

**COUNCILLOR GLADYS SANDIFORD, MAYOR**

**MINUTES OF: THE COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF ROSSENDALE**

**Date of Meeting: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

**PRESENT:** The Mayor Councillor Sandiford (in the Chair)  
Councillors Aldred, A. Barnes, Cheetham, Crawforth, Driver, Eaton (part), Essex, Evans, Farrington, Gill (part), Gledhill, Jackson, Kenyon, Lamb, McInnes, MacNae, Marriott, May, Milling, Morris, Neal, Nuttall, Oakes, Pilling, Roberts, Robertson, Shipley, D. Smith, M. Smith and Stansfield.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Helen Lockwood, Chief Executive  
Stuart Sugarman, Director of Business  
Fiona Meechan, Director of Customers and Communities  
Liz Sandiford, Head of People and Policy  
Adrian Smith, Principal Planner (Forward Planning)  
Carolyn Sharples, Committee and Member Services Manager  
George Taylor, Mayor's Attendant  
Bernard Gwyn, Mayor's Attendant

**ALSO PRESENT:** Lancashire County Councillor Steen  
1 representative of the press  
9 members of the public

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**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were submitted for Councillors L.Barnes, Graham, and Serridge.

**2. MINUTES**

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> November be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

**3. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

There were no urgent items of business.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Minute item 12 – Councillor Aldred declared a personal interest that he was a life long member of Unison.

Minute item 12 – Councillor McInnes declared a personal interest that she was a Unite Workplace and Equality Rep.

Minute item 12 – Councillor Nuttall declared a personal interest that he was a member of Unison and had participated in the strike action.

Minute item 12 – Councillor Essex declared a personal interest that he was a life member of the National Association of Head Teachers.

Minute item 12 – Councillor Driver declared a personal interest that she was a member of Unison.

Minute item 12 – Councillor Robertson declared a personal interest that she was a life long member of Unison.

Minute item 12 – Councillor Evans declared a personal interest that he had long term membership of the Electrical Power Engineers Association.

## **5. OUTSTANDING ITEMS OF BUSINESS FROM THE LAST MEETING**

There were no outstanding items to report.

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The following issues were raised by members of the public and were answered by the Leader or designated person:

No	Issue	Questioner	Answered by (and action)
1.	How will the Council determine the amount of money to be put aside in next year's financial plan specifically for the necessary repairs to Haslingden pool? Will there be a capital sum in the budget?	Mr. J.Lund	Councillor A.Barnes
2.	Community spirit shown with the underwater cleaning of Haslingden Pool by volunteers and did the Council agree it was the Big Society in action?	Mr M.McGrath	Councillor A.Barnes
3.	Deadline for the production of a maintenance plan for Haslingden pool? Why isn't there one?	Mrs L.Lund	Councillor A.Barnes

## **7. COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR, THE LEADER OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

The Mayor had no communications to report.

The Leader of the Council had no communications to report.

The Chief Executive had no communications to report.

## **8. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS**

The following issues were raised by Councillors and answered by the Leader or designated person:

No	Issue	Questioner	Answered by (and action)
1.	Breakdown of all Valley Centre purchasing costs and the cost of officer time involved. A copy of the costs. Retracting the press comment regarding "sour grapes".	Councillor Essex	Councillor A.Barnes agreed that a copy of the breakdown of costs would be sent to all councillors.
2.	Cost of using the Valley Centre as a car park and /or open space? How will the Council pay back the money borrowed?	Councillor Driver	Councillor MacNae and Councillor A.Barnes
3.	Had Councillor Barnes seen a report providing an open market value of no more than £1M for the Valley Centre? Why has Ashcap sold for less than £2.4 million?	Councillor Gledhill	Councillor A.Barnes
4.	Valley Centre demolition and business rates cost for 2011/12 and 2012/12 together with the interest charges on the loan. Estimate figures for demolition?	Councillor Milling	Councillor A.Barnes
5.	A market for the Valley Centre buildings in their current form? Hotelier interest in the old town hall?	Councillor Cheetham	Councillor A.Barnes
6.	Leader's position regarding the policy to build gypsy encampments in Rossendale. Clarity on whether it could be 8 different sites in total?	Councillor Darryl Smith	Councillor A.Barnes
7.	Update on the vocational centre at Stubbylee and why there had been delays. Confirmation of completion by 2012 or 2013?	Councillor Eaton	Councillor MacNae
8.	Would Alden Place developers' payment of £37,000 be spent on upgrading the playground at Snig Hole, Helmshore? When was the money received and thanks to Helmshore residents for also raising money.	Councillor Evans	Councillor A.Barnes agreed to provide Councillor Evans with the additional information requested.
9.	Cost of responding to Freedom of Information requests each year?	Councillor Oakes	Councillor Marriott

10.	How will the public access local police services following the closure of the stations?	Councillor McInnes	Councillor A.Barnes
11.	What has been spent so far on tourism/promotional activity, and what is planned with the remainder of the budget? Figures on what is planned for the rest of the budget?	Councillor Nuttall	Councillor MacNae
12.	Will small councils such as Rossendale remain viable as stand alone bodies in the medium term? Merging with a neighbouring borough rather than being swallowed up by a larger council.	Councillor Pilling	Councillor A.Barnes

## ORDINARY BUSINESS

### 9. RAWTENSTALL TOWN CENTRE (SPD)

The Council considered the Rawtenstall Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) report.

In considering the report members discussed the following:

- Landmarks and public transport.
- No mention of public toilets.
- Thanks to officers for an interesting, easy to read document.
- Urge all members to get involved in the consultation.
- Members to make suggestions on Rawtenstall Market.
- Preserving the Rawtenstall conurbation and the conservation area.

#### Resolved:

1. That Council approves a process of consultation on a Supplementary Planning Document for Rawtenstall Town Centre.
2. That all future minor amendments to the draft Rawtenstall SPD to be delegated to the Planning Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration.

### 10. NOTICE OF MOTION

The Council considered the Notice of Motion which had been submitted by Councillors Essex and Cheetham.

Councillor Essex formally moved the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Cheetham as follows: *“This Council requests that the Mayor send a Loyal Address on behalf of the residents of the Borough of Rossendale to Her Majesty The Queen upon the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee in 2012. Furthermore, this Council asks the*

*Leader of the Council to bring a list of suggestions to the next Full Council Meeting which will enable the Diamond Jubilee to be celebrated in Rossendale.”*

In moving the recommendation Councillor Essex noted the following:

- The monarchy was a national institution.
- Celebrating the 60 year diamond jubilee.
- 75<sup>th</sup> year of the abdication.
- Imposed burdens.
- Putting herself before everyone else.
- 387 engagements undertaken both foreign and at home.
- She is respected around the world.
- Pride and celebration.

Councillor A.Barnes moved an amendment to the notice of motion and Councillor Jackson seconded the amendment as follows: *“This Council requests that the Mayor send a Loyal Address on behalf of the residents of the Borough of Rossendale to Her Majesty The Queen upon the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee in 2012. Furthermore, that this Council invite Her Majesty to our Mayor Making buffet in May 2012, and that this Council participates in Lancashire wide events organised by Lancashire County Council and the Lord Lieutenants office.”*

A question was raised in relation to 14.5 in the Constitution and whether the amendment could be put before any discussion. The Director of Business informed that amendments were in the “Motions Without Notice” section and could be put at any time as per sections 13.4 and 15. Councillor Essex requested that the wording of section 14.5 be referred to the Governance Working Group for discussion.

In moving the recommendation Councillor A.Barnes noted the following:

- Olympic torch activity.
- Activities being undertaken by Lancashire County Council and Lord Lieutenant’s Office.

**N.B.** Councillor Gill left the meeting.

In considering the amendment members discussed the following:

- Locality panels and small grants to community groups.
- Street parties similar to the Royal Wedding.
- Hamlets already have fixtures for celebrations.
- Tree planting activities.
- Encouraging localism.
- Her Majesty’s calendar booked up for next year.
- Small organisations had already had grant funding cut.
- Original motion did not mention grants.
- Applying to Forums for grants as previous.

Councillor Essex asked for the amended motion to be amended further, Councillor A.Barnes agreed move an additional amendment which was seconded by Councillor Essex as follows: *“This Council requests that the Mayor send a Loyal Address on behalf of the residents of the Borough of Rossendale to Her Majesty The Queen upon the*

*occasion of her Diamond Jubilee in 2012. Furthermore, that this Council invite Her Majesty to visit Rossendale, and that this Council participates in Lancashire wide events organised by Lancashire County council and the Lord Lieutenants office."*

Members voted on the amendment becoming the substantive motion, which was carried.

**Resolved:**

That Council requests the Mayor to send a Loyal Address on behalf of the residents of the Borough of Rossendale to Her Majesty The Queen upon the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee in 2012. Furthermore, that this Council invite Her Majesty to visit Rossendale, and that this Council participates in Lancashire wide events organised by Lancashire County council and the Lord Lieutenants office.

**11. NOTICE OF MOTION**

The Council considered the Notice of Motion which had been submitted by Councillors Gledhill and Essex.

Councillor Gledhill formally moved the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Essex as follows: *"This Council accepts the Coalition Government's proposal to freeze Council Tax for the year 2012/2013 thus meaning that the Borough of Rossendale will have not increased its council tax for three consecutive years."*

Councillor A.Barnes moved an amendment to the notice of motion and Councillor Marriott seconded the amendment as follows: *"This Council makes a decision on accepting the Coalitions Government's proposal to freeze Council Tax for the year 2012/2013 at the Council's budget setting meeting in February, once the full implications of this decision are fully understood by members of this Council."*

In considering the amendment members discussed the following:

- This question was asked at the last Council meeting.
- Is it yes, or no?
- Delay rests on the vote of the Council.
- Helping the hard pressed people of Rossendale by having a Council Tax freeze in 2012/2013.
- Leader of Lancashire County Council stated that he accepts the scheme.
- Property band savings pro rata.
- Time needed to investigate what the offer means.
- Estimate 3% rise.
- Events in Europe.
- Unemployment figures highest in 17 years.
- Some Rossendale companies have not had a wage rise for over 5 years.
- Inflation is at an all time high.
- People need to pay bills.
- Do not have to vote on this tonight.
- Appropriate place to vote is at the Budget setting Council meeting.

- Understand family pressures are getting worse.
- If the offer is accepted it could disadvantage Rossendale.
- The government will only support for one year.
- Voting now will not bring any assurances any quicker.
- Need to make careful decisions.
- Medium Term Financial Strategy identifies 3% rises over the next 3 years at least and £1,000,000 cuts from the Council's budget.
- There will be no win for residents with the policy put forward as they will pay through general taxation rather than Council Tax.
- Need to fully understand implications not just for 2012/2013 but for the following 2 years.
- Not taking 0% increase?
- Decide at budget setting.
- If the Council doesn't take the offer it will have to increase Council Tax.
- Amendment is not to do with the offer but about the timing.
- Not correct to make the decision now before considering the facts and implications.
- The short term offer will result in money being withdrawn and will put council tax up beyond an acceptable level or create greater revenue budget cuts.
- People on small incomes e.g. state pension need to be able to plan ahead and manage their budgets.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillors Essex, Morris and Driver.

Members voted on the amendment becoming the substantive motion as follows:

Cllr Aldred	For
Cllr A Barnes	For
Cllr Cheetham	Against
Cllr Crawforth	For
Cllr Driver	Against
Cllr Eaton	Against
Cllr Essex	Against
Cllr Evans	Against
Cllr Farrington	For
Cllr Gledhill	Against
Cllr Jackson	For
Cllr Kenyon	For
Cllr Lamb	For
Cllr McInnes	For
Cllr MacNae	For
Cllr Marriott	For
Cllr May	Against
Cllr Milling	Against
Cllr Morris	Against

Cllr Neal	Against
Cllr Nuttall	For
Cllr Oakes	For
Cllr Pilling	Against
Cllr Roberts	For
Cllr Robertson	For
Cllr Sandiford	Against
Cllr Shipley	Against
Cllr D Smith	Against
Cllr M Smith	For
Cllr Stansfield	Against
<b>For</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Against</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Abstentions</b>	<b>0</b>

The Mayor had exercised her second vote and voted against the amended motion.

The amendment was lost and members returned to the original motion.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillors Essex, Morris and Driver.

In discussing the original motion members discussed the following:

- Voting on this is within the process of the budget setting.
- It is democracy.
- Democracy is tempered by rules and regulations.
- Legal advice given that due budgetary process was not being followed.

Members voted on the original motion, the results of which were as follows:

Cllr Aldred	Against
Cllr A Barnes	Against
Cllr Cheetham	For
Cllr Crawforth	Against
Cllr Driver	For
Cllr Eaton	For
Cllr Essex	For
Cllr Evans	For
Cllr Farrington	Against
Cllr Gledhill	For
Cllr Jackson	Against
Cllr Kenyon	Against
Cllr Lamb	Against



Cllr McInnes	Against
Cllr MacNae	Against
Cllr Marriott	Against
Cllr May	For
Cllr Milling	For
Cllr Morris	For
Cllr Neal	For
Cllr Nuttall	Against
Cllr Oakes	Against
Cllr Pilling	For
Cllr Roberts	Against
Cllr Robertson	Against
Cllr Sandiford	For
Cllr Shipley	For
Cllr D Smith	For
Cllr M Smith	Against
Cllr Stansfield	For
<b>For</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Against</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Abstentions</b>	<b>0</b>

The Mayor had exercised her second vote and voted for the motion.

**Resolved:**

That the Council accepts the Coalition Government’s proposal to freeze Council Tax for the year 2012/2013 thus meaning that the Borough of Rossendale will have not increased its council tax for three consecutive years.

**12. NOTICE OF MOTION**

The Council considered the Notice of Motion which had been submitted by Councillors D.Smith and Gledhill.

Councillor D.Smith formally moved the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Gledhill as follows: *“This Council wishes to record its thanks to the hard work and dedication of all public workers in Rossendale. However, it condemns the action of trade union bosses for instructing their members to strike on 30<sup>th</sup> November and threaten further industrial action. This action will weaken the local economy and threaten local jobs. We publically call upon the trade unions to engage with the Coalition Government in further negotiations on the issue of the growing cost of public service pensions.”*

**N.B.** At this point Councillor Evans declared a personal interest that he was on the Lancashire County Council Pensions Committee for public service pensions.

In considering the notice of motion members discussed the following:

- Agree with the first sentence.
- Trade Union bosses did not instruct people to strike.
- Lack of understanding how Trade Unions operate.
- Pensions supply billions to the Treasury.
- Unison sent facts and figures letter and offer to withdraw labour, not instructed to strike.
- Other factors there as well e.g. restructures and time off with no pay.
- Not all jobs are high paid with a high pension at the end.
- Motion “condemns”, which is a strong word.
- Condemn bankers.
- Putting greed before the interests of the people.
- Many people are on the basic minimum wage.
- Elected members should protect vulnerable society.
- At the time of the strike the Union were negotiating with the government.
- Government did not negotiate, Unions were told it was the final offer and if there was a strike they may withdraw the offer.
- £20 million cuts to Rossendale through the district and county councils and other partners.
- Desire for further negotiations.
- There have been progressive changes to pensions over the years.
- Levels of contributions unsustainable.
- This Council’s contribution to pensions is growing every year.
- Pensions timebomb.
- There have been changes to the state pensions.
- Lower paid will get better pensions.
- Expense of ordinary working people with the closure of schools and having to take unpaid leave.
- Loss of work for sole traders.
- Shops rely on public sector workers.
- Trade Unions steer people to go on strike.
- All deserve decent pensions, but some in Rossendale do not have work or a pension scheme.
- Expressing a democratic right.
- Not for profit sector pensions are sparse.

A recorded vote was requested by Councillors Aldred, Nuttall and A.Barnes.

Members voted on the motion as follows:

Cllr Aldred	Against
Cllr A Barnes	Against
Cllr Cheetham	For
Cllr Crawforth	Against
Cllr Driver	Abstain

Cllr Eaton	For
Cllr Essex	For
Cllr Evans	Abstain
Cllr Farrington	Against
Cllr Gledhill	For
Cllr Jackson	Against
Cllr Kenyon	Against
Cllr Lamb	Against
Cllr McInnes	Against
Cllr MacNae	Against
Cllr Marriott	Against
Cllr May	For
Cllr Milling	For
Cllr Morris	For
Cllr Neal	Against
Cllr Nuttall	Against
Cllr Oakes	Against
Cllr Pilling	Against
Cllr Roberts	Against
Cllr Robertson	Against
Cllr Sandiford	Against
Cllr Shipley	For
Cllr D Smith	For
Cllr M Smith	Against
Cllr Stansfield	For
<b>For</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Against</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Abstentions</b>	<b>3</b>

**Resolved:**

The motion was lost.

**13. NOTICE OF MOTION**

The Council considered the notice of motion which had been submitted by Councillors Robertson and Lamb.

Councillor Robertson formally moved the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Lamb as follows: *“This council notes and welcomes the UK wide campaign to end ‘Legal loan sharking’. This council believes that the lack of access to affordable credit is socially and economically damaging. Unaffordable credit is causing many unwanted*

*effects such as poorer diets, colder homes, rent, council tax and utility arrears, depression and poor health. This council believes that it is the responsibility of all levels of government to try to ensure affordable credit for all, and therefore pledges to use best practice to promote financial literacy and affordable lending. This will help to ensure that wealth stays in the local economy. We also pledge to promote the credit unions in Rossendale, community based organisations offering access to affordable credit and promoting savings. The council calls on the government to introduce caps on the total lending rates that can be charged for providing credit. Recent research by the Debt Advice Foundation has found that 41% of those struggling with debt claim that their problems are the result of high interest 'payday lending' Of the people using this kind of credit 25% said they needed the money to buy food or other essentials."*

In considering the report members discussed the following:

- Worry for people on low income.
- HM Treasury issued a package to help Credit Unions grow more effectively, orders were in force 8<sup>th</sup> January 2012.
- 428 Credit Unions in Great Britain.
- Use new powers in the new year.

**N.B.** Councillor Eaton left the meeting.

Members continued to discuss the following:

- Figures circulated showing interest rates compared.
- Lenders and different interest rates.
- Other countries have limits on interest.
- Call for councillors to sign up to the e-petition.
- Not just low income families getting caught.
- Young families on benefit unable to pay money back.
- Health problems suffered as a result of debt.
- Loan sharks are the only people doing big business this year.
- Preying on people needing basics such as food.
- Excellent motion on an important area.
- Credit Unions have legitimate loans and advice and want to protect the vulnerable.

### **Resolved:**

That council notes and welcomes the UK wide campaign to end 'Legal loan sharking'. This council believes that the lack of access to affordable credit is socially and economically damaging. Unaffordable credit is causing many unwanted effects such as poorer diets, colder homes, rent, council tax and utility arrears, depression and poor health. This council believes that it is the responsibility of all levels of government to try to ensure affordable credit for all, and therefore pledges to use best practice to promote financial literacy and affordable lending. This will help to ensure that wealth stays in the local economy. We also pledge to promote the credit unions in Rossendale, community based organisations offering access to affordable credit and promoting savings. The council calls on the government to introduce caps on the total lending rates that can be charged for providing credit. Recent research by the Debt Advice Foundation has found that 41% of those struggling with debt claim that their problems are the result of

high interest 'payday lending'. Of the people using this kind of credit 25% said they needed the money to buy food or other essentials.

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As the meeting had been in session for three hours the Mayor asked members to vote on whether the meeting would continue, as required by the Council's Constitution.

**Resolved:**

That the meeting would continue.

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**14. URGENT DECISIONS**

The Mayor reported that the Cabinet had not taken any urgent decisions since the last meeting.

**15. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET AND OTHER COMMITTEES**

**15a. Recommendation of the Governance Working Group: Constitution Review**

The Council considered the amendments proposed to the Constitution.

**Resolved:**

1. That members agree to reinstate the following wording to the Council's Constitution with effect from 28<sup>th</sup> March 2012:

*Employees must declare to the Head of Service or the Chief Executive and update the Register of Officers Interests, maintained by the Director of Business if they have:*

- *non-financial interests, membership of organisations or public bodies which may bring them into conflict with the Council's interests. Trade Union membership is exempt from this requirement.*

2. That members agree to make no changes to the Council's Constitution in relation to members questions.

**(The meeting started at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.35pm)**

Signed.....

(Chair)

Date .....