

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

16 October 2003

The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Mrs F.M. Angell) in the Chair

Members of the
Council present:

Councillors A. Alderson, Mrs F.M. Angell, J.R. Ashmore, Mrs F.J. Barden, E.G. Barrett, J. Broadhead, Mrs P.I. Broadhead, M.J. Brown, Ms D.V. Clarke, A.J. Davis, J.B. Dean, D.P. Easton, J.M. Edwards, J.R. Furey, Mrs C.E. Gant, Mrs L.M. Gillham, P.A. Greenwood, R.K. Habgood, Mrs S.E. Jacobs, Mrs C.Y. Jones, C. Knight, A.M. Moore, H.W.V. Meares, C.J. Norman, Mrs J. Norman, R. Pate, P.J. Poole, Mrs E.E. Price, R.J. Ray, Ms C.M. Simmons, Mrs V.A. Smallman, N.Thewlis, A.P. Tollett, P.B. Tuley, P.J. Waddell, K.J.T. Walmsley, J.R. Whiteley, and G.B. Woodger

Members of the
Council absent:

Councillors J.E. Haas, D.W Parr and B.J. Relph

403. COUNCILLOR A.G. (TONY) COLLINS

The Council stood in silence as a mark of respect to the memory of Councillor Tony Collins who had died suddenly on 18 September at the age of 84. First elected to the new Runnymede Council in 1974, Councillor Collins had been Mayor in 1978/79 and had played a prominent role on the Planning Committee (Chairman 1976 - 78) and the Housing and Community Services Committee (Chairman 1983 - 85). In recent years (since 1998) he had been Chairman of the Englefield Green Committee.

Councillor Collins had played an active community role, and had represented the Council on several outside bodies. These included the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee, Surrey Access Forum, and the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

404. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 17 July 2003 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

405. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Greenwood on his recent marriage.

A lunch held on 19 September at The Runnymede Hotel had raised £1,000 for the Mayor's charity. The Mayor thanked the five Members who had attended, particularly Councillor Alderson who had individually raised a further £750 from Barclays Bank for the Shooting Star Trust.

Councillor Mrs Broadhead was organising a concert by the Weybridge Male Voice Choir which was to be held on Saturday 15 November at The Prince of Peace Church, Weybridge.

Councillor Mrs Smallman was organising a Christmas Floral Lunch at The Hythe Centre for Friday 28 November. The Bourne Garden Centre would be providing the flowers.

The Mayor's Civic Reception would be held on Friday 5 December at The Hythe Centre. The Mayor would be presenting her Runnymede Citizen of the Year Award at this reception. She thanked the Surrey Herald for publicising the Award.

The Borough was honoured to host two Royal visits. The Duke of York had opened the new Jubilee Building at Bishopsgate School, Englefield Green, and on 17 October her Majesty Queen Elizabeth would be attending the rededication of the Air Forces Memorial, Coopers Hill, on its 50th anniversary.

Finally, the Mayor congratulated Doreen Weavers who had won the Mayor's Tree Competition.

406. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor B.J. Relph.

407. PETITION

Councillor P.J. Poole submitted a petition signed by 53 residents of Trumps Green, in the following terms:

"We the undersigned, petition that the rarely used railway foot-crossing at Crown Lane, Virginia Water be closed down - or an alternative to the train siren warning system be found - so that we will not continue to be subjected to this deplorable noise night and day."

The petition was referred to the appropriate Committee in accordance with Standing Order 19.5.

408. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PLANNING MATTERS - UPDATE

RESOLVED that -

the recommendation of the Planning Committee as set out in paragraph 240, page 396 (Minutes 30 July 2003) be approved.

409. CONSULTATION PRACTICE AND FUTURE STRATEGY

RESOLVED that -

the recommendation of the Corporate Management Committee as set out in paragraph 270, page 426 (Minutes 4 September 2003) be approved.

410. HOUSING STRATEGY STATEMENT AND BUSINESS PLAN 2003

RESOLVED that -

the recommendation of the Housing and Community Services Committee as set out in paragraph 283, page 505 (Minutes 10 September 2003) be approved.

411. INDEPENDENT MEMBERS - TERM OF OFFICE

RESOLVED that -

the recommendation of the Standards and Audit Committee as set out in paragraph 312, page 647 (Minutes 16 September 2003) be approved.

412. MEMBERS' I.T. PROTOCOLS

RESOLVED that -

the recommendation of the Standards and Audit Committee as set out in paragraph 316, page 648 (Minutes 16 September 2003) be approved.

413. LEADER'S POSITION STATEMENT 2004/2005

The Council considered recommendations from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 2 October 2003. The Statement had then been considered by the Review Board on 9 October. The Leader had also considered comments from individual Members and Officers. In agreeing the Leader's statement the Council noted that there were some typographical errors and other minor amendments that would be rectified before the final version was published.

RESOLVED that -

subject to final drafting amendments agreed by the Leader,

- i) **the Position Paper for 2004/2005 (Appendix 'A') be approved as Council policy;**
- ii) **the contents of the paper be reflected in the Best Value Performance Plan for 2004/05; and**
- iii) **Officers be instructed to take the Position Paper into account in developing service targets.**

(Councillor P.A. Greenwood requested that his vote against recommendations i) to iii) above be recorded in accordance with Standing Order 25.3).

414. FINANCIAL FORECAST

The Council considered recommendations from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 2 October 2003. The recommendations had then been considered by the Review Board on 9 October 2003.

RESOLVED that -

- i) **the strategy summarised at Appendix '3' of the Summons be pursued;**
- ii) **the financial forecast for the five year period to 2008/9 be approved and referred to the Review Board for comments;**
- iii) **savings be made in the General Fund budget with effect from the 2004/5 financial year as set out in Appendix '4' of the Summons;**
- iv) **further savings of £155,000 be made in the General Fund to offset the cost of new initiatives; and**
- v) **the forecast form the basis for drawing up detailed service budgets for 2004/05, subject to the comments of the Review Board.**

(Councillor P.A. Greenwood requested that his abstention be recorded in accordance with Standing Order 25.3).

415. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT (CPA) - THE AUTHORITY'S SELF ASSESSMENT

The Council considered a recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 2 October 2003.

RESOLVED that -

the Corporate Self Assessment (Appendix '6' to the Summons) and the three diagnostics (Appendices '7', '8' & '9' to the Summons) be approved and the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Chairman, be authorised to make appropriate drafting amendments before submission to the CPA Inspection Team.

416. COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

The Council considered recommendations from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 2 October 2003.

RESOLVED that -

- i) **the draft Communications Strategy (Appendix '10' to the Summons) be adopted; and**

- ii) **a Working Group of six Members (four Conservative, one Runnymede Independent and one Labour - to be nominated by the Group Leaders) be constituted to examine the report in detail with appropriate Officers and to report back on the action recommended.**

417. PERSONNEL STRATEGY

The Council considered recommendations from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 2 October 2003.

RESOLVED that -

- i) **the Personnel Strategy (Appendix '11' to the Summons) be adopted by this Authority; and**
- ii) **a Working Group be formed consisting of six Members (four Conservative, one Runnymede Independent and one Labour - to be nominated by the Group Leaders) appropriate Officers, and other appropriate persons, to review and revise the Strategy prior to the move to the new Civic Offices.**

(Councillor P.A. Greenwood requested that his vote against resolution (ii) be recorded in accordance with Standing Order 25.3).

418. IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT RETURN 2003 (IEG3)

The Council considered a recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 2 October 2003.

RESOLVED that -

the return as set out at Appendix '12' of the Summons be made to the Government.

419. BEOMONDS ALLOTMENT - CAPITAL SCHEME - REMEDIATION AND CLEARANCE

The Council considered recommendations from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 2 October 2003.

RESOLVED that -

- i) **approval be given to a Capital Estimate in the sum of £80,000 accordingly; and**
- ii) **the full year revenue costs of financing the scheme (£3,700) and the potential for further running costs of managing the site be noted.**

(Councillor P.A. Greenwood requested that his abstention be recorded in accordance with Standing Order 25.3).

420. THORPE GREEN - CAPITAL SCHEME - ESSENTIAL ROAD REPAIRS

The Council considered recommendations from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 2 October 2003.

RESOLVED that -

- i) **a Capital Estimate in the sum of £55,000 for the repair and improvement works necessary to bring the access roads up to standard, be approved; and**

- ii) **a supplementary revenue estimate in the sum of £2,500 for the associated Capital Charges, be approved.**

421. ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION POLICY

The Council considered a recommendation from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 2 October 2003.

RESOLVED that -

the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy (Appendix '13' to the Summons) be agreed.

422. LICENSING COMMITTEE - ESTABLISHMENT

The Council considered recommendations from the Corporate Management Committee which had met on 2 October 2003.

RESOLVED that -

- i) **a Licensing Committee of ten Members be constituted with immediate effect;**
- ii) **the Committee consist of seven Conservatives, two Runnymede Independents and one Labour - to be nominated by the Group Leaders;**
- iii) **the Licensing Committee consider all licensing and registration matters so far as they are not expressly committed to another Committee;**
- iv) **the Licensing Committee be authorised to determine all matters before it, save for the Licensing Policy or other matters expressly reserved to Full Council by the Constitution;**
- v) **licensing and related functions be removed from the terms of reference of the Leisure and Environment Committee, and the existing Licensing Sub-Committee be abolished; and**
- vi) **a further report follow as soon as possible as to the procedural and further financial arrangements which will be necessary for the Licensing Committee.**

423. NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor G.B. Woodger moved the suspension of Standing Order 15.6 under the provisions of Standing Order 2.4, coupled with the following Motion, seconded by Councillor R.K. Habgood -

"That this Council notes that the proposed European Constitution prepared by the European Convention will have major implications for Local Government, giving "shared competence" over home affairs, transport, energy, social policy, economic and social cohesion, consumer protection and the environment meaning overall more legislation and guidance binding on Local Government when the Government is committed to reducing the legislative burden and encouraging localism.

That given the Government has encouraged public consultation and referenda to test public opinion on constitutional change affecting both national and Local Government, including regional assemblies and directly elected Mayors, this Council believes the electorate should be able to express their views on matters of constitutional change such as the adoption of the proposed European Constitution.

That this Council resolves to write formally to the Prime Minister calling upon him to hold a national referendum on the proposed European Constitution".

On the suggestion of Councillor Mrs Price the mover of the motion with the consent of the seconder and the Mayor added a new first paragraph to the Motion - "That Runnymede Borough Council wishes to remind the Prime Minister of the historical significance of Magna Carta in granting rights to the people".

On the suggestion of Councillor K.J.T. Walmsley the mover of the motion with the consent of his seconder and the Mayor added the words "claims it" between the words "Government" and "is" in the last line of the original first paragraph (now the second paragraph) of the Motion.

In speaking to his Motion Councillor Woodger explained that, in his view, the proposed European Constitution had severe implications for local democracy. He considered that the issues raised were plain and that there was nothing to be gained by remitting the matter to Committee for consideration and report, hence he had moved the suspension of Standing Order 15.6. Councillor Woodger quoted a press report which alleged that the Queen herself was worried about the constitutional impact of the proposed European Constitution on the unwritten constitution of the United Kingdom. Councillor Habgood, in seconding the motion, expressed his belief that the European Convention could eventually destroy local democracy by concentrating power in Brussels. Other Councillors spoke both in favour of, and against, the Motion. The dissenting view was, essentially, that such matters should be primarily a concern of the House of Commons and not a matter for local authorities which should be concentrating on local issues. The view was also expressed that the Government would not be influenced by a Motion agreed by a District Council.

A named vote was requested by a Member in accordance with Standing Order 25.2. Votes were then recorded as follows:

For the Motion: Councillors Alderson, Mrs Angell, Ashmore, Mrs Barden, J. Broadhead, Mrs Broadhead, Brown, Ms Clarke, Davis, Dean, Easton, Edwards, Furey, Mrs Gant, Mrs Gillham, Habgood, Mrs Jacobs, Mrs Jones, Knight, Meares, Moore, C.J. Norman, Mrs Norman, Poole, Mrs Price, Ms Simmons, Mrs Smallman, Thewlis, Tollett, Tuley, Waddell, Walmsley, Whiteley and Woodger (34)

Against the Motion: Councillors Barrett, Greenwood, Pate and Ray (4).

Accordingly, the Council

RESOLVED to suspend Standing Order 15.6 and that -

Runnymede Borough Council wishes to remind the Prime Minister of the historical significance of Magna Carta in granting rights to the people.

The Council notes that the proposed European Constitution prepared by the European Convention will have major implications for Local Government, giving "shared competence" over home affairs, transport, energy, social policy, economic and social cohesion, consumer protection and the environment meaning overall more legislation and guidance binding on Local Government when the Government claims it is committed to reducing the legislative burden and encouraging localism.

That given the Government has encouraged public consultation and referenda to test public opinion on constitutional change affecting both national and Local Government, including regional assemblies and directly elected Mayors, this Council believes the electorate should be able to express their views on matters of constitutional change such as the adoption of the proposed European Constitution.

That this Council resolves to write formally to the Prime Minister calling upon him to hold a national referendum on the proposed European Constitution.

424. REVIEW BOARD PROGRAMME

The Chairman of the Review Board, Councillor P.J. Poole explained that in the near future the Board would be examining the following issues: (i) Benefits Fraud (ii) Annual Personnel Report (iii) Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, and (iv) Parks and Open Spaces.

425. SURREY SUPPORTING PEOPLE COMMISSIONING BODY - NOMINATION

The Council noted that the Corporate Management Committee had originally decided to nominate Councillor P.J. Waddell to the above body, but that for a variety of reasons (and with Councillor Waddell's agreement) Councillor H.W.V. Meares had subsequently been nominated instead using the provision of Standing Order 42.

RESOLVED that -

the proposed nomination of Councillor Waddell to Surrey Supporting People Commissioning Body be rescinded.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 9.12 p.m.)