



## **Minutes of a meeting of Council held on Wednesday, 27 November 2024**

### Members present:

Nikki Ind - Chair	Mark Harris – Vice-Chair	
David Cunningham	Claire Bloomer	Jeremy Theyer
Dilys Neill	Nigel Robbins	Clare Turner
Tristan Wilkinson	Gary Selwyn	Michael Vann
Mike Evely	Lisa Spivey	Jon Wareing
Joe Harris	Patrick Coleman	Ian Watson
Julia Judd	Ray Brassington	Daryl Corps
Juliet Layton	Tom Stowe	Len Wilkins
Andrew Maclean	Tony Slater	Paul Hodgkinson
Gina Blomefield	David Fowles	Angus Jenkinson
Mike McKeown		

### Officers present:

Andrew Brown, Democratic Services Business Manager	Caleb Harris, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Angela Claridge, Director of Governance and Development (Monitoring Officer)	Kira Thompson, Election and Democratic Services Support Assistant
David Stanley, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer	

## **46 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Chris Twells, Helene Mansilla, and Tony Dale

Officers were notified during the meeting that Councillor Roly Hughes had to also provide apologies.

## **47 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

## 48 Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting on 25 September 2024 were considered as part of the pack. The Chair noted for Members that there was an exempt member question response included in the private papers, and asked if any Member wished to discuss the contents in private session. There was no request to discuss these in private session.

There were no amendments to the minutes

<b>Minutes of previous meeting on 25 September 2024 (Resolution)</b>		
RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting on 25 September 2024 be APPROVED as a correct record.		
For	Gina Blomefield, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	28
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	Claire Bloomer and David Cunningham	2
<b>Carried</b>		

## 49 Unsung Heroes Awards

The purpose of this item was for the Chair to award the Unsung Heroes awards.

This was noted by the Chair as the second month where the awards are given.

The Chair then noted the awardees as Christopher Davies, Suzie Drye, Richard and Kate Cleverly and Gemina Plater. Their contributions were across the District were highlighted especially in relation to young people.

## 50 Announcements from the Chair, Leader or Chief Executive (if any)

The Chair then made her announcements:

- Thanks were given to Ana Prelici and Caleb Harris as they were both moving on to new employment opportunities.

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- Congratulations were given to the Cirencester Signpost organisation who had received the Kings Award for Voluntary Service.
- The Chair had represented the Council at a number of key events including the Tetbury Remembrance Service, the lowering of flags at the Council offices and the civic briefing at RAF Fairford.
- The recent Storm Birch had caused lots of damages in the District and the work of emergency services and others to assist were acknowledged. On this point, the Chair accepted an intervention from Councillor Cunningham who wished to know what the Council is doing to look at flood mitigation measures in the District. Councillor Wilkinson as the Cabinet Member responsible for flooding noted his previous experience with the flooding of his home and the devastating impact of storms. It was highlighted that the Council would work across all political groups and partners to help tackle this.

The Leader then made his announcements:

- It was noted how important flooding is and how the issues are getting more serious over time. It was important for the Council to use its community leadership role to manage these issues. Thanks were given to Ubico staff and all those involved in tackling the recent events.
- Congratulations were given to all the Unsung Heroes who had been awarded.
- It was highlighted that the English Devolution Bill was likely to bring forward the reorganisation of local government in Gloucestershire. It was highlighted that preparations were ongoing to look at the potential impacts of this and what this will mean for the future of the Council. But there was a need to engage constructively with the government on a county wide basis.
- Thanks were given to Caleb Harris, as the Senior Democratic Services Officer for all of his work. It was noted that Democratic Services had seen a lot of improvements over the past 3 years which was welcomed by all Members.
- The passing of former Councillors Geoffrey Adams and Martin Harwood were recognised for their contributions as public servants.

There were no announcements from the Chief/Deputy Chief Executive Officer

## **51 Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

## **52 Member Questions**

Member questions and the supplementary questions and responses can be found in the attached Annex A.

## **53 Membership of Committees and Cabinet update**

The purpose of the report was to inform Council regarding changes to the membership of the Cabinet and to agree a new appointment to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader, Councillor Joe Harris, introduced the item and made the following points:

- Councillor Tristan Wilkinson was appointed to take up the role of the Economy and Environment which would also include overseeing the Council's waste services.
- There had been a reduction of one Cabinet Member.
- The reshuffle focusses on the key objectives of the administration were being served as part of the corporate priorities from delivering services for residents, to delivering housing and tackling climate change.
- Tributes were paid to Councillors Lisa Spivey and Tony Dale who had left the Cabinet.
- Councillor Lisa Spivey was recommended to be appointed to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and thanks were given to Councillor Gina Blomefield for her leadership of the Committee to improve it.

There thanks given to Councillor Wilkinson for his work on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and a welcome to the Councillor Spivey for her proposed appointment.

There was a comment regarding that waste was not in the title of the role of Economy and Environment as a key statutory service.

Councillor Mike Evely formally seconded the recommendations and made the following points:

- As the previous holder of the waste role, whilst it was not in the title, it was clear where responsibilities were placed.
- It was noted that the new Cabinet responsibilities could be found on the website.

There was no further discussion on the item.

#### **Membership of Committees and Cabinet update (Resolution)**

RESOLVED: That Full Council

1. NOTED the update from the Leader of the Council regarding the change to the membership and responsibilities of Cabinet Members.
2. AGREED to appoint from the Liberal Democrat Group Councillor Lisa Spivey to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to replace Councillor Tristan Wilkinson.

For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	30
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

#### **54 Council Tax Support Scheme for 2025/2026**

The purpose of the report was to consider and approve the revised Council Tax Support Scheme for the financial year 2025/2026.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, Councillor Evemy, introduced the report.

- The scheme is brought in advance of the Budget so that the calculations for the Council Tax for the new financial year
- Council Tax Support was important for many of the most vulnerable in communities
- The Cost of living was continuing pressure on those on lower incomes and the bands for Council Tax Support need to keep pace with increasing costs. The proposals would see bands increased by 4% in order to keep the real terms value of the support.
- The Council residents in receipt of Council Tax Support have a benefit of £5 million, but the support is vital for those residents on the lowest of incomes.
- The amount of support is based on their income and the family composition in order to target support effectively.
- An estimated increase of £28,000 of increased support of which £2,000 would come from the Council and the rest would come from the County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- The Hardship Fund provides for those residents in exceptional circumstances outside of the Council Tax Support Scheme with an estimated £33,000 remaining which was recommended to be carried over.
- The Council had consulted on this and Citizens Advice Bureau had been engaged in the consultation on the scheme to provide valuable advice.

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Councillor Bloomer reserved their right as the seconder.

It was noted how important the scheme was to vulnerable residents in the District any help provided was welcomed.

There was a question regarding the caseload and if there was a financial limit on support. It was highlighted that the scheme sets out the criteria and the support residents were entitled to. If a significant increase was seen, this would have to be revised to check on the level of support for the following year. However the benefit to those most vulnerable residents outweighed any costs or little money which would be received from those being billed.

The Chair asked about care leavers given the difficult circumstances, and was there any specific support for them. Councillor Evemy's concurred with the comments regarding care leavers but the understanding was there were not part of this scheme as these were income dependent. The Business Manager noted that the Council does have a discount scheme for carers up to the age of 25 through Gloucestershire County Council referrals.

There was a question on the impact of literature from the Council about the cost of living, and if there was a way to measure this. There was also a question regarding a specific case of the Council asking individuals to repay an overpayment of housing benefit and if discretionary housing payment was available to alleviate the pressure. Councillor Evemy noted one leaflet would be hard to measure in terms of the impact but this was important to make sure residents were aware of the help available. The Business Manager on discretionary housing payment scheme, people would be eligible in receipt of housing benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit but they would look at the income and expenditure of the household. However they were not able to comment on the specifics of the case.

There were comments around the structure of Council Tax and the need to update the bands given that these were set over 30 years ago.

It was highlighted that there were many people who were working but are in poverty.

Councillor Claire Bloomer as the seconder then made the following points:

- The scheme would provide valuable benefits to residents who were struggling.
- The last Cabinet meeting received a report on the work of officers providing cost of living support.

Councillor Evemy summed up and made the following points:

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- On Council Tax scheme, it was highlighted that reform was needed for the benefit of taxpayers.
- The Council Tax support scheme allows for more children unlike other benefits like child benefit which has a limit of two children.
- Prior to 2013, Council Tax Support was set nationally. As they are now set locally, there was pride in the policies of the Council.

## **55** **Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles (Policy) Review 2024**

The report details the revisions to the Council's Statement of Principles (Gambling Act 2005), based on legislative requirements, statutory guidance and any amendments following public consultation.

Councillor Ray Brassington as Chair of the Planning and Licensing Committee introduced the report and made the following points:

- Thanks were given to officers for their work on the report
- Licensing authorities are required every 3 years to draft a Statement of Principles and these are then sent out for consultation with the police, Town and Parish Councils and residents.
- No comments were received from the Consultees.
- Following the report being received by the Planning and Licensing Committee, some minor amendments were made to it.
- The recommendation was therefore that the Council adopts a 'no-casino' resolution.

There was a question around the basis for the decision in wishing to adopt a 'no-casino' resolution. It was noted in reply by Councillor Brassington and then also by the Leader of the Council that the resolution ensures the Council has a mechanism to determine if it wishes to allow casinos in the District. The starting point for this would be having no casinos. Without this approve 'no-casino' resolution, the Council would not have the ability to determine this.

There was a question around the exchange of information with other bodies. Mandy Fathers noted in reply the Council does share information with bodies like the Police. However, the Gambling Act was noted to be an area that will be examined in 2025 and an overhaul of these provisions was likely.

Councillor Julia Judd then spoke as the seconder and made the following points:

- The resolution would make sure the District was protected for the future.
- The Planning and Licensing Committee had examined this item as the only item on its agenda at the meeting.

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- Paragraph 2.2 of the report was highlighted as the underlying principles of the licensing authority.

It was noted that the document needed to be approved before 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025 to ensure the safeguards remain in place, and whilst this was the only item on the Planning and Licensing Committee agenda, that Committee was one of the consultees.

<b>Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles (Policy) Review 2024 (Resolution)</b>		
RESOLVED: That Full Council 1. APPROVED the Statement of Principles; and, 2. APPROVED to continue to adopt a “no-casino resolution” for inclusions in the published Gambling Act 2005 Licensing Policy Statement.		
For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	30
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

## **56 Request for a dispensation pursuant to Section 85(1) Local Government Act 1972**

To determine whether a dispensation for Councillor Tony Dale may be granted under the provision of Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Councillor Joe Harris introduced this:

- Councillor Dale was in a serious car accident in July 2024 which left him in a difficult physical condition.
- Whilst Members are eager to see him return to the Council, it was important to provide him with the time and space to recover.
- The request was therefore that the Council waive the ‘six month rule’ provision within Section 85 Local Government Act 1972. This would allow Councillor Dale to continue as a Member without risk of falling off the Council due to non-attendance.



It was noted that Councillor Dale was thought of fondly as Ward Member for Northleach.

It was noted that it was pleasing to see his progress on his recovery but this would take time.

Many Members noted their support and best wishes for his recovery.

The Chair, Councillor Nikki Ind, seconded

- Councillor Dale had been a strong mentor to her during her time as a Councillor
- He was a valued Member to his community of Northleach.
- The space and time to recover given by the proposed dispensation was important.

**Request for a dispensation pursuant to Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 (Resolution)**

That Full Council resolves to:

1. Approve a dispensation for Councillor Tony Dale in accordance with Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, on the grounds of ill-health.

For	Gina Blomefield, Claire Bloomer, Ray Brassington, Patrick Coleman, Daryl Corps, David Cunningham, Mike Evemy, David Fowles, Mark Harris, Joe Harris, Paul Hodgkinson, Nikki Ind, Angus Jenkinson, Julia Judd, Juliet Layton, Andrew Maclean, Mike McKeown, Dilys Neill, Nigel Robbins, Gary Selwyn, Tony Slater, Lisa Spivey, Tom Stowe, Jeremy Theyer, Clare Turner, Michael Vann, Jon Wareing, Ian Watson, Tristan Wilkinson and Len Wilkins	30
Against	None	0
Conflict Of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
<b>Carried</b>		

**57 Notice of Motions**

There were no motions for Council to consider.

**58 Next meeting**

The next meeting of Full Council was noted as Wednesday 22 January 2025.

**59 Matters exempt from publication**

Full Council did not enter private session.

**60 Exempt Member Question response from previous minutes**

Members did not discuss the exempt Member Question response from the previous minutes.

The Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and closed at 3.49 pm

Chair

(END)