

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Civic Sub-Committee**
held on Tuesday, 8th September, 2015 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillors D Bebbington, G Baxendale, A Martin, G Merry and A Moran

Officers

Brian Reed, Head of Governance and Democratic Services

Martin Smith, Manager Executive Office

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Andrew Martin be appointed Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

Councillor Martin in the Chair

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Gordon Baxendale be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Carter, R Fletcher and M Simon.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

5 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

6 COUNCIL FLAG FLYING POLICY

The Sub Committee considered a report which sought clarification over a number of issues in relation to the Council's Flag Flying Policy.

The Council's current Flag Flying Policy was set in 2010 and after five years operations it was suggested that it would be appropriate to review

the Policy in the light of operational and practical issues that had arisen, and to reflect current practices.

The current Policy outlined those occasions when the Cheshire East Flag should be flown at half-mast, including following the death of a serving Member, Honorary Alderman or Honorary Freeman. The policy was that the flag remained at half-mast from the day the death occurred until sunset on the day of the funeral. On one occasion strict adherence to this policy had resulted in the flag being flown at half-mast for over three weeks. On two other occasions it was flown at half-mast for over two weeks. On average the flag has been flown at half-mast for ten days following the death of a serving Member, Honorary Alderman and Honorary Freeman. It was agreed that it would be desirable for the Policy to be more flexible in the circumstances where a funeral of a Member, Honorary Alderman or Freeman was delayed.

The current Policy outlined those days when the Union Flag should be flown; this included the Queen's Birthday and her Official Birthday. Over the last three or so years the Union Flag had also been flown on the birthdays of a number of other members of the Royal Family. The Sub Committee agreed that it was appropriate to regularise those occasions when the Union Flag was flown on the on the birthdays of senior members of the Royal Family.

The current Policy also provided for the Union Flag to be flown at half-mast in the event of a soldier from the Mercian Regiment (1st Battalion) being killed whilst on active service. Since the Policy was written, the Regiment had been restructured. It was agreed that it was appropriate that the Union Flag should be flown at half-mast on the death on active service of any Mercian soldier rather than just those from the 1st Battalion.

The Sub Committee agreed that the Constitution Committee should be asked to review the Council's Flag Flying Policy, taking into account the reasons outlined for changes being made to the Policy.

RESOLVED:

That the Constitution Committee be asked to review the Council's Flag Flying Policy to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

7 APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMEN AND FREEMEN

The Sub Committee considered a report on the options open to the Council in relation to the convening of a Special Meeting to appoint Honorary Alderman and Freeman.

Section 249 of the Local Government 1972 allowed Local Authorities to appoint both Honorary Freeman and Honorary Aldermen. The criterion for appointment as Freeman was that an individual should be a "person of distinction" and have "rendered eminent service to the place or area". The

criterion for appointment as Honorary Alderman was that an individual “should have rendered eminent service to the Council as [a] past Member of the Council. There was no bar on an individual being both a Honorary Freeman and a Honorary Alderman.

Cheshire East Council’s Policy in relation to the appointment of Honorary Aldermen was that a former Member should have served for a minimum of ten years (including service on one of the four demised authorities) and/or have served as Leader or Mayor of Cheshire East.

Seven Members who either stood down in May or who were unsuccessful in seeking re-election had been appointed by one of the four demised authorities as a Honorary Aldermen before the creation of Cheshire East and these individuals automatically became Honorary Aldermen of Cheshire East on 11 May 2015 when their term as an elected Councillor ended. No formal action needed to be taken to recognise the position of these seven former Members.

There were twelve other former Members whose service on Cheshire East and/or one of the demised authorities would qualify them for appointment as Honorary Aldermen.

The Leader of the Council had indicated at a meeting of the Council earlier in the year that he wished to see a number of Members who were standing down from the Council appointed as Freeman of the Borough. These Members had satisfied the test of having rendered eminent service to Cheshire East.

It was noted that a number of Members would be appointed to the position of Honorary Alderman and Honorary Freeman.

The Local Government Act specified that both Honorary Freeman and Honorary Aldermen must be appointed at a Special Meeting of Council, with the appointment being endorsed by a two thirds majority of those Members in attendance at the meeting.

The Sub Committee asked that the Policy for the Appointment of Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Freeman be reviewed, taking into account examples of best practice from other local authorities.

RESOLVED:

- 1 That a report be taken to the Constitution Committee recommending that a Special Meeting of the Council be held on Thursday 17 December 2015; immediately before the planned meeting of the Council being held on that day.
- 2 That the following former Members be proposed for appointment as Honorary Aldermen:

- David Brickhill
- Roy Cartlidge
- Ken Edwards
- Wesley Fitzgerald
- Shirley Jones
- Frank Keegan
- Peggy Martin
- Brendan Murphy
- David Neilson
- Andrew Thwaite
- David Topping
- Roger West

3 That the following former Members be proposed for appointment as Honorary Aldermen:

- Carolyn Andrew
- David Brickhill
- Roland Domleo
- Shirley Jones
- Chris Thorley
- David Topping
- Steve Wilkinson

4 That the Policy for the Appointment of Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Freemen be reviewed.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and concluded at 10.20 am

Councillor A Martin