

BASSETLAW DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th December 2012 at Retford Town Hall

Present: Councillor I J Campbell (Chair)

Councillors	W Barker	S May
	B A Bowles	J W Ogle
	H M Brand	G A N Oxby
	H Burton	C Palmer
	D Challinor	D G Pidwell
	A Chambers	J Potts
	C Entwistle	D R Pressley
	J Evans	M W Quigley
	S J Fielding	A Rhodes
	M T Gray	J B Rickells
	S A Greaves	J M Sanger
	M Gregory	J C Shephard
	F Hart	M Storey
	B Hopkinson	K Sutton
	K H Isard	T Taylor
	Mrs S Isard	S Toms
	G Jones	C Wanless
	J A Leigh	J White
	R Leigh	G J Wynne

Officers in attendance: J Hamilton, M Hill, L Hull, M Ladyman, N Taylor and R Theakstone.

(The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, thanking those who had joined him earlier for the carol service, and read out the Fire Alarm/Evacuation Procedure.)

49. MINUTE'S SILENCE

A minute's silence was held in honour of Mr Wallace Geoffrey Cooper who had recent passed away. Mr Cooper was Bassetlaw's first Vice-Chairman when the District Council was formed in 1974, and went on to become Chairman in 1975, the first District Chairman from Retford.

RESOLVED that a minute's silence be held in honour of Mr Wallace Geoffrey Cooper.

50. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Battey, R B Carrington-Wilde, P Douglas, G Freeman, D Potts, A Mumby, C Troop and A Simpson.

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

(a) **Members**

Councillor A Rhodes declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item No. 7 – Motion No. 2, as it refers to Nottinghamshire County Council’s Health and Wellbeing Board of which he is a member being an elected Member of the County Council. He left the meeting.

(b) Officers

Mr N Taylor declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item No. 11(a) – Chief Executive Salary and Conditions of Service, as he is currently the Interim Chief Executive. He left the meeting.

52. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27TH SEPTEMBER 2012

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th September 2012 be approved as a correct record.

53. COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman's Communications

The Chairman announced that the District Council had recently won three awards and he presented these to officers present: the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust Green Guardians’ ‘Wildlife On Your Doorstep’ Award for the creation of a mini-meadow in an under-used part of the Museum garden; the Regeneration and Renewal Magazine’s Award for boosting high street vitality for which the regeneration of Bridge Street, Worksop, was highly commended; and the retention of the Investors In People Award by the Council for a further three years. The Quest Award had also been awarded to Barnsley Premier Leisure for the excellent level of service and provision of facilities at all the leisure centres in Bassetlaw. All recipients of the awards were duly congratulated.

The Chairman also thanked those who had attended and/or contributed to his charity events. His Charity Account now exceeds £500 and this will hopefully be added to by his “sleepover” on the Retford Town Hall steps on Christmas Eve, which anybody could still sponsor him for.

Leader’s Communications

The Leader updated Council on the latest local government financial settlement notifications and what this means for Bassetlaw. There is major concern that the figures are decreasing each year and he gave some headline figures. There is also the introduction of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which, together with the Budget reports, will be presented to full Council on 4th March, following the Cabinet Meeting on 14th February 2013. However, the Council will meet these challenges head on by working with neighbouring authorities and, by adopting new ways of working, the Council will adapt and change.

Chief Executive's Communications

The Interim Chief Executive updated Council on its ‘Pride in the District’ initiative and outlined three local achievements:

The completion of the Old Market Square in Worksop, from which the Remembrance Day Parade started and ended, a fitting place for such ceremonies, particularly with the flagpoles proudly flying the Union, St George and Bassetlaw District flags.

The keys for the Worksop Creative Village were handed over today, signalling the completion of the 800 sq metre project, costing £1.3m including ERDF funding. This included the

redevelopment of the old fire station, creating craft units and workshops for nine businesses, and will create 45 jobs; six tenants have already signed up.

And lastly, the Bassetlaw Sports Awards, for which there has been much publicity.

54. QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

There was one question by the public of which notice had been given in accordance with Rules of Procedure Number 10.

From Mr L Duveen:

“How many commercial properties owned by Bassetlaw District Council are currently empty and what plans are in place to either bring them back into use or (where possible and appropriate) convert them to residential use?”

Reply by Councillor J Evans:

“Around 95% of the commercial estate is let and these lettings produce approximately £280,000 per annum. There are approximately 12 commercial properties presently available to let, comprising of shops and industrial units. Some of the industrial units had been kept empty pending a final decision regarding the location of the new bus station for Worksop; however, they are now being marketed. There are also a number of industrial units presently under construction which are also being marketed.

The industrial units that are vacant are within established industrial estates and would not lend themselves to conversion to residential use.

There have been instances of vacant shop units with living accommodation being split up and the residential part returned to A1 Housing for re-letting. The Estates Department also has agreements in place with Ad Hoc Property Guardians, whose agents live and sleep in the properties that would otherwise be vacant, on a temporary basis, whilst a decision is made regarding the future use of that property in terms of re-letting, sale or redevelopment.”

55. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

The Agenda contained three questions, notice of which had been given by Members, in accordance with Rules of Procedure Number 11.

From Councillor C Wanless:

“Does the Leader of this Administration have the utmost confidence in the officers employed by Bassetlaw District Council to perform and deliver to an impeccable standard?”

Reply by Councillor S A Greaves:

“I believe this is Councillor Wanless’ first question to Council as Leader of the Opposition. However, it is subjective. We have a fantastic team at Bassetlaw District Council, which performs to the very best, of which we have had proof tonight with the awards.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor C Wanless:

“If that is so, then why do you continually undermine officers and your own Cabinet by ‘micro-managing’ the Council?”

Reply by Councillor S A Greaves:

“I must congratulate you! This is nonsense.”

From Councillor J B Rickells:

“Does the current Administration still see the value in the awarding of Honorary Aldermanship to ex-Councillors for long service to Bassetlaw District Council and, more importantly, their local communities?”

Reply by Councillor S A Greaves:

“Personally, I do see the value of the recognition of such service. However, decisions are dependent upon much more than just one individual, even that of the Leader.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor J B Rickells:

“So will you consider awarding the title of Honorary Alderman to Ken Bullivant in recognition of his long service to Bassetlaw District Council and Beckingham in particular?”

Reply by Councillor S A Greaves:

“As you know, we have spoken about this previously, and it will be addressed in due course.”

From Councillor K H Isard:

“Councillor Greaves, I understand that progress on the Local Development Framework Site Allocations proposals has been halted by you. I ask that you provide this Council with a fully detailed answer as to why you have taken this course of action?”

Reply by Councilor S A Greaves:

“Your premise is wrong, I asked for background information. We are working on Site Allocations, I have simply asked for more information on Council-owned land and this is why it has not appeared before.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor K H Isard:

“In order to maintain public and Member confidence in the excellent and extensive work that has been done by officer and Members alike on the consultation draft of the LDF site allocations document, will you give an absolute assurance that you have not, and will not, discuss Site Allocations matters with the local MPs, John Mann or Patrick Mercer, or their agents or family members, and, furthermore, will you give an absolute undertaking that you will have the officer report on the Site Allocations document put on the agenda of the next Cabinet Meeting so that the public may then have the earliest opportunity of scrutinising that work and passing comment thereon?”

Reply by Councillor S A Greaves:

"I see Councillor Isard is back to his mischievous best! This issue is ongoing and will be placed on the Forward Plan. Councillor Isard is stirring up trouble, which is improper, and he should know better."

Point of Order by Councillor K H Isard:

"I sit on the LDF Framework Group so I know that the meetings have been suspended. The Site Allocations document was set for the November Cabinet Meeting; however, no reason was given for it being pulled, and we are now awaiting the Leader to revert his decision."

56. MOTIONS

The Agenda contained three motions, notice of which had been given in accordance with Rules of Procedure Number 12.

Proposed by Councillor J M Sanger and seconded by Councillor H M Brand:

"This Council recognises that the 2012 Achievers' Evening held in Retford Town Hall on Tuesday 9th October was a great success. Many people were recognised for their outstanding contribution and dedication as volunteers for so many worthwhile projects in the District, both in giving their time to organisations and also raising money for good causes. This Council will ensure (even in this present difficult financial climate) that these evenings will continue to be arranged each year to thank Bassetlaw residents and give publicity to the valuable work undertaken, which would otherwise go unnoticed."

Councillor B Barker proposed an amendment to the Motion:

"This Council recognises that the 2012 Achievers' Evening held in Retford Town Hall on Tuesday 9th October was a great success. Many people were recognised for their outstanding contribution and dedication as volunteers for so many worthwhile projects in the District, both in giving their time to organisations and also raising money for good causes. This Council will continue to thank Bassetlaw residents and celebrate the valuable work undertaken by them which would otherwise go unnoticed."

This was seconded by Councillor S A Greaves.

(The meeting was adjourned for five minutes to allow Members to read the amendment.)

Councillors J M Sanger and B Barker spoke to the amended motion.

RESOLVED that the amended motion be supported.

(Councillor A Rhodes left the meeting for the following motion as he had declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest.)

Proposed by Councillor J White and seconded by Councillor S A Greaves:

"This Council calls upon Nottinghamshire County Council to allow a representative from each District Council to sit, with voting rights, upon its Health and Wellbeing Board and will lobby for this by writing to NCC, the Minister of State and local MPs."

(Councillor J White explained the reason for the motion but reserved her right to sum up.)

Councillors D Challinor, Mrs M W Quigley, J W Ogle, G J Wynne, H M Brand, K H Isard, S A Greaves and J White spoke to the motion.

RESOLVED that the motion be supported.

Proposed by Councillor G J Wynne and seconded by Councillor W Barker:

“This Council believes that it is right and proper that all Council employees are entitled to a Living Wage and will bring forward proposals to make this happen by the start of the financial year.”

Councillors C Wanless, T Taylor, Mrs M W Quigley, K Sutton, K H isard, F Hart, J C Shephard, C Entwistle, B Barker and G J Wynne spoke to the motion.

RESOLVED that the motion be supported.

(The voting for supporting this motion was unanimous.)

57. REFERRALS

- (a) Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 17th September 2012 – Minute No. 48(c) – Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

RESOLVED that the Committee’s Annual Report be received by Council in accordance with Part 2, Article 6 of the Council’s Constitution.

- (b) Cabinet – 2nd October 2012 – Minute No. 65(a) – The Council’s Anti-Poverty Strategy (Key Decision No. 324)

RESOLVED that the Council’s Anti-Poverty Strategy be endorsed.

- (c) Cabinet – 4th December 2012 – Minute No. 100(b) – Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy (Key Decision No. 362)

RESOLVED that Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy be approved and implemented.

- (d) Cabinet – 4th December 2012 – Minute No. 102(b) – Strategic Tenancy Strategy (Key Decision No. 325)

RESOLVED that Tenancy Strategy be approved and implemented.

- (e) Cabinet – 4th December 2012 – Minute No. 102(c) – Review of Choice Based Lettings (Key Decision No. 353)

RESOLVED that the changes to the Choice Based Lettings Policy, as detailed in Appendix A of the report, be approved and implemented.

- (f) Cabinet – 4th December 2012 – Minute No. 103(c) – Council Tax Weekly Payment Scheme for Council Tenants (Key Decision No. 366)

RESOLVED that:

1. The revocation of the weekly scheme for Council tenants’ Council Tax payment be

approved, with effect from 1st April 2013.

2. Officers put in place a communication plan to notify those affected and assist them with future payment options, including opting in to a weekly Council Tax payment, where necessary.

(g) Joint Employee Council – 11th December 2012 – Minute No. 28(a) – Anti-Bribery Policies and Procedures

RESOLVED that the Anti-Bribery Policies and Procedures, as appended to the report, be approved and implemented to support the Council's approach to Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption.

(The following referral had been omitted from the Agenda but circulated prior to the meeting.)

(h) Cabinet – 6th November 2012 – Minute No. 84(a) – Community Right to Bid: Assets of Community Value (Key Decision No. 354)

RESOLVED that the processes, as set out at paragraph 3.6 of the report, be approved and adopted so that the Council can meet its statutory responsibilities in respect of the Community Right to Bid.

(Councillor J B Rickells left the meeting at this point.)

58. REPORT(S) OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

(a) Determination of Dispensations

Council approval was sought for the proposed procedure for the determination of dispensations, which was appended to the report.

RESOLVED that the proposed procedure for the Determination of Dispensation Applications, as appended to the report, be approved with appropriate amendments being made to the Council's Constitution to support the new arrangements.

(b) Appointment of Independent Person

Council approval was sought for the appointment of Mr Andrew Middleton as Independent Person for Bassetlaw District Council.

RESOLVED that the appointment of Mr Andrew Middleton as Independent Person be approved.

59. REPORT(S) OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

(a) Amendments to the Council Constitution

Council approval was sought for amendments to the Council Constitution as appended to the report.

RESOLVED that the amendments to the Constitution, as appended to the report, be approved.

(b) Armed Forces Community Covenant

Council approval was sought for the Council to enter into an Armed Forces Community Covenant between the District Council and representatives of the Armed Forces; the Covenant was appended to the report.

RESOLVED that:

1. Bassetlaw District Council enters into a Community Covenant with the Armed Forces community in Bassetlaw, in the form appended to the report.
2. The arrangements for the Covenant to be signed with representatives of the Armed Forces be approved.

60. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and after considering the public interest test as set out by the officer in the body of the report, Members agreed that the following items of business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2, and therefore, in accordance with Section 100A of the Act, the press and public be excluded from the meeting:

Agenda Item No. 11 – Chief Executive Salary and Conditions of Service – Paragraph 2.

(N Taylor left the meeting during consideration of the following item.)

61. REPORT(S) OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(a) Chief Executive Salary and Conditions of Service

Council approval was sought to a revision of the salary and conditions of service for the vacant Chief Executive post. Council was also updated on the outcome of the exercise to explore the option of a shared Chief Executive.

RESOLVED that:

1. The shared Chief Executive initiative be not pursued any further and a single “stand alone” appointment be pursued.
2. The revised salary and car allowance/mileage arrangements, as set out in the presentation for the vacant permanent post of Chief Executive, be adopted.
3. The interim arrangements for the Chief Executive position continue until a permanent Chief Executive is in post, following the authorisation of the recruitment process by the Leader.

62. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

As there was no other urgent business, the Chairman closed the meeting after thanking everyone for their attendance and wishing everyone Season’s Greetings and all the best for 2013.