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Minutes

Meeting of : Full Council
Date : 22 January 2024
Meeting held : The Guildhall
Commencing at : 6:30pm

Present:

Chair: Cllr A Hoque

Vice Chair: Cllr S Hocking

Cllrs: A Bayliss, L Blackwood, J Bolwell, S Charleston, V Charleston, C Corbin, T Corbin, B Dalton, C Hibbert, J King, T Last, C McGrath, J Nettle, A Riddle, E Rimmer, R Rogers, P Sample, C Stanway, I Tomes and J Wells.

Officers: Joanna Wood and Janine Whitty

1309. Apologies:

1309.1. Cllr J Broom gave her apologies.

1309.2. Cllr M Mewse gave his apologies.

1310. Public Questions/Statement Time:

No public questions or statements were submitted.

1311. Councillor Questions/Statement Time:

Councillor statements were submitted by Cllr S Charleston and Cllr L Blackwood both regarding the recent flooding in the Ashley Road area. Cllr J King also gave a statement regarding the Market Place Task Group. Copies of these statements can be found at the end of the minutes.

1312. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The Chairman approved and signed the minutes of the last meeting of the Extraordinary Full Council on 18 December 2023.

1313. Declaration of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest.

1314. Dispensations:

No dispensations were requested.

1315. Chairman's Announcements:

1315.1. The Chairman provided an update regarding mayoral engagements he has attended as Mayor since Full Council in November. A copy of this update can be found at the end of these minutes.

1316. Administration Leaders Report:

1316.1. Administration Group Leader Cllr Victoria Charleston provided a report, including thanks to outgoing Interim City Clerk Joanna Wood and Interim Responsible Finance Officer, as well as welcoming new RFO Steve Bishop. Full update can be found at the end of these minutes.

1317. Referral of Minutes:

Minutes taken place since the Extraordinary Full Council on 18 December 2023 meeting were considered.

Proposed by: Cllr A Hoque

Seconded by: Cllr S Hocking

A vote was taken and accordingly was **carried**; therefore, it was:

Resolved that:

1317.1. Councillors reviewed and noted the minutes as listed below:

Planning and Development

18 December 2023

Finance and Governance

15 January 2024

1318. Committee Reports:

Committee Chairman provided updates as follows;

1318.1. Cllr C Corbin Chairman of the Community Services committee provided a brief update, however the committee hasn't met some months.

1318.2. Cllr T Corbin Chairman of the Planning and Development expressed his and Vice-Chairman Cllr A Riddle's disappointment following the recent collapse of Hangar 3 at Old Sarum. The committee remains to be very busy.

1319. Outside Representatives:

1319.1. Cllr S Hocking, Local Flood Response Co-ordinator, provided an after action report regarding the recent flooding in the Ashley Road area. As well as Ashley Road there were some smaller incidents around the city. Cllr Hocking provided conclusions, recommendations and actions. The report will be circulated to Cllrs and partner organisations shortly once complete. A copy of this report can also be found [here](#).

1320. River Park Project Update:

Andy Wallis and Ron Kurtis from the Environment Agency provided an update regarding the large amounts of rainfall this year and the recent flooding in and around the Ashley Road area. A copy of the presentation provided can be found [here](#).

A number of residents present also provided their concerns, comments and feedback regarding the recent flooding incident at Ashley Road.

Cllrs I Tomes, T Corbin, C Corbin, J Nettle, P Sample, J King, J Wells, C Hibbert, S Charleston also asked further questions, provided their comments, thanked those that helped during this incident, as well as highlighting the need for the flood response to be improved prior to any future events.

Cllr McGrath also provided feedback following recent flooding in Milford, on Milford Mill Road who found that the Wiltshire Council gully cleaning and response during this event was not sufficient and therefore plans to address further at forthcoming Wiltshire Council meetings.

The Environment Agency provided additional answers following resident and Cllr questions, and will publish further information once a full report has been completed, as well as circulate more information regarding the River Park project, some of which can be found on the Environment Agency website [here](#).

The Chairman of the Council will also write to Wiltshire Council to query it's lack of support and leadership during this incident.

1321. Assets of Community Value – City Hall:

The council considered Wiltshire Council's proposal for the disposal of this asset of community value. Cllrs provided their concerns regarding the continued closure of the City Hall, including various Cllrs who are members of the Friend of City Hall group. possible. The council did not express an interest in being treated as a potential bidder. However, Cllr P Sample requested that the Chairman of the Council write a letter to Wiltshire Council to request that

the building is reopened, or parts of the building are opened for community use as soon as

The Chairman paused the meeting for short break at 8.26pm.

The meeting continued at 8.38pm

1322. Budget Setting 2024/25:

Administration Group Leader Cllr Victoria Charleston provided a statement regarding the proposed budget, including highlighting this year's public budget consultation, areas of focus within the budget, as well as thanking officers for their work. A full copy of this statement can be found at the end of these minutes. The Conservative Leader Cllr S Hocking responded with his comments, as well other members. Administration Group Leaders Cllr V Charleston and Cllr Ian Tomes also provided answers to Cllr questions and comments raised. The committee discussed the proposed budget and precept, and it was:

Resolved to:

- 1322.1. Approve the proposed revenue and capital budget and fees and charges for 2024/25 as set out in the report and appendices, and
- 1322.2. Agree the precept of £5,642,672.

Proposed by: Cllr V Charleston

Seconded by: Cllr I Tomes

A vote was taken and accordingly was **carried**.

1323. Nomination for Mayor Elect 2024/25 and Deputy Mayor Elect 2024/25:

The Chairman called for nominations for the Mayor Elect & Deputy Mayor Elect for 2024/25, and it was:

Resolved that:

- 1323.1. Cllr Sven Hocking be nominated as the Mayor Elect for the municipal year 2024/2025.

Proposed by: Cllr A Hoque

Seconded by: Cllr T Corbin

A vote was taken and accordingly was **carried**.

1323.2. Cllr Ed Rimmer be nominated as the Deputy Mayor Elect for the municipal year 2024/2025.

Proposed by: Cllr I Tomes

Seconded by: Cllr S Charleston

A vote was taken and accordingly was **carried**.

1324. Calendar of Meetings 2024/25:

The council considered the calendar of meetings for 2024/25 and it was:

Resolved to:

1324.1. Agree the calendar of meetings for 2024/25.

Proposed by: Cllr A Hoque

Seconded by: Cllr S Hocking

A vote was taken and accordingly was **carried**.

1325. Matters, if any, which by reason of special circumstances the Chairman decides should be discussed as a matter of urgency for information only. Please note that the Council cannot lawfully consider or determine any matter which is not specified on the Agenda of this summons.

There were 18 members of the public and 1 member of the press present.

The meeting closed at 9.33 pm.

Councillor Statements:

Cllr Samuel Charleston

I wanted to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the residents of Ashley Road, and surround areas, who were affected by the recent flooding.

The amount of community spirit on display was remarkable, and a credit to our city.

In particular I would like to thank Ross and his team at Spire Removals, who stayed to help, kept the road closed, and sent a van to the City Council's depot to fill up with sandbags.

I would also like to thank Sven Hocking, who was there when I arrived on Saturday night and left when I did at around 1AM, Paul Sample, who was on the scene numerous times both at the time and afterwards, as well as my fellow ward councillors, Victoria and Lynne, Andy Wallis from the Environment Agency, Jo and Marc from the City Council, Nick Darbyshire from Wilshire Council, as well as the Highways Engineer who turned up on Sunday to unblock the gullies, and our MP John Glen.

There will be some questions to answer about how and why this happened, and what lessons there are that must be learned from this. I know there are residents who are very concerned about this happening again; once the works are complete it will take a much larger flood event to affect the area, and we have to be ready to deal with the challenges that lie ahead as the climate crisis continues to develop.

Cllr Lynne Blackwood

Regarding the recent Ashley Road floods.

First, I'd like to insist on the fact that I'm not laying blame at anyone's door. This was a complex situation with many factors coming into play. These are mine and residents' observations, based on a number of facts which are at present incomplete.

The first is the dismal coordination of an effective response and also the fact that as a duly elected St Paul's Cllr, I wasn't informed or contacted until a resident phoned and, despite asking very nicely, was excluded from the meeting with the Environment Agency CEO, John Glen, Cllr Hocking, Cllr Riddle and Cllr Sam Charleston. No one from the Labour Cllrs was informed or invited either. In face of a crisis, we should work together for our residents, or at least, that's how I see things. Playing Party politics on the back of residents' woes, is in my opinion, inadmissible. I suggest that in the event of a crisis in a ward, all three Cllrs should be informed immediately by phone. No matter the day or time, this should be standard practice.

Now, regarding the response from what I heard from residents. Flood alerts. Warnings were sent and received but according to many residents, the water rose rapidly, like 'a raging river' within an hour. Why was there such a huge surge which even caught the Environment Agency off-guard? Next, a recent email went round saying 'there was no risk to life' to explain the lack of Fire Services intervention,

including worried residents' requests for help. I disagree. A disabled resident in a wheelchair with water up to her ankles was at risk. Residents lifted her out, wading through water – not their job and at the same time possibly putting themselves and the resident at risk. Second, sandbags. I looked at Wilts County Council sandbag policy information – 500 sandbags stated, this number could have been updated - 500 available for the whole of Wiltshire with water tables brimming, rivers already high and exceptional rainfall, is an insufficient number. Someone somewhere should have the foresight to buy in additional stock. Third, residents and I have been asking for the gullies in Butts Road to be cleared of silt, mud etc dropped by dumper trucks leaving the 5 Rivers works site. And this since the beginning of December with no result. Budget cuts on frontline services or the argument of 'there's no money' results in dissatisfied and disillusioned residents, with City Cllrs sometimes feeling powerless to help them.

I'm not saying that clearing blocked drains would have prevented the flooding but we have to take this as one of the many factors. I have collected a lot more information, for example, a longstanding blocked storm drain system issue, the allotment drainage channel and much more all of which involve various agencies, including Salisbury City Council and Keir. I'm frustrated that my suggestion to bring people together to resolve these important issues has fallen on deaf ears. Residents too, are rightfully frustrated since they live and see each and every problem in their neighbourhood. They know best but is someone actually listening and actioning solutions?

I'm still collecting and collating testimonies, evidence and facts and will put forward a Councillor Statement for the record at the next Full Council. It would be of great help if residents could complete the survey, either with the paper copy that has come through their letterboxes or online. The link is on Salisbury St Paul's Community Facebook page.

I will also be putting forward a motion to the upcoming Community Services Committee for a full, 100% waiver of the allotment fee for the Coldharbour Lane Allotment Holders. This is meagre compensation for, in some cases, substantial financial losses but should be considered as a positive gesture on our part. Cllr Caroline Corbin and I have discussed and now instigated a request that compensation available is extended to a] private tenants; b] allotment holders; c] residents whose cars were affected. Many will make claims to then see their insurance premiums increased as will homeowners. We will work tirelessly together to push for additional compensation whether in-kind or monetary, to be made available. Our response, whether coordination or immediate help and support should be better. We should do better. Bottom Line.

Finally, I'd like to thank all those who responded to my 'badgering' emails with in-depth information and in some cases, promises of action. I know you are all understaffed, exceptionally busy and work very hard. I sincerely appreciate your efforts and support.

Thank you Mr Mayor, fellow Cllrs and residents for allowing me these few minutes

Councillor Statement - Cllr Jo King

Want to update the Council on where we are with the possible stage in the city centre.

27 June 2022 Motion to SCC “believes that a permanent stage should be erected in the Market / Guildhall Square and therefore agree to form a Working Group consisting of those members of Salisbury City Council interested and invite others to join.”

September 2022 held a public meeting where those involved in the creative scene in Salisbury attended. Four schools said they would like to put on their productions; other wanting to use the stage were a poetry group, rock bands, choirs, choral groups, comedienne, ukulele band

Working Group was formed consisting of councillors, local PA company representatives, people in local bands. It was decided that the way ahead would be to have a temporary stage in the city centre to test the waters before a permanent stage was erected. Preliminary work included security, planning consent, position of the stage.

At the last meeting of the Group we received a presentation from a local company who could supply the stage and ancillary equipment for a considerably reduced charge from their usual fees. We have pencilled in their diary the last week in May and the whole of June this year.

We are presently working with the officers on the job description for someone to run this, complete paperwork, risk assessments etc.

I anticipate the cost of the hire of the stage and the person to run it to be raised outside of Salisbury City Council finances.

If we find that the stage is a useful asset to the city, we will begin the process of building a permanent stage in the city centre. There does seem to still be an energy for this project within the schools and the music scene and promoters are keen to see this happen.

Chairman’s Announcements:

Cllr Atiqul Hoque

Since our last full council excluding the extraordinary meeting, I’ve covered further 23 events till date I’ve cover 123 official engagements
I’ll just highlight few.

Starting off with 17th November Christmas begins in Salisbury this year’s theme was City of Stars. Out of many attractions the Snow Queen was the top attraction well done officers.

21st Nov 12pm

Mothers Union Diocese of Salisbury

Great service at trinity church at to part of cathedral and talk on refugees and domestic violence.

21st on evening eco hub alliance special AGM great achievement now accredited to Charity registration I'm delighted to say I'm now a member, we must do our bit for the planet and environment.

22nd November I had the honour to open Jennys restaurant in library walk. A great addition.

22nd November same day in the evening I was invited to attend Inspire foundation Charity dinner (funding research into spinal cord injuries across UK. Out of 17 Salisbury has one as branch.

I was invited to attend PEACE VIGIL organised by SALISBURY METHODISTS AND QUAKERS in solidarity with people of Middle East, lighting candle for Israel and Gaza.

27th November honorary recorder ceremony. A rare opportunity for a mayor to appoint a new judge. Sadly, we said farewell to Judge Barnett and welcome Timothy Mousley. Thank you to all councillors who attended. Cllr Sample felt right at home :)

29th November. I've attended Royal British Legion RBL AGM where I had the opportunity to say thank you to all volunteers. This year it was record breaking amount raised £71,000.

30th November it's an honour to be invited by regiment biennial award Dinner the Rifles where the HRH Queen Camilla was present as she's the patron.

3rd December darkness to light advent carol service at the cathedral. I've always wanted attend one of these It was an honour to be asked to do a reading front of almost 2000 people.

6th Dec Citizenship Ceremony. 10 Citizens from Ireland, Germany, Ghana, India, Nepal and Thailand.

This was special 9th Dec I met Martha who won the Christmas Card Competition. It was one of the best moments out of many events I attended. She's from Winterslow.

12th Dec. Out officer Marc and Mostyn arranged a meeting to meet and thank all the wildlife Group volunteers. It might look small, but they do a fantastic work, which makes great difference.

13th Dec Bishop Wordsworth school Carol Services in Cathedral.

14th Dec Carol Service in cathedral in the morning for Leehurst Swan School.

17 Dec Salisbury Cancer Research UK

Christmas Carol Service

St Thomas's Church. I did a reading that Muslim can relate to.

18th Extra ordinary Full council. Agenda NDP allocation.

18th December annual Wilton and Salisbury Rotary club Christmas dinner, incorporated Mayor's appeal. Final total £18,015.10

24th Christmas 2023 Community Christmas Eve Carol Sing Along

A great turnout well lol and team for arranging. It was Great experience and fun

7th January first event was Xanten twinning association lunch. It's excellent to we have so many members and our friendship is stronger than ever. Thank to Chris

8th January. Rotary club monthly dinner with speaker Charles Ackroyd historical hunt of Antarctica. Fascinating journey, I wouldn't!

10th January Citizenships Ceremony great start for many residents who took the oath.

18th January Happy Days Nursery & Pre-School Salisbury in Longhedge. Opened by Tom Corbin It's been very popular and in full capacity.

As a Muslim I enjoyed attending the Carol service and the many verses from the bible match with Quran and teachings.

But what was fascinating is that every Carol included the song of NOW-ELL "BORN IS THE KING OF ISRAEL" whilst we Muslims and Christian believes and accepts

Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) as king of Israel... but does the people Israel believes or accept ? If not why not.

Administration Leaders Update:

Cllr Victoria Charleston

Firstly, I am delighted to confirm that we have a new Chief Executive Officer for Salisbury City Council. Asa Thorpe joins us from University Hospital Southampton having previously worked in policing, housing, and local government. He will begin on 5th February. I am sure we are all looking forward to welcoming him soon.

I want to thank members of the cross-party recruitment task group for their initial work in the process of hiring a new lead officer for us. Particular thanks to Cllrs Nettle, Riddle, and Wells as well as our HR Manager Tracy Adams for the hours of work they committed alongside myself in finding our new Chief Exec.

Further heartfelt thanks to our Interim Clerk, Jo Woods for her sterling work over the last few months keeping everything moving forward, tackling some challenges, and helping to produce tonight's budget. A small gift of appreciation on behalf of the Council

Secondly welcome to our new permanent Responsible Financial Officer, Steve Bishop. Again, thanks to Steve Mansfield for his hard work over the last few months, the Council Leaders have enjoyed working with him.

Hopefully these two permanent appointments enable us to look forward over the next year to tackling some challenges coming our way.

I want to note the flooding experienced in Salisbury at the beginning of the month. Residents and Businesses in my ward suffered particularly and I am grateful we will be hearing from Andy Wallis tonight as well as Cllr Svan Hocking on the flooding.

We have recently had the latest City Partnership meeting which brings together organisations such as the BID, the Cathedral, the Playhouse, the College, and Wiltshire Council. Cllr Riddle attended on behalf of the Leaders and noted that the Partnership heard that city centre retail is on an upward trend. Plans are being worked on to make Culver St car park pay on exit, which will make it more attractive to shoppers. There were discussions about the need to manage disruption caused by all the various improvement schemes going on simultaneously.

Finally, this week the Leaders are hosting our Neighbouring Parishes meeting. We are hosting Councillors from Somerset Council who are keen to appreciate the impact of transferring services to parishes. We will also be discussing the Wiltshire Local Plan.

I will end on this point as we have a lot to get through tonight!

Budget Setting Statement

Cllr Victoria Charleston

This is the third budget I have presented on behalf of this administration. Like our work, it is evolving and shows the direction of this Council.

Firstly, it is a balanced budget. We are not intending to spend more money than we bring in. This is a prudent financial position to take and is a different approach to three years ago.

Secondly, this budget was formulated in consultation with residents. Back in August we ran a survey which asked people about their view on the City Council as well as our priorities. Across the board, 70% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the way SCC runs services which is an endorsement of the hard work by councillors and officers.

We held focus groups and a public meeting to ensure people had their opportunity to contribute to the budget setting process. In these discussions, people prioritised

three strands of our strategy: our environmental work, our events, and resident engagement.

To this end, we have protected our climate change budgets and ground maintenance budgets, we have protected our cultural grants to the Playhouse and Salisbury Museum as well as our events budgets.

We have made it a priority of our new Chief Exec to focus on resident engagement and communication.

One of the key issues that came out of our consultation and focus groups was the state of our pavements. So we have committed £30k of new money for street weeding. Over the last year we had a diversity inclusion task group, chaired by Cllr Bolwell, and on the back of that we are committing new money to start making our parks more accessible for *all* children starting with a new path to the play facilities on Bemerton Heath.

Importantly, we are also focusing on making this council run more smoothly by including money for new payroll and finance software which will enable officers to work efficiently. This is well overdue and intends to correct a long standing inefficiency within the Council.

Overall, this budget allows us to continue to maintain parks, play parks and over 12,000 trees, to give community grants, run community spaces and Salisbury Pantry; put on events including Fayre on the Square; run the Information Centre, shopmobility the crematorium and markets; It keeps our streets and public toilets clean; as well as so much more.

We have tightened budgets where possible, increased income targets on events and some fees and rents and we are asking residents for an extra 55p per week to keep doing all the services they have told us they want and appreciate.

I want to thank all officers for their hard work this year and particular thanks to our interim clerk, Jo and interim RFO, Steve for all their hard work on this budget.