



Councillor Andy Cooper (Mayor)

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

K M Aspin	B McKeown
J A Barron	A R McNaughton
E L Carter	D M McNaughton
R P Cooke	A Nixon
B M Cross	J A Nixon
M G Dodson	L Nixon
A P Edgeller	G P K Pardesi
P C Edgeller	A N Pearce
I D Fordham	J M Pert
A D Hobbs	J P Read
J Hood	A F Reid
F D J James	D P Rouxel
R A James	A J Sandiford
P W Jones	S N Spencer
R Kenney	J Thorley
P A Leason	M J Winnington

Officers in attendance:-

T Clegg	-	Chief Executive
I Curran	-	Head of Law and Governance
W Conaghan	-	Press and Communication Manager
J Dean	-	Democratic Services Officer

C26 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2023 were agreed as a true and correct record.

C27 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors F E Beatty, A T A Godfrey, E G R Jones, A M Loughran, M Phillips, J S Powell and J T Rose.

C28 Announcements

The Mayor detailed the following forthcoming events for Members to note:

- Battle of Britain Commemoration - Sunday 17 September 2023. There will be a church service in The Collegiate Church of St Mary, followed by a Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Borough War Memorial. Tactical Supply Wing (RAF) will then undertake a short Freedom Parade from Earl Street to Victoria Park (Bandstand side).
- Congratulations to Milford Hall Cricket Club who recently won their first ever Voneus Village Cup title at Lords having played against Leeds and Broomfield Cricket Club from Kent in a nail-biting final.

The Mayor led a minute's silence remembering the passing of former Councillor and Mayor John Alan Russell and Councillor Margaret Rose Goodall.

C29 Notices of Motion

- (a) A Notice of Motion pursuant to Paragraph 13 of the Council Procedure Rules had been proposed by Councillors A P Edgeller and J M Pert as follows:

“The Samaritans will be celebrating their 70th anniversary in November, more importantly they have been at work in Stafford for 60 years. They currently have around 22000 volunteers and more than 200 branches and locations across the UK and Ireland. Every 10 seconds Samaritans respond to a call for help. With the good work they do throughout Stafford in order to show our appreciation of their work, this Council resolves to plant a tree in Victoria Park sometime during November of this year.”

Members subsequently voted on the Motion as set out above which was declared to be carried.

- (b) A Notice of Motion pursuant to Paragraph 13 of the Council Procedure Rules had been proposed by Councillors A J Sandiford and seconded by Councillor G P K Pardesi as follows:

“Save our Ticket Offices Council Motion:

Council notes with concern the announcement by the Rail Delivery group that train companies are pressing ahead with plans to close up to 1000 rail ticket offices across England over the next 3 years.

Council believes that ticket offices provide a vital service to residents in the Stafford Borough. Having a clearly sign-posted place in the station for people with ticket enquiries provides certainty and confidence for customers who may struggle to otherwise locate station staff.

Not all residents are able to use station ticket machines, or have the means to book a ticket in advance. Complicated journeys involving connections are likely to require human assistance to ensure customers purchase the most appropriate and cheapest tickets, and do not incur penalties or pay more than necessary for their journey.

Council is concerned the closure of ticket offices will disproportionately effect older and disabled residents in the Stafford Borough - as well as those who are limited by their literacy and IT skills.

Council notes the statistics from Age UK that 3 million older people in the UK do not have access to the internet, and statistics from the Royal National Institute for Blind People that only 3% of those with partial or full sight loss feel able to use ticket machines.

Council is also concerned about the possible implications for current station staff and concerns that have been raised over possible staff redundancies - given that there will be no regulations for minimum staffing levels at stations and platforms.

Council therefore resolves to:

- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to Mark Harper MP Secretary of State for Transport, and the Chief Executive of the Rail Delivery Group, expressing Council's opposition to the possible closure of staffed rail ticket offices - and in particular the office(s) at Stafford.
- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to Avanti West Coast expressing the Council's opposition to any plans to close the staffed ticket office(s) at Stafford.
- Refer this issue to the Economic Development and Planning Committee with the recommendation that representatives from Avanti West Coast are invited to attend a Scrutiny Meeting at the earliest possible point to discuss future plans for ticket offices and staffing at Stafford."

Members subsequently voted on the Motion as set out above which was declared to be carried.

C30 Draft Sex Establishment Policy

The Council considered the Draft Sex Establishment Policy which has already been considered by Cabinet and Community and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and has been the subject of a public consultation.

RESOLVED:- to approve the Policy.

Members subsequently voted on the Motion as set out above which was declared to be carried.

MAYOR