

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
NORTH WARWICKSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL  
HELD AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE  
ON WEDNESDAY 4 DECEMBER 2024**

Present: Councillor Hayfield in the Chair

Councillors Barnett, Bell, Chapman, Clews, Davey, Dirveiks, Farrow, Fowler, Hobley, Humphreys, Jackson, Jarvis, Jenns, Melia, Osborne, Parsons, H Phillips, O Phillips, Reilly, Ridley, Ririe, Simpson, Singh, Smith, Stuart, Symonds, Turley, Watson, Whapples, A Wright and D Wright.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bates, Gosling and Taylor.

**47 Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

None were declared at the meeting.

**48 Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 17 October 2024**

The minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 17 October 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the mayor.

**49 Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Jackson on the recent award of her degree in Social Studies.

The Mayor had attended the Atherstone Dickens Night held on 30 November 2024

**50 Questions Pursuant to Standing Order No 7**

The following questions were received pursuant to Standing Order No 7:-

**Question from Charles Goadby:**

In a report by Development Economics (who do research for many public sector bodies) it was concluded that for every £1 of support invested into Agriculture, there was a £7.40 return on investment to the economy, with particular benefit to both local and rural economies. Given the removal of both Agricultural and Business property relief for farmers at a time that coincides with the increase in NI, the increase in decoupled support to production in the form of the Basic Payment Scheme and the introduction of carbon tax on fertiliser imports, does the council feel that this attack on family farming is additionally an attack on our local economy, our local community and an attack on our food security.

My 10-year average pre-tax profits on farming has been £126 per acre. From next year, with the removal of bps support that pre-tax profit will fall to around £60 per acre. This is a family farm that provides enough milk for 41,700 people, enough beef for 1950 people and enough bread for 125,000 people. If my 80-year-old father passes now we will face a IHT tax bill of around £200 per acre for the next 10 years. Food production will no longer be viable for our farm and more land will be sold outside of farming and food production.

Since 1980 self-sufficiency in the UK has fallen from 80% to 62% today. Natural England reported recently that if we continue the current trajectory of environmental policy our self-sufficiency will fall another 25%. All this at a period when the UN have said that food production worldwide must increase by between 60-80% by 2050 just to keep up with demand. We will have more competition for food, in a far more unsettled geopolitical climate, which will not only lead to more food inflation but also more frequent periods of empty shelves along with less ability to uphold our food standards which over 1million people petitioned to maintain. If we allow this government to run roughshod with such ill-thought-out policies it is not just our industry that will suffer, it is not just our environment that will suffer, it is not just our local economy and communities that will suffer, but everyone, especially those who are least able to afford the food they need to support themselves and have a healthy diet.

I ask the council members how much they value the food on their plates, the landscapes that surround us and the businesses served in this district, both directly and indirectly by our farms.

**The response from Councillor David Wright, Leader of the Council was:**

I'd like to thank Mr Goadby for his question.

- The Labour Government had no mandate to deliver such seismic change to the Inheritance Tax regime particularly on Agricultural and Business Property Relief. This was not included in the Labour Party manifesto and therefore, residents in North Warwickshire voted for Rachel Taylor under false pretences.
- Prior to the General Election, Steve Reed MP now the Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs confirmed to the NFU that Labour would not make changes to the APR regime on Inheritance Tax. This was clearly a lie.
- Keir Starmer said at the last NFU conference – *“losing a farm is not like losing any other business—it can’t come back.”*
- I believe that Labour’s plans on Agricultural and Business Property Relief would directly hit 70,000 small farming families across the UK. This would include the majority of small farming families, of which we have nearly 250, in North Warwickshire. This data is supported by the County Land and Business Association.
- No farmers no food. Without our small farming families, Labour’s plans will see the UK become more reliant on the foreign food imports. What does this mean

for residents in North Warwickshire? Simply, it threatens food security and will see food prices going up for local residents.

- This council, with a Conservative administration, not only values but will strive to protect our rural borough and where we can will support our farmers and all businesses borough wide.

**Question from Councillor Jewkes:**

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This evening I'm here to ask North Warwickshire Borough Council to take advantage of a hugely important and game-changing idea put forward by the government. As you will be aware from past appearances before you, I spend a lot of my time discussing accessibility and inclusion issues surrounding the disabled and carers community throughout North Warwickshire and Bedworth.

I would like to ask that you as an important tier of local government please place a positive view into the 'Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings' consultation.

It seeks views on allowing remote and hybrid attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings in England.

It proposes introducing powers for local authority members to attend meetings remotely and vote by proxy in certain circumstances.

The government intends to legislate to give local authorities the flexibility to allow elected members to attend formal council meetings remotely.

Government are inviting responses from local authority elected members, all types and tiers of authorities, local authority sector representative organisations, and members of the public interested in local democracy.

I have discussed this with quite a few of our community, both with disabilities and without, carers and various other different demographics in our communities.

On a personal level the current state of public transport and the expanse of our county has kyboshed any chance of me standing for the county council elections this year, in order to attend since I am a non-driver I would have needed to take 4 busses or 3 trains in order to attend meetings in Warwick, along with the fact that none of the public transport would accommodate my mobility scooter thus adding a hell of a lot of excess stress and pain to my journey.

I've spoken to single parents who have a huge interest in local politics and would love to have more involvement BUT their current position precludes them even remotely from taking up the opportunity to sit in one of those seats you are currently sitting there.

This can't be right in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in an age where inclusion and accessibility are 2 words with the utmost importance in a constantly evolving demographic, as local councillors and Politicians we all believe that opportunity is the key to success and every member of our community should FEEL they are valued and that THEY can come here and serve their communities.

We feel therefore that this could be one of the biggest most inclusive modernisations of local politics in decades, it would mean that many disabled people who find public transport inaccessible could stand for local government roles. It would mean that local carers could get involved in making some of those all-important decisions that could affect their responsibilities locally the opportunity to get involved, it could help single parents to be able to get involved by allowing them to fulfil their obligations to the council whilst also being able to fulfil their family obligations. So many of these people have so much to give and currently, they have no avenue into local politics. WE NEED THESE PEOPLE INVOLVED HELP THEM TO ENGAGE POSITIVELY AND WATCH HOW MUCH THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IMPROVE when those who live their day-to-day lives with issues, we make decisions on can also put their experiences into our local decision-making processes.

**Response from David Wright – Leader of the Council:**

I'd like to thank Councillor Jewkes for his question.

The Government's consultation on Remote Attendance at meetings and Proxy votes was considered by this Council's Executive Board last Monday, the 25 November.

Whilst the Board acknowledged the points raised in the consultation and I appreciate the points raised by Cllr Jewkes, the Board unanimously agreed that remote attendance should only be allowed in certain exceptional or emergency circumstances and that proxy voting could not be supported. Concerns were raised across the Chamber about hybrid meetings not working very well (particularly when the technology is not available or fails), that debate can be stifled and that the public would expect their elected representative to physically attend meetings. There were no circumstances in which the Board could see proxy voting to be acceptable. The Council's response to the consultation therefore has been submitted on that basis.

I would suggest however that Cllr Jewkes contacts Warwickshire County Council Officers to discuss what support they would be able to offer so that he could consider standing for election.

**51 Minutes of Planning and Development Board – 4 November 2024.**

It was proposed by Councillor Simpson, seconded by Councillor Dirveiks and

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning and Development Board held on 4 November 2024 be approved and adopted.**

**52 Minutes of Special Sub-Group – 5 November 2024**

It was proposed by Councillor Clews, seconded by Councillor Jenns and

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Special Sub-Group held on 5 November 2024 be approved and adopted.**

**53 Minutes of Resources Board – 11 November 2024**

It was proposed by Councillor Symonds, seconded by Councillor Davey and

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Resources Board held on 11 November 2024 be approved and adopted.**

**54 Minutes of Local Development Framework Sub-Committee held on – 19 November 2024**

It was proposed by Councillor Watson, seconded by Councillor Ridley and

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee held on 19 November 2024 be approved and adopted.**

**55 Minutes of Executive Board – 25 November 2024**

It was proposed by Councillor D Wright, seconded by Councillor Fowler and

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 25 November 2024 be approved and adopted, subject to:**

**(i) External Auditors Completion Report for Those Charged with Governance 2021/22 & 2022/23**

- a That the Completion Report, as presented in Appendix A of the report of the Interim Corporate Director – Resources (Section 151 Officer), be approved; and that the Completion Report presented as Appendix A be approved; and**
- b That, in consultation with the Chairman of the Executive Board, delegated authority be given to the Interim Corporate Director - Resources (Section 151 Officer) to sign off the Letter of Representation for 2021/22 and 2022/23.**

**(ii) Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 – 2029**

- a That the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, attached at Appendix A of the report of the Interim Corporate Director – Resources (Section 151 Officer), be approved;**

- b That the General Fund budget projections for 2024/25 to 2028/29 be noted;**
- c That the approach for balancing the Medium Term Budget set out in Table 2 of the report of the Interim Corporate Director – Resources (Section 151 Officer), be adopted;**
- d That the budget movements for 2024/25 as detailed in Table 3 of the report of the Interim Corporate Director – Resources (Section 151 Officer), be approved;**
- e That the strategy for increasing the council tax to the maximum level approved by the Government, continue;**
- f That the high-level projects/initiatives for delivering reductions and increased income in Appendix A section 11 of the report of the Interim Corporate Director – Resources (Section 151 Officer), be noted and more detail and financial targets for the Tax Set report be requested; and**
- g That a review of earmarked reserves with the balance on any funds no longer required being transferred to the general fund balance be carried out.**

**(iii) Calendar of Meetings 2025/26**

- a That the draft calendar of meetings for 2025/26, as submitted at Appendix A to the report of the Chief Executive, be approved; and**
- b That future meeting dates for working parties and task and finish groups be added to the calendar when arranged and that calendar meeting invitations be sent to all Borough Councillors for these meetings.**

**56 Minutes of Community and Environment Board – 27 November 2024**

It was proposed by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Melia and

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meetings of the Community and Environment Board held on 27 November be approved and adopted.**

**57 Notice of Motion under Standing Order No 10**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor D Wright and seconded by Councillor Symonds

**That the Council notes:**

- The recent 2024 Autumn Budget change to Inheritance Tax relief announced by the Labour Government will introduce a Family Farm Tax and will have a detrimental impact on Family Farms and farmers' ability to pass on their farms to the next generation of farmers.

**That the Council believes that:**

- The Labour Government have committed a shameful betrayal and let down farmers by breaking their promise to not introduce a Family Farm Tax.
- The Family Farm Tax will damage the ability of farmers to pass on their farms to their children.
- Labour's Family Tax will threaten food security by forcing the sale of family farms.
- The Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Steve Reed and Keir Starmer promised not to introduce a tax like this.
- Numerous rural and farming organisations such as the National Farmers Union and Country Land and Business Association have warned that countless farms will be harmed, threatening food security and rural areas.
- The comments made by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Steve Reed, that already struggling farmers will have to 'do more for less' show disdain for farmers and the sector.
- At a time when many farmers in North Warwickshire are struggling with soaring costs and energy prices, this sudden tax rise will damage the future of their farms.

**That the Council resolves:**

- To request the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to outline the Council's dismay at this decision and calls on the Government to stop the Family Farm Tax.
- That the Leader of the Council engages with local farmers and community representatives to see what support the Council may be able to offer.

In accordance with Standing Order No 11(1) the recorded vote was as follows:

**For** – Bell, Clews, Davey, Fowler, Hayfield, Humphreys, Jarvis, Jenns, Melia, Reilly, Ridley, Simpson, Singh, Smith, Symonds, Watson, A Wright, D Wright.

**Against** - Barnett, Chapman, Dirveiks, Farrow, Hobley, Jackson, Osborne, Parsons, H Phillips, O Phillips, Ririe, Turley, Whapples.

**Abstain** - Stuart.

**Upon being put to the vote the mayor declared the motion to be carried.**

The following Notice of Motion was proposed by Councillor Bell and seconded by Councillor Clews

Rachel Taylor MP asked a question in Parliament where she stated that she had uncovered the shocking statistic that showed North Warwickshire Borough Council prosecuted only one fly tipper in the year 2022/23. She asked the Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she found that dismal statistic acceptable.

**That the Council notes North Warwickshire Borough Council's Approach to Fly Tipping:**

- Similar to other local authorities, NWBC has a large number of fly tipping incidents reported each year; it is the second highest crime type in the Borough and costs around £205,000 pa. The Council cannot control how many cases happen in the Borough given the open and rural nature of our area. The Council and its residents are the victims here rather than a party to blame.
- The Council can only seek to take action where there is information within the waste as to where it has come from, or a witness or camera can identify the vehicle used.
- All such cases are followed up by Officers however there are often very good reasons why further action cannot be taken – common reasons involve witness understandably not wishing to make a formal statement, false number plates (suggesting a link to organised crime) or no trace of suspects at registered addresses.
- NWBC takes fly tipping very seriously, it is considered under the Community and Environment Board and minutes of that Board are presented at full Council. Fly tipping is also considered in the Safer Communities Committee.
- In 2023 and 2024 there have been 2 reports each year on fly tipping presented to Community and Environment Board and 3 to Safer Communities.
- At the August 2024 meeting the Board agreed to significantly increase the amount payable for a Fixed Penalty Notice. During the last report to the Community and Environment Board in October, the newly appointed Environmental Crime Officer who started in this newly created post this summer presented on his plans for more enforcement and the use of a drone to further address the issue of fly tipping.
- Prosecution is only one of the actions which may be taken in response to fly tipping; our records show that, in addition to 174 other enforcement actions, there were 2 prosecutions and 2 fixed penalty notices in 2022/23, rather than the single case shown in the DEFRA figures.
- In 2023/24 there were 1151 reported incidents of fly tipping in North Warwickshire; there were 93 enforcement actions. In the first 2 quarters of

2024/25 there were 591 reported incidents of fly tipping and 33 enforcement actions.

- In 2023 NWBC trialled the use of 6 Artificial Intelligence cameras to assess their effectiveness in capturing fly tipping events.
- NWBC have created an interactive Power BI report displaying hotspots, volumes and waste types to enable managers to make timely decisions.
- Rachel Taylor remains a councillor in NWBC and is free to attend any Board meeting and is required to attend full Council meetings; she should be fully aware of the data and the Council's actions in this area.
- During her time as a councillor Ms Taylor has never asked a question on fly tipping.

**That the Council resolves:**

To request the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to recognise NWBC's approach to and actions on fly tipping and call on him to acknowledge that Ms Taylor's question in Parliament led to a distorted view of NWBC's focus on this area.

It was then proposed by Councillor Ririe and seconded by Councillor O Phillips, by way of a friendly amendment that the final two bullet points be removed from the Notice of Motion and:

**That the Council resolves:**

To request the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to:

- 1 Correct the record that NWBC has prosecuted twice in 2022/23 and issued two fixed penalty notices;
- 2 Outline the challenges that rural councils face in dealing with flytipping; and for the Secretary of State to consider the responsibilities of all councils regarding the prevention of flytipping; and
- 3 Recognise NWBC's approach and actions on fly tipping.

**Upon being put to the vote the mayor declared the motion to be carried.**

**58 Common Seal**

It was proposed by Councillor Hayfield and seconded by Councillor Jarvis and

**Resolved:**

**That the Chief Executive be authorised to affix the Common Seal to any Orders, Deeds and Documents as necessary to give effect to the decisions of the Council, including any passed during part of the meeting which is held in private, in accordance with Article 11.05 of the Articles of the Constitution.**

**59 Exclusion of the Public and Press**

**Resolved:**

**That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Schedule 12A to the Act.**

**60 Exempt Extract of the Planning & Development Board – 4 November 2024**

It was proposed by Councillor Simpson seconded by Councillor Dirveiks and

**Resolved:**

**That the exempt extract of the minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Development Board held on 4 November 2024, be approved and adopted.**

**61 Exempt Extract of the Minutes of the Special Sub-Group – 5 November 2024**

It was proposed by Councillor Clews, seconded by Councillor Jenns and

**Resolved:**

**That the exempt extract of the minutes of the meeting of the Special Sub-Group held on 5 November 2024 be approved and adopted.**

**62 Exempt Extract of the Minutes of the Resources Board held on 11 November 2024**

It was proposed by Councillor Symonds , seconded by Councillor Davey and

**Resolved:**

**That the exempt extract of the minutes of the meeting of the Resources Board held on 11 November 2024 be approved and adopted.**

**63 Exempt Extract of the Minutes of the Executive Board held on 25 November 2024**

It was proposed by Councillor Symonds, seconded by Councillor Ridley and

**Resolved:**

**That the exempt extract of the minutes of the meeting of the Executive Board held on 25 November 2024 be approved and adopted.**

**64 Exempt Extract of the Minutes of the Community and Environment Board held on 27 November 2024**

It was proposed by Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Ridley and

**Resolved:**

**That the exempt extract of the minutes of the meeting of the Community and Environment Board held on 27 November 2024 be approved and adopted.**

**Chairman of the next ensuing meeting  
of the Council**