

Annual Council
23 May 2022

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL held on Monday 23 May 2022 at 7.30pm in the Hawthorne Theatre, Campus West, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors B.Fitzsimon (Mayor)
G.Ganney (Deputy Mayor)

M.Birleson, J.Bond, S.Bonfante, J.Boulton, S.Boulton,
L.Brandon, J.Broach, L.Chesterman, J.Cragg,
L.Crofton, G.Hayes, A.Hellyer, M.Holloway, D.Jones,
C.Juggins, S.Kasumu, T.Kingsbury, J.Lake, R.Lass,
F.Marsh, S.McNamara, G.Michaelides, T.Mitchinson,
G.Moore, L.Musk, N.Pace, D.Panter, R.Platt,
J.Quinton, J.Ranshaw, B.Sarson, P.Shah, M.Siewniak,
P.Smith, C.Stanbury, S.Thusu, F.Thomson, T.Travell,
R.Trigg, S.Tunstall, F.Wachuku, J.Weston,
P.Zukowskyj

OFFICIALS Chief Executive (K.Ng)
PRESENT: Assistant Director (Legal and Governance) (M.Martinus)
Governance Services Manager (A.Marston)
Member and Mayor Liaison Officer (S.Houghton)

Father Darren Collins, the Team Rector of Bishops Hatfield for the Churches of St Etheldreda and St Luke led the Council in prayer.

Welcome:

The retiring Mayor welcomed the newly elected Councillors to the Council. The new Councillors are:

Sandreni Bonfante, James Broach, Larry Crofton, Duncan Jones, Terry Mitchinson, Gemma Moore, Darrell Panter, Tim Rowse and Michal Siewniak.

1. ELECTION OF MAYOR

Nominations were invited for the election of the Mayor of the Borough of Welwyn Hatfield for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

It was moved and seconded by Councillors J.Boulton and A.Hellyer that Councillor B.Fitzsimon be elected. The retiring Mayor then asked if there were any other nominations. There being no other nominations, it was

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RESOLVED:

That Councillor B.Fitzsimon be elected Mayor of the Borough of Welwyn Hatfield for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

The retiring Mayor presented the Borough Civic Awards for 2022 in partnership with Mears and the University of Hertfordshire.

The retiring Mayor presented the following awards for 2022:-

- Harley Lieberman in recognition of his hard work undertaken at Hatfield Men's Shed where he volunteers. He supports the other shed members, particularly the younger members like himself and also sharing his considerable joinery expertise on woodwork projects.
- Mayo Vondee in recognition of her contribution to pro bono work undertaken at the Hertfordshire Law School. Mayo also volunteers to work in the Hertfordshire Law Clinic when it opened in October 2019 which enables members of the public to obtain one-off verbal or written legal advice in a range of areas including employment, family and housing law.
- Cherie Button and Joy Chance in recognition for their work supporting the residents of Welwyn Garden City. Since the restrictions had been relaxed last year, they support the local community by simply sitting outside the Howard Centre, saying hello and talking to people to brighten up their day. They also have a Facebook page "Cherie and Joy - we grow community".

The retiring Mayor presented the 2022 Mears Community Award to Martin Connolly in recognition for the work he had undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic vaccination programme. Martin is a volunteer who has led a team of volunteer marshals that enabled the delivery of the vaccine programme in Hatfield from the beginning of January 2021. His cheerful demeanour in all weathers put everyone, particularly nervous participants, at ease.

The retiring Mayor invited G.Ward, Dean of Students, to present the University of Hertfordshire young person award to Joy Ifarimoyo for her contribution as a midwifery student in helping others, both as a site representative for peers at her placement at Barnet hospital and as a midwifery ambassador to course applicants.

The retiring Mayor, on behalf of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, thanked both Mears and the University of Hertfordshire for their continued support as sponsors of the civic awards.

The retiring Mayor spoke about his time as Mayor of Welwyn Hatfield.

The retiring Mayor reported that he had raised £9,500 for his charity during his year of office, Just One Click Away, JOCA. The Mayor presented a cheque to representatives of his charity.

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The retiring Mayor thanked Mrs Hebden for her patience and tolerance for attending evening events. The retiring Mayor thanked colleagues in the Council for their help and Councillor colleagues for their support including attending Charity events.

The retiring Mayor thanked Councillor B.Fitzsimon as his Deputy for her support during the year and presented her with a gift.

The retiring Mayor thanked S.Houghton, Member and Mayor Liaison Officer for her help during the year and presented her with a gift.

The retiring Mayor then vacated the Chair which was taken by Councillor B.Fitzsimon.

Councillor B.Fitzsimon made the formal Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Mayor pursuant to Section 83 of the Local Government Act 1972.

(Councillor B.Fitzsimon in the Chair)

The Mayor thanked Councillors J.Boulton and A.Hellyer for nominating her and expressed that it will be an honour to serve the community again as the Mayor of Welwyn Hatfield Borough, having served as Mayor previously in 2018-2019.

The Mayor also thanked County Councillor Peter Hebden for all of the excellent work he did during his time as Mayor. The Mayor presented him with the Past Mayor's Medal and album of his time in office.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor T.Kingsbury, expressed his thanks to the retiring Mayor for his service as Mayor of the Borough and also congratulated B.Fitzsimon on her appointment as Mayor.

2. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR

The Mayor invited nominations for the appointment of the Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

It was moved and seconded by Councillors S.Boulton and P.Smith that Councillor G.Ganney be appointed. The Mayor, then asked if there were any other nominations. There being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor G.Ganney be appointed Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

Councillor G.Ganney made the formal Declaration of Acceptance of Office as Deputy Mayor pursuant to Section 83 of the Local Government Act 1972.

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The Deputy Mayor thanked Councillors S.Boulton and P.Smith for the nomination. The Deputy Mayor said it will be an honour to serve the people of Welwyn Hatfield by assisting the Mayor in this office.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.Richardson, T.Rowse and J.P.Skoczylas.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16 March 2022 were approved as a correct record and noted by the Mayor.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

Councillors J.Bond, S.Boulton, T.Kingsbury, F.Thomson S.Thusu and P.Zukowskyj declared non-pecuniary interests in items on the Agenda as appropriate as Members of Hertfordshire County Council.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made the following announcements:-

6.1. Mayor's Charity

The Mayor announced that during her Mayor year she will be supporting the local charity, the Welwyn Hatfield Women's Refuge.

6.2. Councillors No Longer Serving

On behalf of the Council the Mayor expressed thanks to former Councillors D.Bell, A.Dennis, S.Elam, P.Hebden, T.Jackson-Mynott, H.Quenet, A.Rohale and K.Thorpe.

7. APPOINTMENT OF SECTION 151 CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

Report of the Chief Executive on the approval of the appointment of the Council's Section 151 Chief Finance Officer.

Councils are required under Section 151 of Local Government Act 1972 to make arrangements for the proper administration of the financial affairs and give an officer responsibility for the administration of those affairs. This officer is generally known as the Section 151 Officer.

Under the Council's Constitution, Full Council is required to appoint Statutory Officers and this included the appointment of the S151 officer.

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A new Senior Management Structure was launched by the Chief Executive in March 2022. The S151 Officer role will be carried out by the postholder for the new post, Executive Director (Finance and Transformation).

An external recruitment campaign and rigorous assessment process had taken place, which included an independent technical interview by the Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), Rob Whiteman CBE. The Leader was also part of the final stage interview panel, and it was unanimously agreed to recommend to Full Council that Richard Baker be appointed to the role.

Richard had been acting up as the S151 officer since November 2020 and had been successful in delivering a balanced budget and medium term financial plan in one of the most challenging periods following the very significant financial impacts of Covid. He had also been instrumental in the delivery of the Council's digital strategy as well as the modernisation programme.

It was moved and seconded by Councillors T.Kingsbury and S.Boulton and

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Council approved that Richard Baker be appointed to the statutory post of Section 151 Chief Finance Officer.
- (2) That delegated responsibility be given to the Human Resources Manager, in consultation with the Chief Executive, to finalise the arrangements for this appointment.

8. REVIEW OF POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY

The Mayor called on the Council to approve the review of political proportionality of Member appointments to Committees and changes to the allocation of seats.

It was moved and seconded by Councillors T.Kingsbury and S.Boulton and

RESOLVED:

That the review of political proportionality of Member appointments to Committees, as set out in the schedule to the report, be approved.

9. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES 2022/23

The Mayor asked the Council to note the appointments made by Councillor T.Kingsbury as Leader of the Council of the Cabinet and approve the membership of Non-Executive Committees.

It was moved and seconded by Councillors T.Kingsbury and S.Boulton and

RESOLVED:

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- (1) That the appointment of the Cabinet by the Leader of the Council, as set out in Agenda item 9a, be noted.
- (2) That the membership of non-executive Committees with their respective Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen, as set out in Agenda item 9b, be approved.

10. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES

The appointment of representatives to serve on outside bodies in 2022/23.

The Council was asked to nominate members to sit on various outside bodies. The nominations were stated in the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the appointments of Members to serve as the Council's representatives on outside bodies, as set on in Agenda item 10, be approved.

11. ATTENDANCES

Attendances by Members at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Panels during the Municipal Year 2021/22 were set out in the Agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the list showing the number of attendances by Members at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Panels during the Municipal Year 2021/22, as set out in the Agenda, be received.

Meeting ended 8.22pm
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