.M. Parr |
| W.A. Peet | V.C. Pepper (a) |
| R.A. Poynter (a) | C.N.F.W. Pratt |
| C. Preston | S.J. Prew-Smith |
| D.E. Pulk | D.A. Pycroft (a) |
| S.J. Ragsdale | A. Rigby |
| J.J. Spencer | M.S. Spencer (a) |
| R.F. Spencer | J.O. Tanner |
| G.G. Tunncliffe | J.A. Woodward |
| M.A. Wright | |

25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bexon, G.V. Clarke, W.J. Clarke, Chandran, Day, Gollop, McCrossen, Pepper, Poynter, M.S.Spencer.

26 TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2006.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the above meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

27 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.

Councillor Creamer declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 12 (Notice of Motion - safety checks in cemeteries)

28

PERSONNEL AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

In respect of Minute 42 of the above meeting, which, in accordance with Standing Order 29, had stood adjourned, without discussion from the previous meeting of the Council after having been moved and seconded, it was:-

RESOLVED That:

1. The existing Scrutiny Committees be disestablished and that two Scrutiny Committees be created, to be called, the Performance Review Scrutiny Committee and the Policy Review Scrutiny Committee with the terms of reference appended to the report.
2. The amendments to the Council's Constitution be made as set out in the report and take effect from 16 May 2007.

29

TO DEAL WITH QUESTIONS OF WHICH DUE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN UNDER STANDING ORDER NO.9(1)(A) ON ANY MATTER IN RELATION TO WHICH THE COUNCIL HAS POWERS OR DUTIES.

i. Question received in the name of Councillor J.M. Parr to the Leisure Services Portfolio Holder: -

'Councillors from all Groups continue to receive complaints from relatives about the staking of memorials on the graves of their loved ones. Would the Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services please tell the Council why this is necessary, whether other, less unsightly methods of securing memorials have been considered and what steps have been taken to advise the public and relatives about what is being done, both generally and with regard to individual graves?'

Councillor Golland replied in the following terms:-

'The reason for the testing of monuments was laid down in a directive issued by the Health and Safety Executive in 2001 and reviewed in 2006. This contained the guidelines for the safety and testing methods, and this was included in a report from a Select Committee at the House of Commons on the future management of cemeteries.

The latest guidance of the methods of memorial testing and making memorials safe was issued by the Local Government Ombudsman in 2006, and this guidance is followed by the Council. This report also states that it will be considered to be maladministration for Councils not to have adopted a policy for testing, and ensuring that memorials are stable and cannot cause injury.

All members of the public who have contacted the Council have been offered a meeting on site. Some memorials have been re-tested in the

presence of the owner and in each case the test has proven to be accurate and the monument subsequently repaired.

It is the intention that the Borough Council's Direct Services will carry out the re-testing which is required every five years.

A demonstration of testing was previously notified to Councillors, but unfortunately none were able to attend.

Another demonstration will be held prior to the next section in Redhill Cemetery being tested.

Every effort has been made to notify the owners of graves that the memorials were to be tested.

- There have been articles in the Contacts Magazine.
- Information on the Website.
- Signage at the entrance and within the cemeteries.
- Leaflets distributed by the gate person.
- Information supplied to Stonemasons and Funeral Directors.
- Numerous press releases and articles.

Officers will be present on the days of the planned demonstration but resources do not allow for their presence at all three cemeteries on a regular basis. However the cemetery staff are able to inform enquirers, and can be relied upon to advise with sensitivity.

It is difficult to see how the communications can be expanded meaningfully and within budget. (Many relatives visit at weekends, therefore the `surgery' would miss the majority of owners and others come from outside the Borough, or only once or twice a year.)

Testing is being started by other Nottinghamshire Authorities and the resultant publicity may help Gedling's Leisure Department in their strenuous efforts to inform the public.

ii. Question received in the name of Councillor J.O Tanner to the Leader of the Council: -

'The last time we heard, the County Council were considering applying for unitary status. This decision was to be made by the end of January. Could the Leader of the Council give us an up to date appraisal of the situation?'

ii. Councillor R.F Spencer replied in the following terms:-

'I would like to thank Councillor Tanner for the above question mainly due to the fact that we have not got on too well with the County Council over the past 12 months.

At the beginning we all said that we would co-operate with the City, County and other District Council's and agree a working framework.

I would also like to thank all members of the Council for giving myself and the Chief Executive authority to attend meetings with neighbouring authorities and present a case for Gedling which had the backing of the whole Council.

On 19 December a meeting was held at County Hall with the Leaders of all the Districts and the County Council when it was agreed by all that we would work together to promote a joint working solution for Nottinghamshire. This was to be ratified by each Council and Submitted by us to the Secretary of State Ruth Kelly as an agreed position.

I was accordingly dismayed when a few days later, David Kirkham the Leader of the County Council issued a statement indicating that the County and Nottingham City Council were proposing to submit a proposal for a 'super City' and County unitary authority'.

I am pleased that since then a number of our County Councillors exerted pressure on the County Council not to submit such a proposal but instead to make more effort to work better with the Districts.

I am proud to be a Borough Councillor. I believe that we can have different views but that should not stop us working together. The recent satisfaction survey results confirm how highly the public think of this Council – more highly than they do of either the County or the City Council, reflecting the fact that some things are better delivered at a local level and that we are often better placed to promote local issues and interests.

In 1992 we took a deputation to Westminster to try and prevent the closure of Calverton Colliery although it was clear that no one at London knew where we were in the country.

I am proud to be a Gedling Borough Council person but not too proud to say that we must all show the public that we are serious about working together better for the area.'

30

TO CONSIDER AND IF APPROVED ADOPT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET AND COMMITTEES: -

To consider and if approved adopt the following recommendations;-

- i. Personnel and Resources 29 January 2007 minute no 37

(Appointment of Standards Committee Member) pages 76 -77

In respect of minute 37 it was moved by Councillor Boot and seconded by Councillor P.G Barnes that the following recommendations contained in the minute be adopted.

The Mayor put the proposition to the Meeting and declared the same carried and it was:-

RESOLVED:

That Mr R Martin be appointed as a member of the Standards Committee.

ii Personnel and Resources 29 January 2007 minute no 38 (Independent Remuneration Panel - Members scheme of Allowances) page 77

In respect of minute 38 it was moved by Councillor Boot and seconded by Councillor Feeney that the following recommendations contained in the minute be adopted.

The Mayor put the proposition to the Meeting and declared the same carried and it was:-

RESOLVED: To approve a scheme of Members Allowances in the following terms:-

i That Basic Allowance be increased to £3,500 from 1 April 2007;

ii That the percentage pay award made to Council staff be applied to the Basic Allowance (£3,500.00) Special Responsibility Allowances and Co-optees' Allowance from 1 April 2007.

iii. That the Special Responsibility Allowance paid to Members of the Licensing Act Committee be retained for the year 2007/2008.

iv. That the Deputy Leader's allowance revert to the level paid to a Cabinet Member in the event that political control of the Council is held by one party following the local election in May 2007.

v. that a Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to the Mayor at the midway point between a Chairmanship and a Cabinet Member

vi. That the Mayor Special Responsibility Allowance be increased to a point midway between that of a Cabinet Member and a Committee Chair.

vii. That a Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to the Deputy Mayor at the level of half the allowance paid to a Committee Chair.

31 NOTICE OF MOTION

Upon a Notice of Motion received in the name of Councillor P.G. Barnes and seconded by Councillor S.J Barnes in the following terms:-

'This Council is aware of the challenging nature of public concern over the on-going safety checks in the cemeteries. We also recognise the distress that has inadvertently been visited on many residents as a result of these works.

It calls on the appropriate officers to revisit our communications strategy and actively seek new ways to engage and involve stakeholders, including the setting up of a regular on-site surgery to address concerns in a timely and expeditious manner.'

An amendment was moved by Councillor Golland and seconded by Councillor Nicholson in the following terms:-

'To delete paragraph 2 and replace it with a new paragraph as follows:-

'It is therefore proposed that prior to a planned presentation to Members and the public about this matter, any further testing or remedial work to graves at Redhill is delayed. This will allow a further press release to advertise the event'

The Mayor put the amendment to the meeting and it was declared carried.

The amendment then became the substantive motion and upon the Mayor putting the proposition to the meeting it was declared carried and it was:-

RESOLVED:

'This Council is aware of the challenging nature of public concern over the on-going safety checks in the cemeteries. We also recognise the distress that has inadvertently been visited on many residents as a result of these works.

It is therefore proposed that prior to a planned presentation to Members and the public about this matter, any further testing or remedial work to graves at Redhill is delayed. This will allow a further press release to advertise the event'

32 PRUDENTIAL CODE INDICATORS 2007/08 TO 2009/10

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Finance seeking formal approval of the Prudential Indicators for Gedling Borough Council

for the financial years 2007/08 to 2009/10.

A proposition was moved by Councillor R.F. Spencer and seconded by Councillor Nicholson that the recommendations contained in the report be adopted.

The Mayor put the proposition to the Meeting and declared the same carried and it was:-

RESOLVED:

To approve the Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2007/08 to 2009/10 as detailed in Appendix 1, which have been set with due reference to CIPFA's Prudential Code, under the Local Government Act 2003.

The meeting closed at 7.25 pm