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COUNCIL - 23.05.23

AT A MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL held in the Guildhall, Windsor - Guildhall on Tuesday 23 May 2023

PRESENT: The Mayor (Mrs Christine Bateson), The Deputy Mayor (Gary Muir) Councillors Clive Baskerville, Adam Bermange, George Blundell, Simon Bond, Mandy Brar, Catherine Del Campo, Alison Carpenter, Richard Coe, Carole Da Costa, Wisdom Da Costa, Suzanne Cross, Devon Davies, Karen Davies, Jack Douglas, Genevieve Gosling, Jodie Grove, Geoff Hill, Mark Howard, Maureen Hunt, Lynne Jones, Neil Knowles, Ewan Larcombe, Sayonara Luxton, Asghar Majeed, Siân Martin, Chris Moriarty, Helen Price, Gary Reeves, Joshua Reynolds, Julian Sharpe, George Shaw, Gurch Singh, Kashmir Singh, John Story, Helen Taylor, Amy Tisi, Julian Tisi, Simon Werner and Mark Wilson

In attendance: Richard Bateson, Caron North, Teresa Knowles and David Armitage

Officers: Stephen Evans, Kevin McDaniel, Andrew Durrant, Lin Ferguson, Elaine Browne, Nikki Craig, Andrew Vallance, Andrew Scott, David White, Sarah Lawrence, Dean Graham, Amarjit Mitharo

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Buckley and Walters.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were none declared.

3. Election of Mayor for 2023/24

The Mayor, Mrs Christine Bateson, welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting and reflected on her year as in office.

Mrs Bateson thanked all the officers who had supported her: Andrew Scott, Dean Graham, Emma Duncan, Amarjit Mitharo and Mark Blackshaw. In particular she highlighted Alison Singleton, Mayoral Secretary who had been brilliant. During her year as Mayor she had been very lucky to attend special and historic events. At the start of her year she had attended events to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee which was a wonderful start to an interesting and enjoyable 12 months. She reflected that, in September, she had felt privileged to journey to London to see the Queen lying in state and attend the service in Saint George's Chapel following the funeral procession. She had also been involved in the proclamation of His Majesty the King, attended Buckingham Palace to deliver a royal address to him and saw the Coronation Concert in the grounds of Windsor Castle. She reflected that alongside the high-profile events she had also enjoyed all the other engagements such as opening new stores, visiting day centre, attending community events and meeting lots of people at around 200 events. She reported that the borough was blessed with hundreds of volunteers, and she was astonished by the hours of work and effort made by Scout Leaders, Rotarians and Lions. The Windsor and Maidenhead Community and Interfaith Groups did such good work to keep harmony and peace as well as celebrating the diverse borough. She concluded that it was lovely to finish her 28 years as a Councillor as Mayor she had many happy memories and had made many friends. She was looking forward to active retirement and would be travelling abroad to visit family and friends.

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The Mayor invited nominations for the election of the Mayor of the Royal Borough for 2022/23.

In proposing Councillor Neil Knowles for the role of Mayor, Councillor Jones stated that he was born in Newcastle Under Lyme but moved to Windsor at an early age with his military family. They were then posted all over the world including Germany, Malaya and Singapore before returning to the UK and Windsor, where he attended Dedworth Green Secondary School as it was then. He joined the Army and The Life Guards straight from school and served in Windsor, Cyprus, Germany, Canada before returning to Windsor again, where he met Teresa.

Following a tour of Mounted Duty Neil applied for and passed the Army Pilots course becoming an Army Helicopter Pilot in the Army Air Corps serving everywhere there was conflict until completing his Regular service moving onto the reserve, in which he served with the Royal Air Force until the age of 55, when he retired as a Squadron Leader.

On leaving the Army, Neil became a Radio and TV presenter and producer working for the BBC then local commercial Radio before joining the British Forces Broadcasting Service, again working everywhere there was conflict until he moved into project, administration and financial management in the education sector.

She continued that Neil has been a Ward Councillor for Old Windsor since May 2019, working hard to make a difference to local residents and is particularly keen on preserving the green belt. He is very active in the community having run Windsor Air Cadets for some years, he is a school governor at St Peters Middle School, a trustee of Old Windsor alms houses and keeps his military links as a member of Flemish Farm based Light Cavalry, the Honourable Artillery Company, and is also a member of the Historic Army Aircraft flight.

She continued that Teresa and Neil have a son, Sam, who runs a successful events business in the Netherlands and a grandson Max. On a personal note she commented that she had thoroughly enjoyed working alongside Neil representing Old Windsor and said that life was never boring with him around. Whilst he would be proud to be Mayor she considered he had the experience, skills and authority to ensure the smooth running of Council meetings and carry out his duties with the passion and good humour he was known for.

In seconding the motion Councillor Hill explained that as Mayor, Councillor Knowles would be accompanied by his wife, Teresa Knowles as Mayoress. She had attended Kins Court School and St Peters School, Old Windsor and Windsor Girls School before starting work in the early years sector. Teresa had become a specialist OFSTED inspector, working mentoring and training Early Years practitioners. Teresa enjoyed crafting and was always making something.

It was moved by Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Hill and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that Councillor Neil Knowles be elected Mayor of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the ensuing Municipal year.

The Chief Executive declared Councillor Knowles duly elected Mayor.

Councillor Knowles made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by Councillors Jones and Hill.

THE MAYOR (COUNCILLOR KNOWLES) IN THE CHAIR

Mrs Bateson presented the Mayor with the Mace, the Borough seal and the keys to the Mayor's Parlour.

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In making his speech of acceptance, Councillor Knowles thanked Lieutenant Colonel Tom Armitage from the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment for allowing officers Goodman and Tye to represent when he had begun his working life. He also thanked John Cookson from The Light Cavalry Honourable Artillery Company based at Flemish Farm where he spent his spare time.

He thanked Mrs Christine Bateson and Richard Bateson for representing the borough the previous year, noting it was a year like no other and her length of service as an elected representative was inspiring. He asked everyone present to join him in applauding her achievement.

He commented that he did not think he had dreamed of being Mayor of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead when he was 15 years old but he had achieved many of his ambitions. He became an elected councillor when he had followed his wife's advice to take action. He stated that she was his 'rock' and anything he achieved was due to her support. In his forthcoming year he would try to continue his support for Blue Acre Horse Rescue in Old Windsor and the Household Cavalry Foundation. He also intended to support and highlight local small medium businesses. He commented that they were still suffering post covid and wanted to update the 70s slogan "Buy British" to "Buy Borough".

He concluded that he hoped his appointment was the start of a new era and a friendlier Council which was less adversarial and consequently more attractive to residents who may be apprehensive about becoming Councillors. He thanked everyone for his appointment and hoped he would be a good servant to them all.

The Mayor presented Mrs Christine Bateson and Richard Bateson with their Past Mayor's and Past Consort badges.

4. Election of Deputy Mayor for 2023/24

In nominating Councillor Bond for the office of Deputy Mayor, Councillor Werner stated that he had known him for over 35 years from when he was helping in a local elections campaign in 1987. Councillor Bond had taught him that being loud was not the way to be effective, he thought him diligence, perseverance and hard work. He stated that Councillor Bond had advised him to consider in decision making how less fortunate people would be affected and what could be done to empower them. He advised that residents in Belmont also used words such as diligence, perseverance and hard work to describe Councillor Bond. He reflected that Councillor Bond was the one Councillor, over the past four years, that every Councillor from every party would stop talking to listen to. He reported that Councillor Bond was very humble and there was a long list of charities that he had supported over the years including setting up Wild Maidenhead and Maidenhead Foodshare, MaidEnergy and the Crauford Arms. He noted that those attributes were perfect for the role of Deputy Mayor.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Price commented that his quiet but determined style would prepare him for the role. Councillor Bond would be supported by his consort, David Armitage. David had applied his food science studies in his career at Rank Hovis McDougal Research Centre. During retirement he has actively campaigned for clearer labelling on food products so that those without perfect vision can read the ingredients. David is helpful, supportive and sociable and also has an enquiring scientific curiosity which were ideal attributes as consort to the Deputy Mayor.

It was moved by Councillor Werner, seconded by Councillor Price, and:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: that Councillor Simon Bond be appointed Deputy Mayor of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the ensuing Municipal Year.

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The Chief Executive declared Councillor Simon Bond duly appointed Deputy Mayor. Councillor Bond made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by Councillors Price and Hill.

In his speech of acceptance, Councillor Bond said he it been a privilege to represent the residents of Belmont ward and wanted to thank them for electing himself and Sian martin as their Ward Councillors. He reflected that when he was approached about becoming Deputy Mayor he had been surprised as it was outside of his comfort zone. He added that everyone says it is a great opportunity to learn about life across the borough through the voluntary and community sector which was something he was looking forward to do. He reflected that it was never too late to learn something new and considered that with the new Council this was something everyone would be doing a lot of. He thanked council officers and councillors for the various lessons he had learnt on his Council journey so far. He was looking forward to working with the new Mayor over the coming year and thanked everyone for giving him the opportunity.

Councillor Bond then presented Mr Gary Muir and Caron North with their past Deputy Mayor's and past Deputy Mayoress's badges.

5. Election of Leader of the Council

The Mayor invited nominations for the election of Leader of the Council for 2023 – 2027.

On the proposition of Councillor Jones, seconded by Councillor Del Campo it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that Councillor Simon Werner be appointed as Leader of the Royal Borough for 2023 – 2027.

6. Political balance and appointment of Panels, Chairs and Vice-Chairs for 2023/24

Council considered the political balance in accordance with the duty in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to review and determine the representation of the different political groups on bodies appointed by the council following the May election. The Mayor advised the meeting that an updated report had been circulated to councillors with the details of nominations provided. The report highlighted proposed changes by the new administration and the executive arrangements for the municipal year.

On the proposition of Councillor Werner, Leader of the Council seconded by Councillor Jones it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY that

- i) **the political balance of the council as a result of the local elections held on 4 May 2023 as detailed in paragraph 2.1 be noted;**
- ii) **the membership of the committees, panels and forums be approved for the ensuing Municipal Year as detailed in the Appendix to the minutes;**
- iii) **the Chairs and Vice-Chairs be appointed for the ensuing Municipal Year as detailed in the Appendix to the minutes;**
- iv) **authority be delegated to the Service Lead – Electoral and Democratic Services to amend/make further appointments on the nomination of the relevant Group Leader; and**

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- v) **authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to amend the constitution as appropriate in light of any amendments to the structure of Panels, Committees and Forums as detailed in the Appendix to the minutes.**

The meeting, which started at 7.00 pm, ended at 7.38 pm.

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