

Salisbury City Council
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Minutes

Meeting of : Full Council
Date : 4 November 2024
Meeting held : The Guildhall
Commencing at : 6:30pm

Present:

Chair: S Hocking

Vice Chair: Cllr E Rimmer

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

Officers: Asa Thorpe, Steve Bishop, Penny Muxworthy, Marc Read, Matt Hine and Andrew Hunt

1. Apologies:

Apologies were received from Cllrs A Hoque

2. Public Questions/Statement Time:

Question and statements were received regarding agenda item 12, "Broken Bridges." Copies of the question and supporting statements are included at the end of the minutes for reference.

3. Councillor Questions/Statement Time:

A Councillor question was submitted by Cllr Rimmer, The question can be found at the end of these minutes. A verbal response was provided by Cllr I Tomes

A councillor statement read by Cllr T Corbin. The full statement can be found at the end of these minutes.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

The Chairman approved and signed the minutes of the last meeting of the Full Council on 2 September 2024.

5. Declaration of Interest:

Cllr J. Nettle declared a pecuniary interest in Item 12 due to being on the board of Broken Bridges.

Cllr A. Riddle declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 12 due to their spouse being on the board of Broken Bridge.

6. Dispensations:

No dispensations were requested.

7. Chairman's Announcements:

The Chairman made the following announcements:

In the last couple of months I have welcomed 20 people as new British Citizens to Salisbury, opened the Thriving on a Shoestring event at the GH, opening night of "Birdsong" at the Playhouse, Stars Appeal annual fundraiser at the Rifles Museum, celebration of the River Park project, the Skylark exhibition at the Museum, Wilton Town Council annual Mayors Service, spent as a guest of Bemerton Residents Association, accompanied Phyll Babb on her 37th of 100 walks around the Cathedral before her 100th Birthday raising funds for the Salisbury Trust for the Homeless, the BWS annual prizegiving event in the Cathedral, the annual Racal Electronics reunion at the Rugby Club, the annual open day the Fire Station, accompanied COGS on their annual Mayors cycle ride, opened Irene Kholer's Silver Salisbury bash at the GH, met with a couple of students to help them with their A-Level coursework around the role of the Mayor in City, Hotter Shoe's new store in the High Street, opened and judged the "bake-off" and "hot dog speed eating" competitions at the Foodie Sunday on the Market Square, Salisbury NHS's AGM here in the GH, the annual Past Mayors Lunch at the White Hart, an Outside Broadcast for Radio Odstock in support the Friends Sweetshop and Stars Appeal bookshop – who were so impressed I've been asked to come back at do another slot in a couple of weeks to – (MC Mayor in the House), unveiled the Paddington Bear statue in Fisherton Street, the RNLI's 200 Anniversary street collection, Salisbury Rotary Club monthly dinner with the Dean as guest speaker, the reception for Cllr Hoque to mark his Mayoral Year, The Royal British Legion Poppy Launch Appeal, "Meet the Artist" at Gallery 21, Riding for the Disabled new Menage,

Royal Naval Association annual Trafalgar Day evening Dinner (not very PC if you were French, or in the Royal Air Force!), retirement of Alan Lake after 30 years of Council Service, the Vegan Market on the GH square, and finally around the Dawn Sturgess enquiry at the GH I attended the opening morning and gave a TV interview for BBC Breakfast and Channel 5 evening News.

The Chairman declared that this meeting may go beyond 9:30pm, due to the number of items to be discussed and ask approval for the committee, for the meeting to go over this point and it was:

Proposed by: Cllr S Hocking

Second by: Cllr E Rimmer

Resolved that:

7.1. Councillors agreed the minute will proceed beyond 9:30pm if required.

8. Administration Leaders Report:

Admin leaders welcome the Head of Business, Matt Hine, they also acknowledged officers work for the Dawn Surges Inquiry. Gratitude was extended to staff for their efforts on the completion of the crematorium roof.

Appreciation was noted for the collaborative work on the draft budget, with thanks to councillors for their contributions. This year has shown a much-improved understanding of the budget process, and staff efforts have made it significantly clearer.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan (SNDP) is proceeding well and has been approved, with thanks given to Anne Riddle for her dedication. The council is pleased to announce the appointment of the first finance team apprentice. Progress on the Churchill project remains on course for completion. Additionally, six new volunteers have joined the CCTV team, and LED lighting has been installed in the information centre.

The administration also extends its thanks to Lynne Blackwood for her contributions and reflects on the handling of recent matters, apologising on behalf of the Labour Group for any issues that may have arisen. Moving forward, all councillors are encouraged to maintain respect and decorum in their conduct to ensure a positive and collaborative working environment.

9. Referral of Minutes:

Minutes taken since the Full Council meeting on 2 September 2024 were considered.

Proposed by: Cllr S Hocking
Seconded by: Cllr E Rimmer

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

Resolved that:

- 9.1. Councillors reviewed and noted the minutes as listed below:
Planning and Development 22 July 2024
Planning and Development 19 August 2024
Community Services 16 September 2024
Planning and Development 23 September 2024

10. Committee Reports:

The Committee's Chairman provided updates as follows.

Councillor J Wells, Chairman of the Environmental and Climate Committee, reported that no formal update is needed, as the most important matters would be discussed later in the meeting. However, the recent meeting highlighted the commendable work of Marc and his environmental team.

Councillor A Bayliss, Chairman of the Finance and Governance Committee, provided an update on the recent Finance and Governance Committee meeting. The update included the satisfactory conclusion of the 2023/24 annual accounts and the introduction of a new corporate card policy.

Councillor C Corbin, Chairman of the Community Services Committee, provided an update on the previous meeting. The update highlighted the extensive work covered during the meeting and acknowledged the impressive efforts of the Communities Team. Councillor Corbin noted the gratitude expressed by residents for the activities and initiatives delivered by the team.

Councillor S Charleston, Chairman of the Events, Markets, and Grants Subcommittee, provided an update on recent meetings, including the final approval of a rent reduction for the Stafford Club.

Cllr T Corbin, Chairman of the Planning and Development Committee, expressed gratitude to all committee members for their dedication and contributions to the meetings. As well as welcoming every member is to attend, every four weeks.

11. Outside Representatives:

No Outside representatives received

12. Broken bridges

The Chairman expressed gratitude to the attendees and acknowledged the many supportive messages received. The Chief Executive Officer read aloud the written questions and responses directed to the public question.

The Broken Bridges Committee delivered a presentation on behalf of Broken Bridges Nature Reserve Limited (BBNR) to Salisbury City Council, seeking a contribution of £50,000 to assist in the acquisition of Fitzgerald Farm, commonly known as Broken Bridges, for the benefit of Salisbury's residents and visitors.

The presentation introduced the Broken Bridges Nature Reserve as a project aligned with Salisbury City Council's environmental, social, and economic objectives. It included a formal request for a £50,000 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) grant to complete the purchase of 35 acres of Fitzgerald Farm. The importance of the project for the community was emphasized, with anticipated social and economic benefits outlined, such as reducing traffic congestion, improving local access, and enhancing regional investment. Additionally, the environmental benefits were highlighted, including enhanced pedestrian and cyclist accessibility, health promotion, biodiversity conservation, and improved natural resource management. Community support was evident, as residents have contributed donations and expressed the value of preserving and enhancing the area. The final slide served as a call to action to secure funding and protect community assets, underscoring the potential to reverse biodiversity loss and enhance community well-being through increased access to green spaces.

Councillor J. Nettle declared a pecuniary interest in Item 17 due to being on the board of Broken Bridges and left the room during discussion and voting on this item

The council commended the dedication of everyone involved in the project, engaged in discussion, and posed questions regarding the proposal. It was:

Resolved to:

7.1. To financially support the creation of a Nature Reserve at the Broken Bridges site.

Proposed by: Cllr T Corbin

Seconded by: Cllr R Rogers

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

13. Co-option

The Chief Executive Officer, Asa Thorpe, formally welcomed the candidates for the co-option of St. Paul's Ward and provided the Council with an overview of the co-option process.

Councillor Sven Hocking and Councillor Ed Rimmer nominated all candidates for co-option.

Each nominee delivered a three-minute presentation and responded to questions from councillors. The process concluded after three rounds of voting, during which a majority decision was reached to co-opt a candidate and it was:

Resolved that:

13.1. Chris Taylor was co-opted as a Salisbury City Councillor for St. Paul's Ward.

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

14. Motion of Cllr C Corbin

Cllr C Corbin requested for the motion to be referred to the next full council meeting.

Resolved that:

14.1 Agreed for motion to be deferred to next meeting.

15. Bemerton Heath Pump Track:

Marc Reed, Head of Environment, introduced Wiltshire Council and presented an overview of the Community Conversations initiative for the Bemerton Heath Pump Track.

The initiative aims to establish a purpose-built cycling track designed to cater to various skill levels, enabling riders to gain momentum through a series of rollers and banked turns without the need for pedalling. Supported by both Wiltshire Council and Salisbury City Council, the project emphasizes active community involvement throughout the planning process, including idea generation and guidance from a local advisory panel. Key considerations outlined in the presentation included technical feasibility, financial considerations, environmental impact, and community consultation.

Preliminary market research indicates that the track will require minimal maintenance, with an estimated lifespan of 15-20 years for asphalt surfaces. Funding is expected to come from local council contributions and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, with a formal request made for Salisbury City Council

to confirm their commitment to future asset ownership and ongoing maintenance responsibilities upon project completion.

The council engaged with questions and discussion, and it was:

Resolved to:

15.1. Approve the project proposal for the Bemerton Heath Pump Track

15.2. Agree that Salisbury City Council will assume ownership and maintenance responsibilities following project completion, subject to planning approvals, and warranties provided by suppliers

Proposed by Cllr T Corbin

Seconded by Cllr C Corbin

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

16. Weeds Option Paper

Marc Reed, Head of Environment. Presented the report on weed control for 2025/26 outlines various options for consideration following the delegation of responsibility from Wiltshire Council in 2017. With no statutory standard required, the cessation of glyphosate use by Wiltshire Council in 2023 led to increased resident complaints due to limited hand weeding.

Salisbury City Council previously halted glyphosate use in 2021, amending the policy in 2023 for invasive species treatment only. Trials of non-glyphosate treatments and new mechanical methods in 2024 had limited success.

The report highlighted options including standard or droplet glyphosate spraying, hot foam treatment, additional operatives, or accepting weed presence with appropriate public communication.

Each option varies in cost and environmental impact, with glyphosate shown in recent studies to be the most cost-effective and least environmentally taxing. The Committee is recommended to decide on the preferred option for 2025/26.

The councillors discussed and voted on each option, and it was:

Resolved that:

16.1. Salisbury city hire Additional 2 FTE Streetscene Operatives & Van with associated equipment. Cost would be reflected in budget setting documents.

17. Budget Monitoring Report to the end of August

Responsible Finance Officer, Steve Bishop presented Councillors with a summary of income and expenditure, comparing actual figures against the budget for the period. Variances exceeding £50,000 were highlighted and discussed. Budget monitoring reports will be provided quarterly to Full Council, in line with Financial Regulation 4.8.

Noted to:

17.1. The Council noted the financial position at the end of August 2024 and officers' explanations of the significant variances.

17.2. The Council noted the low level of the general reserve which continues to be in breach of the Council's stipulated minimum level.

18. Conclusion of 2023/24 Annual Accounts Process

Responsible Finance Officer, Steve Bishop presented an update on the conclusion of the 2023/24 annual accounts process. As a designated 'smaller authority,' the Council completed the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24, including the internal audit report, governance statement, and accounting statements, which were approved by Full Council in June 2024 and submitted for external audit. A notice of public rights inspection was also issued, inviting public engagement. The report outlines the results of the external audit and public inspection.

Noted to:

18.1. The Council noted the satisfactory conclusion of the 2023/24 annual accounts process.

18.2. The Council recognised the unacceptable risks arising from the absence of an RFO last year and ensures that these risks are more effectively managed in future

19. Annual Review of Investment Strategy: To receive the Annual Investment strategy

Steve Bishop, Responsible Finance Officer, presented a report to the Council to review its Investment Strategy to determine whether it remains fit for purpose or requires improvement. The Investment Strategy, as a core policy of the Council's Constitution, provided a framework for officers to prudently manage treasury balances throughout the year. The Councillors discussed and it was:

Resolved to:

19.1. The Council reviews the investment strategy every three years.

19.2. The Council permits money market investments as part of its investment strategy, provided the RFO ensures all liquidity requirements are met.

19.3. The Council approves the amended investment strategy appended to this report.

Proposed by: Cllr B Dalton

Seconded by: Cllr C Corbin

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

20. 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 45 members of the public present and 1 member of the press in attendance.

The meeting closed at 10:22 pm.

Cllr T Corbin Statement

I am very much aggrieved by recent events.

For as long as I can remember and certainly for all the time of my being a City Councillor since 2013 I have noted the polite acknowledgement councillors give to each other in recognition of the work and sacrifice that they each give. Certainly councillors who might be considered by some to be lazy will draw a certain degree of ire from their colleagues, but when factors around disability and ill health are concerned there is an acceptance that individual absences from council meetings can and should occur over what might be a prolonged period of time. This is something I have witnessed quietly carried out at various local Parish Councils including Salisbury City Council and at Wiltshire Council. I have on many occasions over the years made the statement that none of us know what challenges other members are facing or what ailments and such like we might have yet to face. We should not be too quick to make judgements.

It seems to me that this council has lost a sense of duty to its fellow colleagues by not allowing members to be appraised of Cllr Blackwood's health and needs. I know that members would have informally appreciated such an opportunity.

I find it hard to understand for example how three notable cases of ill health in this 4 year election cycle can have such a varied response, two of these impacting on the same ward of St. Paul's.

The recent course of action, in my opinion brings reputational embarrassment to Salisbury City Council in the way it goes about its business in this chamber and I am sure members on all sides would also like the opportunity to correct this.

Regardless of our political differences we all strive to represent Salisbury and the one thing we can all offer each other in support is polite respect.

Due to my work commitments it is very likely that this councillor statement is being read out in my absence, but I happily take this opportunity to encourage Lynne Blackwood to retake her place as a councillor in this chamber and I also encourage other members to support her in this.

With Best wishes

Cllr Tom Corbin

Public Questions

1. Does this request meet the criteria for community levy infrastructure spending?

My understanding is that the funding application is only to help towards the purchase costs. The grant doesn't guarantee the land will be acquired without further funding and therefore provides no tangible infrastructure benefits to the community. Moreover, even if the land is acquired there is no tangible improvement to the community infrastructure over what already exists without future investment. Therefore the use of CIL funds is highly questionable.

Response:

The Planning Act 2008 provides a wide definition of the infrastructure which can be funded by the levy, including transport, flood defences, schools, hospitals, and other health and social care facilities. This definition allows the levy to be used to fund a very broad range of facilities such as play areas, parks and green spaces, cultural and sports facilities, district heating schemes and police stations and other community safety facilities. This gives local communities flexibility to choose what infrastructure they need to deliver their development plan.

It is the view of officers of the Council that the use of funds is not questionable based on the criteria for use of CIL.

2. There is no security or legal assurance linked to this grant. I doubt the city council has ever previously committed such an amount of public funds without a least some form of memorandum of understanding being put in place.

Response:

The request from the Broken Bridges team offers no capital nor liability going forwards. It is a request for a donation to enable a community purchase to be made.

3. What happens if the scheme doesn't achieve the acquisition? According to organisation website there is no guarantee that donations will be returned to the respective benefactor.

Response:

If the purchase does not go ahead within the specified time limit, the Council would expect full reimbursement.

4. I can see no long term financial model outlining the costs and revenue streams to achieve the schemes objectives. Nor a plan advising of future operating costs and sustainability once the initial objectives of the scheme have been met.

The lack of forward planning makes me believe that the scheme will likely require ongoing public funding including assistance from Salisbury city council.

Response:

Agreed in that the report circulated to Councillors does not include a business plan. In order to maximise the opportunity which this purchase could bring, it is the opinion of officers that further funding would be necessary. This could be secured from public, private or charitable sources. Currently there are no plans to fund this scheme beyond a possible donation.

5. Furthermore to the risks identified at point four, what' is the contingency for when the current schemes leadership are no longer able to continue to manage the scheme? Considering any substantial investment from Salisbury City council shouldn't there be representation from Scc within the CIC with majority voting rights.

Response:

The Chief Executive of Salisbury City Council had approached the CIC for Councillor representation on the Board of the CIC. This was declined. A key question to consider before making a decision is what would happen if the CIC ceased to operate.

6. I do not doubt the integrity of the schemes structure nor the independence of it's chairman Councillor Jeremy Nettle. I do however have misgiving about the value attributed to this project because of this possible conflict of interest. I am in no doubt that this proposal would never have got to this stage if a serving City councillor wasn't a prominent part of the requesting scheme. I can't think of any similar request to come before full council.

Response:

Each Councillor has to make their own assessment on conflicts of interest. Recommendations have been made to those attending.

7. Finally, I fully support the aims and objectives of the CIC but do not believe that the acquisition of the land at the current asking price is a prudent use of funding.

The scheme will not be providing any further environmental protection to the broken bridge's what is already Insitu . The land certainly isn't at risk of development. There is already a popular public right of way on the land managed by Wiltshire council. The scheme isn't promising any increase to the existing public access.

I feel the scheme would be better to work with the existing or future land owner, and Wiltshire council to achieve improvements.

Response:

The CIC have outlined several benefits to the community and potential funding sources, but it does not explicitly address concerns about the asking price for the land or provide a detailed justification for the expenditure.

This is a decision which has been discussed by the Leadership of the Administration, and Officers have taken a view that there is a legal route to spending public funds. The decision on whether to spend a significant amount of money sits with the Councillors.

Cllr E Rimmer Question

Can this administration truly justify its decision to convert Holocaust Memorial Day—a day specifically dedicated to commemorating the systematic extermination of six million Jewish men, women, and children—into a general event that ‘does not single out any one cultural group’? At a time when antisemitism is surging across the UK, this shift risks conveying indifference, if not outright disregard, for the unique suffering of Jews and the specific lessons of the Holocaust.

The council was rightly quick to display the Ukrainian flag in solidarity but refused to display the Israeli flag, and has remained silent following allegations of antisemitic behaviour by a Councillor that led to his expulsion from the Conservative Party. By altering Holocaust Memorial Day to avoid ‘singling out’ the Jewish community, the council’s actions align disturbingly with the definition of antisemitism, which includes treating Jews differently and failing to acknowledge their unique experiences.

Does this administration truly believe it can build a ‘future for Salisbury’ by erasing the historical significance of the Holocaust in the name of inclusion? What message does this send to Salisbury’s Jewish residents, and to all citizens, if Holocaust remembrance is reduced to a generic celebration of diversity? This is not inclusion; it is targeted erasure. This is not progress; it is moral cowardice. How does the administration defend this choice to dilute Holocaust remembrance in the context of its stated commitment to confronting all forms of hate?"

Broken Bridges Public Comments

I would like to add my support for the Broken Bridges Nature Reserve project. My wife and I regularly walk the Broken Bridges footpath both for exercise and to show visitors the interesting local countryside. We strongly support the objectives of the project to restore the biodiversity of the meadows by re-introducing suitable grazing and to bring about proper management for the health of the river.

The proposed acquisition of the property will be crucial to preserving this magical little corner of Salisbury. I strongly urge the Council to approve it for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) developer funding.

Yours truly,

John MacKay

Myrtle Cottage. Church Lane

Lower Bemerton

We have been living in Harnham (Middle Street) for over 10 years having moved from an overcrowded and impersonal Basingstoke.

We have enjoyed all the wonderful facilities of the Meadows, Town path walks to town and also the rambling trails along Broken Bridges to town, Lower Bemerton and along the farm footpaths to Netherhampton etc.

The Broken Bridges paths have been wonderful to share with our children and grandchildren and it would greatly benefit from the Council Development Funding to secure it as a nature reserve and development for the benefit for the community and future generations.

Alas, our corner of Salisbury has been greatly destroyed by the new and future housing projects. It is time for city and county councils to fund areas such as the Broken Bridges Project. It would truly benefit all of Salisbury.

Please therefore support the scheme with a generous grant and funding.

Many thanks and kind regards,

W J Tucker, Middle Street, Harnham

I understand that you will be discussing the Broken Bridges reserve proposal at a Council meeting on Monday. I hope you will support this really worthwhile project.

Joan New

Harnham

I would like to express my whole hearted support of the Broken Bridges nature reserve. I have already donated towards the funding and hope that the council will support it too by using the Community Infrastructure Levy developer funding. I live locally on Lower Road and go walking everyday. I think the location is unique and needs to be preserved and looked after appropriately for current and future generations and all the wildlife.

Kind regards

Karen Parchment

Lower Rd

I am writing prior to the meeting on Monday 4th November, where a presentation will be given by Broken Bridges Nature Reserve CIC directors to propose securing CIL from the Netherhampton Road housing developers.

I am not able to attend the meeting in person, so am offering written support of this proposal.

Kind regards,

Helen Redford

In advance of the Salisbury City Council Meeting on Monday 4th November, I would like to express my strong support for the efforts to purchase the land at Broken Bridges, Harnham and make this a nature reserve.

As a Harnham resident I regularly use Broken Bridges path for dog walking and to reach Churchfields. Broken Bridges is a very special asset for the city as it is a wild area of great biodiversity that is accesible and enjoyed by a large number of people. However, the area is currently neglected and in urgent need of maintenance to improve paths, cut dangerous trees and of management to improve biodiversity. This is a particularly valuable area as there is a large development of new houses adjacent to the land. This will lead to an incleasing number of people using Broken

Bridges path as a route into Salisbury and wanting to access this beautiful area for walks.

It will be wonderful to secure the future of Broken Bridges for public access and improved wildlife management by the purchase of the land by the Broken Bridges Trust. I strongly support the application for CIL developer funding for purchase of the land.

Dr Andrew Gorringe

I wish to support the purchase of Broken Bridges Nature Reserve. It will keep a valuable site available for the residents of the city.

Brian White

UpperStreet, Salisbury

I wish to support this project as Harnham residents have lost 'access' to many green fields and open spaces as a result of house building. This project will enable pedestrians (including those in wheelchairs) and cyclists to enjoy this area again or for the first time.

Margaret White

Upper St,Harnham

As a resident of Lower Bemerton, 99 Lower Road, I would like to indicate my full support to the Broken Bridges Nature Reserve Project.

I hope Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) developer funding can be secured.

The water meadows are an integral part of our community and a joy to the residents and visitors alike. Providing a habitat for wildlife is key to the proposed project and will protect our environment.

Julie Mossom

I would like to add my support for the Broken Bridges project as I know it will benefit the community.

Thank you

Sue Gurd

