

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Council held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 24 February 2015

Present:

Members:

Councillor H Noonan (Chair)

Councillor N Akhtar	Councillor R Lakha
Councillor M Ali	Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor A Andrews	Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor R Bailey	Councillor A Lucas
Councillor S Bains	Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor L Bigham	Councillor K Maton
Councillor J Blundell	Councillor C Miks
Councillor R Brown	Councillor K Mulhall
Councillor K Caan	Councillor J Mutton
Councillor D Chater	Councillor M Mutton
Councillor J Clifford	Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor G Duggins	Councillor E Ruane
Councillor C Fletcher	Councillor R Sandy
Councillor D Galliers	Councillor T Sawdon
Councillor D Gannon	Councillor B Singh
Councillor A Gingell	Councillor D Skinner
Councillor M Hammon	Councillor T Skipper
Councillor L Harvard	Councillor H Sweet
Councillor D Howells	Councillor K Taylor
Councillor J Innes	Councillor R Thay
Councillor L Kelly	Councillor S Thomas
Councillor D Kershaw	Councillor P Townshend
Councillor A Khan	Councillor D Welsh
Councillor T Khan	

Honorary Alderman Mr J Gazey

Apologies: Councillor F Abbott, M Auluck, J Birdi, G Crookes,
P Hetherton and S Walsh

Public Business

122. Chair of the Meeting

The Lord Mayor, Councillor Noonan and Councillor Maton left the meeting after consideration of the item contained in Minute 128 below. The meeting was then chaired by the Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor Hammon.

123. Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 January 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th January 2015 were signed as a true record.

124. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

RESOLVED that the City Council exclude the press and public under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 relating to the private report on 'Disposal of Property Assets pursuant to Friargate' (Minute 135 below), on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of information defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and that in all of the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

125. **Coventry Good Citizen Award**

On behalf of the Council, the Lord Mayor presented Pat Sullivan with the Coventry Good Citizen Award. Her citation read:

"Pat Sullivan's commitment to the community stretches back some 30 years. Her hard work and commitment as the Treasurer, Secretary, keyholder and General Administrator for the Village Hall in Eastern Green dates back to around 1984. She announced her intention to retire from the position – aptly described by one resident as 'chief cook and bottle washer' – it soon became apparent that it will take numerous people to replace her, as parts of her role will be undertaken by many different people! In this sense, she is literally an irreplaceable individual who has offered outstanding voluntary service to her community.

It is clear that Pat's dedication to the Village Hall and its many users has been instrumental in its continued success on a reasonably firm financial footing. The Centre is a 'not for profit' facility run for the benefit of the community. Pat has dedicated 3 decades to the running of the centre whilst also working full time. Her dedication to the community is unquestionable and Pat's retirement is considered a great loss. It is therefore entirely appropriate to mark the occasion by presenting her with the Good Citizen Award".

126. **Correspondence and Announcements of the Lord Mayor**

Further to Minute 112, the Lord Mayor reported on responses received from the President of the French Republic and Mayor of Paris following the receipt of a letter from the Lord Mayor and the Leader of the Council expressing the city's condolences following the attack on Charlie Hebdo magazine. The Lord Mayor also reported on a response from the High Commissioner of Pakistan and the Chief Minister for Peshawar following the receipt of a letter from the Lord Mayor expressing the City's condolences following the terrorist attack on a school in Peshawar just before Christmas.

127. **Re-order of the Agenda**

In accordance with the Constitution, the following motions without notice were moved by Councillor Townshend, seconded by Councillor Bailey and agreed:

- (a) To re-order the business on the agenda so that Item 6 on the agenda (Petitions) was taken after Item 8 (Coventry City Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) – The Preferred Approach).

- (b) That items 9 (2015/16 Council Tax Setting Report) and 10 (Budget Report 2015/16) on the agenda be considered together.

In addition and in accordance with legislation, it was moved by Councillor Townshend and seconded by Councillor Bailey and agreed, that a recorded vote be taken in respect of all decisions relating to items 9 and 10 (including any amendments)

128. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Hammon declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the matter referred to Minute 129 below (Coventry City Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) – The Preferred Approach). He withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this matter.

129. **Coventry City Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) - The Preferred Approach**

Further to Minute 107 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Executive Director of Place, which sought approval of the draft Coventry City Centre Action Plan. The report also sought authority to enter a period of public engagement on the Plan that provided the platform from which to regenerate the City Centre involving new retail provision, more new homes, employment space and leisure, social and community provisions and a strategic overview of accessibility issues including parking, pedestrian movement and associated infrastructure.

RESOLVED that the City Council approves the "City Centre Area Action Plan – The Preferred Approach (2014-2031)" document and authorises a period of seven weeks public engagement beginning on Friday 27th February 2015 and ending on Friday 17th April 2015.

130. **Petitions**

RESOLVED that the following petitions be referred to the appropriate City Council bodies:

- (1) **Lorries on Sir Henry Parkes Road – 8 signatures – presented by Councillor Taylor.**
- (2) **Request for changes to Taxi Licensing – 378 signatures - presented by Councillor A Khan**
- (3) **Request for traffic calming measures at the Webster Street junction – 307 signatures – Councillor A Khan**
- (4) **Support for Earlsdon Library - 3643 signatures – presented by Councillor Taylor**
- (5) **Request for pavement improvements on Leicester Causeway – 62 signatures – presented by Councillor A Khan**
- (6) **Request for road resurfacing on James Galloway Close – 46 signatures – presented by Councillor Lakha**
- (7) **Request for railings at Nnaksar Gurdwara Grusikh Temple, 224-226 Foleshill Road – 74 signatures – presented by Councillor A Khan**
- (8) **Save Willenhall Library – 405 signatures – presented by Councillor Lakha**

(9) Save Canley Library – 136 signatures – presented by Councillor Lakha

131. 2015/16 Council Tax Setting Report

Further to Minute 112 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Executive Director of Resources, which calculated the Council Tax level for 2015/16.

The report indicated that the Pre-Budget Report was approved on the basis of consulting on a Council Tax rise of 1%. It had subsequently been clarified by the Government that the Council would be required to hold a referendum if it increased council tax by 2% or above. On that basis, the budget was being proposed on the basis of increasing the Council Tax by 1.9%.

The Executive Director of Resources reported that the precepts from the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority were approved at their meeting on 16 February 2015 and, as a result, the figures indicated as provisional within the report were updated, as detailed below, to reflect minor variations.

The Cabinet noted that the recommendations followed the structure of resolutions drawn up by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, to ensure that the legal requirements were fully adhered to in setting the tax. As a consequence, the proposed resolutions were necessarily complex.

An amendment, as detailed in the Appendix to these minutes, was moved by Councillor Sawdon, seconded by Councillor Blundell and lost.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

(1) Note the following Council Tax base amounts for the year 2015/16, as approved by Cabinet on 6 January 2015, in accordance with Regulations made under Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) (“the Act”):

(a) 74,296.2 being the amount calculated by the Council as its Council Tax base for the year for the whole Council area;

(b) Allesley	309.2
Keresley	215.4

being the amounts calculated by the Council as its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(2) That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2015/16 in accordance with Sections 31A, 31B and 34 to 36 of the Act:

(a) £718,717,000 being the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils (*Gross Expenditure*

and reserves required to be raised for estimated future expenditure);

(b) £616,545,753 being the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act. (*Gross Income including reserves to be used to meet the Gross Expenditure but excluding Council Tax income*);

(c) £102,171,247 being the amount by which the aggregate at (2)(a) above exceeds the aggregate at (2)(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year;

$$(d) \text{ £1,375.19} \quad \frac{(2)(c)}{(1)(a)} = \frac{\text{£102,171,247}}{74,296.2}$$

being the amount at (2)(c) above divided by (1)(a) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year. (*Average Council Tax at Band D for the City including Parish Precepts*).

(e) £5,056.00 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in section 34(1) of the Act. (*Parish Precepts*);

$$(f) \text{ £1,375.12} \quad = (2)(d) - \frac{(2)(e)}{(1)(a)} = \text{£1,375.19} - \frac{\text{£5,056.00}}{74,296.2}$$

being the amount at (2)(d) above, less the result given by dividing the amount at (2)(e) above by the amounts at (1)(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of the area to which no special items relate. (*Council Tax at Band D for the City excluding Parish Precepts*);

(g)	Coventry Unparished Area	£1,375.12
	Allesley	£1,386.33
	Keresley	£1,382.50

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (2)(f) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at (1)(b) above, calculated by

the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate. (*Council Taxes at Band D for the City and Parish*).

(h)	Valuation Band	Parts to which no special item relates	Parish of Allesley	Parish of Keresley
		£	£	£
	A	916.75	924.22	921.67
	B	1069.54	1078.26	1075.28
	C	1222.33	1232.29	1228.89
	D	1375.12	1386.33	1382.50
	E	1680.70	1694.40	1689.72
	F	1986.28	2002.47	1996.94
	G	2291.87	2310.55	2304.17
	H	2750.24	2772.66	2765.00

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (2)(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken for the year in respect of the categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands.

- (3) To note that for the year 2015/16 the Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands and West Midlands Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Band	Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands	West Midlands Fire Authority
	£	£
A	71.03	36.62
B	82.87	42.73
C	94.71	48.83
D	106.55	54.94
E	103.23	67.14
F	153.91	79.35
G	177.58	91.56
H	213.10	109.87

- (4) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (2)(h) and (3) above, the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Act, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2015/16 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwelling shown below:

Valuation Band	Parts to which no special item relates	Parish of Allesley	Parish of Keresley
	£	£	£
A	1024.40	1031.87	1029.32
B	1195.14	1203.86	1200.88
C	1365.87	1375.83	1372.43
D	1536.61	1547.82	1543.99
E	1878.07	1891.77	1887.09
F	2219.54	2235.73	2230.20
G	2561.01	2579.69	2573.31
H	3037.21	3095.63	3087.97

- (5) That the Council determines that its relevant basic amount of Tax for 2015/16 is not excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Sections 52ZC and 52ZD of the Act.

132. Budget Report 2015/16

Further to Minute 131 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Strategic Management Board, which outlined the proposed final revenue budget for 2015/16, following a period of consultation on a range of budget options which were previously considered by the Cabinet on 2 December 2014.

The allocation of Government funding for 2015/16 was confirmed in the Local Government Settlement announced on 3 February 2015. This was broadly in line with previous expectations and incorporated a headline reduction in Revenue Support Grant of £24m (15%) from 2014/15 levels. In overall terms, the reduced Government funding was equivalent to a like-for-like reduction of £638 for every Coventry household between 2010/11 and 2015/16.

In line with its Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Council has continued to meet the challenge of significantly reduced resources through its programme of projects under the abc (A Better Coventry) banner. The report reflected a new phase of transformation incorporating the Kickstart, Customer Journey, City Centre First, a new Workforce Strategy and Doing Things Differently projects. The report incorporated savings within these programmes plus some expenditure proposals and pressures which together produced a balanced budget position for 2015/16.

This package of changes would allow the Council to continue to deliver its key policies, confirmed in the Council Plan approved on 14 January 2014. As part of this, the Plan acknowledged the reductions in resources that faced the City Council and the need for the Council to reduce costs, maximise income and the use of its assets and work in a flexible and adaptable manner. These themes

were reflected within the transformation plans, which would also encompass the need for the Council to revise its expectations and those of its citizens and taxpayers in relation to the range, level and location of services that will be delivered in the future.

Despite the financial pressures it faced, the Council was maintaining an ambitious approach to kickstarting the Friargate business district, implementing the Coventry Investment Fund proposals and the leading drive for economic growth and regeneration. The financial foundations for taking forward these initiatives had been reported within existing decisions and were noted subject to specific recommendations within the report.

The proposed rise in Council Tax levels was just below the limit set by the Government, beyond which a referendum would be required. The referendum limit had been set at 2% and the recommended Council Tax rise was proposed just below this at 1.9%. This option made a modest amount of resources (£1.9m) available to the Council in the short-term and guaranteed the long term security of this funding to help protect services provided to the people of Coventry.

The report also proposed a Capital Programme of £118m, compared with the current projected 2014/15 programme of £124m. The proposals included continued significant investment in highways and public realm works programmes and construction of the Council's new administrative office building in the Friargate Business District. The 2015/16 Programme required £42m of funding from Prudential Borrowing, £31m of which related to the Friargate building and the Coventry Investment Fund. A further £7m related to non-scheme specific borrowing resulting from spending decisions made in previous years. It was noted that there was a strong likelihood that non-specific borrowing requirements would be avoided in 2015/16 as a result of either in-year re-profiling of expenditure above the 5% re-scheduling level or as a result of other additional funding being received in-year ahead of the need to spend. In addition, the Executive Director of Resources would continue to recommend to members an intention to reduce the overall need to borrow, by applying uncommitted revenue resources or capital receipts as they arise, which would reduce capital financing costs over the longer term. It was also intended that close control should continue to be exercised on the approval of any new capital spending commitments in the coming years.

The Council was also required to approve its Treasury Management Strategy, its revised Investment Strategy and Prudential Indicators and these were incorporated within the report submitted.

An amendment, as detailed in the Appendix to these minutes, was moved by Councillor Sawdon, seconded by Councillor Blundell and lost.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- (1) Approve the spending and savings proposals in Appendix 2 of the report submitted.**

- (2) **Approve the total 2015/16 revenue budget of £238m as set out in Table and Appendix 4 of the report, established in line with a 1.9% City Council Tax increase and the Council Tax Requirement recommended in the Council Tax Setting Report.**
- (3) **Note the Executive Director for Resources' comment confirming the robustness of the budget and adequacy of reserves, as detailed in Sections 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 of the report.**
- (4) **Approve the Capital Programme of £118m for 2015/16 and the future years' commitments arising from this programme of £244m in 2016/17 to 2019/20, as detailed in Section 2.3 and Appendix 5 of the report.**
- (5) **Approve the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16, as detailed in Section 2.4 of the report, the revised Investment Strategy and Policy at Appendix 6 for immediate implementation and the prudential indicators and limits described in Section 2.4 and summarised in Appendix 7.**

Notes:

- (a) In accordance with Minute 127 above, a recorded vote was taken in respect of the amendment referred to in Minute 131 and 132 above

The Councillors voting for and against the amendment were as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Councillor Andrews	Councillor Ali	
Councillor Bailey	Councillor Akhtar	
Councillor Blundell	Councillor Bains	
Councillor Hammon	Councillor Mrs Bigham	
Councillor Lepoidevin	Councillor Brown	
Councillor Sawdon	Councillor Caan	
Councillor Skinner	Councillor Chater	
Councillor Taylor	Councillor Clifford	
	Councillor Duggins	
	Councillor Fletcher	
	Councillor Galliers	
	Councillor Gannon	
	Councillor Gingell	
	Councillor Harvard	
	Councillor Howells	
	Councillor Innes	
	Councillor Kelly	
	Councillor Kershaw	
	Councillor A Khan	
	Councillor Lakha	
	Councillor Lancaster	
	Councillor Mrs Lucas	
	Councillor McNicholas	
	Councillor Miks	
	Councillor Mulhall	
	Councillor J Mutton	

Councillor M Mutton
Councillor O'Boyle
Councillor Ruane
Councillor Sandy
Councillor B Singh
Councillor Skipper
Councillor Sweet
Councillor Thay
Councillor Thomas
Councillor Townshend
Councillor Welsh

Result: 8 for
37 against
0 abstentions

(b) In accordance with Minute 127 above, a recorded vote was taken in respect of the substantive motion referred to in Minute 131 and 132 above

The Councillors voting for and against the substantive motion were as follows:

For	Against	Abstain
Councillor Akhtar	Councillor Andrews	
Councillor Ali	Councillor Bailey	
Councillor Bains	Councillor Blundell	
Councillor Mrs Bigham	Councillor Hammon	
Councillor Brown	Councillor Lepoidevin	
Councillor Caan	Councillor Sawdon	
Councillor Chater	Councillor Skinner	
Councillor Clifford	Councillor Taylor	
Councillor Duggins		
Councillor Fletcher		
Councillor Galliers		
Councillor Gannon		
Councillor Gingell		
Councillor Harvard		
Councillor Howells		
Councillor Innes		
Councillor Kelly		
Councillor Kershaw		
Councillor A Khan		
Councillor T Khan		
Councillor Lakha		
Councillor Lancaster		
Councillor Mrs Lucas		
Councillor McNicholas		
Councillor Mrs Miks		
Councillor Mulhall		
Councillor J Mutton		
Councillor M Mutton		
Councillor O'Boyle		

Councillor Ruane
Councillor Sandy
Councillor B Singh
Councillor Skipper
Councillor Mrs Sweet
Councillor Thay
Councillor Thomas
Councillor Townshend
Councillor Welsh

Result: 8 for
37 against
0 abstentions

133. Disposal of Property Assets pursuant to Friargate

Further to Minute 114 of the Cabinet, the City Council considered a report of the Executive Director for Place, which set out proposals for the disposal of Civic Centres 1 to 4 as part of the Friargate project.

A corresponding private report detailing commercially confidential elements of the proposals was also submitted for consideration.

On 25 June 2013, the Council approved that the organisation support the development of the Friargate Business District to regenerate the City, transform the Council and deliver savings by the construction of a new Council owned office building at Friargate, the construction of a new bridge deck, the rationalisation of its operational property estate and the subsequent disposal of property assets vacated through such rationalisation. The report required that the capital receipts generated from the disposal of such assets be ring fenced to the Friargate Project as part of the affordability strategy for the investment. The report also required that a disposal strategy be developed that sought early marketing and negotiations designed to minimise the impact on the City Centre estate. It was noted that the Council had entered into contractual arrangements for the new building to be built.

Since this time officers had prioritised the disposal of the key City Centre sites, namely Civic Centres 1 to 4 and Spire/Christchurch House. Disposal of Spire/Christchurch House had already been approved and officers had been working closely with Coventry University in respect of Civic Centres 1 to 4.

The University had now presented their proposals for this key site to the Council which were consistent with the Council's vision for the regeneration of this site and the city centre. The University proposed that the site would become their key 'front door' site and would provide up to 35,000 sq m of development, incorporating research, HQ, commercial and international centre along with a small amount of post-graduate residential accommodation.

The development would require the demolition of all the Civic Centre 1 to 4 buildings and their phased replacement by the University. The University had also indicated that they wished to purchase the freehold of the commercial units and flats above that front Earl Street for possible incorporation into the redevelopment. These shops and the flats above were subject to a mixture of tenancies which

were largely subject to security of tenure protection. The University would be responsible for negotiating with the leaseholders to secure vacant possession at their expense and at an appropriate time should the properties be required to facilitate development.

Under the draft Heads of Terms the University proposed that they purchase the site and simultaneously enter into a lease back to the Council at a peppercorn rent until autumn 2017. This would provide sufficient time for the Council to complete the move to Friargate and vacate Civic Centres 1 to 4.

In addition, the University had given a commitment to maintain the members car parking currently accommodated in the Magistrates car park albeit this may need to be reconfigured to allow it to be accommodated as development progressed.

The report also set out the wider outline strategy for dealing with the disposal of further property assets which would become surplus to requirements as part of the move to Friargate.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- (1) Approve the freehold disposal of the site outlined red on Plan 1, comprising Civic Centres 1 to 4 to Coventry University in accordance with the terms set out in the report submitted.**
- (2) Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place, Executive Director for Resources and the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Service as appropriate, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, to agree any variations or new requirements that are deemed necessary to give effect to the proposals.**
- (3) Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Resources and the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services to complete the necessary legal documentation in this matter and collect the agreed consideration.**
- (4) Approve the outline disposal strategy set out in Section 2.12 of the report and delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, to amend the strategy as required to minimise the impact of vacation of the City Centre estate.**
- (5) Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, to agree terms for disposal under the strategy, provided that the terms are in accordance with the Friargate Business case.**

134. **Appointment of Deputy Cabinet Member**

The City Council received a report of the Leader which reported the appointment of Councillor Richard Brown as an additional Deputy Cabinet Member, to assist the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, with effect from 6 February 2015.

135. **Statements**

The Cabinet Member (Children and Young People), Councillor Ruane, made a Statement in respect of the "Children's Services Improvement Plan".

Councillor Lepoidevin responded to the statement.

136. **Disposal of Property Assets pursuant to Friargate**

Further to Minute 133 above, the City Council considered a private report, which set out the commercially confidential aspects of proposals for the disposal of Civic Centres 1 to 4 as part of the Friargate project.

RESOLVED that the City Council:

- (1) Approve the freehold disposal of the site outlined in red on plan 1 comprising Civic Centres 1 to 4 to Coventry University in accordance with the terms set out in the report submitted.**
- (2) Delegate Authority to the Executive Director for Place, Executive Director for Resources and the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services as appropriate, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, to agree any variations or new requirements that are deemed necessary to give effect to the proposals.**
- (3) Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Resources and the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic services to complete the necessary legal documentation in this matter and collect the agreed consideration.**
- (4) Approve the outline disposal strategy set out in Section 2.14 of the report submitted and delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, to amend the strategy as required to minimise the impact of vacation of the City Centre estate.**
- (5) Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, to agree terms for disposal under the strategy, provided that the terms are in accordance with the Friargate Business case.**

(Meeting closed at 6.15 pm)