

# **STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **COUNCIL MEETING**

### **Minutes**

**WEDNESDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2024**

PRESENT: Councillor I Plant (Chair)

Councillors J Aberley, C Atkins, P Barks, C Beswick, C Boone, C Brady, B Cawley, A Church, J Cox, M Deaville, M Durose, C Edwards, 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, J Kempster, L Malyon, K Mills, N Moul, A Parkes, D Pascall, O Pointon, J Porter, D Price, D Proudlove, P Roberts, C Smith, M Spooner, L Swindlehurst, M Swindlehurst, G Taylor, E Wain, R Ward, V Wheeldon, P Wilkinson, C Wood, M Worthington and N Yates

APOLOGIES: Councillors G Bentley, J Salt, D Shaw and L Whitehouse

#### 32 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 16 October 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 33 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations were made:-

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Members Declaring Interest</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Item 11.1 Notice of Motion	Cllrs Barks, Malyon, Hart, Hughes, Beswick, Fallows, Hulme, Flunder, Jebb and Kempster	Other interests (e.g. family members) relating to the farming community.
General - Matters relating to related to the Police/NHS	Cllr Porter	Other interests

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

The Chairman confirmed that he had cut the first sod for the redevelopment of Brough Park Leisure Centre, Leek, had attended many engagements for the Council and continued to raise funds for his charitable causes.

The Leader of the Council thanked councillors for their attendance at Leek Indoor Market following the recent refurbishment. Many compliments had been received and an official opening would take place in the new year.

35 **TO CONSIDER AND DEBATE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET, OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS AND COMMITTEES, IF ANY.**

36 **LICENSING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE - STREET TRADING POLICY**

RESOLVED:

That the amended Street Trading Policy 2024-2027 be approved.

36a **CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING PARTY - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES**

RESOLVED:

That the revised Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules be approved.

36b **CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING PARTY - PROPOSED PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY FOR COUNCILLORS**

RESOLVED:

That the the LGA Parental Leave Policy for Members (attached at Appendix A to the report) be adopted.

36c **STANDARDS COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT**

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

37 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MEETINGS IN THE INTERIM PERIOD PRIOR TO THE COUNCIL MEETING, IF ANY.**

37a **AUDIT AND ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE - TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

RESOLVED:

That the Treasury Management position at the quarter ended 30 September 2024 be noted.

38 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY REVIEW**

RESOLVED:

That further to the resolution of Council on 16 October 2024 the Sub-Committee of Council established to co-ordinate liaison with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England be comprised as follows:

Conservative - 3 nominations  
Independent - 2 nominations  
Labour - 3 nominations

39 **APPROVAL OF DISPENSATION**

RESOLVED:

1. That the urgent decision taken on 11 November 2024 by the Council's Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chairman of the Council and political group leaders, to approve a dispensation in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 to Councillor D. Shaw from attending meetings of the Council and its constituent bodies due to his ongoing treatment for a medical condition until after the next meeting of Full Council be noted.
2. That a further dispensation be approved until the next meeting of the Council when the situation would be reviewed.

40 **NOTICES OF MOTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE NO. 8, IF ANY.**

40a **CLLR L. MALYON**

"The Chancellor in her budget in one swoop has changed farming as we know it, farmers may be land rich but they are not rich in real terms. Farmers are the backbone of England and we definitely see it here in the Staffordshire Moorlands. In the long term what the Chancellor has done is wipe out farming for the future generations, yes the threshold is £1 million but at today's prices that is not a lot it will also affect the smaller farmer, farms are passed down generation to generation. The agricultural relief is of great concern to the farming community if that has gone then more and more farmers will hit the wall, we are already losing farmers.

If this goes ahead we will see a drastic change in our landscape that is looked after by our farmers 24/7 every day of the year.

We have got write to the government and protest on behalf of our farming community, they have to sit down and talk to the farmers and realise that what has been proposed is wrong and needs changing, without farmers in the future we will have no quality food it will all come from abroad and be substandard to what we have from the British Farmer."

40b **CLLR J. PORTER**

"Council notes that:

- The recent 2024 Autumn Budget change to Inheritance Tax relief announced by the Labour Government will introduce a Family Farm Tax and will have a detrimental impact on 1,126 Family Farms across the Staffordshire Moorlands and farmers' ability to pass on their farms to the next generation of farmers.

Council believes that:

- The Labour Government have committed a shameful betrayal and let down farmers by breaking their promise to not introduce a Family Farm Tax.
- The Family Farm Tax will damage the ability of farmers to pass on their farms to their children.
- Labour's Family Farm Tax will threaten food security by forcing the sale of family farms.
- The Labour Government's Family Farm Tax will make British food production harder.

- That the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Steve Reed and Keir Starmer promised not to introduce a tax like this.
- Numerous rural and farming organisations such as the National Farmers Union and Country Land and Business Association have warned that countless farms will be harmed, threatening food security and rural areas.
- The comments made by Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Steve Reed that already struggling farmers will have to 'do more with less'.
- At a time when many farmers in the Staffordshire Moorlands are struggling with soaring costs and energy prices, this sudden tax rise will damage the future of their farms.

Council resolves:

- To request that the Council writes to the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to outline the Council's dismay at this decision and calls on the Government to stop the Family Farm Tax.
- That the Council engages with local farmers and community representatives on what support Council can do to support them.
- That a list must be published of affected farms."

Councillor Porter agreed to withdraw the last point of his motion.

The Chairman of the Council permitted the above motions to be discussed together to help the proper conduct of the Council's business given that the motions referred to the same issue.

An **AMENDMENT** to Councillor Malyon's motion was proposed by Cllr Gledhill and seconded by Cllr Price as follows:

"The Chancellor in her budget in one swoop has changed farming as we know it, farmers may be land rich, but they are not all rich in real terms. Farming is the oldest industry in England and farming families are the backbone of it, especially here in the Staffordshire Moorlands.

The Chancellor has proposed changes which will affect the ability of family farms to be passed down from generation to generation. The new thresholds to inheritance tax, whether the exemption figure is £1m or even £3m, could result in increasing the financial concerns of farmers at a time when the number of farmers is already reducing.

We should also acknowledge that farmers serve their community by looking after the landscape 24/7 every day of the year; in the absence of active farming there could be a drastic change for the worse to our local environment.

This motion calls upon the Council to write to the government inviting it to give further consideration to the budget proposals affecting the farming community in view of the public interest in having a viable and sustainable farming industry to ensure the supply of quality food."

Councillors considered the ability of family farms to be passed down from generation to generation. The new thresholds to inheritance tax, whether the exemption figure is £1m or even £3m, could result in increasing the financial concerns of farmers at a time when the number of farmers is already reducing. The Council also

acknowledged that farmers serve their community by looking after the landscape 24/7 every day of the year; in the absence of active farming there could be a drastic change for the worse to our local environment.

Having been **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**, upon being put to the vote, the **AMENDMENT** was **CARRIED** unanimously in the terms set out above.

Having been **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**, upon being put to the vote, Cllr Porter's **MOTION** was declared **LOST**.

41 **TO CONSIDER ANY POLITICAL GROUP APPOINTMENTS OR CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP, IF ANY.**

RESOLVED:

That revised committee allocations presented to Council following changes to political group membership be approved.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date