

Minutes

OF A MEETING OF THE



Listening Learning Leading

Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee

HELD AT 6.30 PM ON TUESDAY 29 OCTOBER 2019

MEETING ROOM 1, 135 EASTERN AVENUE, MILTON PARK, MILTON, ABINGDON, OXFORDSHIRE, OX14 4SB

Present

Councillors David Bartholomew, Peter Dragonetti, Alexandrine Kantor (as substitute for Maggie Filipova-Rivers), Mocky Khan, Lynn Lloyd and David Turner

Officers:

Susan Baker, Steven Corrigan and Margaret Reed

Also present:

Councillors Sue Cooper and Ian White

1 Election of chairman

RESOLVED: to elect Councillor Lloyd as Chairman of the committee for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year.

2 Appointment of vice-chairman

RESOLVED: to appoint Councillor Dragonetti as the Vice-Chairman of the committee for the remainder of the 2019/20 municipal year.

3 Apologies for absence

Councillor Filipova-Rivers submitted an apology for absence with Councillor Kantor attending as substitute.

4 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2018 as a correct record and agree that the chairman signs them as such.

5 Declarations of interest

None.

6 Urgent business and chairman's announcements

None.

7 Public participation

No members of the public had registered to address the committee.

8 Report of the Returning Officer on the delivery of the May 2019 district and parish elections

The committee considered the report of the returning officer on the delivery of the May 2019 South Oxfordshire District Council elections and parish council elections for the South Oxfordshire area and set out a number of action points.

A number of councillors expressed disappointment regarding the low number of contested parish council elections. Whilst the cost of running an election clearly deterred some parish councils having a contested election, concern was also expressed that pressure was put on some candidates not to stand to ensure the status quo. The committee was advised that a decision not to charge parish councils for the running of elections would place a financial burden on the district council.

There was support for the nominations process and particularly the lack of an appointments system and the provision an informal check of the paperwork. There was also support for the decision to undertake the district council counts overnight.

In response to concerns expressed regarding the failure of IT systems and printing problems and the subsequent delay in announcing election results, Margaret Reed, Returning Officer, advised that progress was being made to address the issues which arose.

The committee thanked all staff involved for the successful delivery of the elections. The committee welcomed the report and agreed that the elections had run smoothly. The committee endorsed the action points set out in paragraph 31 of the report.

RESOLVED: to

1. note the report of the returning officer on the delivery of the May 2019 district and parish elections to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 29 October 2019;
2. endorse the action points in paragraph 31 of the report of the returning officer to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 29 October 2019.

9 Polling district and polling places review

The committee considered the report of the head of legal and democratic on proposals for polling districts and polling places following a periodic review required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

The committee was advised of a late representation from a resident of South Moreton who asked that the council re-designate The Crown Public House as a polling station following its reopening as a community asset. The committee agreed to authorise the head of legal and democratic to review the suitability of the venue and consult members of the committee, local ward councillors and the parish council prior to a final decision.

The committee noted that the arrangements had worked well in recent elections.

RESOLVED: to

1. note the consultation responses and the officer comments set out in appendix A of the report of the head of legal and democratic to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 29 October 2019;
2. note the Acting Returning Officer's comments attached at appendix B of the report of the head of legal and democratic to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 29 October 2019;
3. approve the schedule of polling districts and polling places attached at appendix C of the report of the head of legal and democratic to the Community Governance and Electoral Issues Committee on 29 October 2019;
4. authorise the head of legal and democratic to review the suitability of the Crown Public House in South Moreton as a polling place, to consult members of the committee, local councillors and the parish council and to make a final decision on whether to designate it as a polling place;
5. authorise the head of legal and democratic, acting in her capacity as the council's returning officer, to make changes to polling districts and polling places where circumstances dictate that this is desirable, having first consulted with members of the committee and the local councillor(s).

10 District wide community governance review

The committee considered a proposal, set out on the agenda, to commence a district wide community governance review in Spring 2020 which would allow for any changes to be implemented for the 2023 elections.

Officers advised that changes to district council boundaries are a matter for the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.

RESOLVED: to request that officers submit a timetable for a community governance review to the committee for a review to commence in Spring 2020.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm

Chairman

Date