

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the
WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Woodgreen,
Witney, on Wednesday 15 May 2019 at 2:00pm

PRESENT

Councillors: Maxine Crossland (Chairman), Alex Postan (Vice-Chairman), Jake Acock, Joy Aitman, Alaa Al-Yousuf, Luci Ashbourne, Andrew Beaney, Richard Bishop, Rosa Bolger, Jill Bull, Mike Cahill, Laetisia Carter, Louise Chapman, Nathalie Chapple, Andrew Coles, Owen Collins, Julian Cooper, Derek Cotterill, Marilyn Davies, Jane Doughty, Harry Eaglestone, Duncan Enright, Hilary Fenton, Ted Fenton, Steve Good, Andy Graham, Jeff Haine, David Harvey, Gill Hill, David Jackson, Ed James, Richard Langridge, Liz Leffman, Nick Leverton, Dan Levy, Norman MacRae, Martin McBride, Michele Mead, James Mills, Toby Morris, Kieran Mullins, Neil Owen, Elizabeth Poskitt, Carl Rylett, Geoff Saul and Harry St John.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

By virtue of the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, Councillor Crossland took the Chair and invited nominations for the office of Chairman.

It was:

RESOLVED: that Councillor Harry Eaglestone be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Crossland thanked Members for giving her the opportunity to represent West Oxfordshire during the past year. She had found her time in office interesting and had noticed a decrease in the degree of formality accompanying civic events. Councillor Crossland thanked Members for the respect and courtesy they had extended to her during her period of office and congratulated Councillor Eaglestone on his appointment as Chairman.

The Chairman signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Members for their support.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Chairman invited nominations for the office of Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Jane Doughty be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

The Vice-Chairman signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, thanked Members for their support and expressed her appreciation of the way in which Councillor Postan had fulfilled the role during the previous year.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 24 April 2019, copies of which had been circulated, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nigel Colston, Suzi Coul and Ben Woodruff.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers relating to items to be considered at the meeting.

6. RECEIPT OF ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Eaglestone thanked Councillor Crossland for her service to the Council as Chairman during the previous year. He welcomed both newly elected Members and those returning to the Council.

The Leader of the Council also welcomed new and re-elected Members to the Council and reminded all councillors who were yet to return their declaration of interest form to do so. Councillor Mills also expressed his thanks to Councillors Crossland and Postan for their service to the Council and District of West Oxfordshire.

6.1 Former Members of the Council

Councillor Eaglestone then paid tribute to those Members who had not been returned at the last election and expressed his thanks for their service and the contributions they had made to the work of the Council over many years.

Peter Kelland

Councillor Kelland represented Eynsham and Cassington from 2011 and served on the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Development Control Committee, Lowlands Area Planning Sub-Committee and the Audit and General Purposes Committee.

Alvin Adams

Councillor Adams represented Witney West from 2003 and Witney South from May 2007. Initially appointed to the General Purposes Committee, he joined the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2004. He was appointed Vice-Chairman of the Audit and General Purposes Committee in 2009 and Chairman in 2011, a role he fulfilled until this year.

Peter Handley

Councillor Handley was first elected to represent Carterton North West in 2002.

He served on the Licensing Committee, Audit and General Purposes Committee, Development Control Committee and the Lowlands Area Planning Sub-Committee. He was appointed Chairman of the General Purposes Committee and Vice-Chairman of the Economic and Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2005 before being made Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2007, serving in that capacity until 2018.

Charles Cottrell-Dormer

Councillor Cottrell-Dormer was the longest serving Member of West Oxfordshire having remained on the Council continuously since its inception in 1974.

Throughout that time he served on the Development Control Committee and the Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee. In 1977 he was appointed as Vice Chairman of the Sub-Committee, becoming its Chairman in 1979 and serving in that capacity until 2005.

Whilst primarily associated with the work of the planning sub-committee (and his abhorrence of Leylandii hedging) Charles also served on the Policy and Co-ordinating Committee, Finance and General Purposes Committee, Public Health Committee and the Housing Committee.

6.2 Debenhams Department Store, Marriotts Walk, Witney

Councillor Mills advised that, following the announcement that it was intended to close the Debenhams store in Marriotts Walk, he had written to the Interim Chairman to enquire whether there was anything the Council could do to help in retaining the outlet. A response had been received indicating that the Company's Property Director would be in touch to discuss the offer of assistance further.

Councillor Coles congratulated Councillor Eaglestone on his appointment as Chairman and went on to express his thanks to the Leader of the Council for his efforts to secure the future of the Debenhams store in Marriotts Walk. He indicated that the Labour Group would be more than willing to offer any assistance and work with other parties to achieve this end.

6.3 Delivery of Affordable Homes

Councillor Mills advised that he was to write to Kit Malthouse MP, the Minister of State for Housing to ask for his support in enabling the £60 Million allocated under the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal to be utilised for more innovative methods of delivering affordable homes. Councillor Mills explained that he wished to see greater flexibility in the way in which this funding could be deployed and reminded Members of the arrangements with the Blenheim Estate under which the Estate would let and manage affordable homes. He advised that the first of these developments at Hanborough Gate was to provide 59 affordable homes, 42 of which would be available to rent at 60% of affordable rent. Initiatives such as this would help to address the specific difficulties faced in the District.

6.4 Use of Email Addresses

Councillor Morris reminded all Members to use their West Oxfordshire email address for all Council Work. Any political correspondence should be conducted through personal email addresses.

6.5 Development Control – Member Training

Councillor Haine reminded Members that all those wishing to sit or substitute on the development control sub-committees that it was mandatory to attend training. Arrangements had been made for a training session to be held at the conclusion of the afternoon's meeting which was open to all Members.

7. PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There were no submissions from members of the public under the provisions of the Council's Rules of Procedure.

8. RETURNING OFFICER'S REPORT ON ELECTIONS HELD ON 3 MAY 2018

The Council received and noted the report of the Returning Officer giving details of the results of the District Council elections held on 2 May 2019.

Councillor Mills noted that it was mental health awareness week and, given that there had been a polarisation of opinion and greater belligerence in politics nationally, suggested that it was important for Members to have an awareness of mental health when considering the potential impact of their dealings with others.

Councillor Postan noted that, whilst some 50% of residents of the Shilton parish lived in Bradwell Village, they had to travel some distance to cast their votes as there was no polling station in that area.

Councillor Morris advised that he had received representations from a number of parents who were faced with making other provisions for child care when schools were closed for use as polling stations and asked if their use could be reduced.

Councillor Enright thanked the Returning Officer and the election staff for their work in administering the recent elections. Councillor Graham also expressed his appreciation.

The Head of Democratic Services reminded Members that a review of polling districts and places was currently underway and that consultation remained open until the first week of September. Any concerns relating to polling places could be raised through this process. He went on to advise Members that only three school premises were now in use as polling stations, all of which were located in Witney. If Members were aware of any suitable alternatives they would be welcomed.

9. APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

The Leader of the Council announced his appointment of the Deputy Leader and other Executive Members in accordance with Article 7.5 of the Constitution.

Mr Mills advised that he was to reappoint Councillor Morris as Deputy Leader and that Councillor MacRae would be taking responsibility for the Environment Portfolio. Councillor Mead would be joining the Executive with responsibility for Health and Leisure and Councillor Good was to assume responsibility for Communities and Housing. Councillor Haine would retain responsibility for Strategic Planning.

In addition, Councillor Mills announced that Councillor Leverton would become the Council's Armed Forces and Veterans Champion, Councillor St John its Rural Champion, Councillor Chapman the Elderly Persons Champion and Councillor Beaney the Young Persons Champion. In addition, Councillor Mills advised that he was creating a new role of Social Inclusivity Champion which would be filled by Councillor Bull.

Councillor Leffman enquired whether it was intended and with what frequency the Champions would report back to the Council. Councillor Mills advised that he expected that a reporting structure would be introduced but he wished to discuss this further with the individuals concerned.

Councillor Bolger congratulated Councillor Mead on her appointment and welcomed the decision to replace Councillor Baker with another female Member. However, she stressed that women remained under-represented on the Executive.

10. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES

The report of the Head of Paid Service regarding the appointment of Committees of the Council was received and considered.

Councillor Mills then proposed the recommendations and this was seconded by Council Morris and on being put to the vote was carried.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committees indicated in paragraph 3.2 of the report be appointed, with the specified membership, for the period to the next annual meeting of the council;
- (b) That seats on those Committees be allocated to the political groups and the non-aligned members in accordance with the rules relating to political balance, and as indicated in the Table under paragraph 3.5, with the Labour and Co-operative Party Group being allocated two seats on the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the non-aligned Members being allocated one seat on that Committee with no seats being allocated to them on the remaining two Overview and Scrutiny Committees;

- (c) That Members be appointed to each of the Committees in accordance with the wishes of the political groups as shown in the Appendix to these minutes;
- (d) That Councillor Langridge be allocated a seat on the Audit and General Purposes Committee and the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Davies seats on the Development Control and Urgency Committees;
- (e) That in accordance with, and subject to the exceptions in, Rule 4 of the Council Procedure Rules, all Members of each political group not appointed to a committee or sub-committee be named as alternate members for the member or members of that group who have been appointed to that committee or sub-committee;
- (f) That the Licensing Committee be re-constituted for 2019-2020, with a membership of 11; and
- (g) That the seats on the Licensing Committee be allocated to the political groups in accordance with the principles of political balance, and be filled in accordance with their wishes, with the Committee to comprise seven Conservative members, two Liberal Democrat Members and two Members from the Labour and Co-operative Party Group.

11. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN PRO-TEM FOR THE ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

RESOLVED: that Councillor Eaglestone be appointed Chairman pro-tem of the Council's Committees for those meetings to be held following this meeting.

The meeting closed at 2:32pm

CHAIRMAN

Chairman *
Vice Chairman #

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES 2019/2020

(CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL: HARRY EAGLESTONE
VICE-CHAIRMAN: JANE DOUGHTY)

CABINET (6)

Member	Area of Responsibility
James Mills (Leader)	Leader of the Council: Policy Framework; Corporate Plan; Co-ordination of Executive functions; Representation on Regional and National Bodies; Oxfordshire Partnership Board; Oxfordshire Growth Board; Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership; Oxfordshire Leaders; Economic Development; Business Development; Inward Investment; Visitor Economy; Public Relations
Toby Morris (Deputy Leader)	Resources: Finance and Management; Equalities and Diversity; Customer Services; Information Technology and services; Asset Management; Council Tax and Benefits; Health and Safety; Councillor Development; Shared Services; Efficiency Agenda; Performance Management
Norman MacRae MBE	Environment: Car Parking; Waste Collection and Recycling; Street Scene (Cleansing, Litter and Grounds Maintenance); Energy Advice; Flood Alleviation; Environmental and Regulatory; Environmental Partnership
Michele Mead	Health and Leisure: Sports and Leisure Facilities and Strategy; Healthy communities; Public Art; Community Facilities Grants; Community Revenue Grants; Community Activity Grants; Oxfordshire Health improvement; Community and Public Health
Steve Good	Communities and Housing: Safeguarding; Community Safety Partnership; Crime and Disorder; Neighbourhood Policing; Scrutiny of Police and Crime Commissioner; Voluntary sector engagement; Parish/Town Council Liaison; Assets of Community Value; Broadband; Housing Allocations; and Homelessness
Jeff Haine	Strategic Planning: Regional Spatial Strategy; Local Plan; Government planning policies and guidance; Conservation and Design; Design and Historic Environment; Landscape/Biodiversity; Strategic Housing; Provision of Affordable Housing; Sheltered Housing Accommodation; Development Management

Conservative			Labour	Liberal Democrat	Ind
AUDIT AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE (17)					
Andrew Beaney Louise Chapman Suzi Coul Jane Doughty *	Harry Eaglestone Gill Hill Ed James Martin McBride	Alex Postan Harry St John	Luci Ashbourne Rosa Bolger Duncan Enright	Jake Acock Andy Graham # Elizabeth Poskitt	Richard Langridge
MISCELLANEOUS LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE (5)					
Steve Good # Ed James	Norman MacRae *		Geoff Saul	David Jackson	
STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE (5)					
Andrew Beaney # Richard Bishop	Norman MacRae *	Neil Owen (Standing Deputy)	Andrew Coles	Elizabeth Poskitt	
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE (24)					
Andrew Beaney Richard Bishop Nigel Colston Derek Cotterill Maxine Crossland	Harry Eaglestone Hilary Fenton Ted Fenton # Steve Good Jeff Haine *	Nick Leverton Neil Owen Alex Postan Harry St John	Mike Cahill Owen Collins Duncan Enright Geoff Saul	Nathalie Chapple Julian Cooper David Jackson Kieran Mullins Carl Rylett	Merilyn Davies
LOWLANDS AREA PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE					
Maxine Crossland Harry Eaglestone Hilary Fenton	Ted Fenton * Steve Good Jeff Haine	Nick Leverton Harry St John	Owen Collins Duncan Enright	Kieran Mullins Carl Rylett	
UPLANDS AREA PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE					
Andrew Beaney Richard Bishop Nigel Colston	Derek Cotterill Jeff Haine * Neil Owen	Alex Postan	Mike Cahill Geoff Saul #	Nathalie Chapple Julian Cooper David Jackson	Merilyn Davies
(Ex officio Non-Voting Member: (Vice Chairman of Development Control Committee – Ted Fenton))					

Conservative		Labour		Liberal Democrat	Ind
URGENCY COMMITTEE (11)					
Steve Good Jeff Haine	Norman MacRae Michele Mead	James Mills * Toby Morris #	Joy Aitman Duncan Enright	Andy Graham Liz Leffman	Merilyn Davies
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (14)					
Andrew Beaney * Jill Bull Suzi Coul	Jane Doughty Harry Eaglestone Hilary Fenton	Nick Leverton Neil Owen	Joy Aitman Luci Ashbourne Laetisia Carter #	Jake Acock Andy Graham Carl Rylett	
FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (14)					
Alaa Al-Yousuf Louise Chapman Derek Cotterill *	Maxine Crossland David Harvey Gill Hill	Alex Postan # Harry St John	Rosa Bolger Geoff Saul	Julian Cooper Liz Leffman Dan Levy	Richard Langridge
ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (14)					
Alaa Al-Yousuf # Richard Bishop Jill Bull	Harry Eaglestone Ted Fenton David Harvey *	Martin McBride Alex Postan	Mike Cahill Andrew Coles Owen Collins	Liz Leffman Kieran Mullins Elizabeth Poskitt	
LICENSING COMMITTEE (11)					
Harry Eaglestone Hilary Fenton Ted Fenton	Steve Good # Ed James	Norman MacRae * Alex Postan	Owen Collins Geoff Saul	David Jackson Elizabeth Poskitt	