

Minutes

Meeting name	Council
Date	Wednesday, 22 July 2020
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	By remote video conference

Present:

Chair Councillor M. Graham MBE (Chair)

Councillors

P. Faulkner (Vice-Chair)	R. Bindloss
R. Browne	S. Carter
P. Chandler	P. Cumbers
R. de Burle	J. Douglas
C. Evans	A. Freer-Jones
M. Glancy	L. Higgins
E. Holmes	J. Illingworth
S. Lumley	J. Orson
A. Pearson	P. Posnett MBE
D. Pritchett	R. Smedley
M. Steadman	J. Wilkinson
P. Wood	

Officers

Chief Executive
 Director for Growth and Regeneration
 Director for Governance and Regulatory Services and Monitoring Officer
 Director for Housing and Communities
 Assistant Director for Planning and Delivery
 Corporate Services Manager
 Democratic Services Manager
 Democratic Services Officer (SE)

The Reverend Kevin Ashby offered prayers.

Minute No.	Minute
	<p>MAYOR'S INTRODUCTION</p> <p>The Mayor announced that as the meeting was to be held as a remote conference on Zoom, any Member participating by remote link who declared an interest in any item of business in terms which required them to leave the room must ensure that they cannot be seen or heard during the agenda item.</p> <p>He explained the process for connection failure and that should the link not be re-established before the end of the meeting then the presumption would be that the meeting should continue to deal with the item providing the meeting remains quorate. Should the meeting no longer be quorate the meeting shall be adjourned and any remaining items of business would be deferred. Any Member who had been absent from the debate on a particular item due to connection failure must abstain from the vote on that item.</p> <p>The Mayor explained that Members would use the functionality of the software to speak and each Member would be asked in turn for their vote at the appropriate time.</p> <p>He advised that the meeting would be recorded and live-streamed on You Tube.</p>
CO13	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Child, Fisher and Hewson. Councillor Bains was also not present.</p>
CO14	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>(a) The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2020 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Mayor.</p> <p>(b) The minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 14 May 2020 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Mayor.</p>
CO15	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Councillors Orson, Pearson and Posnett MBE each declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Leicestershire County Council due to their roles as County Councillors.</p> <p><u>Minute CO27 : Motion - Release of Sky Lanterns and Balloons</u></p> <p>Councillors Chandler, Holmes and Orson advised that they were members of the National Farmers' Union and asked for this to be recorded in relation to this item.</p>
CO16	<p>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <p>The Mayor advised that he had no activities to report since the Annual Meeting. He understood there had been a suggestion for a remote VJ service in August and would represent the Borough if this went ahead. He hoped to be able to handover the chain of office at the September Council meeting.</p>

CO17

LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader congratulated the Mayor on his video speech and raising of the flag to celebrate Armed Forces Day.

The Leader stated

'Tonight we have some important business on our agenda relating to finance, the establishment of a constitutional review group and reviewing the annual report from our scrutiny committee. We also have three important motions that I look forward to discussing with all members later.

First of all I would like to raise the crisis impacting on the agricultural industry throughout the Melton Borough. Agriculture is still one of our largest employers and very valuable to Melton Mowbray. Agriculture has been subjected to a combination of events which have created a perfect storm which started with the torrential rainfall on 29th September 2019 and continued throughout the whole of October, November, December, January and into February. This area was affected more than others and I have witnessed the terrible state of the crops first hand from my frequent journeys to Kings Lynn. All this is on top of the impact of Covid which has also hit the hospitality and dairy farm industry. I applaud the Government's financial aid to dairy farmers but farmers mainly work alone and there are concerns for their mental health too. To discuss how the Council can support farmers through this crisis, I will be initiating a meeting between the Council and the National Farmers' Union.

We are now in our fourth month responding to the Coronavirus outbreak and I want to, once again, reiterate my sincere thanks and gratitude for the way this Council has responded. Working with our community and voluntary partners, our Community Hub has delivered over 2,200 food parcels and over 200 prescriptions. Through the government business grants we have paid out nearly £11m to over 950 businesses, as well as providing guidance and support. Throughout this entire time I am proud that we can say we have been 'here for Melton' and we will continue to be so now and in the future.

The pandemic has clearly had a significant impact both in terms of public health and the economy and we are now refocussing on recovery and how we support our communities and businesses to rebuild. It is not going to be easy and that is why we are calling upon government to do more to support us financially as we lead the local response. At a time when the demand for our services, and need for our support, have never been greater, we are finding ourselves under significant financial pressure. Yes, the government has supported local councils but we are concerned they have not taken account of our individual circumstances and we may still be left with a sizeable gap. We are still working through the details of the third round of funding but please be assured that if the funding remains insufficient I will be writing directly to the Secretary of State to make our case for additional help.

As lockdown has started to ease, we have worked closely with local partners to ensure a successful retail, and then more recently, hospitality sector reopening. It has been pleasing to see that the measures introduced have allowed these businesses to reopen safely and the people of Melton have responded very positively. We have also been working hard to enable local businesses to recover as quickly as possible. As well as the grants schemes mentioned earlier we facilitated a business webinar a few weeks ago and relaxed regulations so those providing hospitality can maximise outdoor space. We have also facilitated the start of a new café culture which we hope will start to develop further and help the reinvigoration of our town.

Alongside the response and recovery, other areas of business continue. The recent meeting of the Housing Improvement Board continues to show we are making positive progress in this important area of business. As we have got to grips with our long standing housing challenge, health and safety has been of paramount importance the whole time and I am delighted that the steps we have taken to increase compliance over the last year are more and more becoming business as usual.

In mid-June we launched our new customer self-service platform, IEG4. This replaced a number of older systems and will enable the Council to significantly improve its online offer to residents. Over the next month we will be increasing our promotion of the new system and encouraging residents to sign up to more online services.

We await the government's white paper into Devolution which we understand is due to be published in the Autumn. We will obviously digest the contents with our neighbouring councils and will consider how we can ensure we are best placed to secure the required increase in investment and focus the East Midlands requires. As you will be aware, improving rail connectivity between Melton and Nottingham has been a long standing aspiration of mine and building on work we undertook last year, alongside our MP, we recently submitted a bid to government for further funding to develop the business case and create a direct access through Syston. I look forward to receiving the outcome from this bid later in the year.

I will now turn to the latest developments in relation to the relief road. Firstly I would like to say a huge thank you to the officers of this council for their incredible work to deliver a robust and credible Masterplan within the timescales required. At a time when the vast majority of our resources were being refocussed on responding to the crisis we maintained a commitment to this priority and did not let ourselves or our community down.

I am though very frustrated and disappointed by the approach taken by Leicestershire County Council and their attempt to blame this council for their decision not to accept the Housing Infrastructure Fund. From the outset I must start by reminding everyone that they are the highways authority and they are the education authority. We have worked with them and will continue to do so, but the bottom-line is that if they choose not to accept the Housing Infrastructure Fund then

it is a matter for them, and something for which they must accept responsibility.

It is worth reminding ourselves of what has taken place to get us to this point:

- 1. In October 2018 our Local Plan was adopted, which included the three parts of the relief road but no secondary school.*
- 2. Even before the ink was dry on our Local Plan, the County Council massively increased their requirements for developer contributions for education which created the need for additional primary schools and another secondary school which weren't in the original plan.*
- 3. Inevitably this put huge pressure on viability, but we have worked with them to overcome this and in November 2019 we agreed the basis of a risk share agreement to support infrastructure costs.*
- 4. We understood that everything was then in place for the Housing Infrastructure Funding to be secured but in February 2020 the goal posts changed again and they now needed the Masterplan to be completed before they would accept the HIF money.*
- 5. Even in the middle of the current crisis we diverted resources to accelerate delivery of the Masterplan, which we did on time and to an excellent standard.*
- 6. Now they tell us that is not enough and we have to provide a 'guarantee' on developer contributions.*

So what exactly does a guarantee mean? They haven't told us, but in the last 5 years, Melton Borough Council has secured over £32m towards County Council services and infrastructure. This compares to just £3m secured for all other agencies including ourselves during that time. £25m of this is for the MMDR and education. Of the 55 s106 agreements processed during that time there are only 2 where the County Council's full requests have not been met; and the value of these was very low. In financial terms over the last 5 years Melton Borough Council has secured 99.5% of what the County Council has asked for. If this level of past performance doesn't provide the required assurance or the 'guarantee', what would? 99.7%, 99.9%? What more do they want?

As recently as April we offered to form a joint delivery team with the County Council so that we could work together on securing the HIF. This was rejected by them.

We remain ready to refresh the current viability appraisal and work with the County Council on a development strategy which could be completed in a matter of weeks. We are happy to review options which would assist with improving viability and which could still see the HIF money secured.

Melton Borough Council has done everything it possibly can to deliver the road and to suggest otherwise is both illogical and totally unjustified. This is their responsibility and they cannot just pass the buck.

I feel I also have to share my disappointment in relation to the conduct of the Leicestershire County Council colleagues at their recent Cabinet meeting where this was discussed.

At a time of national crisis, we should all be working together for the benefit of our communities, not seeking to disrespect, criticise or undermine each other. There is a £30m investment in Melton at stake and seeing County Council Cabinet Members, smirking and making some highly unprofessional comments about Melton Borough Council during their meeting was totally inappropriate and unjustified. I am also extremely concerned by some of the reasons their Cabinet gave for not accepting the HIF money.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources suggested the development of the Masterplan had not involved the Developers. This is just plain wrong and the main developers were fully engaged in the process and supportive of the preferred options. With the question of viability such a key consideration, it is deeply troubling that his decision was made on the basis of this inaccurate understanding.

Equally concerning was the suggestion by the former Portfolio Holder for Children's Services that the level of developer contributions associated with a live, undetermined planning application was a justification for refusing the HIF money. As mentioned previously, our performance in securing infrastructure funding for the County Council is impeccable, with 99.5% of requests secured over the last 5 years. There is simply no justification for refusing the HIF money on this basis.

I raised this very point with the County Council's Portfolio Holder for highways at the recent Members Advisory Group, and challenged him to explain his own reasoning for rejecting the money and what he was going to do about the risk it creates for infrastructure delivery more generally across Leicestershire. He did not respond.

It was ironic that the County's Deputy Leader articulated precisely the challenge faced by planning authorities like ourselves; sharing his experience of developers wanting to renegotiate s106 agreements. We certainly recognise that challenge and I would also welcome his thoughts for how we might prevent that in future - if we are to provide the kind of 'guarantee' seemingly required by the County Council?

We fully appreciate the significant risk faced by the County Council in relation to infrastructure funding, but as I have demonstrated, we have done all we can to support them – delivering our Local Plan, establishing the basis for a risk share agreement, securing 99.5% of developer contributions they have asked for and completing the Masterplan on time. If the County Council chose not to accept the HIF money it is their decision, and their failure to follow through on the commitment they made. If that is what they want to do, they need to grow up, be brave and accept responsibility for that decision, rather than blaming us or anyone else.

We continue to liaise with Homes England and even now, we stand ready to work with the County Council, in good faith, to secure the HIF money and deliver the road. It is not too late and we await their response.'

Councillor Holmes thanked the Leader for taking the time to look into the difficulties

	<p>faced by the agricultural industry and offered her support in providing statistics during this time.</p> <p>Councillor Cumbers agreed that it was a sensible approach to meet with the NFU and work out a way forward to help the local farming industry.</p> <p>The Leader thanked the Councillors for their comments and for recognising the seriousness of the situation that farmers are facing at the current time.</p>
CO18	<p>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME There were no public questions received.</p>
CO19	<p>CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL The Council received the following two reports and recommendations from Cabinet for determination.</p> <p><u>(a) TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20</u></p> <p>Councillor de Burle, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Resources, moved the recommendation and drew Members' attention to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Treasury Management Annual Report was presented to Council following its scrutiny by Cabinet in the previous week • Treasury management was about managing the Council's resources effectively to maximise on any benefits that could be achieved from it • The team had a consistent record of over performance demonstrated against a reference group made up of other public bodies • The investment return for the year averaged out at 1.25% which was an increase over 2018/19 and generated an additional £138k more than was budgeted for across General Fund and Housing Revenue Account • The Council's activities in 2019/20 produced a total of £310k in income for which the Team should be thanked • Regrettably advised that the outlook for 2020/21 was very challenging with Covid impacting negatively on investment returns from reduced rates and the lower cash balances available for investment <p>Councillor Orson seconded the motion.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u></p> <p>To APPROVE the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2019-20.</p> <p><u>(b) GENERAL FUND REVENUE ACCOUNT 2019/20 - PROVISIONAL YEAR END POSITION</u></p>

Councillor de Burle, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Resources, moved the recommendation and drew Members' attention to the following:

- Due to resources being diverted to the Covid pandemic, it was an achievement that the accounts had been closed for 2019/20;
- There was a slight understand on budgets at the year end and a larger underspend on special expenses;
- The financial impact of the pandemic was significant and the Council was going to have to exercise extreme caution on its activities from hereon;
- There was still much uncertainty on the residual amount the Council may have to fund from its own resources;
- The longer term impact would be greater including debt collection and how much the Council would be able to recover;
- The pandemic would restrict the Council's ability to fund risk assessed eventualities from the unallocated reserves as there was a massive demand on these reserves;
- The Council was carefully monitoring reserves, looking for savings, assessing unspent budgets in quarter 1 and options to mitigate unfunded Covid costs;
- Cabinet recommended that £300k be reallocated to support any unfunded Covid expenditure. This reserve had been increased at it was felt appropriate at this time to reallocate a portion to offset ;
- The situation was ever changing and was constantly under review but the situation remained challenging.

Councillor Orson seconded the motion.

RESOLVED

To **APPROVE** the allocation of £300k of the business rates equalisation reserve to support any unfunded Covid-19 expenditure.

CO20

REVIEW OF CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

Councillor Freer-Jones, Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement, presented a report to consider proposed amendments to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and moved the recommendation. She then drew Members' attention to the following:

- These new rules had been subject to extensive review by Welland Procurement to ensure they reflected changes in the Law, best practice and changes required that result from internal reviews on how the Council operated. There had also been extensive engagement with internal stakeholders;

- The Contract Procedure Rules were supported by the Procurement Toolkit which was intended to be a reference point for officers when undertaking a procurement exercise;
- Cabinet also approved the 2020-2024 Annual Procurement Appraisal and Framework on 15 July 2020, which set out how the Council would promote effective procurement across the Council, as well as summarised how the Council would adopt a strategic approach to sustainable procurement based on national and regional drivers, best practice and recommendations on sustainable procurement;
- Subject to approval, the updated Contract Procedure Rules would come in to effect from 1 September 2020, and would be incorporated into the Constitution accordingly. This deferred effective date would allow sufficient time for Council Officers to receive training.

Councillor Orson seconded the motion

Councillor Evans moved an amendment that the following be added to the end of the motion as follows:

‘And this document is referred back to the Audit and Standards Committee for review to include the risks and benefits to Melton Borough Council as host of the Welland procurement and providing procedures to Member Councils.’

Councillor Pritchett seconded the amendment.

Councillor Freer-Jones sought clarity on the validity of the amendment from the Monitoring Officer and it was established that the amendment was acceptable as it was not in disagreement with the document but was adding to the existing motion.

(The Mayor lost remote connection, the meeting was silent whilst waiting for the Mayor to re-join and he regained connection after a short period.)

Councillor Pritchett explained his reasoning for the amendment which was to refer the document back to the Audit and Standards Committee for further review to consider risks as well as other concerns relating to procedures which he felt needed more detail and depth. If the amendment was not accepted he would vote against the motion and ask for his vote to be recorded.

The Leader felt the document had previously been reviewed and reflected best practice therefore he would vote for the motion.

Councillor Freer-Jones felt that the amendment could have been previously raised to enable more preparation and a discussion on what was required. As it stood she felt unclear as to what was requested.

It was suggested that the review could go through the proposed new Constitution Review Working Group and this would be the appropriate way forward for a constitutional matter. Councillor Freer-Jones accepted this approach.

However Councillor Evans felt that the Audit and Standards Committee was best qualified to review this type of document and his amendment stood although he understood the Constitution Review Working Group would consider the document for inclusion in the Constitution. Councillor Pritchett was in agreement with this approach.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was carried.

RESOLVED

To **APPROVE** the updated Contract Procedure Rules as attached in Appendix A, with an implementation date of 1st September 2020 (to allow sufficient time for Council Officers to receive training) and this document is referred back to the Audit and Standards Committee for review to include the risks and benefits to Melton Borough Council as host of the Welland procurement and providing procedures to Member Councils.

CO21

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

Councillor Cumbers, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, proposed the report for noting which gave an overview of the work done by the Scrutiny Committee during the year 2019/20 and gave a brief introduction as follows:

- Thanked the Scrutiny Committee Members for their enthusiasm for their work and the Democratic Services Team for their support;
- The Scrutiny Annual Report was considered good practice and was an excellent opportunity to highlight the work of the Committee throughout the year and also report on outcomes and proposals for improvement for the coming Municipal Year. The Scrutiny Committee reviewed and approved the report at its meeting in March 2020;
- She hoped that Members would agree that they had developed a sound foundation for the work of Scrutiny in its inaugural year; working collaboratively with Cabinet; challenging in an open and constructive way; developing relationships with officers; to ensure outcome based focus and maintaining an outcomes-based focus on improving delivery of services to the community;
- There was still much to do, the report details some proposals for the coming year and the Committee would also continue to self-evaluate and respond to feedback on how it could improve and develop. The Committee was currently developing its annual work plan, unfortunately this had been delayed by the current national crisis but they began this work at a very productive Scrutiny Workshop last week and they hoped to finalise at the September meeting;
- She was pleased to be able to highlight the work of the Committee and increase the profile of Scrutiny across the Council and externally and welcomed comments from Members.

Councillor Bindloss seconded.

	<p>The Leader thanked the Scrutiny Committee and explained that Cabinet and Scrutiny worked hand in hand. They had produced some good work and looked forward to challenging work in the future.</p> <p>Councillor Cumbers thanked the Leader for his comments and reiterated that Scrutiny had a good working relationship with the Cabinet.</p> <p>The Council NOTED the Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20 (Appendix A).</p>
CO22	<p>REVIEW OF POLITICAL BALANCE</p> <p>The Monitoring Officer introduced a report for the Council to approve the revised political balance calculations and allocation of seats on committees in accordance with statutory requirements (as set out in the report) following an event that altered the political balance between the Groups.</p> <p>Councillor ORSON moved the recommendations and provided a brief introduction to the report.</p> <p>Councillor HIGGINS seconded the motion.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u></p> <p>(1) To APPROVE the political balance calculations at paragraph 4.1 of the report;</p> <p>(2) To APPROVE the allocation of seats to Political Groups shown at paragraph 4.2 of the report;</p> <p>(3) To APPROVE the election of Councillor Mel Steadman as Chairman to the Licensing Committee and Councillor Tejpal Bains as Vice Chairman to the Licensing Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2020/21.</p>
CO23	<p>ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING GROUP</p> <p>Councillor Freer-Jones, Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement, moved the recommendations and gave a brief introduction to the report as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the Annual Council Meeting held on 14 May 2020, the Leader of the Council committed to the establishment of a Constitution Review Working Group which would be responsible for regular review of the constitution, ensuring that it remains relevant, accurate and lawful; • The report and the accompanying Terms of Reference specify that the group should have cross-party membership to ensure that there was representation across the whole council. • It was proposed that the group would look at both general and more specific reviews of the Constitution. The group would undertake these reviews in the light of changes to legislation, amendments to Council policy and procedure and accepted best practice. The group would formulate reports and draft changes to the Constitution, which would then be considered by Council; • The proposal was to also include the Member Development Group in the remit of the Group to allow for efficiencies.

- Details on the purpose, scope and composition of the group were set out in the report and the Terms of Reference at Appendix A and she welcomed questions.

Councillor Orson seconded the motion.

Councillor Evans proposed an amendment to recommendations 2 and 3 of the report and considered that political balance should be adhered to as representatives of the Council and the group be made up of 4 Members being 3 Conservatives and 1 Opposition Member. He added that the non-aligned Members had not formed a group and could not represent each other.

Councillor Orson stated that he would vote against the amendment as the existing composition reflected the whole Council. He added that the non-aligned Members had agreed between them that Councillor Illingworth would take the non-aligned seat.

On being put to the vote the amendment fell.

Debate continued on the substantive motion:

Councillor Holmes said that she had previously been a single Councillor in opposition and explained that the LGA stance was to include independent Councillors where possible.

Councillor Freer-Jones also felt that there should be representation across the whole Council and the motion was more inclusive than the amendment.

Councillor Lumley advised that due to an impending investigation, he chose not be appointed to any committees or groups at this time but understood Councillor Holmes' point.

(Councillor Chandler lost remote connection during this item and was not present for the vote.)

RESOLVED

- (1) To **APPROVE** the establishment of the Constitution Review Working Group;
- (2) To **APPROVE** the purpose, remit and composition of the group as set out in the Terms of Reference (Appendix A);
- (3) To **APPROVE** the membership of the working group for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2020/21 (Appendix B);
- (4) To **AMEND** Chapter 2, Part 6 of the MBC Constitution to reflect amendments to the delegations as described in Section 5.

CO24

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

There were no questions from Members received.

CO25	<p>MOTIONS ON NOTICE</p> <p>In accordance with the Constitution, motions on notice must be signed by at least two Members and be about matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Melton Borough. The following three motions met the constitutional requirement and were considered by the Council.</p>
CO26	<p>MOTION - ANTI-RACISM</p> <p>In support of the motion, Councillor Orson said</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘We live in unprecedented times, but despite the heavy burden placed upon us all by this crisis, I am incredibly proud of how both our community and this council has responded. Melton is an amazing place and it is a great privilege to live here and serve here, but we cannot ignore that covid-19 will mean that the things which make our communities unequal will become even more pronounced;</i> • <i>Now more than ever we will need to redouble our efforts to challenge disadvantage and discrimination and ensure we lead from the front in seeking a fair and inclusive society for all;</i> • <i>The tragic death of George Floyd and the outpouring of concern expressed by millions across the country highlights the very real issues that many face and reminds us that we must not be complacent, and that we must keep up the fight against racism, discrimination and inequality;</i> • <i>As a Council we need to continuously challenge ourselves, by asking what we can do better, we must create an environment where everyone, from any racial background feels able to speak up and expose racism with the confidence that the Council will respond in a supportive and proactive way. We must better understand the views of those who feel disadvantaged in our society and we must seek out and tackle discrimination and prejudice wherever it exists. We should not re-write our history but must learn from mistakes of the past and ensure they are not repeated;</i> • <i>We must recognise the unconscious bias within us all, which will shape our thinking and influence our behaviours, and which can lead to inadvertent discrimination. And let’s be clear, whether intentional or not, discrimination is discrimination and we must all take responsibility for the impact of our own biases and prejudices and work to combat them;</i> • <i>This Council welcomes and values the diversity of its workforce, the people and the communities in the Borough, and everyone who uses our services. The strength of our organisation comes from the richness of our diversity and all that we can learn from each other. We are all worthy of respect and dignity, and all of us should be judged by our actions not by the colour of our skin or any other innate characteristic. We must work hard to promote inclusivity and celebrate diversity, I know that we are working hard to achieve this throughout the organisation, but we must continue to look for ways in which we can improve;</i>

- *As leaders of this organisation we must not shy away from difficult conversations, but rather foster an environment where questions can be asked and honest self-reflection encouraged. We should recognise these are complex issues and should approach them with gentle humility, rather than arrogance and pomposity. We should encourage debate and discussion such that we collectively learn and develop, rather than becoming more entrenched in our views. Through our collective dialogue and determination to do better and tackle discrimination we can respond to any inadequacies with an optimistic spirit and positive action;*
- *I would therefore request that Members join me in supporting the following motion.'*

The Council resolves :

To reaffirm its commitment to promoting equality and fairness for all, and condemns any and all forms of racism and all discrimination; wherever it is found.

As a Council to challenge ourselves to do more and commit to do the following

- Develop our councillors and workforce and take time to learn more about racism and understand the impact on our communities.
- Deliver the objectives set out in the Corporate Equalities Policy;
- Ask the Council's Scrutiny Committee to consider the government's recently published "Covid-19: Understanding the impact on BAME communities" report and consider the implications for Council services and the community and make recommendations to Cabinet as to how the Council should respond; and
- Designate one elected member as an Equalities Champion who will work with the Council's Equalities lead officer on this agenda, providing further challenge and support to officers, Cabinet and Council as appropriate

(Councillor Chandler here re-joined the meeting.)

Councillor Browne seconded the motion and relayed his personal experiences of racism from living in Northern Ireland during the troubles and emphasised how important it was for leaders to work together and ensure all people were able to integrate together.

Councillor Evans felt this was a sensitive subject area and although he supported the motion he considered there were bigger issues to deal with during the pandemic.

Several Members spoke in support of the motion and it was suggested that equalities training be arranged for Members and Officers to attend together.

Councillor Lumley also supported the motion but expressed concern regarding the media's portrayal of the Black Lives Matters campaign. Councillor Lumley

expressed his support for equal opportunities and stated that racism was not acceptable, but also believed that free speech should not be hindered and that the media should provide a more balanced representation of the issues. He felt that the Council was already doing an excellent job regarding equalities.

RESOLVED

To reaffirm its commitment to promoting equality and fairness for all, and condemns any and all forms of racism and all discrimination; wherever it is found.

As a Council to challenge ourselves to do more and commit to do the following

- Develop our councillors and workforce and take time to learn more about racism and understand the impact on our communities.
- Deliver the objectives set out in the Corporate Equalities Policy;
- Ask the Council's Scrutiny Committee to consider the government's recently published "Covid-19: Understanding the impact on BAME communities" report and consider the implications for Council services and the community and make recommendations to Cabinet as to how the Council should respond; and
- Designate one elected member as an Equalities Champion who will work with the Council's Equalities lead officer on this agenda, providing further challenge and support to officers, Cabinet and Council as appropriate

(Unanimous)

(Councillor Illingworth left the meeting during the preceding item and on leaving expressed his support for the motion and that he would have voted in favour had he been present at the time of the vote.)

(Councillor Wood left the meeting during the preceding item and did not vote thereon.)

CO27

MOTION - RELEASE OF SKY LANTERNS AND BALLOONS

In support of the motion, Councillor Orson said

- *'Many organisations have drawn attention to the problem of sky lantern and balloon releases and the call to ban such releases nationally is supported by the Marine Conservation Society, RSPCA, RSPB, BASC and the National Farmers' Union;*
- *Releasing of sky lanterns may appear an impressive sight, but they can be dangerous and there is no way of predicting where they will land;*
- *Some of the main dangers include:*
 - *Lanterns have caused fires on an industrial scale; destroying acres of crops, farm buildings and stored food supplies as well as killing or injuring farm animals;*

- *Lanterns and balloons cause significant litter problems on land and sea posing a risk to livestock and marine animals which mistake balloons for food;*
- *Lanterns being mistaken for distress flares increasing false alarm call outs in coastal areas; and*
- *Lanterns and balloons causing Injury or death to animals through ingestion, entanglement and entrapment.*
- *Numerous UK local authorities have agreed to implement a ban on balloon and lantern releases on their land as a result of increasing concerns relating to the dangers highlighted above;*
- *There is currently no UK legislation available to control this issue, but in order to demonstrate the Council's continued commitment to improving the attractiveness of the Borough and tackling the detrimental impact of debris resulting from such releases, I propose that Council supports the following motion:'*

The Council resolves :

- To ban the use and release of sky lanterns and helium balloons meant for release on all Council-owned public open space;
- To discourage the release of Sky Lanterns and Helium Balloons at any events licensed by Melton Borough Council and request third parties who lease Council property to observe the ban on balloon and sky lantern releases;
- To delegate authority to the Director for Governance and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate, Access and Engagement to make any consequential changes to Council policies and agreements in relation to the use of Council land as a result of this motion;
- To promote information to local people, leading to better understanding of the damage sky lanterns do

Councillor Freer-Jones seconded the motion and explained that these lanterns and balloons caused nuisance and pressure on the emergency services due to false alarms and distress signals raised when they landed.

Members were in support of the motion and raised concerns as to how they could be stopped and what were the enforcement arrangements.

The Leader responded that Councils had to show leadership and place pressure on Government for legislation and he would contact the local MP to raise the issue. The Regulatory Team would enforce the Council's decision.

RESOLVED

- To ban the use and release of sky lanterns and helium balloons meant for release on all Council-owned public open space;
- To discourage the release of Sky Lanterns and Helium Balloons at any events licensed by Melton Borough Council and request third parties who lease Council property to observe the ban on balloon and sky lantern releases;
- To delegate authority to the Director for Governance and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate, Access and Engagement to make any consequential changes to Council policies and agreements in relation to the use of Council land as a result of this motion;
- To promote information to local people, leading to better understanding of the damage sky lanterns do

(Unanimous)

(Although not present at the meeting, it was requested that Councillor Hewson's support for the motion be reported in the minutes.)

CO28

MOTION - FAIRTRADE

Councillor Smedley outlined a revised motion set out below which had been previously circulated to Members. Councillor Smedley proposed the motion and gave the following introduction:

- *'Since the FAIRTRADE Mark was launched in the UK in 1994 consumer demand for these products has grown and this is thanks to the efforts of grassroots campaigners and pioneering businesses.*
- *I believe that that the recently agreed International Fair Trade Charter should be welcomed as it rightfully states that rising inequality, entrenched poverty and a deepening ecological crisis have led the global community to seek different models of business and trade that drive fair and sustainable economies.*
- *The Fairtrade principles of paying a 'premium' that is wholly managed by farmers and workers themselves, and of minimum prices to protect producers from market volatility are crucial to systemic change.*
- *I strongly believe that local authorities and other public bodies should support this fantastic cause that improves the standard of living for so many people less fortunate than ourselves ensuring that they are free of exploitation modern slavery.'*

The revised motion was as follows:

The Council resolves :

- To support the Melton Fairtrade Borough Steering Group in their 2019 renewal

	<p>application, to renew Melton Borough’s Fairtrade status.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To actively promote Fairtrade locally, through support for local groups, and events, including during Fairtrade Fortnight. • To support the promotion and use of Fairtrade refreshments within the Council premises, including meeting rooms, community centres and Council Offices. <p>Councillor Orson seconded the motion and congratulated Councillor Smedley on her commitment in drafting and presenting this motion.</p> <p>There were some Member comments relating to the cost and quality of Fairtrade products especially those used previously at the Council Offices. It was noted the Fairtrade did not produce milk and therefore had no impact on local dairy farmers. However there was concern that products should be locally sourced where possible.</p> <p>Councillor Smedley responded that Fairtrade was a choice and was not to be forced on people but it was about promoting Fairtrade suppliers and by purchasing the products customers were helping someone a lot less fortunate than themselves. Most products available under the Fairtrade umbrella could not be sourced or produced locally.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the Melton Fairtrade Borough Steering Group in their 2019 renewal application, to renew Melton Borough’s Fairtrade status. • To actively promote Fairtrade locally, through support for local groups, and events, including during Fairtrade Fortnight. • To support the promotion and use of Fairtrade refreshments within the Council premises, including meeting rooms, community centres and Council Offices.
CO29	<p>RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES There were no recommendations and reports from Committees.</p>
CO30	<p>REPORT ON CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S USE OF EMERGENCY POWERS The Council considered a report on the use of the Chief Executive’s Emergency Powers under Section 12.3 of Chapter 2, Part 4 of the Melton Borough Council Constitution (Officer Scheme of Delegation).</p> <p>Councillor Orson moved the recommendation to note the decisions made by the Chief Executive under emergency powers.</p> <p>Councillor Higgins seconded the motion.</p>

	The Council NOTED the decisions made by the Chief Executive under emergency powers.
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The meeting closed at: 9.20 pm

Mayor