



**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2023 AT 5:30PM IN THE JEFFREY ROOM IN THE GULDHALL, NORTHAMPTON**

**PRESENT:** Councillor D Meredith (Town Mayor);  
Councillor S Hibbert (Deputy Town Mayor)

**COUNCILLORS:** J Alwahabi, J Birch, M Brown, R Connolly, J Fuchshuber, K Holland-Delamere P Joyce, A Kilbride, J Lane, L Marriott, T Miah, B Purser, D Soan, A Stevens, W Tarasiewicz

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Mr S Carter (Town Clerk) and Miss F Barford (Democratic Services Officer)

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Mr Mark Mullen (Operations Manager, Northampton BID) and Mrs Julie Tetman (Local Business Owner)

Prior to the start of the meeting a minute's silence was observed in memory of all those impacted by the earthquake that had so severely affected parts of Turkey and Syria.

**35. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were submitted by Councillors G Eales, M Hallam, C Russell, R Ashraf, E Haque, F Ismail and N Choudary.

**36. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor explained that he had been very busy attending engagements within the community, whilst fundraising for his chosen charities and to date raised £7,944 and thanked Councillors for their support. The Town Mayor added that his Civic Gala would be held on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and Councillors were invited.

**37. PUBLIC QUESTIONS/STATEMENT TIME:**

Mr Mullen from the Northampton BID had informed the Clerk that he wished to speak prior to the meeting.

Mr Mullen stated he had attended West Northamptonshire Council's (WNC) cabinet meeting on Monday to relay the sentiments of the Northampton BID and how they disagreed with the proposed increase in parking charges across Northampton. Mr Mullen explained that he had highlighted to WNC's cabinet that in his opinion there was poor consultation on the proposal and highlighted that there was no intention to increase parking charges in the 3 other large towns within West Northamptonshire.

Mr Mullen presented a graph that demonstrated the town centre's footfall over the previous years and explained that a large decrease in footfall correlated with the previous increase in parking charges in 2018. Mr Mullen continued that businesses within the town had been negatively affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic and would continue be affected by the regeneration of the Market Square, Abington and Fish Street, the implementation of parking charge increases would further exacerbate this.

Mrs Tetman a local retailer had also requested to speak.

Mrs Tetman explained that herself and business would be greatly impacted by the increase in parking charges especially as her establishment sells products from 90 other small local businesses. Mrs Tetman continued that

the removal of free on-street parking after 7pm would be a detriment as many people visit her business at this time due to the free parking. She continued that local people would be deterred further by the proposed increase to parking charges and frequent the likes of Rushden Lakes or other retail sites across Northamptonshire that provide free parking. Mrs Tetman stated she had spoken to other business who have opened in Rushden lakes and stated they would open a store in town centre however they are dissatisfied with the cost of parking.

Mr Mullen and Mrs Tetman were both thanked for their contribution.

### **38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors J Alwahabi, M Brown, R Connolly, S Hibbert, K Holland-Delamere, P Joyce, A Kilbride, J Lane, B Purser and W Tarasiewicz declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute 39 as they are West Northamptonshire Councillors.

### **39. NOTICE OF MOTION – THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING MOTION TO BE PROPOSED**

Councillor Birch proposed the following motion:

*This council is pleased to hear that West Northants Council has revised its plans for parking on Saturdays with the reinstatement of the 2 free hours. However, we ask that WNC reconsider the proposal to charge car park users on a Sunday.*

*With the challenges to our town centre and with the effects that the regeneration work to the Market Square and Abington Street will have, free Sunday parking is a vital attraction. It is also noted that parking in the other main towns, namely Daventry, Towcester and Brackley is free of charge, which puts Northampton at a disadvantage.*

*We would also ask that WNC support some free Saturdays to coincide with large events throughout the year*

In proposing the motion Cllr Birch highlighted the impact on the economy in the town and the negative impact on retailers. The work to the Market Square and other planned upgrades, which whilst beneficial in the long term, had severe implications in the short term in terms of loss of footfall, and the proposed changes to the parking would not help. The free parking in the other major towns in West Northamptonshire was also highlighted.

Councillor Soan proposed an amendment to the motion that Northampton Town Council go further and subsidise the cost to maintain one-hour free parking on Saturday and free on a Sunday through the repurpose of part of the Council's General Reserves or Accommodation Budget. A Councillor stated they supported the amendment as it would enable the Town Council to support local businesses.

A Councillor raised they disagreed with the amendment as the Town Council would essentially subsidise West Northamptonshire Council's budget. Another Councillor disagreed with the proposed amendment as the Council's accommodation was one of the highest risks on the risk register. It was also commented that if the amendment was agreed it would be a disservice to those who reside outside of the town centre and who do not venture into the town centre. A Councillor stated that if WNC wanted to approach the Town Council about adopting car parks, then the Town Council would be open to that.

A Councillor highlighted that no parking charge increases were proposed for Brackley, Towcester or Daventry and in fact they remained free which seemed to be unfair and at the detriment of Northampton.

A Councillor reiterated the proposed amendment would support our local businesses who were suffering.

After the proposed amendment was put to a vote it was **NOT AGREED**.

Councillor Alwahabi proposed that an amendment be made that stated there needs to be a harmonisation of parking charges across West Northamptonshire. Once again highlighting the disparity between Northampton and the other three towns who had free parking, it was suggested that WNC be asked to review this. This amendment was seconded and was put to a vote and **AGREED**.

**RESOLVED:** It was unanimously agreed that the following motion as amended be agreed and this be submitted to West Northamptonshire Council:

*This council is pleased to hear that West Northants Council has revised its plans for parking on Saturdays with the reinstatement of the 2 free hours. However, we ask that WNC reconsider the proposal to charge car park users on a Sunday.*

*With the challenges to our town centre and with the effects that the regeneration work to the Market Square and Abington Street will have, free Sunday parking is a vital attraction. It is also noted that parking in the other main towns, namely Daventry, Towcester and Brackley is free of charge, which puts Northampton at a disadvantage. WNC needs to harmonise parking charges across their area.*

*We would also ask that WNC support some free Saturdays to coincide with large events throughout the year*

**MEETING CONCLUDED: 6:30PM**