

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Council held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 19 January 2021

Present:

Members:

Councillor J McNicholas (Chair)

Councillor F Abbott	Councillor R Lakha
Councillor N Akhtar	Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor P Akhtar	Councillor M Lapsa
Councillor M Ali	Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor R Ali	Councillor G Lloyd
Councillor A Andrews	Councillor P Male
Councillor R Auluck	Councillor K Maton
Councillor R Bailey	Councillor T Mayer
Councillor L Bigham	Councillor C Miks
Councillor J Birdi	Councillor M Mutton
Councillor J Blundell	Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor R Brown	Councillor G Ridley
Councillor K Caan	Councillor E Ruane
Councillor J Clifford	Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor G Duggins	Councillor T Sawdon
Councillor B Gittins	Councillor P Seaman
Councillor L Harvard	Councillor B Singh
Councillor G Hayre	Councillor R Singh
Councillor M Heaven	Councillor D Skinner
Councillor P Hetheron	Councillor R Thay
Councillor J Innes	Councillor C Thomas
Councillor T Jandu	Councillor S Walsh
Councillor B Kaur	Councillor D Welsh
Councillor AS Khan	Councillor G Williams

Apologies:

Councillor L Kelly, A Lucas and J Mutton

Public Business

70. Chair

In the absence of the Lord Mayor, Councillor A Lucas, in accordance with the Constitution, the Deputy Lord Mayor, Councillor J McNicholas Chaired the meeting.

71. Minutes of the Meeting held on 8 December 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2020 were agreed as a true record.

72. Correspondence and Announcements of the Lord Mayor

(a) Queen's New Year Honours

The Deputy Lord Mayor referred to awards made to the following citizens associated with Coventry in the recent New Year's Honours List:

Brendan Peter Connor OBE, Former Chairman of the Midlands Air Ambulance Charity for his voluntary and charitable services to the community in the West Midlands.

John Kiely MBE, for his philanthropic work in Coventry, helping disadvantaged youth.

Haroon Mahmood BEM, for services to the community in the West Midlands, particularly during Covid-19.

Lee Pardy – McLaughlin OBE, City Council Principal Social Worker in Children’s Services for his services to social work.

Councillor David Skinner, MBE, for his services to the Coventry community.

Members paid tribute to the recipients and noted that the Lord Mayor would be writing to them all to congratulate them on behalf of the City Council.

(b) Death of Former Lady Mayoress

The Deputy Lord Mayor referred to the recent death of Mrs Nancy Cairns, wife of former Councillor and Lord Mayor David Cairns. Nancy was Lady Mayoress in 1989-90, she served the city with great dignity and dedication.

Members paid tribute to Nancy and noted that the Lord Mayor and the Leader had already written to the family, forwarding the Council’s sincere condolences.

73. **Petitions**

RESOLVED that the following petition be referred to the relevant organisation:

(a) Save Coventry Building Society branch in Coundon from closing – 14 signatures, presented by Councillor T Jandu.

74. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

75. **Question Time**

Councillors AS Khan and D Welsh provided written answers to the questions set out in the Questions Booklet together with oral responses to supplementary questions put to them at the meeting.

The following Members answered oral questions put to them by other Members as set out below, together with supplementary questions on the same matters:

No	Questions asked by	Question put to	Subject matter
1	Councillor J Lepoidevin	Councillor P Hetheron	Christmas bin

			collections
2	Councillor T Mayer	Councillor G Duggins	Prioritisation of the COVID vaccine
3	Councillor G Williams	Councillor AS Khan	Recruitment of the Assistant Director of Fairness and Belonging by the Police and Crime Commissioner

76. **Statements**

1) Statement of the Leader

The Leader, Councillor G Duggins, made a Statement in respect of a number of issues relating to Covid-19.

Councillor G Ridley responded to the Statement.

2) Statement of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People in respect of the “Children’s Services Improvement Plan.”

Councillor J Lepoidevin responded to the Statement

77. **Debate - Universal Credit**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor J Innes and seconded by Councillor K Caan:

“This council notes:

- Next April the Government plan to cut the benefit level for millions of claimants by ending of the time limited increase to the basic rate of Universal Credit (and the tax credit equivalent) announced by the Chancellor on 20th March as part of his pandemic response package.
- The £20 a week boost reflected the reality that the level of benefits were not adequate to protect the swiftly increasing number of households relying on them as the crisis hit. Exactly because that increase was a very significant and welcome move to bolster low- and middle-income families living standards, its removal will be a huge loss.
- Pressing ahead would see the level of unemployment support fall to its lowest real-terms level since 1990-91, and it’s lowest ever relative to average earnings. Indeed, the basic level of out-of-work support prior to the March boost was – at £73 a week (£3,800 a year) – less than half the absolute poverty line.

- The increase in benefits have had a positive effect on the lives of thousands of local claimants who are better able to pay for life's essentials such as food, clothing and utilities.
- The local economy has also benefited from the increase in benefit levels as claimants spend their money locally thereby supporting local businesses and jobs.
- The cut by the Chancellor of the increase to the basic rate of Universal Credit will result in £28,344,000 being removed from Coventry local economy.

This council resolves to:

- Write to the Chancellor, Rushi Sunak and to the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson demanding that the £20 increase to Universal Credit is made permanent and extended to claimants on legacy benefits.
- Work with other local government organisations to form a coalition to pressure the government to make the £20 increase to Universal Credit permanent”.

RESOLVED that the Motion, as set out above, be adopted.

(Note: A vote on this was taken by name)

78. Debate: Brexit deal with the European Community

The following Motion was moved by Councillor J Blundell and seconded by Councillor M Heaven:

“This council congratulates the Prime Minister on the post Brexit deal with the European Community and ensures we enter the new year as a fully sovereign nation. 2021 will be an opportunity to show what the United Kingdom means to the rest of the world: striking trade deals with new markets and reasserting ourselves as a liberal and free trading nation acting as a force for good.”

The following amendment was moved by Councillor J O’Boyle and seconded by Councillor G Duggins and carried:

The Motion as set out on the Council agenda was amended by the deletion of the words after “new markets” and by the amendment to, and insertion of, the words underlined as per the following, the amended Motion now to read: -

“This council notes the post Brexit deal with the European Community which ensures we enter the new year as a fully sovereign nation. 2021 will be a challenge to show what the United Kingdom means to the rest of the world: striking trade deals with new markets and making friends and agreements with new and old nations alike. Britain can be a force for good if it demonstrates that both our country and particularly Coventry continues to remain an attractive location for investors globally. Government must also live up to its promise of protecting all European funding. In driving a green-led economic recovery from COVID-19, we must also ensure we deliver against commitments made in the Paris Agreement”.

RESOLVED that the amended Motion, as set out above, be adopted.

(Note: A vote on this was taken by name)

(Meeting closed at 5.25 pm)