

Minutes

Annual General Meeting of the Council

25th May 2023

These Minutes principally record decisions taken and, where appropriate, the reasons for the decisions. A recording of the meeting is available on the Council's YouTube Channel at <http://www.braintree.gov.uk/youtube>

Present:

| Councillors | Present | Councillors | Present |
|---------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Councillor J Abbott | Yes | Councillor L Jefferis | Yes |
| Councillor D Abram | Apologies | Councillor J Martin | Yes |
| Councillor M Ault | Yes | Councillor S Mason | Yes |
| Councillor J Ayten | Yes | Councillor A Munday | Yes |
| Councillor J Baugh | Yes | Councillor I Parker | Yes |
| Councillor J Beavis | Yes | Councillor J Pell | Yes |
| Councillor J Bond | Yes | Councillor G Prime | Yes |
| Councillor K Bowers | Yes | Councillor S Rajeev | Yes |
| Councillor L Bowers-Flint | Yes | Councillor R Ramage | Yes |
| Councillor G Butland | Yes | Councillor F Ricci | Yes |
| Councillor J Coleridge | Yes | Councillor P Schwier | Yes |
| Councillor G Courtauld | Yes | Councillor G Spray | Yes |
| Councillor M Cunningham | Yes | Councillor M Staines | Yes |
| Councillor T Cunningham | Yes | Councillor B Taylor | Yes |
| Councillor C Dervish | Yes | Councillor W Taylor | Yes |
| Councillor T Diamond | Yes | Councillor M Thorogood | Yes |
| Councillor J Edwards | Yes | Councillor P Thorogood | Yes |
| Councillor C Finch | Yes | Councillor R van Dulken | Yes |
| Councillor M Fincken | Yes | Councillor T Walsh | Yes |
| Councillor D Garrod | Yes | Councillor L Walters | Yes |
| Councillor M Green | Yes | Councillor E Williams | Yes |
| Councillor J Hayes | Yes | Councillor T Williams | Yes |
| Councillor P Heath | Yes | Councillor J Wrench | Yes |
| Councillor D Holland | Yes | Councillor B Wright | Yes |
| Councillor A Hooks | Yes | | |

1 **CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS TO THE COUNCIL INCLUDING PRESENTATION OF LONG SERVICE CERTIFICATES AND RETIREMENT CERTIFICATES**

INFORMATION: The Chairman announced that he had the pleasure of acknowledging those Councillors who had retired at the end of the last administration and welcomed them all to the Chamber. This year had seen 22 Councillors retire, each of whom had worked tirelessly as a Councillor for many years.

The Chairman advised Members that in recognition of their contribution and commitment as a Councillor of Braintree District Council and to the residents and communities of the Braintree District, he had the pleasure of presenting each of them with a certificate earlier in the evening. He added that each Councillor had made a positive impact on shaping the district during their term of office, and it was incredibly sad to see them go. On behalf of the Council, the Chairman wished all retiring Members the best for their future endeavours and thanked them for all they had achieved as District Councillors.

The Chairman had the privilege of acknowledging the long service of David Mann, the former Leader of the Labour Group, who before his retirement had served the District Council for 40 continuous years. This was an incredible achievement and was testament to the passion David Mann had shown to his role as a Councillor and to the District. The Chairman announced that, on behalf of the Council, it was with great pleasure that he presented a certificate to David Mann to commemorate his 40 years service as an elected Member of Braintree District Council in appreciation for his dedicated service to the residents and communities in the Braintree District.

The Chairmen then welcomed the Group Leaders to say a few words in recognition of David Mann's incredible achievement. Councillors Jefferis, Butland, Beavis and Pell, on behalf of the Labour Group, Conservative Group, Independent and Green Group and the Halstead Residents' Association respectively, all congratulated David Mann on his work and service to the community and residents of the Braintree District over the last 40 years.

The Chairman then presented Members with a short video capturing some of the highlights as his year as Chairman.

2 **PRESENTATION TO OUTGOING CHAIRMAN**

INFORMATION: In the absence of Dan Gascoyne, Chief Executive of Braintree District Council, Kim Mayo, Head of Governance and Monitoring Officer, made a presentation to Councillor Andrew Hensman on his behalf. On behalf of the Chief Executive and the Council, Councillor Hensman was congratulated for his successful year as Chairman and was proud to announce that in appointing Councillor Hensman, Braintree District Council was the first to have an autistic Chairman, something which Councillor Hensman had been very open about and had championed the cause raising awareness throughout his Chairmanship.

Councillors Butland, Beavis, Jefferis and Pell on behalf of the Conservative Group, Labour Group, Independent and Green Group and the Halstead Residents' Association

respectively, all commended Councillor Hensman for his term of office and congratulated him for his dedication and work throughout community and for his continuous support and raising awareness and funds for his chosen charities.

Full details of the presentations can be found on the Councils YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VyHJG2nLul8>

3 TO ELECT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

INFORMATION: Councillor Butland nominated Councillor Diana Garrod for Chairman of the Council for the Civic year 2023-24, this was seconded by Councillor T Cunningham.

DECISION: That Councillor Garrod be elected as Chairman of the Council for the Civic Year 2023/24.

Councillor Garrod received the Chain of Office for Chairman of the Council, signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and gave an acceptance address.

4 TO ELECT THE VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

INFORMATION: Councillor Butland nominated Councillor Lyn Walters for Vice-Chairman of the Council for the Civic year 2023-24, this was seconded by Councillor T Cunningham.

DECISION: That Councillor Walters be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the Civic Year 2023/24.

Councillor Walters received the Chain of Office for Vice-Chairman of the Council, signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and gave an acceptance address.

5 TO RECEIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

INFORMATION: The Chairman had no formal announcements to make.

6 MINUTES

DECISION: That the Minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 20th March 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

INFORMATION: There were no interests declared.

8 TO ELECT THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

DECISION: That Councillor G Butland be appointed as Leader of the Council for the four-year term of the Council ending in 2027.

9 **COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS**

INFORMATION: The Chairman advised Members that there had been two updates to Appendix B of the report which set out the appointments to outside bodies. The first was in respect of a Councillor from the Halstead Residents Association being appointed as the Council's representative to the Friends of Halstead Gardens and Halstead in Bloom Partnership. It was noted that Councillor Jackie Pell had confirmed that she would take forward these appointments and represent the Council.

The Chairman added that for the avoidance of doubt, the Members to be appointed to the Rivenhall Playing Field Association were Councillors James Abbott and Bob Wright being the Ward Members for Silver End and Cressing. The Members to be appointed to the Malting Lane Forum were Councillors Jackie Martin and Paul Heath being the ward members for Witham South.

The second matter to be addressed was in respect of nominations for the Chairman of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee. Members were advised that this was the only Chairman position which did not have a nominated Councillor for the role and would therefore be looking for nominations. It was noted that nominations must come from the Nominated Membership as set out in appendix A of the report.

The following nominations were received, Councillor Abbott nominated Councillor Beavis, this was seconded by Councillor Wright. Councillor Jefferis nominated Councillor Heath, this was seconded by Councillor Fincken. Following a vote by Members it was confirmed that Councillor Paul Heath was elected as Chairman of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

DECISION: That Council agreed the following:

1. To approve the appointments to Council Committees as set out in Appendix A of the report.
2. To approve the appointments to the Outside Bodies as set out in Appendix B of the report.
3. That Councillor Heath be appointed as the Chairman of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.

10 **LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

INFORMATION: The Leader informed Members of some updates to the Cabinet Member Portfolios in respect of the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Inward Investment. It was noted that the heading of Locate Braintree including Tourism, should be Locate Braintree 'District' including Tourism and that a further area of Digital Essex be added to the Cabinet Members Portfolio.

The Leader informed Members that they had reduced the number of Cabinet Members and the formation of the Cabinet had changed and now consisted of 7 Cabinet

Members and 5 Deputy Cabinet Members. It was added that the Deputy Cabinet Members would be able to attend meetings of Cabinet and participate in the debate but would not be able to vote. The Leader also extended an invitation to all Group Leaders to continue to attend meetings of Cabinet.

DECISION: That Members agreed:

- a) To note the appointment of the Cabinet Members and their assigned Portfolios as set out in Appendix A of the report and;
- b) To note the appointment of Deputy Cabinet Members as set out in paragraph 3.10 of the report.

11 **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION**

INFORMATION: The Leader set out the report and informed Members of the proposed changes to the Constitution for their consideration.

Members were reminded of the previous administrations' Scrutiny arrangements, and it was noted that two of the Scrutiny Committees had been removed from the constitution as it was felt there was significant advantage in establishing working groups of Members who had genuine interests in the issues that were being determined and hoped to pursue this again. The Leader added that a new Policy Committee had been created which would explore existing policies as well as looking to create new ones.

It was recognised that the specific order of items of business on the agenda for consideration by Council had resulted in the 3 hours permitted for Council meetings being used to consider Motions or specific items of business. The result of this was that the time permitted within the Constitution of 1 hour for questions to the Leader and the Cabinet was rarely achievable and often there was little more than 10 minutes through which questions could be put under this provision. This was an important part of the meeting and provided Members with an opportunity to ask direct questions of Cabinet. Accordingly, in recognition of this, it was proposed that the item would be revised, and a time period of 30 minutes would be allocated and would be moved up the agenda so as to ensure the time allocation was utilised. It was also suggested that the official leader of the opposition should always have the opportunity to ask the first question, and following this the order of questions taken would be at the Chairman's discretion.

As part of the review, and in recognition of the need for specific items of business to be heard, and to ensure meetings were able to convene within the permitted 3 hours, the allocation of Motions was to be revised. It was proposed to reduce the maximum number of Motions available to 4 motions per meeting and the number of motions available to each Political Group would be assigned in accordance with the number of seats held. It was added that each Group would be expected to operate within its allocation, and it would not be possible to keep motions in reserves or to transfer any unused allocation to an alternative Group during the course of the civic year.

The Leader added that the decision had been made to drop reports from Cabinet Members from the Agenda as it was felt this consumed a large amount of officers time

and was rarely referred to in meetings. There would however be a report on Council issues from the Leader if it was necessary.

The Leader advised Members that they would review the effectiveness of these amendments through the Developing Democracy Group towards the end of the civic year.

DECISION: That the amendments to the Council's Constitution as identified in Appendix A of the report was approved.

12 **ANNUAL TIMETABLE OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

INFORMATION: That the following Council and Annual General Meeting dates, as set out in the Timetable of Meetings 2023/24, were confirmed:-

Ordinary meetings of Full Council are held on a Monday starting at 7:15pm:

17th July 2023

4th September 2023

11th December 2023

19th February 2024

18th March 2024

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) would be held on 22nd April 2024

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 20.32pm.

Councillor D Garrod
(Chairman)