

BOROUGH OF REIGATE AND BANSTEAD

COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held as a Remote - Virtual Meeting on 10 December 2020 at 7.30 pm.

Present: Councillors R. Absalom (Mayor), F. Kelly (Deputy Mayor), M. A. Brunt (Leader), T. Schofield (Deputy Leader), G. Adamson, T. Archer, R. H. Ashford, R. Biggs, M. S. Blacker, N. J. Bramhall, J. S. Bray, G. Buttironi, J. C. S. Essex, R. J. Feeney, K. Foreman, P. Harp, R. Harper, N. D. Harrison, A. C. J. Horwood, J. Hudson, E. Humphreys, S. A. Kulka, J. P. King, V. H. Lewanski, R. Michalowski, N. C. Moses, C. M. Neame, S. Parnall, J. Paul, J. E. Philpott, S. J. G. Rickman, R. Ritter, D. A. Ross, K. Sachdeva, S. Sinden, C. Stevens, R. S. Turner and S. T. Walsh.

43. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Extraordinary and Ordinary meetings of Council held on 24 September 2020 be approved as a correct record.

44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Knight and Whinney.

45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

46. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

47. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were no public questions.

48. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Five questions on Notice were asked, and responses given, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 2.15.

Question by	Answered by	Subject
Cllr Sinden	Executive Member for Planning Policy and Place Delivery, Cllr Biggs	Retrofitting of High-Rise Buildings
Cllr Essex	Executive Member for Corporate Policy, Councillor Lewanski (Written response)	Surrey County Council Energy Reduction Funding
Cllr Essex	Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt	Surrey Fire and Rescue Service
Cllr Ritter	Executive Member for Investments and Companies, Cllr Archer	Proposed Crematorium
Cllr Kulka	Executive Member for Investment and Companies, Cllr Archer	Reigate Priory Building and Museum

Note: For more information on responses to Council questions, please see this page on the Council's website: <https://reigate-banstead.moderngov.co.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13264>

49. RECOMMENDATIONS

Council received three recommendations from the meeting of the Executive held on 19 November 2020.

RESOLVED:

1. To adopt a new council tax policy to apply a 300% council premium for properties that have been empty for more than 10 years with effect from 1 April 2021. (Executive Minute 45)
2. That the Treasury Management Performance for the year to date, and the updated prudential indicators, be noted. (Executive Minute 46)
3. The Council Tax Base for 2021/22 be approved. (Executive Minute 47)

50. STATEMENTS

There were no statements.

51. DESIGNATION OF POLLING PLACES AND DEPUTY ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER

At the invitation of the Mayor, the Interim Head of Paid Service introduced the report. The Coronavirus pandemic presented specific challenges to the administration of elections, particularly to arrangements at polling stations and the suitability of polling places. Since October, the Electoral Services team had been conducting a COVID risk assessment of all 43 polling places within the Borough, in line with the Electoral Commission's guidance.

Consideration had been given to whether one-way systems and social distancing measures could be accommodated, in consultation with the Council's health and safety officers. Where a change was recommended, Officers had undertaken a full assessment of electoral, accessibility and public health matters in consultation with Borough and County Members.

The report also sought to respond to the advice of the Electoral Commission that Councils should appoint a deputy Electoral Registration Officer in case the Electoral Registration Officer was unable to act personally.

RESOLVED:

1. That the premises and recommendations set out in Appendix 1 (as revised) be designated the polling places for the polling districts stated.
2. That Joyce Hamilton, Head of Legal and Governance, be appointed as a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer.

52. POSTHUMOUS RECOGNITION OF FORMER COUNCILLORS

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt, proposed the recommendations and in so doing expressed his thanks to those Members who had suggested suitable forms of recognition. Councillor Adamson, in seconding the proposal, spoke in memoriam of former Councillors Spiers and Stead.

RESOLVED that subject to all and any statutory checks and notifications:

1. The walkway along Waterhouse Lane toward Kingswood Village Hall be so named 'Spiers Walk' in posthumous recognition of former Councillor Joan Spiers.
2. The outdoor gym and refurbished playground in Nork Park be named in posthumous recognition of former Councillor Brian Stead.

53. COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 5.15

RESOLVED to note the decision of the Leader of the Council, made on 12 November 2020, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 5.15.

54. RETIRING COUNCILLOR

Members noted that Councillor Hal Brown (Earlswood and Whitebushes Ward) had resigned from the Council on 29 November 2020.

55. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt, made four announcements:

- The Mayor-elect for 2021/22 would be Councillor Jill Bray, in recognition of her long-standing as a Member of the Council and previous term as Deputy Mayor.
- Councillor Blacker would be appointed to the vacant seat on the Audit Committee, and Councillor Sachdeva would be appointed to the vacant seat on the Licensing and Regulatory Committee.
- That the Council's appreciation of the contribution of former Councillor Brown, and former Councillor Fenton (who had resigned earlier in the year), to the Earlswood and Whitebushes Ward, and the Borough Council, be conveyed to them in a letter from the Mayor.
- That the Fairtrade Steering Group be congratulated as Reigate had been awarded Fairtrade Community Status by the Fairtrade Foundation.

In accordance with the delegation introduced by Council in November 2016, the changes in Committee memberships would be discharged by Officers.

56. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

With much sadness, the Mayor announced the deaths of two former Councillors. Former Councillor Norman Harris served the residents of Nork Ward for 26 years from 1990 to 2016 and former Councillor John Jones had served the residents of Redhill East Ward from 2000 until 2008. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor offered condolences to their families and friends.

Following a short period of reflection, the Mayor then:

- Expressed her thanks to the people who either brought together or participated in the Borough's observations of those dates dedicated to the remembrance of the Armed Forces.
- Explained that sadly, the annual Holocaust remembrance service would not take place in January 2021 due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and, instead, the Mayor's Office would share content from the Holocaust Memorial Trust on the Council's social media channels.
- Announced a charity fundraising raffle, in aid of the Community Fund for Reigate and Banstead.

The Mayor concluded the meeting by offering her very best wishes for a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year to everyone.

Clerk's note - Minute 44: Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Lynch and McKenna, subsequent to the meeting. Minute 52: The report at agenda item 10 had described former Councillor Spiers as a former Chair of the Kingswood Residents Association, in error.

The Meeting closed at 8.17 pm