

AT A MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall on Tuesday 22 September 2015

PRESENT: The Mayor, (Councillor Mrs Eileen Quick), The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Mrs Sayonara Luxton) Councillors Natasha Airey, Malcolm Alexander, Christine Bateson, George Bathurst, Malcolm Beer, Hashim Bhatti, Phillip Bicknell, John Bowden, Paul Brimacombe, Clive Bullock, David Burbage, Stuart Carroll, Gerald Clark, John Collins, David Coppinger, Carwyn Cox, Simon Dudley, David Evans, Marius Gilmore, Jesse Grey, Geoffrey Hill, David Hilton, Charles Hollingsworth, Maureen Hunt, Mohammed Ilyas, Richard Kellaway, John Lenton, Philip Love, Asghar Majeed, Ross McWilliams, Marion Mills, Gary Muir, Jack Rankin, Colin Rayner, Samantha Rayner, Wesley Richards, Hari Sharma, Derek Sharp, Shamsul Shelim, Adam Smith, John Story, Claire Stretton, Lisa Targowska, Simon Werner, Derek Wilson, Ed Wilson and Lynda Yong.

Officers: Alison Alexander, Neil Allen, Mark Blackshaw, Andrew Brooker, Richard Ellis, Simon Fletcher, Elizabeth Hambidge, Christabel Shawcross, Karen Shepherd and Anna Trott.

PART I

34. **PRAYERS**

Reverend Stileman said prayers for the meeting.

35. **ONE MINUTE SILENCE**

A minute's silence was held in memory of former Councillor Eric Wiles, Ben Page (Community Warden) and Sarah Onouha (Adult Services) who had all recently passed away.

36. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Airey, Lilly Evans, Lynne Jones, Paul Lion, Nicola Pryer, MJ Saunders and Leo Walters,

37. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 28 July 2015 were approved.

38. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs Hunt declared an interest in item 13 (motion b) as an Ambassador for the Alexander Devine charity. She would not vote on the motion but would remain in the room for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item.

The Mayor declared an interest in item 13 (motion b) as an Ambassador for the Alexander Devine charity.

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Councillors Burbage, Dudley and D. Wilson declared interests in relation to the item 'Constitutional Amendments' as a Bray Parish Councillor.

Councillor Coppinger declared an interest in item 12 (question f) as a member of the Maidenhead Target Shooting Club.

Councillors Rayner and Mrs Rayner declared disclosable pecuniary interests in item 13 (questions c and j) as the family worked with a charity supporting refugees in Syria. Both councillors would leave the room for the duration of the discussion of the items.

The Deputy Mayor and Councillor Mrs Rayner declared interests in item 13 (motion b) as fundraisers for the Alexander Devine charity

Councillors Rayner and Mrs Rayner declared disclosable pecuniary interests in item 13 (questions b) as they were landowners whose land was likely to be compulsory purchased for the Smart Motorways scheme.

39. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor submitted in writing details of engagements that she and the Deputy Mayor had undertaken since the last meeting, which were noted by the Council. The Mayor highlighted her visit to Sportsable to attend the organisations 40th anniversary celebrations.

40. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None received in time.

41. PETITIONS

The following petition was presented by Councillor Mrs Bateson:

'We, the undersigned, wish the RBWM to consider reducing the recently implemented 18 tonne weight limit on the Chobham Road railway bridge to a maximum of 7.5 tonnes. We are concerned that the large lorries pose a safety risk due to the narrow road over the bridge. Large vehicles are forced to cross the central double-white line on a bend where visibility is limited and oncoming traffic may not see them in time.'

Councillor Mrs Bateson addressed the meeting to summarise the content of the petition. She explained that the petition had been signed by 230 people, along with a further 213 signatures on an e-petition. The petition therefore totalled 1003 signatures. The petition had been organised in response to the increase in heavy traffic vehicles travelling along the Chobham Road, which was the High Street in Sunningdale. The parish council was concerned about increased traffic from the planned DERA development which would routinely use the bridge. The Royal Borough had introduced the weight limit in June after it acknowledged with its shops, houses and street parking, that heavy lorries should not use the bridge. Additionally, it was an s-bend bridge which was unsafe for people coming the other way.

The Mayor ruled that the petition should be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

42. APPOINTMENT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

Members considered the appointment of David Scott (Head of Governance, Performance and Policy) as the Monitoring Officer from 1 December 2015. Mr Scott would be supported by officers from the Shared Legal Services team at Wokingham.

Councillor Burbage advised Members that the recommendation should read 'Council' not 'Cabinet' and hence should be amended.

Councillor Werner commended the recommendation.

It was proposed by Councillor Burbage, seconded by Councillor Dudley, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council appoint David Scott as the Monitoring Officer for the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead with effect from 1 December 2015 until further notice.

43. REPLACEMENT OF DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACE ORDERS (DPPOS) WITH A PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO)

Members considered the replacement of DPPOs with a PSPO. Councillor Cox explained that the proposal was a result of the implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2014. Under the legislation, the change would take place by October 2017 anyway whether council agreed or not. Councillor Cox explained that a DPPO allowed regulation of activities including the consumption of alcohol in areas where problems occurred. The police were also empowered to remove alcohol where appropriate. PSPOs were similar but extended the powers of local authorities to regulate other activities that could be considered anti-social. A PSPO could be made where the council was satisfied that the activity or activities, carried on in a public place, it proposes to restrict:

- Have had, or are likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality;
- Is, or is likely to be, persistent or continuing in nature;
- Is, or is likely to be, unreasonable; and
- Justifies the restrictions imposed

The report proposed the two existing DPPOs be replaced with one PSPO, with the inclusion of an anomaly at Riverside Gardens. Future PSPOs would come to a PSPO Panel, with the exception of large matters that would come to Full Council for consideration.

Councillor Werner welcomed the report. He was pleased that there was a mechanism for increasing the number of PSPOs in future where a problem occurred. In 2004 Pinkneys Green had had a number of issues with anti-social behaviour. A series of measures were put together at the time, including the first alcohol-free zone in the borough. It had been a fundamental part of solving some of the problems on the estate.

It was proposed by Councillor Cox, seconded by Councillor Werner, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That Council:

- i) Agrees to the replacement of the two current Designated Public Space Orders with one Public Space Protection Order covering all the same locations in the previous DPPOs by 30 October 2015 and makes a small extension to the Riverside Gardens alcohol free zone area to include all of the car park.**
- ii) Agrees to the sealing of the order establishing one Public Space Protection Order as described above.**
- iii) Agrees to amend its constitution with respect to the Alley Gating/Cold Calling Zone Panel (covered in a separate paper entitled “Constitutional Amendments”) and to extend its function to consider all types of PSPO.**

44. CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS & APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

Members considered proposed amendments to the Constitution and appointments to Council Committees.

Councillor Burbage explained the first amendment would enable a call-in by Members of the Opposition (numbering three) without needing another councillor in support. The report also proposed the changes relating to PSPOs as per the previous item and minor changes to a number of terms of reference. Reference to the Head of Legal would also be amended to the Monitoring Officer as appropriate.

Councillor Burbage announced that he wished to introduce a further amendment to restore a paragraph omitted at the time of the last revision of the constitution at section 7D 2 Officer Advice To Councillors between 2.3 and 2.4:

‘Where a Councillor requests factual information (usually written) from an Officer as set out in paragraph 2.3 above, that information will also be supplied to the Chairman of the appropriate Panel, Forum or Committee, or the relevant Lead Member of the Cabinet, and relevant Officers.’

The Mayor requested the reason for the urgent amendment. Councillor Burbage responded that a recent exchange between Members and officers had highlighted the need for the change and if the issue was not resolved, ambiguity would remain. The Mayor accepted the reasoning.

Councillor Werner commented that as the clause had not been in place since 2011 he could not see the reason for the urgent request. Councillor Beer stated that he was happy to accept the urgent amendment, with a subsequent amendment to read ‘except where a Councillor requests a question remains confidential.’ A safeguard was needed for confidential matters, for example if a question was being raised on behalf of a resident. Councillor Werner seconded Councillor Beer’s amendment.

Councillor Burbage stated that he did not accept Councillor Beer's further amendment. He commented that there could be room for agreement where confidentiality applied but a blanket option for confidentiality was not appropriate. He suggested that the issue be referred to the Constitution Sub committee for discussion. This would also avoid the need to wait until the next Council meeting in December.

Councillor D. Wilson welcomed the amendments in the report, particularly in relation to the devolution of powers to parishes. It was likely that others would follow Bray's lead and requested that the Constitution Sub Committee consider each request.

Councillor Beer welcomed amendments to panel appointments that would restore some balance and ensure input from the opposition. He commented that the Opposition would not be abusing the ability to call-in executive decisions; with just three Members as the Opposition itself was very busy. The changes to political balance would have allowed the Opposition to sit on approximately 30 panels but this had been pruned to around 10 as detailed in the report.

It was proposed by Councillor Burbage, seconded by Councillor Dudley, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That

- i) the amendments to the Council's Constitution as set out in Appendices are considered and approved; and**
- ii) the Council instructs Constitution Sub Committee to undertake negotiations with Bray Parish Council with the intention of devolving decision making in Planning matters; and**
- iii) the appointments to the committees of Council are approved.**
- iv) The Constitution Sub Committee be requested to consider the inclusion of the following wording in section 7D 2 Officer Advice To Councillors of the constitution between 2.3 and 2.4:**

'Where a Councillor requests factual information (usually written) from an Officer as set out in paragraph 2.3 above, that information will also be supplied to the Chairman of the appropriate Panel, Forum or Committee, or the relevant Lead Member of the Cabinet, and relevant Officers.'

45. CODE OF CONDUCT AMENDMENTS

Members considered proposed amendments to Part 7A of the Constitution in respect to Members Code of Conduct.

Councillor Burbage explained that the code had last been updated in 2012. A recent review highlighted inconsistencies in recording personal interest therefore amendments were proposed to come into effect on 1 November 2015. The Constitution Sub Committee would also be asked to undertake a review of the code and make further

changes to the Council meeting in December 2015, as opposed to July 2016 as detailed in the report.

The report also proposed amendments to the complaints process, in particular how long complaints were logged on the website. The changes would also enable councillors to include a statement in response for complaints where a breach was found.

Councillor Werner highlighted that under previous codes Local Authority governors would submit a personal interest whereas governors under any other category would declare a prejudicial interest. He would like to see this approach included in any review of the code as it fitted with the Nolan principles. Councillor Dudley commented that it would be important to ensure people were not put off being involved in their local community. The situation could arise when a large number of the councillors at a meeting could not take part in the debate and this would be a retrograde step. He emphasised the need for a balance.

It was proposed by Councillor Burbage, seconded by Councillor Dudley, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That

- i) The amendments to the Council's Code of Conduct as set out in Appendices are approved and will be adopted from 1st November 2015; and**
- ii) Training in the amended Code of Conduct will be offered to Councillors in respect to Personal Interests; and**
- iii) The Constitution Subcommittee undertakes a thorough review of Code of Conduct to make a recommendation to Council by December 2015.**

46. DELEGATION OF PLANNING DECISIONS TO PARISH COUNCILS - REQUIRED CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

Members noted that the item had been included in the 'Constitution Amendments' report already considered.

47. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

a) Question submitted by Councillor Beer to Councillor Burbage, Leader of the Council

Please explain why despite the catastrophic flooding last year the Flood Group has not met for over a year since June 2014, no minutes have been published since March 2014 and no further meetings of this group to liaise with outside bodies on the potentially life changing threats of flooding are planned. Please can the Flood Group be urgently restored?

Councillor Burbage responded that the records he had did not match with Councillor Beer's question. He believed that the Flood Group had met on 29 July 2015; Councillor Beer had been invited but had submitted his apologies. The Forum had also met on 2 February 2015 and 20 October 2014. The next meeting was scheduled for 5 October

2015. The borough took flooding issues seriously. Cabinet received regular reports on the issue.

By way of a supplementary Councillor Beer stated that Cabinet initiated a multi-agency officer Flood Working Group in July 2009 and in November 2009 expanded it to include Riverside Ward councillors, representatives of Parish Flood Group, the EA, Thames Water and Thames Awash with the first meeting on 12 December 2009. It had been run by the Operations team almost as an offshore operation with poor links to the website and the council calendar, despite the borough's statutory responsibility as the Area Flood Lead Authority. Councillor Beer asked Councillor Burbage to ensure that it would be properly recognised and facilitated by Members Services in future to avoid inexcusable clashes such as the next Flood Forum with the Borough Transformation presentation.

Councillor Burbage, responded that support by Democratic Services was being reviewed and this would improve the formality and publication of agenda and minutes. He suggested Councillor Beer stay in contact with Councillor Grey as the borough representative on Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and Councillor Rayner as Lead Member.

b) Question submitted by Councillor Beer to Councillor Burbage, Leader of the Council

I have not had an answer about if the Council has responded to the Smart Motorway consultation regarding the M4 whereby the hard shoulders will be sacrificed as full traffic lanes without adequate alternative emergency provisions. What is the Council doing about the current consultation?

Councillor Burbage, responded that he understood that Councillor Beer was in dialogue with officers in relation to the issue. The current consultation was being undertaken by the Planning Inspectorate with a number of hearings being held at the Town Hall. The earlier consultation with Highways England had closed. Councillor Cox was the allocated Lead Member and he had been fully briefed by officers. He would no doubt welcome any input from Councillor Beer.

By way of a supplementary Councillor Beer commented that the Lead Member had said he had a conflict of interest and someone else would reply to his query of 19 August 2015. He was still waiting for news on whether the council responded to the consultation the previous November/December. Councillor Beer had asked for the issue to go to the Highways, Transport & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel but it did not. He asked whether the borough commented on the Infrastructure Planning Application before July and was participating in the current examination.

Councillor Burbage, apologised if Councillor Beer had requested an item on the Overview & Scrutiny agenda and it had not been put on the agenda, and also if his question had not been responded to. Officers would respond directly to Councillor Beer on these matters. He confirmed that the council had responded to the Planning Inspectorate on the Smart Motorway proposal. He hoped that that Councillor Beer would be able to contribute in future.

Councillor Rayner and Mrs Rayner left the room for the duration of the debate on the question.

c) Question submitted by Councillor D Wilson to Councillor Rayner, Lead Member for Highways and Transport

The Stafferton Way Link Road is due to be finished this year; does the Lead Member think that a competition or some input from residents can be arranged when considering its name?

Councillor Rayner responded that residents had been waiting for 25 years for the link road to be finished. A competition had been launched to allow residents to choose the new name for the road. Four individuals would be judging the proposed names, in the Mayor's Parlour. A number of names had already been suggested, including Cilla Black Way. He placed on record his thanks to Councillor Hill, the previous Lead Member, for his work on the project.

By way of a supplementary Councillor D. Wilson asked when the project would be completed?

Councillor Rayner responded that he had been told by the agents that the project would be completed by November 2015. An opening ceremony was planned. There had been some issues with utility companies that had delayed progress.

d) Question submitted by Councillor Ilyas to Councillor Rayner, Lead Member for Highways and Transport

Can the Lead Member provide an update on the replacement parking system for the Nicholson's car park?

Councillor Rayner responded that two or three different parking systems had been used in the Nicholson's car park over that last few years. He hoped that the new system would be the right one. A great deal of research had been undertaken and suppliers had been interviewed. The new system moved away from paper cards to tokens with chips, and pay on exit. Individuals could become members of the car park and pay online. An introductory offer would be available to encourage people to join, with £10 free parking in return. The new system would be installed by the end of November. If it were not in by then, installation would wait until after Christmas.

By way of a supplementary Councillor Ilyas asked for assurances that thorough procedures had been put in place to ensure residents would face problems as in the past.

Councillor Rayner responded that he had been assured by officers that the new system would work and be delivered on time. He had asked Community Wardens and Ambassadors to help support residents in the first few weeks. He thanked the Strategic Director of Operations and the parking Principal for their work on the project.

e) Question submitted by Councillor Mrs N Airey to Councillor Rayner, Lead Member for Highways and Transport

Can the Lead Member inform the council about the proposal to improve the junction and traffic flow at Imperial Road / Winkfield Road?

Councillor Rayner responded that he had reviewed the traffic situation. During peak times in the summer manually controlled lights had been installed. Unfortunately the two sets of lights implemented in 2008 did not communicate and this had led to problems. The proposal was therefore to remove both sets. Two alternative schemes had been developed and a public consultation on the proposals would take place. A zebra crossing would be retained for the girls' school.

Councillor Mrs N Airey confirmed she did not have a supplementary question.

f) Question submitted by Councillor Coppinger to Councillor D Wilson, Lead Member for Planning

Maidenhead Target Shooting Club, established 1906 and at Braywick Park since 1967, has 169 members including 20 juniors, members shoot at national / international level; could the lead member for Planning confirm that any future plan for Braywick will ensure the Olympic sport of shooting can continue to be pursued safely by members of all ages whatever their physical ability.

Councillor D Wilson, responded that the council recognised the important contribution that Maidenhead Target Shooting Club made to the sporting facilities of the borough. In planning for Braywick, the council would seek to ensure that provision was made to secure the future of the Olympic sport of shooting.

Councillor Coppinger confirmed he did not have a supplementary question

g) Question submitted by Councillor Carroll to Councillor Burbage, Leader of the Council

Given the desperate situation engulfing the international refugee crisis and following recent policy commitments by the Prime Minister, could the Leader of the Council please outline the Council's position regarding housing extra refugees and any associated plans?

Councillor Burbage responded that borough was working with government to support refugees including those from the Syrian crisis. The next step was for officers and partners to meet on 4 October 2015 with the Home Office and South East Strategic Partnership for Migration to discuss a plan for how the borough could assist. Attendees would be from the Housing, Adult Social Care and Children's Services as well as with partners such as local Housing Associations and the voluntary sector together would consider what practical options were available to accommodate and support children and families in most need, including considering availability of empty homes and access to support services

Councillor Carroll confirmed he did not have a supplementary question.

Councillor Rayner and Mrs Rayner left the room for the duration of the debate on the question.

h) Question submitted by Councillor E Wilson to Councillor Cox, Lead Member for Environmental Services

Will the Lead Member take time to look at the innovative work being conducted by Westminster City Council and the charity Hubbub and see whether there are any learnings for litter control in the Royal Borough?

Councillor Cox responded that he had asked officers to contact Westminster City Council. In conjunction with the charity Hubbub they were trialling an initiative called 'Neat Streets' which was based on the latest thinking on behaviour change and awareness raising from around the world. Veolia, the borough's street cleaning contractor was also participating in the initiative. Examples of what they were doing included musical litter bins, chewing gum art and voting with cigarette butts on topical fun issues e.g. 'Who will win the Ashes?' The trial commenced in May and would be completed in October. Westminster City Council had said they would share the results of the trial with the borough and the council would keep in contact with them and consider opportunities to implement appropriate examples of good practice identified during the trial.

By way of a supplementary Councillor E Wilson commented that he welcomed the Lead Member's intervention. Westminster's scheme was very interesting and innovative. The council had an obligation to residents to look at all ways litter could be tackled. The first Dedworth Recycling Day had been held the previous weekend. The five Councillors in Dedworth had adopted Dedworth Road for litter patrols. The Good Business Neighbour scheme was also in place. His challenge to the Lead Member was to come back with some innovative ideas.

Councillor Cox responded that he commended the work being undertaken in Dedworth. He would continue to look at ways to improve the streets in the borough.

i) Question submitted by Councillor Targowska to Councillor Cox, Lead Member for Environmental Services

Residents in Portlock Road and Penyston Road have submitted a petition regarding the distribution centre operating at 78 Portlock Road and its use of articulated lorries and parking of business vehicles in Portlock Road and Penyston Road; can I please have an update regarding how the Council is working to address the concerns expressed by residents in that petition?

Councillor Cox responded that noise nuisance complaints were currently being investigated by Environmental Protection personnel. A statutory noise nuisance had not yet been witnessed at this stage, but officers had provided advice to the premises about ensuring their operations did not detrimentally affect neighbouring residential premises. Residents had reported improved levels of noise in the past few weeks and the council had been informed that the business would not be extending its tenancy agreement at the site when it expired at the end of the calendar year. Noise investigations would

continue however and may result in formal action should a statutory nuisance be evidenced. Parking enforcement officers were also patrolling the area so as to discourage any misuse of the parking arrangements in Portlock Road. The Lead Member would ensure that officers keep me and the local ward members fully updated and briefed on developments.

Councillor Mrs Targowska confirmed she did not have a supplementary question

j) Question submitted by Councillor Richards to Councillor Burbage, Leader of the Council

Could the Leader of the Council set out what steps he is taking to welcome refugees from the current Syria crisis to the RBWM as part of the government's effort to accept more refugees?

Councillor Burbage had responded to the question earlier, at question g.

Councillor Richards confirmed he did not have a supplementary question

Councillor Rayner and Mrs Rayner left the room for the duration of the debate on the question.

k) Question submitted by Councillor Beer to Councillor Rayner, Lead Member for Highways and Transport

The masonry parapet of Albert Bridge on the Old Windsor to Datchet Road has not been repaired after severe damage about a year ago and is hidden by a flimsy barrier. After numerous requests for urgent action notices were eventually issued stating repairs would start on 6th July and last 6 to 7 weeks, please explain the absence of action.

Members noted that the third question from the opposition Leader had been accepted as urgent by the Lead Member.

Councillor Rayner responded that the works had not gone ahead in May because of the Horse Show. Residents would not have been happy if Windsor had become gridlocked at this time. The work would be done in November 2015 when there was less traffic in the area as Legoland was closed.

By way of a supplementary Councillor Beer stated that he first raised the issue a exactly 12 months previously, about three months after a large part of the bridge was dislodged and temporarily barricaded. After another enquiry he had been advised of the November start. Councillor Beer asked if pressure could be applied to start earlier to avoid further delays due to winter frosts causing partial closure of the busy road to extend over the Christmas period.

Councillor Rayner responded that he did not think road closure would be necessary. Professional contractors would be used and no work carried out during frosty conditions. He preferred that work would take longer in Windsor than the town be gridlocked. He would personally keep an eye on progress.

48. ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the order of business as detailed in the agenda be amended.

49. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

b) By Councillor Mrs Hunt

Councillor Mrs Hunt introduced her motion. She explained that the Alexander Devine charity was set up in 2007 to help all children with life-limiting and life threatening illnesses. Anyone who had a poorly child would know the heartaches, the difficulties and the emotional rollercoaster that followed a diagnosis. In 2008 the council pledged to give as much assistance as possible to the charity. In 2010 a benefactor donated land on which the hospice could be built, and planning permission was achieved in 2011. Fundraising then began in earnest; a large variety of events had been held. The council was now asked to waive the large amount of costs related to highway works that would take fundraisers a long time to gather. Councillor Mrs Hunt was proud to be involved with the charity along with fellow councillors. None of what had been achieved could have occurred without the commitment and drive of Fiona Devine.

Councillor Brimacombe stated that he was pleased to second the motion; the Councillors of Cox Green were very pleased to have the hospice site in their Ward, albeit close to the boundary. The highways fees, due payable in the normal course of events would be £3,075. This fee was for supervision, inspection and legal agreements associated with works required for the part of the development that would become public highway. The fees were to ensure that legal agreements were in place and that works were undertaken to the required standard. In addition to the highway fees, Shared Legal Services would charge a fee £2,831 for preparation and processing of the legal agreement. In summary, it was proposed to waive, or not to pass on to the charity, the total costs of £5,906. All Councillors would realise what an enormous achievement it would be to raise the £5 million required and he understood that circa £4 million has been collected so far. Like filling a large bath with small drops of water this took time and patience, but each drop of water was fundamentally important. Councillor Clive Bullock had donated £750 of his Councillor budget to the cause and, between Councillor McWilliams and himself, a further £500 would be added. The bath continued to fill. The council had been a friend to the charity in various forms, not least the Councillors who had declared interests. Councillor Brimacombe commended the motion to Council, that the £5,906 of fees not be passed to the Alexander Devine Charity, in order to give practical support to the establishment of the hospice for children in Berkshire.

Councillor Grey commented that as Mayor in 2009 he had supported the charity which did enormous good work for children and their families in the borough. Both parents worked tirelessly to get the hospice off the ground. Councillor Werner stated that his support for the motion was undivided. The motion was a great precedent to set for charities. The fundraising drive was truly amazing, along with the leadership of the family. Councillor Rayner commented that he got to know the family during his time as

Mayor. The Mayor stated that she looked forward to the ground-breaking ceremony that was to take place the next day.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Hunt, seconded by Councillor Brimacombe, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That this Council seeks to waive legal costs to Alexander Devine relating to necessary highways works arising from the building of the new hospice.

(Councillor Mrs Hunt did not vote on the motion)

a) By Councillor Kellaway

Councillor Kellaway introduced his motion. He explained that the electrification of the Western region was about to take place, something that had taken years to come to fruition. The programme included plans to electrify branch lines. Trains from Cookham direct to Paddington carried approximately 400 passengers a day. Travellers also came from Bourne End and Marlow giving a total of 1000 coming into Maidenhead each day. The total cost of the project was £34m. Completion of such schemes often slipped and it was therefore vital to maintain pressure on the government to ensure it took place.

Councillor Rayner commented that since he had become Lead Member had had met with Railtrack and First Great Western (FGW) on two occasions. The council needed the support of every resident of Furze Platt, Cookham and even Bourne End. He had recently met with his opposite number at Wycombe District Council who was also supportive. He hoped for a meeting with local MPs to discuss how to discuss pressurising FGW to electrify the line. If diesel trains were introduced instead, the line could be closed.

Councillor Werner stated that he supported the important motion. He had been told the council were trying to get electrification of the route anyway. Without electrification the direct line trains could be entirely lost. It was vital that the council pulled together to get a result on this issue.

Councillor Sharma explained that three months previously a meeting had been held with National Rail and FGW. They had promised they would increase the frequency on the line. At the moment trains ran every half hour. This would benefit all residents. Councillor Ilyas stated that as a ward councillor for Furze Platt, he supported the motion. He believed it would allow more borough residents to benefit from this both economically and from increased transport links for all borough residents. Councillor Clark stated that he supported on behalf of Cookham residents. Improved access for residents would be a key part of the Maidenhead regeneration scheme.

Councillor Lenton commented that he felt 1000 people per day was not a large figure spread over 24 hours. A similar number went through Wraybury station. If platforms were too short electrification would not help anyway. Network Rail projects tended to increase in cost significantly.

Councillor Kellaway responded to Councillor Lenton that he felt 1000 was a large number. Approximately 5000 people came through Maidenhead every day and this

would increase with Crossrail. He hoped all Councillors would support the motion. Councillor Sharma commented that lots of children travelled from Cookham to Furze Platt every day; the line was very well used.

It was proposed by Councillor Kellaway, seconded by Councillor Rayner, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That this Council recognises the importance to the local economy and environment of the rail branch line to Furze Platt and Cookham, warmly supports the plans to electrify the line as part of the overall electrification of the Western Rail Line and urges the Department for Transport to move ahead with the scheme as soon as practicable

c) By Councillor Richards

Councillor Richards introduced his motion. Councillor Richards explained that he had proposed the motion because of the historic nature of events. The crisis in Syria had been building for a number of years and had gathered steam last summer with the expulsion of Christians and Yazidis from their homes. The harrowing picture of a three year old boy washed up on the shores of Turkey had recently been broadcast around the world. Europe was facing the greatest number of refugees since World War Two. Over the last three years of the civil war, 4m people had been made refugee. Of Syria's 1.1 million Christian population, an estimated 700,000 had been forced to leave their homes. The crisis compared to 1.2 million refugees from the Balkan wars of the 1990s and 15 million in World War Two. There was both a moral and a legal obligation to act. Justine Greening, International Development Minister had stated that £1bn had been provided in aid, second only to the USA for food, education and health services. At a time of great and legitimate public concern over migration, the Prime Minister had been right to draw a distinction regarding refugees. The Development Secretary had said that the resettlement of 20,000 of the most vulnerable refugees was both the moral thing to do and also the smart the thing to do.

Councillor Richards explained that he wished to withdraw the second motion as it was clear that the government was keeping the situation under review he also wished to add the words 'from camps' to the first recommendation.

Councillor Burbage commented that, in the Home Secretary's constituency, with such a long war and the refugee crisis, he felt that it was right to support the government's approach to aid genuine refugees. The country had a long history of providing refuge from war; the challenge was ever so much greater for the nations to the south and east of the continent. There had been some good news from the European meeting earlier that day on migrant quotas, although the UK was not part of that process. The council's choice was to aid those who were truly refugees from the war, directly from camps. As he had mentioned earlier, the council was working with the Local Government Association and the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration to develop plans, alongside many other local authorities. The Home Office had been working to provide councils with the information needed on resettlement programmes. No doubt resolving funding questions would be part of this work. He thanked local individuals who had offered to help with the refugee crisis locally. Along with Councillor Coppinger and others he would be keeping Councillors informed as the situation developed.

Councillor Brimacombe agreed with Councillor Richards that the scale, complexity and human tragedy of the matter clearly ranked it as one of the most demanding challenges that the collective leadership of Europe had faced in decades. As war had been the root cause, he offered the metaphor that these leaders were themselves walking across a minefield; a policy minefield. At their backs, people must therefore be patient, if they paused, checked, amended their route and sometimes stepped back. New members of the EU had been criticised for enforcing the rule of law; laws set out by founding members. Many different types of people had been caught in the net of the tragedy, organised crime had exploited the situation, and this had all been seen through the eyes and editorship of the media.

Councillor Brimacombe continued that he Prime Minister had found some safe and sensible ground; leading in providing financial support for food and shelter in camps within the region, taking care in selecting the genuine from the duplicitous and assisting the most vulnerable, children and women at risk of abuse. The council should support the Prime Minister in his difficult job. He wholeheartedly supported the motion as amended. Councillor Brimacombe urged councillors to let the concern be sincere, offer a balanced consideration and add voices in decency. Equally, it would be important not to add to the complexity, confusion or difficulty that the collective leaders faced. It would be a long and difficult path for those involved, the way ahead would not be clearly signposted and it would bring dangers. It would test patience, moderation and commitment. Sadly it would continue to do this, long after the eyes of the media guided attention elsewhere.

Councillor Coppinger stated that he and his officers had more than most to do; they would do all they could to support the decisions of the council.

It was proposed by Councillor Richards, seconded by Councillor Burbage, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That

This Council:

- i) Supports the Prime Minister's announcement on 7 September that the UK will accept up to 20,000 Syrian refugees from camps over the next 5 years.**

Councillor Rayner and Mrs Rayner left the room for the duration of the debate on the motion.

50. MEETING

The meeting, which started at 7.30pm, ended at 9.09pm.