

COUNCIL
20 MAY 2009

Present :- Councillor Margaret Fairley-Crowe (Chairman)
Councillor Henry Spyvee (Mayor)
Councillor Sonia Lewis (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors Christopher Arnold, Nick Barlow,
Lyn Barton, Kevin Bentley, Mary Blandon,
Elizabeth Blundell, John Bouckley, Nigel Chapman,
Peter Chillingworth, Helen Chuah, Barrie Cook,
Nick Cope, Mark Cory, Robert Davidson,
Beverly Davies, Tina Dopson, John Elliott,
Andrew Ellis, Margaret Fisher, Stephen Ford,
Wyn Foster, Ray Gamble, Christopher Garnett,
Martin Goss, Chris Hall, Mike Hardy, Dave Harris,
Pauline Hazell, Peter Higgins, Theresa Higgins,
Mike Hogg, Martin Hunt, John Jowers,
Margaret Kimberley, Justin Knight, Michael Lilley,
Sue Lissimore, Jackie Maclean, Jon Manning,
Richard Martin, Kim Naish, Nigel Offen,
Philip Oxford, Gaye Pyman, Ann Quarrie,
Lesley Scott-Boutell, Paul Smith, Terry Sutton,
Laura Sykes, Nick Taylor, Jill Tod, Anne Turrell,
Dennis Willetts, Julie Young and Tim Young

Councillors Fisher and Naish were not present for items 1-6.

The meeting was opened with prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain, The Reverend David Harper.

1. Election of Mayor

It was PROPOSED by Councillor Hall, SECONDED by Councillor Bouckley and SUPPORTED by Councillors Dopson and P. Oxford and –

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that Councillor Henry Spyvee be elected Mayor of this Borough for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor Spyvee took the customary oath and made and subscribed the declaration of acceptance of office.

The Mayor then took the Chair and returned thanks for his election.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.

3. Election of Deputy Mayor

It was PROPOSED by Councillor Kimberley, SECONDED and SUPPORTED by Councillors Chuah, T. Young and P. Oxford and –

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that Councillor Sonia Lewis be elected Deputy Mayor of this Borough for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor Lewis then made and subscribed the declaration of acceptance of office and returned thanks for her election as Deputy Mayor.

4. Vote of Thanks to the Late Mayor, Councillor Peter Crowe, and Retiring Mayor, Councillor Margaret Fairley-Crowe

It was PROPOSED by Councillor Bentley, SECONDED and SUPPORTED by Councillors Hunt, T. Young and P. Oxford and –

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that the best thanks of the Council are due and are hereby accorded to the late Councillor Peter Crowe and to Councillor Margaret Fairley-Crowe for the admirable manner in which they had discharged the responsible duties of the Mayoralty during the past year and that a transcript of this resolution under the Common Seal be furnished to Councillor Margaret Fairley-Crowe.

5. Mayor's Chaplain and Other Announcements

The Mayor intimated that he had appointed the Reverend David Harper to be his Chaplain for the ensuing Municipal Year and indicated that the theme of his mayoralty would be 'Colchester: It's Fascinating Past; It's Exciting Future'.

The Civic Service would take place on Sunday, 31 May 2009 at Eld Lane Baptist Church. There would be an Essex Band concert at St Botolph's Church on 13 June and the "Mayoress at Home" would take place on 20 June 2009.

The Mayor also indicated that he would be supporting the following charities:-

Army Benevolent Fund;
Christian Youth Outreach
Colchester Emergency Night Shelter
CO1
St Helena Hospice

6. Adjournment

RESOLVED that the meeting stand adjourned until 12.00 noon and be resumed in the Council Chamber

7. Reconvened Meeting

The meeting reconvened at 12.00 noon in the Council chamber.

8. Have Your Say!

Adam Norgate and Abigail Stringer addressed the Council pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 6(2) and asked the following questions:-

- When would the Visual Arts Facility (VAF) be completed?
- How much had the VAF cost so far and how much would it cost to complete?
- What was the purpose of the VAF?
- Did Colchester really need the VAF?
- Why did officials refuse to comment on the progress of attempts to raise funds from other sources to complete the VAF?
- Why were funds allocated to the VAF but not to other initiatives that young people might benefit from such as free transport, the youth council or a concert hall?
- How could significant members of the arts world be encouraged to engage with and support young people.

Councillor Hunt, Portfolio Holder for Communication, Customers and Leisure, responded. He thanked Adam and Abigail for attending. He stated that the VAF should be completed by spring 2010. The Council was in a better position to ensure that it was completed than it had been previously. It should cost slightly less than the overall £25.5 million budget. He stressed that the Council's contribution was currently £1.5 million, with a further £2 million committed to the project. The VAF helped fulfil a number of objectives in the Council's Strategic Plan. It would provide a centre of excellence and venue for young people to meet and learn. It was designed to be one of a range of

cultural and leisure facilities in Colchester. He noted the requests for funding for other priorities. Transportation was an issue for Essex County Council and there was already an excellent concert facility at Charter Hall which he would seek to promote. Councillor Hunt indicated that a detailed written response would be sent.

Andy Hamilton addressed the Council pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 6(2). He believed that the Council operated a culture of secrecy and had refused to hold public inquiries into the Decent Homes contract and the VAF. He expressed concern that firstsite had been guaranteed the lease of the VAF and that he believed that auditors had ignored deficiencies in the accounts of the VAF. Councillor Turrell, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, indicated that a written response would be sent.

9. Appointment of the Leader of the Council

RESOLVED that Councillor Turrell be appointed Leader of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year.

10. Appointment of the Deputy Leader of the Council

RESOLVED that Councillor Hunt be appointed Deputy Leader of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year.

11. Appointment of the Cabinet

RESOLVED that in accordance with the provisions of Section 24 of the Local Government Act 2000 the number of seats, Group representation and membership of the Cabinet for the ensuing Municipal Year be as circulated at the meeting and attached to these minutes.

12. Delegations made by the Leader of the Council

RESOLVED that the allocation of responsibility for portfolios by Cabinet members for the ensuing municipal year, as determined by the Leader of the Council and as circulated at the meeting, be noted.

13. Appointment of Panels, Committees and Sub-Committees

RESOLVED that:-

(i) that in accordance with the provisions of Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the number of seats, Group Representation and membership of the Accounts and Regulatory Committee, Finance and Audit Scrutiny Panel, Licensing Committee, Local Development Framework Committee, Planning Committee, Policy Review and Development Panel and the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the ensuing municipal year be as circulated at the meeting and attached to these minutes.

(ii) that in accordance with the provisions of Section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the appointments of the Standards Committee and the Task and Finish Groups shall not be on a Group basis and membership shall be as circulated meeting and attached to these minutes.

(iii) that the membership of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel be confirmed as follows:-
Samantha Drummond,
Paul Nunny and
David Priest.