

Council

Tuesday, 21 June 2022

7.30 pm

Present:

The Worshipful the Mayor, Cllr Peter Scollard
The Deputy Mayor, Cllr John Caller

Councillors:

Derek Ashenden	Jordan Meade
Helen Ashenden	Lyn Milner
Conrad Broadley	Shane Mochrie-Cox
Gurdip Ram Bungar	Emma Morley
John Burden	Diane Morton
Harold Craske	Elizabeth Mulheran
Lee Croxton	Leslie Pearton
Dakota Dibben	Tony Rana
Aaron Elliott	Tony Rice
Emma Elliott	Alan Ridgers
Brian Francis	Christina Rolles
Sarah Gow	Lenny Rolles
Gary Harding	Brian Sangha
Baljit Hayre	Gurbax Singh
Leslie Hills	Lauren Sullivan
Leslie Hoskins	Narinderjit Singh Thandi
Samir Jassal	Denise Tiran
Nirmal Khabra	Jenny Wallace
Bob Lane	Frank Wardle

Stuart Bobby	Chief Executive
Nick Brown	Director (Environment) & Deputy Chief Executive
Sarah Parfitt	Director (Corporate Services)
Daniel Killian	Director (Housing)
Simon Hookway	Assistant Director (Communities)
Vickey Nutley	Interim Head of Legal Services
Simon Walsh	Service Manager (Communities)
Ben Clarke	Committee Services Officer

21. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ejaz Aslam, Gurjit Bains, Tony Pritchard and Steve Thompson.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor passed on condolences to Cllr Aslam, whose father recently passed away.

22. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 May 2022 were signed by the Mayor.

23. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

24. To answer any questions received from members of the public of which notice has been given under Council Procedure Rule 13

The following question had been submitted by John Milner (Gravesham and Dartford Extinction Rebellion) and a response was given by Cllr John Burden, Leader of the Council.

Question

According to a survey carried out by Kent Wildlife Trust and Bug life, there has been a 70% decline in flying insects over the past 17 years in Kent – what actions are the Council taking to address this decline?

Specifically, is the Council participating in the ‘No Mow May’ campaign, and what is the Council policy on the use of herbicides and pesticides in the borough?

Thank you

Gravesham and Dartford Extinction Rebellion

Response

The decline in insects and wildlife is a deep concern for the Council and we are putting in place key strategies that will improve the natural habitat for insects and animals, for the benefit of all species, both within the areas under the direct control of the Council but also across the wider areas of the Borough given our place-shaping role.

Gravesham Borough Council has started a program of proactively planting more trees, and a wider selection of plants that not only encourage wildlife but also improve the look of an area.

An example of this is that during the last planting season over 3,200 trees and native whips were planted by the Council to create mini woodland environments and natural hedging.

This is an increase from an average of just over one hundred trees a year only a few years ago and I expect that this is a number that will continue to grow as GBC actively looks for carbon offsetting, alongside carbon reductions, as part of its strategy to prepare the Borough to be carbon neutral by 2030.

You may also have noticed that for the first time in over a decade the flower beds at the Gordon Promenade and Gardens have been changed to provide year-round colour and texture, again increasing the biodiversity of the area. This is part of a bigger strategy for that important part of the Town that develops the dell, the rampart of New Tavern Fort, the lake and the surrounding tree species.

There are also many other areas that are being improved as part of the strategy, these include: improving the biodiversity of flower beds in communal housing areas, the introduction of more urban trees, dressing shop front areas with plants, developing wildflower chalk grasslands, introducing urban orchards, increased verge planting of wildflowers and bulbs, and replacing fencing with native hedging to soften the landscape where this is feasible.

Gravesham Borough Council didn't participate in 'No Mow May'. We unfortunately we don't have the infrastructure or machinery that will allow for the significant additional horticultural maintenance following such a period, but we will keep such an approach under review. As I have already outlined, there are many other initiatives that are being introduced in order to increase biodiversity in our parks and open spaces.

In relation to the use of herbicides and pesticides; where possible the use of dangerous and toxic poisons has been removed from use by the Council. There are very few occasions where this is an absolute necessity, with the eradication of knotweed and Japanese lily for example. Even then, we will always consider the use of alternative methods to treat these invasive species, such as the use of machinery and physical labour, and will use natural, plant based, products which quickly degrade if that is a viable option.

25. Minutes of Committees

Motions that proceedings, reports and recommendations of Committees, except those reserved under Council Procedure 5.2(6) as referred to below be received and adopted and where applicable the Orders made by them be ratified and confirmed were duly proposed, seconded and resolved in each case.

- Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 18 May 2022
- Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 30 May 2022
- Minutes of the meeting of the Overview Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 9 June 2022
- Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Wednesday, 15 June 2022

26. Reserved Minutes

It was moved by Cllr John Burden and seconded by Cllr Lee Croxton that:-

- the reserved Minute of Cabinet (Financial Pressures and Risk) held on Monday, 30 May 2022 be ratified and confirmed.
- the reserved Minute of Cabinet (Environmental Enforcement Services Update) held on Monday, 30 May 2022 be ratified and confirmed.

Members paid tribute to the hard work of officers within Enforcement Services and applauded their successful prosecutions in the Borough.

Members also thanked the Street Cleansing Review sub-group for their hard work and looked forward to the outcome of the review.

27. Members' Allowances Scheme

The Council received a report which requested that Members consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) relating to the Members' Allowances Scheme.

Members paid tribute to officers and the Panel Members for bringing the report forward.

It was moved by Cllr John Burden and seconded by Cllr Lee Croxton that the recommendation from the Independent Remuneration Panel be agreed:

The Independent Remuneration Panel recommended that there be no change to the Members' Allowances Scheme until after the Local Elections in May 2023, at which time a further review of the scheme would be undertaken by the IRP. The existing arrangement for the annual indexation of basic and special responsibility allowances, in line with the nationally negotiated pay awards given to Gravesham Borough Council Staff, would be continued.

Following a debate, the motion was put to the meeting and declared to be carried unanimously.

28. Notice of Motion

It was moved by Cllr Shane Mochrie-Cox and seconded by Cllr Jordan Meade:

That this Council supports and agrees to the declaration shown below which in many ways supports the declaration made by Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors, as requested to be passed by us by The Pocahontas Project and delegates authority to the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure to sign and send this below declaration on behalf of the Council to our friends in our Twin Town of Chesterfield in the United States of America, to The Pocahontas Project and His Excellency, the Honourable Joseph R. Biden Jr, the President of the United States of America:

Declaration by the Gravesham Borough Council of the County of Kent, England and of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

We the Gravesham Borough Council note and pay tribute to Pocahontas who is buried here in our Borough at St George's Church having also died here on the 21st March 1617.

We record and pay tribute to her well documented history from helping the English settlers at Jamestown in many ways throughout her lifetime, to adopting the Christian faith becoming Rebecca Rolfe, helping to bring Peace between the English settlers and Powhatan tribes, and therefore Pocahontas is recognised as a woman of great significance and influence in early American History, and British history.

The Council further acknowledges the importance of nurturing, strengthening and developing our common historical connection and recognises again, due to this shared history, the town twinning relationship established between Gravesham Borough Council and Chesterfield County, Virginia, in July 2005, promoting international friendship through education and tourism opportunities and the common purpose that also brought together for the first time in

2006 all Powhatan tribes here in Gravesend to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement of the United States of America.

Gravesham Borough Council and Chesterfield County have continued this relationship through numerous visits since establishing the connection, and

Therefore it is agreed that Gravesham Borough Council, this 21st day of June 2022, publicly acknowledges the many contributions of Pocahontas and of those that seek to remember her and endorses efforts by our friends in the United States of America to pursue a Presidential Proclamation by His Excellency, the Honourable Joseph R. Biden Jr. The President of the United States of America declaring each 21st day of March, the anniversary of her passing here in Gravesend as a national Day of Honour in recognising the legacy of Pocahontas as an example of peace, goodwill and cross-cultural understanding.

Following a debate, the motion was put to the meeting and declared to be carried unanimously.

29. To consider questions from Members of the Council of which notice has been given under Council Procedure Rule 14.

No questions had been received.

30. To receive the Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor thanked the following parties for their hard work and dedication:

- The Mayors Chaplain for her work during Armed Forces Day and giving the Mayors Prayer at tonight's meeting
- The officers that worked hard to successfully deliver the Queens Jubilee Party on the Civic Square which catered to and entertained over 500 school children

The Mayor informed Members that that Mayors Charities had been set up and asked that Members support the Majors events/charities in their respective wards and promote them on their social media channels. The charities chosen for 2022/23 were:

- Eleanor
- Home Start
- Age UK

The Mayor invited Members to the Mayors Parlour for nibbles and drinks after the meeting.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 20:45pm.