

# MINUTES

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2013

2.00 PM



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## PRESENT

Councillor David Nalson Chairman

Councillor Bob Adams  
Councillor Mark Ashberry  
Councillor Ray Auger  
Councillor Jean Bevan  
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing  
Councillor Pam Bosworth  
Councillor Robert Broughton  
Councillor Teri Bryant  
Councillor Paul Carpenter  
Councillor Mrs Frances Cartwright  
Councillor Ibis Channell  
Councillor George Chivers  
Councillor Michael Cook  
Councillor Kelham Cooke  
Councillor Paul Cosham  
Councillor Nick Craft  
Councillor Alan Davidson  
Councillor Phil Dilks  
Councillor Breda Griffin  
Councillor David Higgs  
Councillor Reginald Howard  
Councillor Mrs Rosemary Kaberry-Brown  
Councillor Vic Kerr  
Councillor Michael King  
Councillor Charmaine Morgan

Councillor Mrs. Linda Neal  
Councillor John Nicholson  
Councillor Helen Powell  
Councillor Nick Robins  
Councillor Graddon Rowlands  
Councillor Bob Russell  
Councillor Bob Sampson  
Councillor Bob Sandall  
Councillor Susan Sandall  
Councillor Trevor Scott  
Councillor Ian Selby  
Councillor Rob Shorrocks  
Councillor Mrs Judy Smith  
Councillor John Smith  
Councillor Peter Stephens  
Councillor Judy Stevens  
Councillor Adam Stokes  
Councillor Mrs Brenda Sumner  
Councillor Mrs Jean Taylor  
Councillor Mike Taylor  
Councillor Jeff Thompson  
Councillor Frank Turner  
Councillor Bruce Wells  
Councillor Rosemary H Woolley  
Councillor Raymond Wooten

## OFFICERS

Chief Executive (Beverly Agass)  
Strategic Directors (Tracey Blackwell,  
Daren Turner)  
Legal & Democratic Services Manager  
(John Armstrong)

## OFFICERS

Strategic Lead for Economic  
Development and Regeneration (Corinne  
Garbett)  
Principal Democracy Officer (Jo Toomey)

## **27. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

### **Question 1 – from Mr A. Baxter, to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Linda Neal:**

“You are no doubt aware that Lincolnshire County Council is consulting on changes to library services across the County. I realise the town of Bourne is less directly affected by the changes because of the new library facility and community point opened in partnership with South Kesteven District Council back in March. However, I am sure you share the concerns of many South Kesteven residents about the proposed cuts to services. The Deepings would get a particularly rough deal from the proposals because we would become one of the largest areas of population in Lincolnshire without a properly staffed library. This will mean that for anyone in the Deepings without access to a car, a visit to the library will take half a day, and children, including my own, will effectively be excluded from accessing libraries completely.

“In light of this, will the South Kesteven District Council be joining other District Councils around Lincolnshire in responding to the consultation? And if so, will South Kesteven District Council be supporting the calls from thousands of residents in the south of the District that the Deepings Library should retain a tier 2 library with adequate resources and properly paid staff?”

### **Reply from Councillor Mrs Neal**

“Thank you very much Mr Chairman. I’d like to thank Mr Baxter for his question and yes, certainly I am aware that the County Council is consulting on its proposed changes to the library service and I know that many people are concerned about what is suggested. I am sure that everyone is aware that this is not a district council service however I am also aware that this service is valued by many local people and I am sure the county council will want to listen to feedback before making a final decision. I understand the period of public consultation closes at the end of September and it is important that as many people as possible provide their views and ideas by completing the online questionnaire on the County Council’s website. The County will, I am sure, listen carefully to the views of the residents whilst at the same time weighing the very difficult financial position that they find themselves in and no doubt explore every avenue regarding possible future service delivery.”

### **Supplementary question from Mr Baxter**

“In one of Margaret Thatcher’s autobiographies, she says that the civil servants came to her and asked to take away children’s milk to charge for museums, and to charge for libraries. She said that she knew from her time as a school girl in Grantham, the importance of libraries and for children to have access to libraries. I would first of all repeat the question: is SKDC going to respond to the consultation as a corporate body, but also is Margaret Thatcher’s words, that children should have access to publicly funded libraries, is it right or wrong?”

## **Reply from Councillor Mrs Neal**

“Thank you very much Mr Chairman. On the first part because there were really two questions there I do believe, I’m not sure whether you’re going to accept two questions or not. The first question was will we be formally responding to the consultation the second question was did I believe children should have access to a library...I firmly believe therefore, Mr. Chairman that children and not only children but members of the community should have access to full library services and I don’t mind saying so but I personally have already responded to the consultation online”

*On whether the Council would be submitting a response as a corporate body the Leader replied:* “It’s not within my Portfolio and I haven’t had a conversation with the Portfolio Holder about it, so I don’t know.”

Several Councillors spoke in support of the Deepings Library campaign and suggested that the Council should respond to the consultation. The Chief Executive advised Members that this forum was only to answer any questions from members of the public and that the Council had its own processes through which any consultation responses could be produced.

Mr Baxter was thanked for his time.

*The public open forum ended at 14:11.*

## **28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Parkin, Jacky Smith, Ian Stokes, Wilkins and Wood.

## **29. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

No interests were disclosed.

## **30. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 JULY 2013**

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11 July 2013 were proposed, seconded and agreed as a correct record.

## **31. COMMUNICATIONS (INCLUDING CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS)**

The Council noted the Chairman’s engagements.

## **32. STAMFORD GEORGIAN FESTIVAL**

The Portfolio Holders for Leisure and Arts and Economic Development – Grow the Economy prefaced the presentation on the Stamford Georgian Festival with

brief speeches. Reference was made to the 'Mallard – Story of Speed' which was held in Grantham on 7-8 September 2013. The event attracted 15,000 visitors and increased footfall in the town centre. Mr Henry Cleary, Carillion and Lincolnshire County Council were thanked for their roles in bringing the Mallard to Grantham.

The Portfolio Holders also spoke about the cultural and economic benefits of holding festivals like the Georgian Festival and the Gravity Fields Festival. They said such events encouraged people's use of the districts towns while promoting civic pride in the area and its heritage.

The Strategic Lead for Economic Development and Regeneration gave a presentation on the Georgian Festival, which was taking place in Stamford between Friday 27 and Sunday 29 September 2013. The festival was designed to promote the local economy and heritage of the area through a high quality event that celebrated the character of the town and build the reputation of the district nationally.

The festival programme covered several different platforms with activities and events based around families, heritage, education and performance. Highlights of the festival included high-profile speakers, music recitals, drama pieces, a specially produced Horrible Histories show, a period cricket match, a street-fayre and a re-enactment of the Stamford Bull Run. Events would take place in a range of venues across Stamford including public buildings, open spaces, churches and other historical and performance venues in the town.

Local businesses and community groups were being encouraged to participate. They had provided venues and put on special events that coincided with the festival. Partners for the event included Stamford Town Council, New College, Rutland and Stamford Mercury, Burghley, Royal Horticultural Society, Horrible Histories, Shade-makers and the Bath Minuet Company. The team had been particularly pleased with the level of support and input from partners.

To complement the festival, education packs for primary school children had been produced and were available online. There would also be traditional fairground rides and street entertainment.

A wide range of promotional activities were taking place using social media, broadcast and print media, street banners and signage and a market stall. Promotional activities were supported by a number of different bodies including Stamford Town Council, Lincolnshire County Council and Rutland County Council.

Members were informed that 1,730 additional parking spaces were being provided (Burghley, Cummins and New College). These would be free for visitors but they would have to walk into the town centre.

There were a number of outcomes that would be used to demonstrate the

festival's level of success:

- Increased footfall over the festival weekend
- Raised visitor spend in local businesses
- Increased return visits to the area
- A higher number of overnight stays
- Wide national and local media coverage
- Support from partners through funding or in-kind support
- Strong community engagement

Before the topic was opened for questions, the Chief Executive reminded Members of the contribution such festivals made to the Council's priorities. She said they were a good tool for maintaining existing businesses and attracting new businesses to the district, which in turn impacted on employment and quality of life.

A number of Members articulated their support for the festival and congratulated the team on the programme. Members were pleased with the buy-in from partners together with the support of the local community. Some concern was expressed about how long-term outcomes could be measured.

Some Councillors particularly advocated the engagement with local schools and colleges. They highlighted the value of inspiring children and teaching them about their local heritage. It was suggested that an additional measure could be added to evaluate how the festival affected children's understanding of the history of their own community.

It was hoped that the festival would be biannual. Comparison was made to Gravity Fields Festival where the success of the 2012 event had led to increased interest and support for 2014.

In response to a question on the accessibility of events and car parking for people with mobility problems, officers explained that car parking arrangements were being publicised. Literature included the location of car parks and how long it would take visitors to get to the town centre. Event information also clearly highlighted those venues where accessibility might be a problem for some visitors.

Brief mention was made of a festival planned for 2014 by residents in the Deepings that would commemorate the start of the First World War. The Councillor who highlighted the festival hoped Members would support it.

Several Councillors also offered their congratulations on the success of the Mallard festival.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Lead for Economic Development and Regeneration for her presentation and wished the team every success with the festival.

### **33. LEADER'S REPORT ON URGENT DECISIONS**

The Leader of the Council's report CAB016, which listed one key decision and four non-key decisions that were taken under special urgency arrangements, was noted. Several members asked for further information, which they were informed could be provided outside the meeting.

There was also some discussion on arrangements within the Constitution on the frequency of reports on decisions taken under special urgency arrangements. The Local Authority (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 stated that the Leader should make quarterly reports on any decisions taken under urgency provisions. It also stated that the Leader should make at least one report each year (this would be where no urgent decisions had been taken).

### **34. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13**

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee presented the Scrutiny Committee annual report for 2012/13 to the Council for noting and summarised the varied work programme undertaken by the Committee

The Chairman thanked the Committee's members for their efforts, together with those people who had attended meetings and given evidence. He also thanked the Vice-Chairman and the officers who supported the Committee.

On a personal note, the chairman of the Scrutiny Committee thanked members of the Council for their support and good wishes through a difficult time.

In discussing the Committee's report, reference was made to the meeting at which the Committee considered provision at Grantham hospital. Two members expressed opposing views on the current outlook for Grantham hospital. A question was also asked about what the Committee learned of proposals for Stamford hospital.

One Member commented on how the Committee's operation had improved and developed and suggested that to work most effectively, an independent scrutiny officer was needed. Two items were suggested for future consideration by the Committee: the impact of the spare room subsidy and static and mobile library provision.

Council noted the report.

### **35. QUESTIONS WITHOUT DISCUSSION**

One question without discussion had been received and referred to the relevant Policy Development Group for a response.

Question 1

To: Councillor Teri Bryant (Good Housing Portfolio Holder)

From: Councillor Charmaine Morgan

*During South Kesteven District Council's AGM 2013 Councillors were assured that those residents affected by Bedroom Tax would be able to claim support through Discretionary Housing Payments for rent arrears protection and assistance moving home.*

*Councillors were advised during the debate that a 'scaleable' fund had been set aside to support residents affected.*

*In view of this can the following figures be provided by officers:-*

- *How many SKDC residents are affected by the Bedroom Tax?*
- *How many applicants have claimed assistance to date with rent arrears protection?*
- *How many applicants have claimed assistance to date with moving costs?*
- *How many applicants have received 100% of their claim?*
- *How many applicants have been rejected for assistance?*
- *How many residents have requested house transfers/exchange as a result of the Bedroom Tax?*
- *How many residents have been successful at moving home as a result of the Bedroom Tax - upsizing and downsizing?*
- *How many residents have moved from SKDC tenancy into private/insecure tenancy as a result of the Bedroom Tax?*
- *How much money has to date been spent on supporting residents affected by the Bedroom Tax with:*
  - a. Moving Costs*
  - b. Rent arrears prevention*

This question was referred to the Resources PDG. The Chairman informed Members that Councillor Morgan had been supplied with an answer to her question.

**36. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting was closed at 15:31.