

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON

25 March 2010

8pm-8.36pm

PRESENT

COUNCILLORS

Edna Stevens (Chairman)

David Carter
Jean Clark
Tony Durcan
Tony Hall
Eddie Johnson
Sue Livings
Chris Millington
Lesley Rideout
Robert Thurston

Simon Carter
Bob Davis
Mike Garnett
Maggie Hulcoop
Shona Johnson
Patrick McClarnon
Linda Pailing
Clive Souter

Joel Charles
Manny Doku
Mark Gough
Andrew Johnson
Muriel Jolles
Nick Macy
Russell Perrin
John Strachan
Mark Wilkinson

APOLOGIES

Lee Dangerfield

Sarah Dangerfield
Lorna Spenceley

Eleanor Macy

78. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Patrick McClarnon declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 (Communications from the Chairman) as his great-niece was receiving a Civic Award.

79. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meetings held on 11 February 2010 and 25 February 2010 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

80. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

(a) Councillor Lorna Spenceley

The Chairman of the Council presented a gift for Councillor Lorna Spenceley in recognition of her long service to the Council.

Cllr Spenceley would be retiring in May 2010, having served nineteen years as a councillor, during which time she had been appointed as both a Leader and Chairman of the Council.

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman wished her good luck in her retirement.

Her gift was accepted by Councillor Chris Millington, as unfortunately, Councillor Spenceley was not well enough to attend.

(b) Councillor Eleanor Macy

The Chairman of the Council present a bouquet of flowers for Councillor Eleanor Macy, who had been unwell for some time and was retiring from the Council.

On behalf of the Council, she wished her better health in the future.

Councillor Nick Macy accepted the bouquet as, unfortunately Councillor Eleanor Macy was not well enough to attend.

(c) Natalie McClarnon

The Chairman of the Council presented a Civic Award to Natalie McClarnon, for her achievements on the rugby pitch.

Having first found her passion for rugby at school at the age eight, Natalie was selected for the England team in 2009. As a senior player she signed for the Saracens Ladies team, where she was given the chance to play premiership rugby in the first team.

(d) Sylvia Portno and Dorothy Ralph

The Chairman of the Council awarded a Civic Award to Sylvia Portno and Dorothy Ralph, in recognition of their dedication and contribution to the social events for the community in and around Manor Hatch Close Sheltered Housing project.

81. **PETITIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None received.

82. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Attached at Appendix A.

83. **MOTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

None received.

84. **REFERENCES FROM COMMITTEES**

None.

85. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

Attached at Appendix B.

86. **REPORTS FROM OFFICERS**

None.

87. **REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

RESOLVED that the reports from Council representatives on certain outside bodies be noted.

88. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM COMMITTEES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following committee meetings be noted:-

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Date</u>
Special Policy & Resources	25/2/10
Scrutiny	04/03/10
Environment & Community	09/03/10
Audit	10/03/10
Housing	11/03/10

89. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

1. **Mr R Tull, 64 Barnmead, Harlow to Cllr Andrew Johnson, Leader of the Council:**

Why did the Council decide to withdraw its support from Harlow Active Retired and is it fully aware of the consequences?

Reply from Cllr Andrew Johnson:

The Council has been encouraging Active Retired to become an independent organisation for the past few years. At one time the organisation received Council funding, but this ceased several years ago, and for the last few years the Council has only provided administrative support. The organisation has over 1,000 members and it is therefore appropriate that the organisation undertakes its own administration, in the same way that other local organisations do.

2. **Rev Dennis Nadin, 201 Willowfield, Harlow, to Cllr Edna Stevens, Chairman of the Council**

Whilst I welcome any improvements in what has been a thoroughly unsatisfactory complaints procedure, as I understand it, there was no systematic attempt by the Scrutiny Committee to encourage persons who were making or had made complaints against the Council to submit evidence in their review of the complaints procedure. Are all Members satisfied with such a one sided review?

Reply from Cllr Edna Stevens:

Elected Members are never satisfied if any review is seen to be "one-sided".

3. **Rev Dennis Nadin, 201 Willowfield, Harlow, to Cllr Edna Stevens, Chairman of the Council**

Will Council ensure that any future reviews allow fair representation of those tenants and residents who have personal experience of the system?

Reply from Cllr Edna Stevens:

The selection of evidence for any scrutiny review is something for the Scrutiny Committee itself to determine. I have no doubt that any perception that evidence was perceived as wanting will be taken on board by the members of the Committee and that they will try to ensure that lessons are learned when selecting evidence in future.

APPENDIX B

QUESTION FROM MEMBERS

1. **Cllr Maggie Hulcoop to Cllr Tony Hall, Chairman of the Environment and Community Committee:**

Can he please confirm that the first hour will be free at the Bush Fair, Stow, Old Harlow and Town Park car parks?

Reply from Cllr Tony Hall:

At a time of economic recession reductions in the Government's Revenue Support Grant cannot be ruled out, so Harlow Council has had to take some tough decisions in order to set a balanced budget and support residents by keeping its Council Tax rise at zero. Nonetheless the Council is also keen to keep fees and charges to residents to a minimum. The main object of the introduction of car park charges was to regulate the chaotic parking situation and these need to be kept in line with the Council's costs, so changes to car park charges were part of the budget and were included in the budget reports. We are constantly monitoring our budgets and seeking opportunities to reduce any impact of such charges. This includes identifying efficiency savings and finding alternative sources of income. As new funding is identified we will review charges and the possibility for reducing or, where appropriate, removing them. Currently the situation is such that implementation of the charges at the Town Park is being deferred as new opportunities are being considered. Advice has been taken that this does not jeopardise the budget plans. In relation to The Stow, Bush Fair and Old Harlow, the first hour remains free.

2. **Cllr Mark Wilkinson to Cllr Tony Hall, Chairman of the Environment and Community Committee:**

Can he give an update as to where the Council are with the tendering process at Harlow Crematorium?

Reply from Cllr Tony Hall:

The Council has received proposals from three organisations interested in running Parndon Wood Cemetery and Crematorium. Officers are currently undertaking a detailed assessment of each submission before preparing a report on their findings to the Environment and Community Committee

3. **Cllr John Strachan to Cllr Lee Dangerfield, Chairman of the Housing Committee**

What plans do you have for 190 The Briars, what would the cost be for bringing 190 The Briars back into general use and has this been budgeted for?

Reply from Cllr Lee Dangerfield:

Discussions are still underway in relation to the use of 190 The Briars, involving Community and Customer Services, Housing Services and also Moat Housing. It would be premature to develop detailed plans and budgetary arrangements ahead of these discussions being completed.