

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 2 APRIL 2008

Attendance:

The Mayor (Councillor Gill) (P) (in the Chair);

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Kimber) (P);

Councillors Allen (P), Ms Ballard (P), Burgess (P), Carr (P), Carter (P), Mrs Champion, Champion (P), Chegwyn (P), Clinton (P), Mrs Cully (P), Cully (P), Davis (P), Dickson (P), Edgar (P), Farr (P), Foster (P), Foster-Reed, Hicks (P), Hook (P), Jacobs (P), Langdon (P), Mrs Mudie (P), Philpott (P), Rigg, Mrs Salter (P), Mrs Searle (P), Smith (P), Taylor (P), Train (P), Ward, Mrs Wright (P) and Wright (P).

Also in attendance: Honorary Freeman Ashby and Mrs Simpson and Honorary Aldermen Mrs Bailey, Foster, Hayward and O'Neill.

ONE MINUTE'S SILENCE

In order to express their sympathy regarding the recent death of Mr Stephen Howell, former Member of the Borough Council, Members of the Council stood in silent tribute for one minute.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Foster-Reed, Rigg and Ward and Honorary Alderman Rushton.

MINUTES

COUNCIL RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Ordinary and Extraordinary meetings of the Council held on 6, 13 and 25 February 2008 be confirmed and signed.

MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

(A) DONATION TO MAYOR'S CHARITY

The Mayor received a cheque from the Gosporters towards Harbour Cancer Relief, the Mayor's Charity.

(B) BREAST CANCER MOONWALK

The Mayor announced that Mrs Brenda Brooker, the Council's Press and Public Relations Officer, would be taking part in the Breast Cancer Moonwalk on Saturday, 5 April 2008.

(C) ITEM OF URGENT BUSINESS

The Mayor advised the Council that a request had been received for an urgent report of the Environmental Services Manager to be considered tonight. The report was entitled: 'Consideration of an Objection to the increase in Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Fees'.

STANDING ORDER 4.5.1 (j)

COUNCIL RESOLVED: That Standing Order 4.5.1 (j) be moved to enable the above urgent item of business to be considered next on the agenda.

CONSIDERATION OF AN OBJECTION TO THE INCREASE IN HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE FEES

By reason of special circumstances, the Mayor determined that this item be considered at this meeting notwithstanding the fact that it had not been available for public inspection in accordance with the provisions of Section 100B(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1985.

The special circumstances were created by the requirement for the Council to confirm or amend the proposed increase in Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licences, which could not be implemented until such time as the matter had been considered by Council and an implementation date agreed.

Councillors Dickson and Edgar declared personal and prejudicial interests in this item, left the Council Chamber and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

STANDING ORDER 4.15.1

The Mayor advised that Standing Order 4.15.1 needed to be moved to enable the Environmental Services Manager to introduce his report related to consideration of an objection to the increase in Hackney Carriage and Private Hire fees.

COUNCIL RESOLVED: That Standing Order 4.15.1 be moved to enable the Environmental Services Manager to introduce his report related to the consideration of an objection to the increase in Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Fees.

Consideration was given to a report of the Environmental Services Manager which requested Council to consider the objections raised by Mr M Poulter to the proposed increase in Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Fees and to uphold the revised fees or amend them as necessary.

A further letter had been received from Mr Poulter which questioned the reasonableness of the proposed increase in fees in comparison with those of other local authorities and suggested that the possibility of a judicial review may be looked into.

The view was expressed that all taxi drivers in Gosport had been consulted and, with the exception of Mr Poulter, had accepted the proposed fees as fair.

Assurances were sought that the income from the fees would equate with costs incurred by the Council. Officers advised that the increase in income was to cover the Council's increased costs and was comparable to that of other local authorities although exact costings were not available at the time. The figures contained in Mr Poulter's further letter referred to Hackney Carriage vehicle fees only.

Council was advised that whatever decision was made could be subject to judicial review, the success of which would depend on the Council's justification of the fees, if challenged.

It was moved by the Leader of the Council that the fees, as contained in the 2008/09 Budget Book, be re-affirmed as from 3 April 2008.

The Motion was accordingly put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

COUNCIL RESOLVED: That the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire fee structure, as set out in the 2008/09 Budget Book, be re-affirmed as from 3 April 2008.

PART II MINUTES

COUNCIL RESOLVED: That the following Part II Minutes be received:

Policy and Organisation Board: 12 March 2008 (Minute Nos. 72 – 80)

Community and Environment Board: 3 March 2008 (Minute Nos. 49 – 52)

Housing Board: 5 March 2008 (Minute Nos. 47 – 48)

THANKS TO THE MAYOR

The Group Leaders thanked the Mayor for the way he had chaired Council meetings throughout his period of office.

Members' best wishes were extended to those Councillors who were stepping down after the current Municipal Year.

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm