

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Council held at 2.00 pm on Tuesday, 16 January 2024**

Present:

Members: Councillor J Birdi (Chair)

Councillor S Agboola	Councillor M Lapsa
Councillor N Akhtar	Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor P Akhtar	Councillor G Lloyd
Councillor M Ali	Councillor P Male
Councillor R Bailey	Councillor K Maton
Councillor L Bigham	Councillor J McNicholas
Councillor J Blundell	Councillor C Miks
Councillor K Caan	Councillor B Mosterman
Councillor G Duggins	Councillor M Mutton
Councillor J Gardiner	Councillor S Nazir
Councillor S Gray	Councillor J O'Boyle
Councillor L Harvard	Councillor E M Reeves
Councillor G Hayre	Councillor G Ridley
Councillor M Heaven	Councillor E Ruane
Councillor P Hetherton	Councillor K Sandhu
Councillor A Hopkins	Councillor T Sawdon
Councillor J Innes	Councillor P Seaman
Councillor T Jandu	Councillor R Simpson
Councillor A Jobbar	Councillor B Singh
Councillor L Kelly	Councillor R Singh
Councillor S Keough	Councillor CE Thomas
Councillor AS Khan	Councillor A Tucker
Councillor R Lakha	Councillor D Welsh
Councillor R Lancaster	

Honorary Aldermen: D Chater, J Clifford, H Fitzpatrick, D Skinner, T Skipper

Apologies: Councillor F Abbott, R Brown, A Kaur, T Khan, A Masih and R Thay

### **Public Business**

**87. Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 December 2023**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2023 were agreed and signed as a true record.

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

1. Happy New Year

This being the first meeting of the year, the Lord Mayor wished all a happy and healthy 2024.

## 2. Death of Gordon Garland

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent death of Gordon Garland, President and Poppy Appeal Organiser at the Royal British Legion. Gordon joined the British Legion in 1990 and was appointed President in 2018.

Gordon was a kind and caring and was always willing to help out and share information and knowledge and was instrumental in helping with the arrangements for Armed Forces Day and Remembrance Sunday each year.

Members paid tribute to Gordon and noted that a letter of condolence had been sent from the Lord Mayor's office to Gordon's wife Kaye and family.

## 3. Death of Andrea Parr

The Lord Mayor referred to the recent death of Andrea Parr, the Co-Founder of Coventry Comfort Carers in 2012.

Andrea was kind, caring and had an incredible way of bonding with those less fortunate. She worked tirelessly, often working late and running around the city at her own cost collecting items for the homeless. She helped turn so many people's lives around from living rough to supporting them into their own accommodation and teach life skills so that they could keep what they would call their forever home.

Members paid tribute to Angela and noted that a letter of condolence had been sent from the Lord Mayor's office to Andrea's family.

## 4. King's New Year's Honours

The Lord Mayor congratulated the following Coventry citizens who had received Honours in the recent New Year's Honours List:

**Professor Carol Ann Doyle**, Head of School for Nursing and Midwifery Education, Birmingham City University. OBE for services to Nurse Education.

**Sandra Godley**, OBE for charitable service to the community in Coventry, West Midlands. (Coventry, West Midlands)

**Cathryn Lee**. Chief Executive, Alzheimer's Society. OBE for services to Charity. (Coventry, West Midlands)

**Paula Rosemary Deas**. Deputy Chief Executive, Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership. MBE for services to the community in Coventry.

**Robert Arnott**, BEM for services to the community in Coventry.

## 5. Guru Gobind Singh Jee

As 17<sup>th</sup> January marked the birth of Guru Gobind Singh Jee. The Lord Mayor offered greetings to Sikhs in Coventry.

89. **Petitions**

**RESOLVED that the following petitions be referred to the appropriate bodies/outside organisations:**

- (a) Petition requesting the Council to locally list Hearsall Baptist Church – 909 signatures, presented by Councillor J Innes**
- (b) Petition requesting that parking at Coventry War Memorial Park remained free of charge for the first three hours – 2992 signatures, presented by Councillor J Blundell**
- (c) Petition to install a pedestrian crossing at the top end of Eastern Green Road and Alspath Lane – 64 signatures, presented by Councillor G Ridley**
- (d) Petition to install average speed cameras on St James Lane, between London Road and Robin Hood Road – 58 signatures, presented by Councillor C Thomas**
- (e) Petition opposing proposal to build a bungalow in the rear garden of 144 Meadfoot Road – 12 signatures, presented by Councillor C Thomas**

90. **Declarations of Interest**

The Monitoring Officer reported that a dispensation had been granted to all Members of the Council under Part 2M, paragraph 6.8.4. of the Constitution, in respect of the matters referred to in Minute 92 (Review of Members Allowance Scheme) and Minute 97 (Debate – Section 21 Notices).

There were no other declarations of interest.

91. **Proposed Amendments to the Constitution**

Further to Minute 8 of the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities meeting, the City Council considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer which sought approval to proposed amendments to the Constitution in relation to changes to the Council's policies and procedures that specifically relate to employment, namely Disciplinary, Enabling Attendance, Capability, Grievance and Collective Disputes.

It was proposed that Appeal Hearings specifically in relation to employment, be delegated to the Chief Executive (or Nominated Officer) so that Members would no longer directly hear Appeals for employees or the trade unions as part of these processes as set out in Part 3J and part 2M of the Constitution.

The Constitutional Advisory Panel at its meeting on 2 January 2024 considered and approved the following proposed changes to the Constitution:

- a) Amendments to the Appeals Committee Procedure Rules as set out in Part 3J of the Constitution
- b) Amendments to the Scheme of Functions Delegations to Employees as set out in Part 2M of the Constitution.

Other authorities for example, Solihull and Wolverhampton had already adopted this approach as at the last Peer Review, it was suggested informally as

something to be considered. Birmingham and Brighton had both also been recently advised to alter their practice so that Members no longer heard appeals. This, therefore, was a timely review in light of the City Council's Peer Review in January 2024.

The amendments to the Constitution would be to delegate the responsibility of employment Appeals to the Chief Executive (or Nominated officer), thus removing the need for Members to be part of the Appeals process for the following policies:

- Disciplinary
- Enabling attendance
- Capability
- Grievance
- Collective dispute

In addition, Part 3J of the Constitution would need to be amended to reference that employment Appeals were delegated to the Chief Executive (or nominated officer).

Employment appeals would be heard at Director or Chief Executive level, dependant on the case and the level of the hearing officer, and the Appeal would always be heard by a more senior officer.

Employee relations statistics would be reported to the Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources bi-annually and shared with trade union colleagues.

**RESOLVED that the City Council approves:**

**(1) The proposed amendments to the Appeals Committee Procedure Rules (Part 3J of the Constitution) as detailed in Appendix A to the report with immediate effect.**

**(2) The amendments to the Scheme of Functions Delegated to Employees (Part 2M of the Constitution) as detailed in Appendix B to the report with immediate effect.**

## 92. **Review of Members' Allowances Scheme**

The City Council considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer which presented the outcome of the Independent Remuneration Panel's review of Coventry's Members' Allowances Scheme and which had made recommendations. When approving changes to its Scheme, the Council must have regard to the Panel's recommendations although it was not bound by them.

All local authorities were required to have a Members' Allowances Scheme, agreed locally, which makes provision for a range of allowances and expenses available to elected Members. Since its introduction, Coventry's scheme has included provision for Member allowances to rise automatically in line with any pay increases that are made to local government employees on a specific spinal point on the National Joint Council (NJC) scale for Local Government Services. Where a local authority scheme provides for increasing allowances by an index, this could operate for maximum period of four years and a further review was required before any further index could be applied.

The following amendment was moved by Councillor T Sawdon, seconded by Councillor G Ridley and lost:

“That all of the Recommendations as set out in the report be approved and that the following additional Recommendation be inserted:

“Recommendation 8 – That SRAs to Deputy Cabinet Members, the Deputy Chair of Scrucro and the Deputy Chairs of Planning Committee, Licensing and Regulatory Committee plus Audit and Procurement Committee should cease to be paid.”

**RESOLVED that the City Council approves the following recommendations made by the Panel:**

- i) **Recommendation 1: That the Basic, Special Responsibility, co-optee and civic allowances continue to be increased each year by any percentage increase in pay agreed for local government employees, (pegged to spinal column point 43 of the NJC scheme); this indexing to be effective from 1 April 2024 and expire on 31 March 2028.**

**Recommendation 2: That the current Scheme be clarified to confirm that Special Responsibility Allowances for any opposition groups are only paid to the Leader and Deputy Leader of the largest Opposition Group on the Council.**

**Recommendation 3: That provision is made for maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave and continue to pay Members’ Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance (where applicable) for up to 6 months with the option to extend for up to one year as set out in this report.**

**Recommendation 4: That the existing co-optee allowance be extended to Independent Members/Persons.**

**Recommendation 5: That the telephone and line rental allowances element of the Scheme be closed to existing Councillors who have not claimed since April 2020 and all incoming Councillors, while allowing existing claimants to continue for the remainder of their time in office.**

**Recommendation 6: That the Members’ Scheme be aligned with HMRC guidance to pay a rate of 45p per mile for qualifying travel by car and an additional 5p per passenger per mile for carrying fellow Councillors and/or officers in a car or van on journeys which are also qualifying journeys for them.**

**Recommendation 7: That the Scheme be amended to include reimbursement for travel by private motorcycle at 24p per mile and bicycle at 20p per mile.**

- ii) **That authority be delegated to the Chief Legal Officer to amend the Scheme of Members' Allowances according to the decisions taken by Council for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.**

93. **Appointment to the West Midlands Investment Zone Joint Committee**

The City Council considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer which sought to appoint a Coventry City Council voting representative to the West Midland Investment Zone Joint Committee.

The Chancellor had announced the establishment of a West Midlands Investment Zone (WMIZ) in the recent Autumn Statement. The West Midlands Combined Authority was required by Government to act as the accountable body for the successful and compliant implementation of the WMIZ. The WMCA had initially established a Joint Committee as the governance body, which would be chaired by the Mayor of the West Midlands.

**RESOLVED that the City Council approves the appointment of Councillor J O'Boyle as the City Council's voting representative to the West Midlands Investment Zone Joint Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year.**

94. **Local Government Boundary Review - Response to Local Government Boundary Commission for England's Draft Recommendations**

The City Council considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer which set out a number of options in respect of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) electoral review.

The review looked at whether the boundaries of wards within the local authority needed to be altered to ensure fairer representation at local government elections.

The LGBCE carried out their initial consultation between 23 May and 31 July 2023. On 31 October 2023 they published their draft recommendations for Coventry for consultation. The closing date for responses was 22 January 2024.

Appendix 1 of the report contained an option for responding to the draft recommendations of the LGBCE on warding patterns for the City in response to their consultation.

**RESOLVED that the City Council approves Appendix 1 of the report as the Council's response to the draft recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Scheme for England.**

95. **Question Time**

Councillor Welsh provided a written answer to the question set out in the Questions Booklet, together with oral responses to supplementary questions asked 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:

<b>No</b>	<b>Questions asked by</b>	<b>Question put to</b>	<b>Subject matter</b>
1	Councillor Heaven	Councillor AS Khan	Twinning with a Ukrainian City
2	Councillor Ridley	Councillor Duggins	Post Office scandal
3	Councillor Gardiner	Councillor Walsh	Planning permissions and Councillor Call-in process
4	Councillor Gardiner	Councillor Hetherton	Improved communication and information sharing around flooding
5	Councillor Lapsa	Councillor Welsh	Progress House

96. **Statements**

There were no Statements.

97. **Debate - Section 21 Notices**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor D Welsh and seconded by Councillor J Innes:

“Coventry has a great many residents renting their homes from private landlords. Although the Government promised to reform the private rented sector, still nothing has been done to stop the issue of Section 21 notices.

The Government accepted the need to end no fault evictions, but still, they dither and delay in bringing forward the necessary legislation to make this happen.

This Council calls on the Government for immediate action to scrap Section 21, which will bring a much-needed measure of security to our residents renting in the private rented sector”.

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

98. **Debate - West Midlands Combined Authority Funding for Coventry**

The following Motion was moved by Councillor R Simpson and seconded by Councillor M Heaven:

“This Council notes the significant capital funding awarded to Coventry by the West Midlands Combined Authority.”

The following amendment was moved by Councillor A Tucker and seconded by Councillor M Mutton and carried:

“That the Motion as set out as Agenda Item 12.1 on the agenda be amended as follows:

At the end of the debate, delete the full stop and add:  
“thanks to the efforts of Coventry’s Labour administration”

The amended Motion now to read:

“This Council notes the significant capital funding awarded to Coventry by the West Midlands Combined Authority thanks to the efforts of Coventry’s Labour administration”

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

(Meeting closed at 4.45 pm)