

MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 26 JUNE 2012

Attendance:

The Mayor (Councillor Dickson) (P) (in the Chair);

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Beavis) (P);

Councillors Allen (P), Ms Ballard, Burgess (P), Carter CK (P), Carter CR (P), Chegwyn (P), Mrs Cully (P), Ms Diffey (P), Edgar (P), Farr (P), Forder (P), Foster-Reed (P), Geddes, Gill (P), Hazel (P), Henshaw (P), Mrs Hook (P), Hook (P), Hylands (P), Jacobs (P), Jessop (P) Kimber (P) Lane (P) Langdon (P), Mrs Morgan (P), Murphy (P), Philpott, Ronayne (P), Scard (P), Mrs Searle (P), Mrs Wright (P) and Wright (P).

Also in attendance: Honorary Aldermen Hewitt and Searle.

PRAYERS

Included in the Prayers prior to the start of the meeting was the missing Gosport sailor Timmy MacColl from HMS Westminster and his family.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ms Ballard, Geddes and Philpott and Honorary Aldermen Foster, Lucas, O'Neill and Train.

NOTICES OF MOTION – STANDING ORDER 4.5.1(j)

The Mayor informed the meeting that he had received two Notices of Motion and he wished to propose under Standing Order 4.5.1 (j) to vary the order of business to take these notices after agenda item 4 and before agenda item 5.

COUNCIL RESOLVED: That Standing Order 4.5.1(j) be moved to vary the order of business to allow two Notices of Motion to be taken after agenda item 4 and before agenda item 5.

PHOTOGRAPHS

A booklet containing 39 colour photographs of the Holbrook Leisure Centre was prior to the meeting distributed to Members and members of the public in the Council Chamber and the Public Gallery. These hard copy photographs are attached to the minute book as appendix (a).

MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

There were no Mayor's Communications.

DEPUTATIONS

It was reported that in accordance with Standing Order 3.5 six notices of deputation had been received by the Borough Solicitor from Elizabeth Thompson, Mark Foster, Linda Jaques, Lesley Burton, Gordon Soutar and Paul Clark.

Elizabeth Thompson was invited to address the Council meeting. She advised that she had taken up swimming upon her retirement to keep fit and expand her social life and that initially she was not a confident swimmer. The pool staff and fellow swimmers had been supportive and she had been able to make new friends and exercise.

She advised that she felt the repairs could be carried out on the centre that would not cost a great deal and that the centre should remain in use until the new facility was open to the public.

She felt that the decision to close the centre was a hasty one and that there would be a great cost to the community, particularly as the school summer holidays were shortly to begin and that staff would be made redundant.

She requested that the Council reconsider their decision to close the centre and that it remains open until the new Leisure Centre was available for use.

Mark Foster was invited to address the Council meeting. He thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak and advised that he was the Chairman of the Gosport Dolphins Swimming Club.

Mr Foster advised that he was dismayed at the closure as it would affect residents and the swimming clubs in the Olympic year. He advised that the Olympic Torch would be passing a half built Leisure Centre and that the up and coming summer passport scheme would be affected.

Mr Foster advised that he would like to understand the decision making process in closing the centre and that why, if the centre was deemed a risk, was it not already closed and swimming clubs and the public being allowed to continue to use it.

Mr Foster questioned who had made the decision to close the centre, whether it had been considered at a meeting of the Council, how and what had led to the decision being made and why the news had been released on the 1 June, before the Jubilee Bank Holiday Weekend.

Linda Jaques was invited to address the Council meeting. She advised the meeting that she was not seeking a full repair of the roof, but a temporary repair to allow the pool to remain open until the new facility was completed.

She advised that she had had it confirmed that the roof was safe and that there was no danger to members of the public and that as a result closure should not go ahead until a proper assessment had been carried out and all avenues explored in the quest to keep it open in such an historical Olympic year.

She felt that it was unacceptable for Gosport Borough Council to close the leisure centre and that no consideration had been given to the people who currently use the centre, including the Gosport Dolphins, aqua aerobics groups and swimming lessons or the employees.

She advised that there had been offers from local builders and roofers who would be prepared to carry out repairs to the roof free of charge if Gosport Borough Council were to pay for the materials. She felt that this acknowledged the importance of the facility to the community and that people were willing to help to ensure that the facility remained open.

She expressed concern that a request that the facility remain open to allow children to swim there in the school holidays had been refused and that as a result there would be one less affordable facility for children to use in the summer

She advised that London's biggest promise when it was bidding for the Olympics was to use the Games to inspire people of all ages to take up sport and that it was a shame that Gosport would not be doing the same. She advised that when the Olympic torch is carried through Gosport, there would not be facilities to inspire people.

She concluded by advising that there was no reason to close the pool and that the decision impacted on a lot of people. The importance of leisure facilities had been highlighted in spending £7.2million on a new facility and asked Members to consider the feelings of the residents and not the political parties they represented.

Lesley Burton was invited to address the Council meeting. She thanked the Mayor for allowing an extraordinary meeting of the Council to be called to discuss Holbrook and hoped that the Elected Members had seen the large crowd and appreciated the strength of feeling against the closure.

Mrs Burton advised that she had opened the swimming pool and had been the first and possibly would be the last person to swim in it. She advised that swimming was the best form of recreational exercise and that it was always a joy to see people using the facility.

Mrs Burton advised that she had been a Gosport Borough Councillor in 1976 and that she felt there had been no debate by the Council over the closure of the pool.

Mrs Burton felt that if there was a danger to members of the public, the pool would have been closed immediately and that repairs should be carried out to allow the pool to remain open until the end of the year.

Mrs Burton expressed concern that the proposed closure was to take place just before the school summer holidays and would be denying children the opportunity to take part in a healthy, supervised activity.

Mrs Burton concluded by advising that the Council would be closing a large and best loved facility, despite the concerns of residents and that although she had been assured that there was no financial gain to the Council, it was an act of vandalism.

Gordon Souter was invited to address the Council meeting. He advised that he was the maintenance engineer at the centre and that the building was structurally sound. He agreed that there was water running down the internal walls of the Centre, but that this had been the case for 14 years.

Mr Souter questioned why the centre was suddenly closing with only 6 months remaining before the new centre opened and questioned whether it was to make way for work to be undertaken on the new centre.

Mr Souter advised that in relation to the photographs provided, the fire door had been replaced and repaired and did not warrant the closure of the centre.

Mr Souter concluded by advising that the closure would be a loss to Gosport and that it was the main leisure facility for residents of Gosport and that the centre need only remain open for another few more months. He advised that the closure was a waste and that Planet Ice had successfully kept the centre open up until now and that consideration had not been given to the residents of Gosport.

PETITION

Mr Clark was invited to address the Council meeting to make his deputation. He handed in a 3232 signature petition to keep Holbrook Recreation Centre open as it would be closing June 30 2012; the new building would not be done until next year so no facilities for customers, no pool for Gosport Dolphins and no jobs for the staff.

The Mayor thanked Mr Clark for the petition and advised that the matter was being debated at this meeting of the Council tonight.

Mr Clark began his deputation by advising that closure of the pool would leave families with no where to swim. He advised that in the Olympic year, the whole world would be looking at Great Britain and that the Olympics would inspire children throughout the country to take part in sport and inspire them to do better, but that the residents of Gosport would have no where.

He expressed concern that those children that could not travel to Fareham could be drawn to swimming in rivers or the sea or that they could take part in tomb stoning which could lead to an accident or a fatality.

Mr Clark advised that he was hoping that the pool would remain open until the school holidays had finished and that it was important that the children had some where to safe to swim in the summer holidays.

Mr Clark welcomed the new leisure centre but expressed concern that there could be a further 6-10 months before the facility was open. He had concern for the members of Gosport Dolphins that would have to potentially travel to Portsmouth to swim at unsuitable times as often young people's training sessions took place before school.

Mr Clark concluded by reiterating that his main concern was that the young people had some where safe to swim.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

It was reported that in accordance with Standing Order 3.6 four notices of public question had been received by the Borough Solicitor from Michael Spoor, Tracy Davey, Sandra Abrams and David Abrams in relation to the proposed closure of Holbrook Leisure Centre. These questions were answered by the Leader of the Council

QUESTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 3.4

- (A) Question No 1 standing in the name of Councillor Mrs Searle on the matter of insurance for the Holbrook Leisure Centre was answered by the Leader of the Council.

NOTICE OF MOTION

The Mayor reported that he had a Notice of Motion under Standing Order 3.3.5 (Notice to Suspend Standing Orders), proposed by Councillor Hook and seconded by Councillor Burgess, to suspend Standing Order 3.3.2 (Eight days' Notice of Motion) so that the Council could consider the Motion in relation to Agenda Item 5, which was set out in the Notice of Motion, at this meeting.

COUNCIL RESOLVED: That Standing Order 3.3.2 be suspended so that the Council could consider the Motion in relation to Agenda Item 5 set out in the Notice of Motion at this meeting.

The Mayor further reported that included in the above Notice of Motion was the suspension of Standing Order 4.6 (Procedure for Motions following Notice) so that this Council meeting may consider the Motion in relation to Agenda Item 5, which was set out in the Notice of Motion, when it considers agenda item 5.

COUNCIL RESOLVED: That Standing Order 4.6 be suspended so that this Council meeting may consider the Motion in relation to Agenda Item 5 set out in the Notice of Motion when it considers agenda item 5.

STANDING ORDER 4.15.1

The Mayor reported that notice had been received under Standing Order 4.15.1, proposed by Councillor Wright and seconded by Councillor Mrs Wright, requesting that following the public questions and depositions the Council goes into Committee in order to discuss the Holbrook Leisure Centre

The Notice of Motion under Standing Order 4.15.1 was accordingly put to the vote and declared LOST.

COUNCIL RESOLVED: That the Notice of Motion under Standing Order 4.15.1 to go into Committee session be not approved.

HOLBROOK LEISURE CENTRE

The Leader of the Council accordingly moved, seconded by Councillor Burgess, the following Motion.

That in respect of Agenda item 5 the Council resolves that:-

In the light of the further deterioration to the fabric of this public building Council confirms that Holbrook Leisure Centre must close no later than 30 June 2012;

It welcomes the discussion that has taken place with Gosport Dolphins to ensure their training programme continues and authorise the Borough Treasurer to provide grant assistance to them at £272 per week from 1 July 2012 (excluding August when the club do not have training sessions) until the date the new pool is available for the Gosport Dolphins to use;

It welcomes the discussion that has taken place with Brune Park Community College to provide additional public swimming facilities during term time and the summer holidays and authorise the Chief Executive to finalise the programme and an agreement to indemnify the College if they incur any additional costs in making such facilities available to the public;

The Council place on record their thanks to Gosport Dolphins, Brune Park Community College and Leesland Junior School for their kind assistance to the Council in this matter.

STANDING ORDER 4.11.8(c)

It was moved and agreed under Standing Order 4.11.8 (c) that the time limit for speeches be increased from 5 minutes to 7 minutes

COUNCIL RESOLVED: That under Standing Order 4.11.8(c) the time limit for speeches be increased from 5 minutes to 7 minutes.

Upon the above Motion being put to the meeting the following Amendment was received by the Mayor from Councillor Mrs Cully. The amendment was duly seconded by Councillor Mrs Wright.

AMENDMENT:

“That in respect of Agenda item 5 the Council resolves that:-

We move that the Council negotiates the extension of the contract for the Holbrook Recreation Centre to remain open until it is necessary to undertake work to the new centre and continue with routine maintenance as required. At that time initiate the grant to the swimming clubs and pay the costs incurred by Brune Park College and Leesland School to provide facilities to the public and to authorise the Borough Treasurer to provide grant assistance to them at £272 per week;

It welcomes the discussion that has taken place with Brune Park Community College to provide additional public swimming facilities during term time and the summer holidays and authorise the Chief Executive to finalise the programme and an agreement to indemnify the College if they incur any additional costs in making such facilities available to the public;

The Council place on record their thanks to Gosport Dolphins, Brune Park Community College and Leesland Junior School for their kind assistance to the Council in this matter.

Upon the Amendment being put to the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order 4.12.4, it was requisitioned that the voting on the Amendment be recorded. A recorded vote was thereupon taken and the names of the Members voting for and against the Amendment were read to the Council as follows:

FOR THE AMENDMENT: Councillors Chegwyn, Mrs Cully, Ms Diffey, Farr, Foster-Reed, Hylands, Mrs Searle, Mrs Wright and Wright (9)

AGAINST THE AMENDMENT: The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors Allen, Burgess, Carter CK, Carter CR, Edgar, Forder, Gill, Hazel, Henshaw, Mrs Hook, Hook, Jacobs, Jessop, Kimber, Lane, Langdon, Mrs Morgan, Murphy, Ronayne and Scard (22)

The Amendment was accordingly declared LOST.

Upon the Original Motion being put to the meeting, in accordance with Standing Order 4.12.4, it was requisitioned that the voting on the Original Motion be recorded. A recorded vote was thereupon taken, and the names of the Members voting for and against Original Motion were read to the Council as follows:

FOR THE ORIGINAL MOTION: The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors Allen, Burgess, Carter CK, Carter CR, Edgar, Forder, Gill, Hazel, Henshaw, Mrs Hook, Hook, Jacobs, Jessop, Kimber, Lane, Langdon, Mrs Morgan, Murphy, Ronayne and Scard (22)

AGAINST THE ORIGINAL MOTION: Councillors Chegwyn, Mrs Cully, Ms Diffey, Farr, Foster-Reed, Hylands, Mrs Searle, Mrs Wright and Wright (9)

The Original Motion was accordingly declared CARRIED.

COUNCIL RESOLVED: That the Original Motion be approved and adopted.

The Council rose at 8.40pm