

MINUTES  
OF A MEETING OF THE  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF WOKING**

held on 20 May 2024

Present:

Cllr M I Raja (Chair)  
Cllr L Morales (Vice-Chair)

Cllr H Akberali	Cllr R Leach
Cllr A Aslam	Cllr L Lyons
Cllr A-M Barker	Cllr C Martin
Cllr T Bonsundy-O'Bryan	Cllr J Morley
Cllr A Boote	Cllr S Mukherjee
Cllr G Cosnahan	Cllr F Mumtaz
Cllr W Forster	Cllr E Nicholson
Cllr P Graves	Cllr S Oades
Cllr S Greentree	Cllr P Pandher
Cllr S Howes	Cllr J Pearce
Cllr A Javaid	Cllr D Roberts
Cllr I Johnson	Cllr T Spenser
Cllr D Jordan	Cllr M Sullivan
Cllr M Kuipers	

Also Present: Claire Storey, Independent Co-Opted Member.

Absent: Councillor L Rice.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Rice.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Strategic Director - Corporate Resources, Kevin Foster declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed director. The companies were listed in an attached schedule. The interests were such that Mr Foster could advise on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Strategic Director - Communities, Louise Strongitharm, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which she was a Council-appointed director. The companies were listed in an attached schedule. The interests were such that Mrs Strongitharm could advise on those items.

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Head of Transformation, Digital and Customer, Adam Walther, declared a disclosable personal interest (non-

pecuniary) in any items concerning the companies of which he was a Council-appointed director. The companies were listed in an attached schedule. The interests were such that Mr Walther could advise on those items.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Claire Storey declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in minute items 11b – Amendments to Constitution – Members Allowances and 11c – Amendments to Constitution – Responsibility for Standards and Audit Committee – in respect of her role as a Co-Opted Independent Member and Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee. The interest was such that Mrs Storey would leave the Council Chamber during the determination of these items.

**3. URGENT BUSINESS.**

No items of Urgent Business were considered.

**4. MINUTES.**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 28 March 2024 be approved and signed as a true and correct record.

**5. THE MAYOR'S END OF YEAR STATEMENT.**

The Mayor warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting. The newly elected Councillors were congratulated on their success and the Mayor wished a happy retirement to those Councillors whose term of office had ended recently.

The Mayor spoke of the events held over the year to raise funds for his Mayoral Charity, the Woking Community Hospital. Residents were thanked for their generosity and the Mayor expressed his appreciation of the support and hard work of a number of community organisations which supported him during the year, including the Woking Rotary Club and Woking Park Bowling Club.

The Mayor had thoroughly enjoyed the past year and thanked all those who had supported him, including Councillors, Officers and the Deputy Mayor. Finally, the Mayor wished Councillor Morales all the best for her forthcoming year as the 50<sup>th</sup> Mayor of Woking.

John Bond

The Mayor reported the sad news that John Bond had passed away at the beginning of April. John had been elected Ward Councillor for Byfleet in 2014 and as Ward Councillor for Byfleet and West Byfleet in 2016. John had later retired from the Council in 2021. The Mayor advised that he had written to John's family to extend the condolences of the Council.

**5a. Announcement of the 2024 Eminent Citizen.**

Each year, the outgoing Mayor selected a resident who had provided an 'eminent service' to the community and appointed them Eminent Citizen. The Mayor announced that this

year's honour would be bestowed on Tony Durran. Tony had been unable to attend the meeting to receive his certificate, which would be sent to him following the meeting.

**5b. Presentation of the Young People's Civic Awards 2024.**

The Mayor presented awards to the winners of the 2024 Young People's Civic Awards Scheme. The Scheme aimed to reward young people who made an outstanding contribution to the life of the community in Woking and whose work or achievements might not normally be recognised.

James Dey – Outstanding Contribution to the Community.

The winner in the first category, Outstanding Contribution to the Community, was James Dey, a remarkable young man who gave his time to volunteer at Wheels for All inclusive cycling charity during its family sessions at Woking Sportsbox. At only 13 years old, James confidently interacted with all the participants and was always eager to assist, adjusting helmets and cycles, giving safety advice, and making everyone feel welcome.

Sophie Signorelli – Outstanding Achievement.

The winner in the second category – Outstanding Achievement – was Sophie Signorelli, an outstanding student at Woking College with a strong work ethic and a thirst to learn. Sophie was a young carer for her mother and, despite facing challenges at home, had shown incredible resilience to focus on her studies.

Ho Kiu Chan – Triumph Over Adversity

The winner of the Triumph Over Adversity category was Ho Kiu Chan, a student of Winston Churchill School. Ho had joined Winston Churchill School from Hong Kong and had worked extremely hard to improve his English. Ho had shown exceptional courage, determination and resilience to continue his studies whilst undergoing chemotherapy and numerous surgeries, and had recently been part of the winning Year 10 Winston Student Team who won the Inter Schools Math Challenge.

**6. ELECTION OF MAYOR 2024/25.**

Councillor Forster moved and Councillor Boote seconded that Councillor Morales be elected Mayor.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Louise Morales be elected Mayor of the Borough for the ensuing year.

The Mayor signed the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

**7. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS.**

The Mayor, Councillor Morales, had enjoyed a wonderful year as Deputy Mayor and thanked the Mayoral and Civic Events Support Officer, Pauline Jackson, for all her support over the past 12 months. For the coming year, the Mayor was looking forward to attending a wide range of events with her husband and Consort, Fernando Morales.

The Mayor's Chaplain

The Mayor reported that her Chaplain for the year would be Lucy Bush, curate for St Peter's Church in Old Woking.

A small Civic Service would be held at the Church later in the year on Sunday, 23 June 2024 at 3pm.

The Mayor's Charity

The Mayor's chosen Charity for the year was the Woking Lighthouse, an organisation which hosted a range of support services including the Jigsaw Hub which connected families with the support they needed, the Woking foodbank, the Jigsaw Storehouse which provided pre-loved clothes and equipment for children under eleven years old, a hygiene bank and a Ukrainian hub. The Mayor intended to arrange a visit to the centre for all Councillors later in the year.

**7a. Presentation of the Past Mayor's Badge.**

The Mayor thanked Councillor M Ilyas Raja for his service to the Borough over the past year as Mayor and presented him with a Past Mayor's Badge.

**7b. Presentation of Certificates to Past Members.**

The Mayor thanked Tahir Aziz, Josh Brown, Andy Caulfield, Kevin Davis, Steve Dorsett, Saj Hussain and Adam Kirby on behalf of the Council for their service as Borough Councillors. Collectively, the six Councillors had provided 43 years of public service through their work as ward Councillors.

Adam, Josh, Kevin and Saj had been able to attend the meeting to be presented with a certificate to mark their time as a Councillor. A certificate would be sent to Tahir and Steve following the meeting.

**8. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR 2024/25.**

Councillor Jordan moved and Councillor Barker seconded that Councillor Boote be appointed Deputy Mayor.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Amanda Boote be appointed Deputy Mayor of the Borough for the ensuing year.

The Deputy Mayor signed the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

**9. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT.**

The Leader, Councillor Barker, made a statement on her approach for the forthcoming year and advised that the Executive for 2024/25 would comprise Councillor Forster as Deputy Leader, and Councillors Johnson, Lyons, Nicholson and Roberts.

Councillor Boote, Leader of the Independent and Others Group, was given the opportunity to respond to Councillor Barker's statement.

**10. LOCAL ELECTIONS 2024 WBC24-026.**

The Council received a report on the names of those who had been returned as Borough Councillors at the Elections on 2 May 2024.

RESOLVED

That the report be received.

**11. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDARDS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE WBC24-025.**

The Council had before it a report on the recommendations from the Standards and Audit Committee, setting out the extracts from the minutes of the meeting held on 29 February 2024. In accordance with the Constitution, the recommendations were deemed to have been moved and seconded.

**11a. Amendments to Constitution - Exceptions to Standing Orders - Procurement STA24-001**

Claire Storey, Chair of the newly formed Audit and Governance Committee and the former Standards and Audit Committee, introduced the recommendations of the Committee in respect of the provisions around procurement set out in the Constitution. The recommendations were agreed nem con.

RESOLVED

- That (i) clause on Exceptions to Standing Orders (Appendix 1 to the report) be amended as set out within the report in the Council's Constitution under Section 6 of Part 5;
- (ii) the authority delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments to the Constitution be noted, including amendments to references within the document and section numbering; and
- (iii) the Monitoring Officer be instructed to make the agreed changes to the Constitution.

**11b. Amendments to Constitution - Members' Allowances STA24-002**

Following her earlier declaration of interest in this item, Claire Storey left the Council Chamber during its determination. Accordingly the Leader of the Council, Councillor Ann-Marie Barker, introduced the recommendations which proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution by removing two clauses in relation to Members' surgeries and the allowance for Co-Optees. The recommendations were agreed nem con.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the clauses on 'Members Surgeries' and 'Co-optees Allowance' (Appendix 1 to the report) be removed from the Council's Constitution under Section 4 of Part 5;
- (ii) the authority delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments to the Constitution be noted, including amendments to references within the document and section numbering; and
- (iii) the Monitoring Officer be instructed to make the agreed changes to the Constitution.

**11c. Amendments to Constitution - Responsibility for Standards and Audit Committee STA24-003**

Claire Storey remained outside of the Council Chamber during the determination of this item, following her earlier declaration of interest in the item. Accordingly the Leader of the Council, Councillor Ann-Marie Barker, introduced the recommendations which proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution to enable the appointment of a second Independent Co-Opted Member. The recommendations were agreed nem con.

RESOLVED

- That (i) the clause on Responsibility for Standards and Audit Committee (Appendix 1 to the report) under Section 1 of Part 3, and Article 10 – Standards and Audit Committee (Appendix 2 to the report) under Section 1 of Part 2, in the Council's Constitution be amended as set out within the report;
- (ii) the authority delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments to the Constitution be noted, including amendments to references within the document and section numbering;
- (iii) Monitoring Officer be instructed to make the agreed changes to the Constitution; and
- (iv) the Local Government Association be lobbied to provide an off the shelf version of a local authority Constitution that could be adapted by individual councils.

**11d. Amendments to Constitution - Asset Disposals Threshold STA24-004**

Claire Storey introduced the recommendations of the Committee in respect of the threshold for asset disposal set out in the Constitution. The recommendations were agreed nem con.

RESOLVED

- That (i) clauses on 'Sale of Land' and 'Land Management' in the Scheme of Delegations (Appendix 1 to the report) under Section 3 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution be amended as set out within the report;

- (ii) authority delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make minor amendments to the Constitution be noted, including amendments to references within the document and section numbering; and
- (iii) Monitoring Officer be instructed to make the agreed changes to the Constitution.

## **12. THE CONSTITUTION WBC24-033.**

The Leader of the Council introduced a report on the Constitution. Over the past year Woking Borough Council had adopted a series of changes to the Constitution as part of planned improvements to the governance of the Authority identified through Officers, Councillors and the Improvement and Recovery Plan. The Constitution had now been updated to reflect the new arrangements and the consequential changes.

Amongst the key areas to have been changed materially was the provision for Urgent Business, the arrangements for public participation at the Planning Committee and questions from members of public, and the adoption of a Corporate Media Protocol. In addition, a series of changes to strengthen the Council's governance arrangements going forward had arisen through the Improvement and Recovery Plan. These included a new framework for the Council's companies, the creation of an Employment Committee, the replacement of the single Overview and Scrutiny Committee with three, service specific Scrutiny Committees and the review of the Standards and Audit Committee, to be called the Audit and Governance Committee going forward.

The Council was now invited to adopt the revised Constitution, noting that the document would continue to be kept under review.

The Members thanked the Officers for their work on the Constitution.

RESOLVED

That the Constitution, as set out in Appendix 2 to this report, be adopted.

## **13. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2024/25 UPDATE.**

The Council had before it a report proposing changes to the calendar of meetings for the coming year. The changes affected the first meetings of the three Scrutiny Committees and had been put forward to enable Members of each of the Committees to meet in an informal setting to hold an initial discussion to develop the 2024/25 scrutiny work programmes.

RESOLVED

That (i) the following meetings of the three Scrutiny Committees be cancelled:

- the Resource and Finance Scrutiny Committee to be held on 11 June 2024;
- the Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee to be held on 25 June 2024; and

- the Communities and Housing Scrutiny Committee to be held on 2 July 2024; and
- (ii) the meetings be rescheduled as follows:
  - the Resource and Finance Scrutiny Committee be held at 7pm on 9 July 2024;
  - the Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee be held at 7pm on 18 July 2024; and
  - the Communities and Housing Scrutiny Committee be held at 7pm on 30 July 2024.

**14. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND OTHER BODIES FOR 2024/25 WBC24-028.**

The Council received a report which set out the proposed memberships of the Council's Committees and recommended the appointment of Members to a range of outside bodies. The proposals had been drawn up by the Council's Selection Panel in the previous week, and included a recommendation for the appointment of the Armed Forces Champion for the coming year.

**RESOLVED**

- That
- (i) membership of the Committees for 2024/25 be agreed as set out in Section 2.0 of the report;
  - (ii) membership of the Safer Working Partnership for 2024/25 be agreed as set out in Section 3.0 of the report;
  - (iii) the size of the Finance Working Group be reduced to six, as set out in Section 3.0 of the report, and the terms of reference as set out in the Constitution be amended to reflect the change;
  - (iv) the appointments to ad hoc bodies for 2024/25 be agreed as set out in Section 4.0 of the report.
  - (v) the nominations to appointments available through the Surrey Leaders' Group, as set out in Section 5.0 of the report, be endorsed;
  - (vi) Councillor Cosnahan be appointed the Armed Forces Champion for 2024/25 and Councillor Howes be appointed Deputy Armed Forces Champion for 2024/25, as set out in Section 6.0 of the report; and
  - (vii) the list of ex officio appointments, as set out in Section 7.0 of the report, be noted.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm  
and ended at 8.28 pm

Chairman: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_