

## COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 21 June 2023 in the Council Chamber - Council Offices at 6.00 pm

<b>Members Present:</b>	Cllr T Adams	Cllr P Bailey
	Cllr M Batey	Cllr K Bayes
	Cllr D Birch	Cllr H Blathwayt
	Cllr J Boyle	Cllr A Brown
	Cllr G Bull	Cllr S Bütikofer
	Cllr E Coleman	Cllr C Cushing
	Cllr N Dixon	Cllr P Fisher
	Cllr A Fitch-Tillett	Cllr T FitzPatrick
	Cllr W Fredericks	Cllr M Hankins
	Cllr C Heinink	Cllr P Heinrich
	Cllr V Holliday	Cllr N Housden
	Cllr G Mancini-Boyle	Cllr P Neatherway
	Cllr L Paterson	Cllr S Penfold
	Cllr P Porter	Cllr C Ringer
	Cllr L Shires	Cllr R Sims
	Cllr E Spagnola	Cllr M Taylor
	Cllr J Toyne	Cllr K Toyne
	Cllr A Varley	Cllr L Vickers

#### Also in attendance:

#### 18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr R Macdonald, Cllr J Purnard and Cllr E Vardy.

#### 19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

‘Cllr G Bull’s attendance to be recorded for the meeting held on 17 May 2023’.

#### 20 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

Cllr L Shires declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda item 12: Witton – Renaming of Parish. She said that she had been appointed on a temporary basis in 2019 to help stabilise the parish council. She was also the County Councillor.

#### 21 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None received.

#### 22 CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Chairman outlined recent civic events:

- 20<sup>th</sup> May – Dambusters 80<sup>th</sup> Commemoration event at the Cliftonville Hotel, Cromer. Cllr Dr V Holliday, Vice-Chairman of the Council, attended this on the Council's behalf and said that it had been a very inspiring and moving tribute.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> June – Service of dedication and official naming ceremony of the new Wells RNLI lifeboat. Cllr S Butikofer, Chairman of the Council attended this event and said that it had been very well attended and the RNLI President, HRH the Duke of Kent and Vice-President Vice Admiral Sir Tim Lawrence had been warmly welcomed. The Chairman said that the event had particular personal meaning for her as the boat commemorated 15,000 people on its decals and the name of her mother was included.
- 11 June – Lord Mayor of Norwich, City service.

## **23 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Leader, Cllr T Adams, began by saying that the Member induction sessions had been going very well and he hoped that Members were finding them useful. He said that feedback from officers involved in the sessions had been very positive and they had commented how engaged members had been.

He then spoke about a recent trip to see fishery locations in Wells and Morston, accompanying NNDC's Sampling Assistant, as he collected testing samples to ensure seafood was safe for consumption. It had been extremely interesting and he encouraged all members to get involved with the Council's different service areas and their activities when possible.

The Leader concluded by saying that the development of the new Corporate Plan was progressing well, with an initial draft going to the next meeting of Cabinet. He thanked the Corporate Leadership Team for their support.

## **24 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS**

Mr N Pearce was in attendance with Mr D Russell. He spoke about the recent series of commemoration events in Cromer for the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dambuster raid. He explained that the week commenced on 16th May with Cromer Town Council flying the RAF Ensign in tribute. Following this, there was the laying of a wreath at the Northrepps War Memorial to remember Northrepps man Flight Sergeant C W Roberts and the other 52 aircrew who failed return to RAF Scampton.

On 17th May, The District Council did likewise. Councillor John Toye was thanked for arranging this. The on 20th May a special event of commemoration and presentations took place at the Cliftonville Hotel Cromer attended by NNDC Vice Chairman Councillor Victoria Holliday, Pilot Officer Brandon Prophet representing RAF Waddington, Duncan Baker MP and representatives of Sheringham and District RAFA and Cromer RBL and members of the public. A commemorative blue plaque, memorial scroll and pictures were presented to the Hotel Manager, including one donated by Councillor Toye whose father was an armourer at the time of the raid. Special thanks were extended to Cllr Dr V Holliday for attending at such short notice.

Mr D Russell then presented Cllr Dr V Holliday with a commemorative picture depicting all the Lancaster bombers which took part in the raid.

## **25 UPDATES REGARDING ANY APPOINTMENTS**

The Chairman asked the Group Leaders if they wished to update members on any appointments.

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett said that she wished to make the following appointments:

- Substitute on Planning Policy & Built Heritage Working Party – Cllr A Fitch-Tillett
- Substitute on North Norfolk Sustainable Communities Grant Fund Panel – Cllr J Punchard

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cllr N Dixon, informed Full Council that the Committee had agreed to appoint Cllr J Boyle as the Council's representative to the Norfolk Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (NHOSC), with Cllr Dr V Holliday as the substitute.

## 26 PORTFOLIO REPORTS

The Chairman asked Cabinet members if they wished to add anything to their written reports. Cllr L Withington, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Community Outreach, said that she wanted to thank the RNLI lifeguards at Sea Palling for saving two people who were carried out by riptides. Cllr Withington proposed a vote of thanks, adding that thanks should also be extended to all the teams along the coast who provided such an essential service under the contract with NNDC to provide lifeguards at beaches along the coastline. Cllr H Blathwayt, local member for Sea Palling, seconded the vote of thanks and said that the community was very grateful for the quick actions of the two lifeguards. Members supported the vote unanimously.

Cllr M Hankins asked Cllr C Ringer, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services for an update on the ongoing situation in Fulmodeston, where there was a fly infestation due to the nearby poultry farm. Cllr Ringer replied that he was aware of the situation and confirmed that the Council's Environmental Health team had been out to visit the site and were engaging with the Poultry Farm owners. Further meetings were due to take place in the following days to address the issue.

Cllr A Brown, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Enforcement, said that there were two minor amendments to his written report: Under the section on Planning Policy & Neighbourhood Planning it should read 2023 not 2013. He then clarified that the referendum on Holt's Neighbourhood Plan would take place on 29<sup>th</sup> June.

Cllr A Fitch-Tillett said that she was not sure which Cabinet member to direct her question to. She said that her concern related to a sign regarding dogs on beaches. At Overstrand beach one set of steps was in poor condition but at the top of the ramp pointing towards these steps, there was a sign stating 'Dogs this way'. This was misleading and potentially dangerous. Cllr T Adams said that he would look into it and come back to Cllr Fitch-Tillett as soon as possible.

Cllr C Cushing referred to the Welcome Event on 9<sup>th</sup> May at the Council Offices when the Chief Executive had said that one of the challenges for the next 4 years was to be more successful in obtaining grant funding from the Government and the County Business Rates Pooled funds. He asked the Leader for his ideas on how the Council could successfully secure external funding so that really substantial projects could be undertaken. The Leader replied that there had been success in securing funding, with NNDC being in the top 10 councils securing funding for Changing

Places. He acknowledged that the levelling up fund bids had not been successful but said it was hoped that the ambitions could still be achieved. The feedback received had not been very illuminating but did indicate that areas with small populations were less successful in receiving a grant. He added that there was lots of ongoing work, including sports development in Fakenham but was happy to discuss it further if needed.

Cllr P Fisher asked Cllr L Withington about Visit North Norfolk's tourism promotion. He said with the pressure on coastal towns, was there an opportunity for future campaigns to focus more on inland attractions. Cllr Withington agreed, saying that the current coastal campaign was running very successfully but there were links to inland attractions and she was supportive of extending the tourism so that it covered the whole district.

Cllr N Housden asked Cllr W Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for People Services, about the Community Connector Team. He asked for the total number of connectors and a schedule of meetings that they had attended and the accompanying budget for the service for the previous 12 months. Cllr Fredericks confirmed that she would provide a written response within 14 days.

Cllr G Mancini-Boyle asked Cllr A Varley, Portfolio Holder for Climate Change & Net Zero, why the council was not applying for decarbonisation grants if it was serious about achieving Net Zero by 2030. Cllr Varley replied that the Council was focussed on achieving its target and had applied for grant funding and would continue to do so, adding that it was a very competitive sector.

Cllr J Toye asked Cllr W Fredericks, Portfolio Holder for Housing, how the serious and justified challenges on the provision of low cost, affordable housing, could be resolved. He referenced the figure of 571 households on the housing register against an anticipated delivery of 70 affordable homes this year and asked what the remaining 501 households could expect in terms of support. Cllr Fredericks replied that all options were being explored to provide more affordable homes but there were many challenges, including the ongoing impact of nutrient neutrality, rising interest rates, inflation and pressures on the private rental sector. The majority of the discretionary housing payments were currently being paid to renters in the private sector due to landlords paying higher mortgage rates. In addition, the cost of living crisis continued to squeeze household incomes. Cllr Fredericks said that the Council would continue to work hard to find solutions and was always seeking suitable rental properties. Cllr Toye asked whether she believe fundamental change was needed. Cllr Fredericks replied that a national housebuilding programme was required or a national scheme along these lines.

Cllr N Dixon referred to the latest Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the challenges in addressing future budget gaps. He asked Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance & Assets, how she proposed to address these. Cllr Shires replied that local authorities were desperately in need of funding – as acknowledged by Cllr Cushing in his earlier question to the Leader. She said that her focus had been on the Outturn report but she would be bringing a report to Full Council soon regarding future plans.

Cllr L Vickers asked Cllr A Brown, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Enforcement, for an update on securing the future of the derelict building in Norwich Street, Fakenham. It was currently a safety hazard as people had to go into the road to pass it, which was particularly challenging for those using mobility scooters or pushing pushchairs. She referenced the 'no broken window policy' where evidence had shown that when a broken window was left unfixed, the whole area began to

degenerate. Cllr Vickers said in the case of 9 Norwich Street, there was an entire derelict building which was having a negative impact on the properties nearby. She asked for clarification of the actions that the Council intended to take to address the problem and the associated timeline. Cllr Brown replied that it was a difficult and complex case concerning a listed building in a central location in Fakenham. It became structurally unsound 4 years ago. The Council had been working with the freehold owner to undertake structural repairs but they had not been co-operative. The Council continued to liaise with Fakenham Town Council to keep them appraised of the situation. He explained that options were being considered regarding the future of the property, including the possibility of a compulsory purchase order (CPO). Cllr Brown said that he wished to declare a pecuniary interest in the premises concerned. Cllr Vickers said that she was happy to assist in any way that she could with expediting the process. She asked if there were plans to clad the sides of the building so that it was less of an eyesore. Cllr Brown replied that this was being considered.

Cllr M Taylor said that other District Councils were leading the way in solving their housing problem. He cited the example of Barking and Dagenham Borough Council, which was providing modular homes to meet the rapidly rising need. He said that Victory Housing Association had advised him that the current backlog in North Norfolk would take a decade to clear. He asked Cllr Fredericks if the Council had a strategy to deal with the problem. Cllr Fredericks replied that NNDC did not any land suitable for building houses on and consequently nowhere to put modular buildings. She added that the current housing strategy was undergoing review and would be coming back for members to review. For the current year, there were 60 affordable homes in the pipeline, which was a good number for such a small rural authority. Cllr Taylor asked when the Housing Strategy would come forward. Cllr Fredericks replied that it would be in the Autumn.

Cllr K Toye asked Cllr L Withington, Portfolio Holder for Leisure, about the reference to working quads in her written report. She asked how this would assist the Countryside team in meeting sustainability ambitions. Cllr Withington replied that the use of quads would transform how they would work in green spaces and country parks. They would be able to deal with much larger pieces of timber safely without relying on the use of contractors. There was also a sawmill coming onstream which would facilitate the construction of benches and other wooden structures. All of this would support the green flag status of the countryside parks, as they required a clear demonstration of year on year improvements. In addition, it would generate additional revenue as they would be able to increase the production of firewood to sell.

## **27 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET 5TH JUNE 2023**

### Cabinet Agenda item 11 – Purchase of Two Additional Refuse Collection Vehicles

Cllr C Ringer, Portfolio Holder for IT, Environmental Services and Waste, introduced this item. He explained that the report set out proposals for the purchase of two new waste collection vehicles, for the collection of garden and trade waste. These would be funded by borrowing £335k, with a revenue contribution of £50k. Cllr Ringer explained that both garden waste and trade waste were services that the Council could charge for and there had been a considerable increase in demand for both services. Garden waste subscriptions had increased by around 1000 per annum

since 2016/17 and over the same period trade waste had increased from 88k to 130k – an increase of 50%. Currently 64% of trade waste collections were included as part of the domestic rounds, whilst this could be expedient for holiday lets, it did place additional constraints on the crews as they had to return to the tip more frequently. It was hoped that an additional vehicle would ease the strain and improve the service overall. In line with contract requirements, these vehicles would be owned by NNDC and funded through a combination of a previously agreed, residual budget of £65k, a revenue contribution of £50k from performance failure deductions in the year 2021/ 2022 and newly agreed borrowing of £335k. Subject to final negotiations with Serco, it may be possible to utilise the performance management deductions for 2022/2023 to further offset the cost of one or both vehicles. Cllr Ringer said that the need for two additional vehicles had come about as the result of the Council's success in attracting new customers. He acknowledged that concerns had been raised about the timing of the report but it was important that the Council took the opportunity to use Serco's pre-allocated build slot with the vehicle manufacturer rather than wait. A delay could result in the vehicles not being available until 2024/2025, whereas a decision to go ahead now, would result in the vehicles being ready for later this year.

The Chairman invited Members to speak:

Cllr C Cushing said that he had been present for the discussions on this matter at Cabinet, Governance, Risk & Audit Committee (GRAC) and Overview & Scrutiny Committee. He said that the initial Cabinet paper had not included sufficient background information and he would not have supported the recommendations at that time, however, additional information had been provided at subsequent committee meetings and he was now supportive of the proposals. Concerns had been raised by members as to how the Council would pay for the new vehicles as very little detail had been provided in the Cabinet report. He said it was important that members had a good understanding of the financial implications of such decisions and it must be set out much more clearly in the future where funding would come from for any proposals on this scale.

Cllr S Penfold asked Cllr Ringer if he was confident that the Council could maintain a good service until the vehicles were ready. Cllr Ringer replied that Serco was currently providing a fourth garden waste vehicle at their own expense to limit any disruption, so that should be sustainable.

Cllr T FitzPatrick referred to page 73 the section entitled 'options considered'. One of the options listed was 'do nothing'. He said that in his view that wasn't an option, as residents expected their bins to be collected on time. He then referred to the section on 'consultations' which referenced 'future round reorganisation'. This gave him cause for concern as the ramifications of the last reorganisation were still being dealt with. He asked that any future change to the rounds was handled carefully. Cllr Ringer agreed, saying that he shared his views regarding the previous reorganisation and he reassured Cllr FitzPatrick that lessons had been learned.

Cllr J Toye thanked Cllr Cushing for his summary of the discussion at the GRAC meeting. He said as the new Chairman of GRAC he was reassured that there were effective systems in place to provide a check and balance, should concerns be raised.

Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance & Assets, thanked Cllr Cushing for raising different points as the report progressed through the various committees, which helped members fully understand the proposals. She said that GRAC had added a

lot of value regarding any financial risks associated with the recommendations and she agreed that the Cabinet report had been light on detail and that was why Cabinet had referred it to GRAC for further discussion. She said that she was content that GRAC had drilled down into the financial risks of the decision but added that she would never be happy with the Council borrowing money and she was hopeful that it may not be necessary. However, it should be remembered that the proposals were due to business growth and that additional vehicles were required to meet demand.

Cllr A Brown thanked Cllr Cushing for his comments and said that he had requested that it was referred to GRAC for assessment of any risks. He said that he was not in any way undermining the report, he was supportive of the proposals and he agreed with Cllr Shires' comments that the Council was essentially a victim of its own success. It would be unfortunate if collections were missed due to lack of capacity. He concluded by saying that he noted the reference to the vehicles being capable of being converted to HVO fuel in the future.

It was proposed by Cllr C Ringer, seconded by Cllr L Shires and

RESOLVED

1. To approve an addition to the Capital programme of £385,000 to purchase two new refuse collection vehicles and that the £385,000 be added to the residual £65,000 that is left over from the original budget to purchase refuse vehicles from 2019 to date.
2. That the purchase be funded by borrowing of £335,000 and a revenue contribution of £50,000.

## **28 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 14TH JUNE 2023**

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cllr N Dixon, confirmed that there were no further recommendations.

## **29 WITTON - RENAMING OF PARISH**

The Leader, Cllr T Adams, introduced this item. He said that it was a request from the parish itself and he was supportive of the recommendations.

Cllr P Porter, Local Member, said that she had always known it as Witton and Ridlington, as did everyone. She was therefore supportive of the proposals.

Cllr L Shires reminded members that in 2019, several district councillors were appointed to Witton Parish Council on a temporary basis to support them during a challenging time. She agreed that everyone knew it as Witton and Ridlington Parish Council. She said as the County Council member and a previous parish councillor, she was fully supportive of the proposals.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr P Porter and

RESOLVED

To approve the renaming of the civil parish of Witton to the civil parish of Witton and Ridlington.

To approve the creation of an Order to formalise the name change.

To approve the delegation of powers to the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer for the making of Section 75 orders in consultation with the relevant elected District Council and County Council members

**30 SALTHOUSE PARISH COUNCIL - TEMPORARY APPOINTMENT OF DISTRICT COUNCILLOR TO ENSURE QUORUM**

Cllr T Adams, Leader of the Council, introduced this item. He explained that he wished to update members on the situation at Salthouse Parish Council. The Chairman then read out the following statement from the Elections Team:

The Electoral Services team has been made aware that there are potentially six interested persons from within the parish who are interested in serving on Salthouse Parish Council. With this in mind, we feel the best course of action is to run a further Notice of Election in the parish to invite nominations for the five vacant seats on the council. This provides for better democracy as should there the reported six nominations received, we can allow the electorate to decide on who represents them.

Is less than six are received, the Parish Council would once again be in a position to operate having reached quorate levels.

*However, keeping this in mind, we would still ask that Full Council do approve the request to allow for a temporary appointment to be made to the Parish Council which could then be enacted should they still find themselves inquorate at the close of the nomination period stated within the proposed new Notice of Election.'*

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr E Spagnola and

RESOLVED

To approve the temporary appointment of either Cllr Eric Vardy or Cllr Victoria Holliday to Salthouse Parish Council.

To approve the creation of an Order to formalise the appointment, if required.

To install a temporary parish clerk to support the co-option process and other duties until a permanent clerk is appointed.

**31 QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM MEMBERS**

None received.

**32 OPPOSITION BUSINESS**

None received.

**33 NOTICE(S) OF MOTION**

The following Notice of Motion had been proposed by Cllr A Varley, seconded by Cllr L Withington:



### **Motion: Safer Seals - A SEAL of APPROVAL**

North Norfolk District Council agrees to support a campaign to increase awareness of the dangers to seals from Flying Rings, encourage businesses to not sell these items in coastal regions and develop the SEAL of APPROVAL Scheme for those businesses supporting SAFER SEALS

Coastal members will be asked to:

- Support the development, implementation and ongoing focus of the Seal of Approval Scheme.

Coastal businesses will be asked to:

- Engage with, support and implement the Seal of Approval Scheme

Officers will be asked to:

- Liaise with relevant partners and create promotional materials for the scheme to operate, raise awareness and add to our online presence.

Before the proposer of the motion, Cllr A Varley, opened the debate, Cllr C Cushing said that he wished to propose an amendment. The Chairman said that Cllr Varley would present the motion, then she would ask Cllr Cushing to propose the amendment.

Cllr Varley began by thanking everyone involved in local campaigns to protect seals from the terrible injuries caused by flying rings. The Council had supported this work for several years now with the 'Safer Seals' campaign. He said that this was a cross-party, non-political campaign that had been very effective in raising awareness of the issue. He referred to the Opposition's motion in December 2022, which proposed that flying rings were banned on the district's beaches and promenades, however the lack of enforcement powers meant that it was not supported. Cllr Varley said that the new motion was aimed at strengthening the previous motion's ambitions with a new 'Seal of Approval' campaign. It was not intended to replace the Safer Seals campaign but to build on it and focussed on trying to prevent the sale of flying rings. He concluded by saying that the Council's Communications team were supportive of the proposals.

Cllr L Withington, seconder of the motion, confirmed that she wished to reserve her right to speak.

The Chairman then asked Cllr Cushing to introduce the amendment. Cllr Cushing referred to bullet point 3 in the motion and proposed that the following amendment: 'to develop and deploy signage with a form of wording effectively banning the use and presence of flying rings on the district's beaches and coastal car parks, stopping short of stating that it was a legally enforceable order.'

Cllr N Dixon seconded the amendment.

Cllr Cushing added that his group would support the substantive motion. He reminded members that the motion brought forward in December was following a motion supported by Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council, which effectively banned flying rings from their beaches. He therefore still believed that this was an effective approach. If people saw a sign essentially stating that flying rings could not be taken onto beaches, then that was likely to be an effective deterrent.

The Chairman invited members to speak on the amendment:

Cllr N Housden said that he had abstained on the previous motion on a number of grounds. He said that seals were not an endangered species and there was a minimum of 157k grey seals around the British coast and about 55k common seals. He said that pollution was the main damaging factor for seals, along with fishing nets and tourist disturbance and pressure. He referred to the recent discussion on the district's housing situation and said that he would not like to see any significant amount of officer time and resource put towards the protection of seals. He said that Cllr Fitch-Tillett had worked hard to ensure that the Council signed up to the 'Motion for the Ocean' which was specifically aimed at hitting plastic pollution. It might be beneficial to ask shops to restrict the sale of flying rings but there were no plans to restrict the sale of plastic buckets, flip flops and disposable barbecues. He concluded by saying that although he would support the motion, it was far more important for the Council to understand the wider pollution implications and the continued focus on protecting seals should not take up a huge amount of time or cost money that the Council could not afford.

Cllr H Blathwayt, Portfolio Holder for Coast, said that the Motion for the Ocean was passed over a year ago, subject to a review after 12 months. However, the district council elections had delayed this so an update would be coming to Full Council soon, setting out the Council's progress in meeting the ambitions of the 'Motion for the Ocean'. He added that he had no objection to additional signage if it discouraged people from using flying rings.

Cllr S Penfold said that he agreed with Cllr Housden's view that it was a bigger issue than just flying rings but added just because something wasn't endangered at present, that it wasn't worth protecting or cherishing. He said that he was supportive of the amendment and that any strongly worded signage was to be encouraged.

Cllr A Brown said that he was concerned about the consequences and the reputational risk of effectively introducing a ban that wasn't enforceable. He said that it needed to be a bye-law or the Council could be put at risk if anyone tested it. He asked the Monitoring Officer to clarify the situation. She confirmed that the Council did not have any enforcement powers if such a sign was erected and people then continued to use flying rings.

Cllr L Shires said she was going to raise concerns about needing to employ more officers to enforce any breaches but the Monitoring Officer had just confirmed that the matter could not be enforced.

Cllr T Adams said that he would like to see a ban on flying rings but there was no means of doing so and he would be concerned about putting up signs that were not enforceable and could be open to challenge. Ideally, in the long term he would like to see signs that would discourage the use of all plastic items on the district's beaches but these should be legally enforceable.

The Chairman said that other Councils placed recycling bins on their promenades and piers for buckets and spades, to discourage people from just discarding them. It would also help families during the cost of living crisis.

Cllr J Toyne sought clarification on the banning of dogs from beaches and queried why signs were permitted for this. Cllr T Adams replied that the current regime was aimed at protecting people but not animals. For dogs, public space protection orders

could be used to protect people from the impact of fouling.

Cllr M Taylor said that he wanted to remind members of the wording 'develop and deploy signage'. He said that it was acknowledged that it was not legally enforceable but a simple sign stating 'no flying rings' with a picture of a seal with a ring around its neck, would deter people from using them.

Cllr C Ringer said that what was being proposed in the amendment was effectively an educational campaign. He said that he had no issues with using signage but it was just one element and so much more could be done. He would be supportive of taking a broader approach that could also reference wider plastic pollution.

Cllr A Varley thanked Cllr Cushing for bringing forward the amendment and indicating their support for the substantive motion. He said, however, that it didn't strengthen the overall concept of the proposed campaign. Signage was just one aspect of this.

Cllr P Heinrich said that he was supportive of signage if it was advisory and educational. He added that tourists left a huge amount of detritus on beaches and across the countryside and this should not be overlooked.

Cllr M Batey said that he had seen strongly worded signage at Horsey over the weekend and it may be worth exploring something similar as an option.

Cllr G Bull said that he supported the amendment. He did a lot of sea fishing and a lot of tourists did not have any understanding of the risks and dangers of the sea or the consequences of using flying rings. They were not acting maliciously but signage would give useful guidance and that was to be welcomed.

Cllr L Withington said that she appreciated the engagement from the Opposition on this matter. She said that she understood their frustration as Sheringham Town Council had tried to introduce a ban on flying rings but were not able to as they were advised it was not enforceable. Cllr Withington said that she wanted to remind members of the substantive motion and its intention. It was not about the Safer Seals campaign – this would continue and the current advisory signage which was in all of the resorts would be refreshed soon with more graphic images. This motion was about trying to stop flying rings which were being sold in local shops getting onto the beach. If people could not purchase them then they could not be taken onto the beach. By giving local business the opportunity to be part of a wider campaign which would publicly allow them to demonstrate their commitment through a charter mark scheme, then the key message about reducing the impact on wildlife, would start to grow and expand. It was about bringing the community on board and encouraging businesses to take responsibility for items that they sold. She urged members not to get distracted by other matters but to focus on the wider issues.

The Chairman invited Cllr N Dixon, seconded of the amendment, to speak. Cllr Dixon said that members were making heavy weather of the proposals. He said that the amendment was simply to add 'teeth' to the substantive motion for the sake of seals and other wildlife.

Cllr A Varley, as proposer of the substantive motion was invited to speak. He said he welcomed engagement from the Opposition but was concerned that the amendment was not something that was enforceable and he felt that the Communications Team were already preparing a full campaign to raise awareness about the impact of flying rings and this would include signage. For this reason, he said that he did not support

the amendment.

The Chairman said that a vote would now be taken on the amendment. It was supported with 27 members voting in favour, 7 against and 1 abstention. The Monitoring Officer advised that the amendment would now form the substantive motion.

Cllr L Shires sought clarification on whether the Council had approved something that was not legal. The Monitoring Officer replied that the amendment proposed that any wording on signage should stop short of stating that a ban was legally enforceable.

Cllr Cushing read out the wording of the amendment again at the request of the Chairman.

Cllr T FitzPatrick said that he wished to pick up on Cllr Housden's point about seals not being legally protected and although this was true, they were an important part of the district's wildlife and the public would still expect to see them treated well and protected where possible. He reminded members that when a motion on this subject had been brought debated just 6 months ago, the Administration had proposed an amendment which was supported, which included the following:

- The Leader meets and discusses the issues with North Norfolk's MPs in conjunction with the Friends of Horsey Seals and the RSPCA, if they wish to join us, to press for the need for additional powers for local government to ban the ring frisbees on our beaches.
- Engage with retailers in North Norfolk about the issues with ring frisbees.
- Post further general communication messages from the spring onwards across social media platforms.
- Consider the benefits of advisory signage on our beaches and Promenades asking that the rings are not used.

Cllr FitzPatrick said none of this had been mentioned tonight and there had been no update to members as to whether these actions had been undertaken. It was now Summer and nothing seemed to have been done on the actions agreed at the previous motion.

The Chairman advised members that the debate had now run out of time and she would now take a vote on the substantive, amended motion.

It was proposed by Cllr A Varley, seconded by Cllr L Withington and

RESOLVED to

Support a campaign to increase awareness of the dangers to seals from Flying Rings, encourage businesses to not sell these items in coastal regions and develop the SEAL of APPROVAL Scheme for those businesses supporting SAFER SEALS

Coastal members will be asked to:

- Support the development, implementation and ongoing focus of the Seal of Approval Scheme.

Coastal businesses will be asked to:

- Engage with, support and implement the Seal of Approval Scheme

Officers will be asked to:

- Liaise with relevant partners and create promotional materials for the scheme to operate, raise awareness and add to our online presence.
- to develop and deploy signage with a form of wording effectively banning the use and presence of flying rings on the district's beaches and coastal car parks, stopping short of stating that it was a legally enforceable order

One member abstained.

**34 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**35 PRIVATE BUSINESS**

The meeting ended at 7.43 pm.

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Chairman