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STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes

WEDNESDAY, 15 MAY 2024

PRESENT: Councillor L Swindlehurst (Chair)

Councillors C Atkins, C Beswick, C Boone, C Brady, B Cawley, A Church, J Cox, M Deaville, M Durose, B Emery, E Fallows, K Flunder, J Garvey, M Gledhill, M Haines, A Hart, I Herdman, T Holmes, K Hoptroff, B Hughes, P Hughes, A Hulme, C Jebb, M Johnson, J Jones, L Malyon, K Mills, N Moul, V O'Shea, A Parkes, D Pascall, I Plant, O Pointon, J Porter, D Price, D Proudlove, P Roberts, D Shaw, M Spooner, M Swindlehurst, G Taylor, R Ward, L Whitehouse, P Wilkinson, C Wood, M Worthington and N Yates

APOLOGIES: Councillors J Aberley, P Barks, G Bentley, C Edwards, J Kempster, J Salt, C Smith and E Wain

Prayers were offered by Reverend Nigel Irons.

1 **REMARKS BY RETIRING CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL.**

The retiring Chairman thanked families and friends, the Vice-Chairman, Cllr Ian Plant and Mrs Kath Plant for their support during the year and also thanked the Chairman's support team.

2 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL.**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor I. Plant be appointed as Chairman of the Council until the next Annual Meeting.

3 **VOTE OF THANKS TO RETIRING CHAIRMAN**

Councillors thanked the retiring Chairman and her Consort for their service during the year in council meetings, acting fairly and firmly, and by attending civic functions representing the Authority.

4 **APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL.**

Nominations were received for Councillor A. Parkes and Councillor J. Porter for the position of Vice-Chairman of the Council.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor A. Parkes be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Council until the next Annual Meeting.

5 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 28 February 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declaration was made:-

Agenda Item	Members Declaring Interest	Nature of Interest
General – any matters arising relating to Staffordshire Police/NHS	Cllr. Porter	Employed by Staffordshire Police/NHS
Item 20 - Checkley Neighbourhood Plan	Cllrs. Flunder, Hulme and Wilkinson	Other Interest - Members of Checkley Parish Council

7 **CHAIRMAN'S OR LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE, IF ANY.**

The Chairman of the Council thanked the retiring Chairman for her support and confirmed that he would be fundraising for Moorlands Home Link and Prostate Cancer during the year ahead with his wife Mrs Kath Plant who would be his Consort.

The Leader of the Council thanked everyone for their contribution to the work of the Council made which had included constructive and positive debates. The Leader also thanked directors, heads of service and Council staff for their support - many projects would be coming to fruition to improve the life of everyone in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

8 **TO RECEIVE THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS AND COMMITTEES/BOARDS FROM GROUP LEADERS (TO BE TABLED AT THE MEETING).**

RESOLVED:

That the allocation of seats on Overview and Scrutiny Panels/ Committees/Boards etc., as submitted by Group Leaders, be approved.

9 **ELECTION OF CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS AND CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES/BOARDS**

RESOLVED:

That the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Panels and Committees, as attached to these minutes be approved.

10 **TO CONFIRM THE APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS TO THE LOCAL PLAN STEERING GROUP AS FOLLOWS: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (GOVERNANCE AND REGULATORY SERVICES), HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES, PRINCIPAL PLANNING OFFICER.**

RESOLVED:

That the appointment of the following Officers to the Local Development Framework Working Party be confirmed:

- Executive Director (Governance and Regulatory Services)
- Head of Development Services
- Principal Planning Officer

11 **DEVELOPMENT OF ENHANCED PARTNERSHIPS WITH TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS**

The report proposed to members a revised approach to the appointment of Chairman of the Parish Assembly via the annual appointment to outside bodies. This formed part of the Council's priority action to develop enhanced partnerships with town and parish councils.

As an **AMENDMENT** it was proposed that the decision be subject to ratification by the Parish Assembly. On being put to the vote the **AMENDMENT** was **LOST**.

RESOLVED:

That from 2024/25, as part of the appointment to outside bodies process, the Council selects from amongst its elected members the Chairman of the Parish Assembly.

12 **TO MAKE APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES FOR 2024/2025.**

RESOLVED:

That appointment of representatives on outside bodies, as attached to these minutes, be approved.

13 **TO APPROVE THE CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2024/2025.**

RESOLVED:

That the Calendar of Meetings for 2024/25 be approved.

"MAKING" OF THE CHECKLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOLLOWING SUPPORT AT REFERENDUM

Full Council on 28th February 2024 resolved that the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan, as amended, met the appropriate requirements and should proceed to referendum.

The referendum was held on the 2nd May 2024, with a 88% of those voting, voting in favour of the 'Checkley Neighbourhood Plan (CNP) becoming part of the Development Plan for that Parish.

Consequently the Checkley Neighbourhood Plan now formed part of the wider Development Plan for Checkley Parish. Regulations stipulate that the Council must formally deem to 'make' (adopt) the Neighbourhood Plan within 8 weeks of the date of the referendum.

RESOLVED:

That the 'making' (adoption) of the Checkley Neighbourhood Development Plan as part of the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's development plan be confirmed.

TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER PROCEDURE RULE NO. 10, IF ANY.

1. Question to the Deputy Leader Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Planning received from Cllr Flunder

"In relation to the UK SPF, what is the number and value of grants that have been distributed across the three towns and rural communities?"

Response:

As expected, there has been a lot of interest from across the District in the UKSPF and REPF grants. I am pleased to report that in total, we have approved grants exceeding £500,000 to local businesses and organisations to support a wide range of activities, including local arts and cultural events, supporting businesses in the development of innovative products and services as well as promoting the visitor economy and investment into town centres and high streets. In total, 65 grants have been approved from the two funding streams; 50 from UKSPF and 15 from Rural England.

The distribution of grants has spread to all corners of the District so all of our communities can and will benefit from the investment. Almost half of the grants (43%) have supported activity in parishes and surrounding villages and the remainder (56%) supported activity in the three main towns of Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek. There is still funding available so please continue to promote the opportunities within your local communities.

In response to supplementary questions the Portfolio Holder confirmed there had been 18 successful grants in Leek, 10 in Biddulph and 9 in Cheadle and that he would seek clearance from the Board to circulate information to stakeholders.

2. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change and Environment received from Cllr Porter

"How successful has the transfer of the SMDC countryside sites been to Staffordshire Wildlife Trust over the last year?"

Response:

“The transfer of countryside sites to Staffordshire Wildlife Trust has been a successful move. The trust has been excellent in their engagement with Council officers and are helpful, knowledgeable, and quick to respond to requests. The trust has members of staff previously employed by SMDC, which gives them valuable insight into both sides of the agreement, they understand the position and role of the Council, whilst also having knowledge of SWT procedures and access to additional internal resources. Staff also have a wealth of experience on each of the countryside sites, and their many years of working on these has built both practical and theoretical knowledge.

SWT has valuable links with many organisations such as Natural England, The Countryside Alliance, The Open Spaces Society, Ramblers, and The British Horse Society to name just a few and they have consulted with many of these organisations to receive important feedback on current management practices. The trust also has long standing associations with volunteer and community groups and has used these to great effect on the countryside sites in SMDC. One example of this was highlighted in Wetley Moor, where 220 hours of volunteer time contributed to seven hectares of scrub control work. This was undertaken by SWT staff in conjunction with the Churnet Valley volunteer group, the Wilder Neighbourhoods Project, and SWT volunteer days. Some other notable achievements since the transfer of management was made include:

- 20m of drystone wall rebuilt in July 2023. This was a two day course as part of the Stoke on Trent Wilder Youth project.
- Large scale estate maintenance involved the repair of potholes and ruts in two kilometres of access tracks to properties. Repair works using recycled tarmac were carried out in January 2023 and January 2024.
- Heathland restoration work. Rush control/ hay cutting of specific land parcels and plots to maintain and increase floristic diversity.
- Grazing Consultation. A consultation questionnaire seeking public comments on grazing and clearance work, with the option to comment on any aspect of the management of Wetley Moor.

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust have also been proactive in providing information and seeking the views of Councillors. District Councillors from local wards have been consulted regarding management, with a comprehensive programme of work for each year being available to view. SWT are also preparing new management plans for some of the sites which will incorporate ideas and comments from consultation initiatives.

SWT report their progress at regular intervals across the year and would be happy to expand this engagement by presenting progress to a future scrutiny panel meeting where they could elaborate on their work and achievements to date.”

In response to supplementary questions the Portfolio Holder suggested that the Chair of the Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel may wish to consider an annual update to be considered at a future meeting. The Portfolio Holder also confirmed that he had recently visited a farm in Consall Vale to better understand issues relating to grazing and agriculture.

3. Question to the Portfolio Holder for Communities received from Cllr Porter

“How many times has the environmental crime crew cleared up illegal fly-tipping across the Moorlands in the last year?”

Response:

There were 370 Fly-tipping incidents that were cleared by Alliance Environmental Services in 2023-24 (April to March). These are formally recorded in fly-capture and national waste data flow. For information, in previous years the incidents were as follows:

2021/22 - 391

2022/23 - 353

In response to supplementary questions the Portfolio Holder provided additional information with regards to the number of fixed penalty notices issued compared against other local authorities. The District Council had issued 7 fixed penalty notices with 326 incidents. (placed 127th out of 267 councils). Technology would also be used to increase levels of surveillance.

The meeting closed at 7.17 pm

_____ Chairman _____ Date

ELECTION OF CHAIRS AND VICE-CHAIRS

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS/COMMITTEES		
Election of Chairs and Vice-Chairs:		
	Chair	Vice-Chair
1. Resources Overview & Scrutiny Panel	Cllr A Hart	Cllr A Church
2. Service Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Panel	Cllr L Malyon	Cllr M Haines
3. Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel	Cllr K Mills	Cllr L Swindlehurst
4. Finance & Performance Committee	Cllr G Taylor	Cllr M Worthington
5. Growth & Economy Committee	Cllr J Garvey	Cllr G Taylor
6. Health & Wellbeing Committee	Cllr J Jones	Cllr B Hughes

COMMITTEES / BOARDS, ETC.		
Election of Chairs and Vice-Chairs:		
	Chair	Vice-Chair
1. Planning Applications	Cllr P Wilkinson	Cllr K Hoptroff
2. Licensing and Regulatory	Cllr K Hoptroff	Cllr M Deaville
3. Standards	Cllr A Church	Cllr I Herdman
4. Audit and Accounts Committee	Cllr M Spooner	Cllr C Edwards
5. Appeals Board	Cllr C Smith	Cllr J Aberley
6. Constitution Review Working Party	Cllr A Church	Cllr D Pascall
7. Local Plan Steering Group	Cllr M Johnson	Cllr M Spooner

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ANNUAL APPOINTMENTS

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES APPOINTED	
Outside Bodies	2024/2025 Representative(s)
(1) Biddulph Moor Village Hall Committee 1 Representative	Councillor Jones
(2) Campaign to Protect Rural England 1 Representative	Councillor Cawley
(3) Captain's Barn Farm Liaison Committee	Councillor Roberts
(4) Community Safety Partnership (District) 1 Representative	Portfolio Holder for Communities
(5) Conservation Liaison Panel 7 Representatives	Inc. Portfolio Holder with responsibility for planning matters Chair of Planning Applications Committee 3 Representatives from Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek Town Wards: Biddulph: Councillor Jones Cheadle: Councillor Whitehouse Leek: Councillor Emery 2 Representatives from the Rural Wards, or their Substitute: Councillors Jebb and Malyon
(6) Croxden Quarry Liaison Committee 1 Representative	Councillor Wilkinson
(7) District Councils' Network	Leader of the Council
(8) Freehay and District Liaison Committee 1 Representative	Councillor Haines
(9) Historic Towns Forum 1 Representative	Councillor Proudlove
(10) Industrial Communities Alliance Midlands Region 1 Representative	Councillor Yates
(11) Leek Town Centre Youth Project @21 3 Representatives	Councillors Barks, Boone and L. Swindlehurst
(12) Local Government Association 1 Representative	Leader of the Council

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES APPOINTED	
Outside Bodies	2024/2025 Representative(s)
(13) Local Government Information Unit Assembly 1 Representative	Councillor Wood
(14) Moorlands Partnership Board 10 Representatives	2 Cabinet Members Councillors Price and Yates 7 Non-Cabinet Members Councillors Jebb, Malyon, O'Shea, Johnson, Emery, Fallows, Flunder
(15) National Association of British Market Authorities 1 Representative	Councillor M. Swindlehurst
(16) Parish Assembly 2 Representatives	Councillor L. Swindlehurst (Chairman) of the Assembly and Leader
(17) Peak Park Authority 1 Representative	Councillor Hart (Appointed until May 2027)
(18) Police, Fire and Crime Panel 1 Representative	Councillor Atkins (Substitute - Councillor Barks)
(19) Rudyard Lake Trust 1 Representative	Councillor Atkins
(20) Staffordshire County Council Corporate Parenting Panel 1 Representative	Councillor Boone
(21) Staffordshire County Council Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 Representative	Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Committee
(22) Staffordshire Joint Waste Board 1 Representative	Portfolio Holder for Climate Change & Environment
(23) Staffordshire Sustainability Board 1 Representative	Portfolio Holder for Climate Change & Environment
(24) Staffordshire North & Stoke-on-Trent Citizens Advice 1 Representative	Councillor Hoptroff
(25) Staffordshire Playing Fields Association 2 Representatives	Councillors Deaville and Yates
(26) Visit Peak District Executive 1 Representative	Councillor M. Swindlehurst

REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES APPOINTED	
Outside Bodies	2024/2025 Representative(s)
(27) Waterhouses Youth Project 1 Representative	Councillor Wain

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