

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

at a meeting of the Council of the Borough of
Kettering held virtually on Zoom on 16th
December 2020

Present:

Councillor	James Burton (Mayor)	Councillor	David Howes
"	Linda Adams	"	Ian Jelley
"	Cedwien Brown	"	Anne Lee
"	Mike Brown	"	Paul Marks
"	Lloyd Bunday	"	Clark Mitchell
"	John Currall	"	Jan O'Hara
"	Ash Davies	"	Russell Roberts
"	Mark Dearing	"	Mark Rowley
"	Maggie Don	"	Mick Scrimshaw
"	Andrew Dutton	"	Margaret Talbot
"	Scott Edwards	"	Mike Tebbutt
"	Jim French	"	Lesley Thurland
"	Ruth Groome	"	Greg Titcombe
"	Jim Hakewill	"	Keli Watts
"	Jenny Henson	"	Jonathan West
"	Philip Hollobone		

20.C.32 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Duncan Bain (Deputy Mayor) and June Derbyshire

20.C.33 MINUTES

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 23rd September 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor

20.C.34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ruth Groome declared a personal interest as an employee of Northamptonshire County Council Libraries Service.

20.C.35 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made the following announcements:

- Former Mayor, John Coleman

The Mayor informed Council of the death of former Mayor, John Coleman who had passed away at the age of 85. John represented the Piper's Hill Ward on Kettering Borough Council from 1987 until 2003, serving on a number of Committees, including the Planning Committee. In 2000 he was elected Mayor.

John was born in the area and would always be remembered for his vast local knowledge. Together with his wife, Lilian, as Mayoress, they undertook a vast number of civic engagements in 2000-2001, taking every opportunity to promote the Borough and engage with as many local people and communities as they could.

The Mayor expressed condolences to Mrs Lilian Coleman and family on their sad loss.

- Belinda Scowen

The Mayor informed Council of the death of Belinda Scowen on 20th November following a battle with cancer, which was borne with strength and dignity. Belinda was a former Team Leader working in Customer Services. Belinda loved her job, always thinking of others and provided excellent customer services whilst caring for colleagues and residents. She would be sadly missed by her family, friends and colleagues at Kettering Borough Council. The Mayor expressed condolences on behalf of the Council.

A one minute silence was observed in memory of John Coleman and Belinda Scowen.

- Messages of Congratulation and Thanks

The Mayor congratulated Councillor John Currall on becoming Mayor of Burton Latimer and expressed birthday wishes to Councillor Jenny Henson.

Thanks were extended to Councillors and staff for their contributions to The Mayor's charity appeal for donated foreign currency, with particular thanks being given to Councillors Dutton, Stanton, Groome and Watts and Executive Director, Martin Hammond, for their donations.

- Update on Mayoral Activities

Updates were given on virtual activities and events as follows:

- Virtual Christmas tree of lights switch-on for Cransley Hospital
- Virtual Kettering Christmas lights switch-on with Hugh Dennis

- The Rotary Club Carol Service would be live-streamed on 17th December
- The Creative Arts Festival would take place on You Tube on 18th December

The Mayor advised Council that he had sent a letter of congratulations on behalf of the Council to Councillor Tom Beattie, Leader of Corby Borough Council, who had received a Councillor of the Year Award. He had also sent a letter expressing good wishes to Glynnis Hooper of Crazy Hats on her retirement.

Announcement by Councillor Keli Watts (Mayor 2019-2020)

Councillor Keli Watts announced that she had been unable to hold her planned fund-raising Jazz night for the British Heart Foundation due to Covid-19 restrictions. She thanked councillors and officers for help in fund-raising throughout her year of office, announcing that a total of £8,400 had been raised.

20.C.36 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader made announcements in respect of the following achievements:-

- The Council had been shortlisted in the 2020 APSE Best Health and Wellbeing Initiatives Award
- A Rose of Northamptonshire Award had been received by the Shared Services refuse team as part of the Covid-19 Unsung Heroes of Northamptonshire Initiative

20.C.37 REPORT OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

No report.

20.C.38 RIGHT TO SPEAK

None

20.C.39 KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2021-2022

A report was submitted which sought Council's approval for:

- (i) the budget for Kettering Town Council for the 2021-2022 financial year; and
- (ii) for a precept to meet that budget for next year to forward on to the Shadow Authority.

During debate, a number of questions were raised on the following matters:-

- The services to be provided by the new Town Council within the submitted budget
- The proposed precept for Kettering Town in relation to the North Northamptonshire budget
- Statutory responsibilities of town and parish councils for elections and allotments
- Costs of accommodation for Kettering Town Council
- The job description for the Interim Clerk
- Responsibility for the market and market charter
- Budget for Neighbourhood Plans

It was noted that the proposed budget included provision for work in connection with the Headlands Neighbourhood Plan, which was due to be completed in 2021. The Portfolio Holder for Finance agreed to circulate the job description for the Interim Clerk by e-mail following the meeting, pointing out to Council that duties included accounting and administration duties and designation as Kettering Town Council's Responsible Finance Officer. Accommodation costs included in the budget were based on market costs.

In relation to the proposed precept for Kettering Town Council, it was noted that it would be for the Town Council and the unitary council to make decisions on any responsibilities for services the Town Council might provide on behalf of North Northamptonshire Council in the future, and the figure provided only took account of those services already agreed by the Borough Council should transfer. The proposed precept was under £140,000, and thus there was no requirement for formal consultation.

(Councillor Michael Brown left the meeting at 6.33 pm)

RESOLVED that

- (i) the budget as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved; and
- (ii) a precept of £8.00 (Band D equivalent) Council Tax be notified to the Shadow Authority for 2021-2022.

(Voting: 29 for; 1 against)

20.C.40

CLOSEDOWN MEASURES – COMMITTEE MINUTE SIGN-OFF

A report was submitted which sought approval to delegate authority for the sign-off of final sets of committee and forum minutes to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair of the relevant committee/forum.

A request was made for an additional informal joint geographic forum meeting to be held on the subject of the unitary budget. The Deputy Leader agreed to investigate the suggestion. However, it was noted that consultation on the proposed unitary budget was currently ongoing, providing an opportunity for individuals to have their say.

RESOLVED that authority be delegated for the sign-off of final sets of committee and forum minutes to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair of the relevant committee/forum.

(Voting: Unanimous)

20.C.41 **MOTIONS**

None

20.C.42 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

Zoom Meetings

Councillor Anne Lee asked the Deputy Leader the following question:

“Is KBC prepared to adopt a more flexible procedure for speakers at the Council’s public Zoom meetings, by allowing those speakers to join the relevant publicly broadcast Zoom meetings from the start with their video and sound muted? It would allow these speakers to follow the debate in real time before being unmuted, similar to physical meetings in the Council chamber, instead of being placed at a disadvantage because of the time lag. If not, why not?”

The Deputy Leader responded as follows:

“The purpose of placing speakers in the waiting room mirrors the practice in physical meetings where speakers are asked to sit at the committee table for the length of their contribution.

For viewers on YouTube, the retention of speakers, especially if there were lots of them, would potentially confuse those watching about who was a decision maker and who was not, which is why we have adopted the practice we have.

Committee Managers no longer have any control over the ability of Zoom meeting attendees to unmute themselves or to quickly remove video feeds for speakers.

Although causing some inconvenience, clarity about who is a committee member and who is exercising the right to speak remains important.”

Cllr Lee asked the following supplementary question:

"Does the assumption that speakers will turn on their video and microphone before and after they are allowed to do so illustrate that some councillors consider themselves as public masters rather than public servants."

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communications replied as follows:-

"No, I don't see it this way, but speaking from a practical point of view as Chair of the Planning Committee, it would have been possible to have had 21 speakers on 7 items at last night's meeting. No complaints have been received from members of the public."

The Deputy Leader added the following comment in response to the supplementary question.

"These are strange times. It is about how we can operate rather than how we would like to. Practicalities must be taken into account. People can still watch the live stream."

20.C.43 MATTERS OF URGENCY

None.

20.C.44 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the penultimate meeting of the Council would take place on 24th February 2021, with the final meeting scheduled for late March.

(The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 6.45 pm)

Signed

The Mayor

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