



MINUTES OF COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE: Wednesday 22 March 2023 TIME: 10.00 am

VENUE: Council Chamber - Shire Hall, Gloucester

Present

Membership:

Cllr Carole Allaway-Martin	Cllr Tim Harman	Cllr David Norman MBE
Cllr Matt Babbage	Cllr Joe Harris	Cllr Sajid Patel
Cllr Paul Baker	Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Cllr Alan Preest (Chair)
Cllr John Bloxsom	Cllr Colin Hay	Cllr Philip Robinson
Cllr David Brown	Cllr Alex Hegenbarth	Cllr Steve Robinson
Cllr Alastair Chambers	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Cllr Vernon Smith
Cllr Cate Cody	Cllr Stephen Hirst (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Lisa Spivey
Cllr Linda Cohen	Cllr Paul Hodgkinson	Cllr Lynden Stowe
Cllr Stephen Davies	Cllr Nick Housden	Cllr Wendy Thomas
Cllr David Drew	Cllr Beki Hoyland	Cllr Pam Tracey MBE
Cllr Ben Evans	Cllr Mark Mackenzie-Charrington	Cllr Chloe Turner
Cllr Stephan Fifield	Cllr Chris McFarling	Cllr Robert Vines
Cllr Bernard Fisher	Cllr Dr Andrew Miller	Cllr Roger Whyborn
Cllr Andrew Gravells MBE	Cllr Graham Morgan	Cllr Kathy Williams
Cllr David Gray	Cllr Dom Morris	Cllr Susan Williams
Cllr Terry Hale	Cllr Gill Moseley	Cllr Dr David Willingham
Cllr Rebecca Halifax	Cllr Emma Nelson	

Members Apologies: Cllr Brian Tipper and Cllr Suzanne Williams

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th February 2023 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Councillor Phil Awford

Members were invited to pay tribute to Cllr Phil Awford who passed away on the 11 March 2023. Phil was the serving County Councillor for Highnam division and a

much loved and respected member of the Council. The following Councillors paid their respects:

Cllr Mark Hawthorne (Leader of the Council):

Today we gather to remember one of our long-serving members Phil Awford. For many in this chamber, Phil was more than a colleague – he was a friend.

Phil was a longstanding member of this council. First elected in 1997 and then again in 2005, he also served on Tewkesbury Borough Council during this period and gained a well-deserved reputation for campaigning on the issue of flooding – earning him the nick name “flood plain Phil”.

He was Mayor of Tewkesbury during the floods of 2007, and through his work on the Regional Flood Committees ensured that Gloucestershire got the investment it needed on flood defence and mitigation. His expertise on this issue was second to none.

He later served as Chairman of this Council, a reflection of his long service, and an acknowledgement of the respect in which he was held across the chamber.

I first met Phil over 25 years ago. He knocked on my door, holding out a piece of blue literature and saying in the way only Phil could – “Any chance of a vote”. His surprise was noticeable when I came back with an enthusiastic yes. In hindsight his reaction was not surprising – after all this was the mid-90s and enthusiastic young Conservatives were thin on the ground.

But neither of us knew then that this chance encounter on a doorstep in Kingsholm would be the beginning of a 25-year friendship.

For it was Phil, along with Andrew Gravells and Paul James who got me involved in the Conservative Party. Indeed, my first campaign experience was Phil’s first victory onto this council in 1997, after a recount, by just 50 votes.

Phil took Paul [James] and myself under his wing. He was the person who encouraged me to stand, and Phil, Paul, Eusuf, Jim Porter and later Phil Beer formed the core of the party in Kingsholm in those early days.

Phil did more than just run my first campaign. He took it upon himself to look after the three of us, Paul, Phil Beer and myself. He’d help organise our annual Christmas Eve parties at my small flat in Kingsholm, cooking up some unusual dishes – including one-year pheasant which, from memory, contained more shot than meat.

He’d often entertain and tried very hard to get us onto his favourite tippie, which back then came in a plastic gallon container – and was a tad too cloudy for my liking.

I was fortunate a couple of weeks ago to go along with Paul James to visit Phil in hospital. We spent a good hour remembering the old days, recalling some of those shared moments that had bonded our friendship – the old gang back together again. Little did Paul or myself know that would be the last time we would see Phil – I don’t think either of us will forget it, but we are both eternally grateful that we had that final hour together.

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Myself, Paul and Phil will always be grateful for the support Phil gave us in those early years. He helped us find our feet; made us feel welcome; he was our political father figure, our mentor; occasionally he made sure we behaved ourselves but ultimately was our friend.

And I know that's a side of Phil that many in this chamber would recognise. For Phil always had time for people and was always willing to provide help and support to fellow members.

For Phil believed that everyone had a role to play and knew when to put politics aside for the betterment of the communities we are all elected to serve.

He was a true gentleman of politics, a true champion for his community and our county. Gloucestershire has lost a great man, and we a dear friend.

He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

Councillor Ben Evans

I and on behalf of the group, extend our condolences to Phil's family and friends. I was struggling when I emailed Mark, to say how sorry I was to hear this. Mark's response was that this was someone who had been a friend for over twenty years and that is a very different experience.

On our side though we knew, respected and some of our members were friends with Phil and our thoughts are with you, as you have lost a real friend. My experience of Phil, as I have been on the council for three years now - he was my neighbouring councillor and I think the phrase 'under your wing' is an apt one. He didn't care what party I was, he looked out for me and would often message me to work on issues together.

I would bump into Phil in the Hare & Hounds occasionally, where he was holding meetings with people. Quite often late in the evening I would receive a message to say we have a joint concern and that we needed to work together. He was massively respected on our side of this chamber, and across the chamber because of the way he conducted himself and because of the person that he was. I don't think there is any bigger compliment you can give someone than that.

We would often joke on our side, that we thought he'd picked the wrong party, which was a compliment from our side but should not be confused with how tremendously loyal he was to his party and to his friends. My memory of Phil will be when people in the Chamber on all sides, were giving a wordy speech that he thought was too wordy and he would look across at me and rise his eyes to the sky in despair, and would have a wicked look in his eyes and shake his head in absolute despair. It didn't matter, and I knew and I said to Mark in my email to him, I felt he had a kindred spirit in him. He was all about the community, community, community and I think that's why so many of us are so sad, as so many of us felt there was a kindred spirit in him and he was only here to represent his community. We are really sad and we pass on our condolences to his family and friends.

Councillor John Bloxsom

On behalf of our group we also offer our condolences to Phil's family, friends and colleagues on his sad death. I've known Phil for the last two years, as he was the

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Chair of Corporate Scrutiny Committee and I have been serving as Vice Chair for that period and my experience of Phil was that he had a good natural sense of humour, was always very inclusive, welcoming of debate and other opinions. I felt he'd be a compassionate person and many of us recognised him as an old fashioned Tory and a good and likable person. We offer our condolences.

Councillor Cate Cody

I am speaking on behalf of the Green Group about our fine fellow councillor, Phil Awford. There is a very common theme running through our conversations about Phil - most notably his fairness, kindness and consequently his ability to get the best out of all of us - working together as a team.

Beki said that when she was elected in 2021, Phil was one of the most welcoming people; his humour shone through and the depth of his understanding was evident on the CROW Committee that he chaired with a calm and attentive attitude.

Chloe very much admired the patient, fair and amicable way Phil ran his scrutiny meetings, allowing time for all, healthy debate and as a result achieving an atmosphere of cooperation across party lines.

Chris told us that Phil was a kind and considerate councillor. He tended to listen before he spoke. A man of integrity that he will miss.

I got to know Phil via the Restoring our Rivers working group which he chaired very decently; always crediting Paul [Hodgkinson] for the group being established through a motion he'd submitted, and not only patiently listening to us all, but actively encouraging us to be as engaged as possible and welcoming all of our contributions. He made us feel like valued colleagues and I know he was very proud of the report we published. As we continue the work, our positive memories of Phil will spur us on to do our very best and I think he would be most pleased to know this.

Our compassion is with his many friends and much loved family.

Councillor Jeremy Hilton

I first met Phil in 1990, when he came to Cllr Christine Twigg's house on a spying mission on the Liberal Democrats; and he was elected to council and so was Mark and others when I took my sabbatical from politics for a number of years. Phil remembered me turning up in 2001 and standing against him at the County Council elections and I originally won by 22 votes but Phil and the team asked for a recount and I won by 72 votes. We walked out of the Guildhall, Phil shook my hand and we never fell out and always got on well and I was very pleased to see him back on the council but in another area as I knew he would do a good job for Gloucestershire.

We were always on good terms and often had cosy chats together, while I tried to find out what was going on in the Conservative Party that was of interest but he never gave anything away that was important, maybe he was teasing me.

He was a good Chair of Committee and did a good job of keeping me and Andrew [Gravells] at bay when we started to argue with each other and would tell us both to be quiet, and calm down and carry on with the business. Phil was a lovely guy and

I was very sorry to hear about his death and I can understand those who were close to him will miss him very much.

Councillor Sajid Patel

I was really saddened by the news on Saturday morning that Phil had passed away, as only two days earlier I had spoken to him and he was so looking forward to coming home and was in great spirits and was talking about attending council. He joined us virtually at the Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting and was looking so well. He was passionate about his community and serving the people of Gloucestershire, even while he was in hospital.

His commitment and dedication was second to none and I recall when I was first elected in 2017, he was one of the first councillors I met at our group meeting and he had the ability to put me at ease and had a natural ability to make you feel comfortable. He was one of the friendliest County Councillors I had met and we became friends. It's very sad and I will miss him.

Councillor Mark Mackenzie-Charrington.

I probably speak on behalf of those who have been elected for less than two years, and I echo many of the sentiments said in the chamber today, many more eloquent than I will be. When one enters County Hall for the first time, it's all a bit awesome and one has to feel their way. Phil was one of the first people who came up and metaphorically put his arm around my shoulder and helped me to understand what I was meant to be doing.

We all get allocated our various committees, and I sat on many committees with Phil and his dry sense of humour and that twinkle in his eye, the nod or the shake of the head, it was evident he was a very wise man. From my personal perspective he was my mentor and I knew if I had a question, I could ask him and I knew I would get wise counsel. He was, in my view, nature's gentleman and we will miss him greatly.

Councillor Joe Harris

I echo what everyone else has said but, for me, my abiding memory of Phil was that he was very funny - he really was - and quite often things in this chamber, not in recent years but in the past got very fraught, when there was no overall control. Phil was also very good at taking the heat out of the situation, by a comment or by rolling his eyes, it put things in perspective.

I got to know Phil when he was the Chairman of the County Council and I was also a member of the 'chain gang' as the Mayor of Cirencester and quite often there would be overlap at events and we got to know each other pretty well. It shows the regard he was held in, given the emotional tributes today, and it is a big loss not only for the Chamber but for his community in Highnam. He got 63% of the vote in Highnam at the last election and we used to have a competition as to who would get the biggest percentage of the vote, he always beat me which was testament to the man.

I think as well the whole ability to put you at ease as I felt that too, as about six years ago, when I was feeling particularly down. At the time both Phil and I smoked

and we would go out to the back of the car park, smoke and share stories, and I was particular down, struggling with mental health and it was a fractious meeting and his abiding words will stay with me forever, 'Don't let them get you down' and from that day on I never have. Thank you Phil, we mourn him and miss him.

Councillor Vernon Smith

I'm not sure where to start really, I think condolences to the family but I want to talk and I fully endorse everything everyone is already said. Phil was a true champion for flood alleviation and a fantastic advocate for his community. I wanted to talk a little bit about my friendship with Phil, because I first met Phil before 2007 but I really got to know him well after the great floods in Tewkesbury of 2007 when Phil was the Mayor. Phil came round when I had lost everything, as I lived in a bungalow, not near a river, and the floods took out everything.

I was frustrated and wanted to talk about things from my civil engineering background - things we should be doing - and Phil asked me to come to a scrutiny committee, and told me, 'Tell them my boy, you tell them'. I remember meeting him there at the scrutiny committee and obviously because of the flood I hadn't really got any clothes, I was just in ordinary jeans and T-shirt and he said to me you need a shirt and tie, my boy, and he gave me his shirt and tie that day, I was nervous and he said tell them the facts.

Phil was fantastic from then on. I've worked so closely with him on a numerous flood alleviation schemes and he helped me with the flood reports in 2008. He introduced me to the Deputy Chief Executive Peter Jones, Simon Excell and Julie Girling and I realise now - I didn't then - that these were really important people to talk too, to move forward after the devastation of 2007. Phil arranged all that, and he worked with me.

I just wanted to tell you a story. I helped Phil take his leaflets out - he was such an advocate for his community he knew everyone. So he would say things like "Make sure you put Mary's leaflet in the milk box and not through the door"; "When you go to Farmer Jones make sure you ask about Shep the dog, how's he doing" and "Ask young Susie how the baby doing". He would then do the most inquisitive thing afterwards, he would interrogate me - did I see Susie, did I put the leaflet in the milk box. But that was Phil and he knew everyone in his community and cared for everyone.

As Councillor Harris said the public supported him because they cared about Phil Awford. I could say so much more. My condolences. He was a friend and I shall miss him greatly.

Cllr Steve Robinson

When I was first elected to council, Phil was Chair of Planning Committee and I was the new boy and I must say that Phil took me under his wing and I shall never forget that. I would just like to say thank you Phil, for being Phil.

Councillor David Willingham

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My sincere condolences to his family, friends and those in the chamber who knew him as a friend and a colleague, far longer than I have as a first-time councillor. Although I have not been here very long, it's clear to me how committed he was to Gloucestershire. He remotely joined the last meeting of Environment Scrutiny just a few days before he died and the fact that he took the time and the effort to dial into that meeting, I think is a mark of the man. His work as the Chair of the Commons and Rights of Way Committee - he was obviously very well respected and this was echoed by the words of the Public Rights of Way Officers at our briefing. This just showed how much respect he was held in by officers. He will be missed by all of us.

Councillor Graham Morgan

Phil was Chair of this Council and I was his Vice Chair and he put me as his Vice Chair again on the Commons & Rights of Way Committee. When I first met Phil, I was coming into this chamber and he tapped me on the shoulder and said 'Aye ole butty, us Foresters gotta stick together' and I thought from that point on, Phil became one of the finest and genuine people I have ever met.

When the Chairman told me, I felt a deep ache - the type you get when you lose someone very close and dear to you. We exchanged banter on Facebook and jokes probably only Foresters would understand. Phil was a Forester and there are no two ways about that, and my condolences go to his family.

He was one of the most genuine persons and finest people I have ever met and that reflects in what has been said today. His knowledge of flooding and issues like that - we will not replace that depth of knowledge by one person, it is impossible to replace it. You always remember he joked about it - he said he knew that much about water, he had water on the brain, but you know his knowledge is unsurpassed. Gloucestershire will be a very, very much poorer place for Phil's passing.

Councillor Philip Robinson

I'll always remember the kindness and helpfulness that Phil showed me when I was newly elected. At that time, I didn't know him particularly well, but within a few days of being elected, he contacted me to put me in the know on flooding. As my division covers a very large area, 20 miles long 10 miles wide, and to the east it shares a boundary with Phil's division and has some of the same problems with flooding and what has already been said - what Phil didn't know about flooding wasn't worth knowing.

The first thing he was keen to impress upon me was that no two flooding events are quite the same and this seemed counter intuitive to me and when I suggested as much to Phil, I saw that gleam in his eye that he was going to show me how wrong I was. He took me on a guided tour, he so very generously gave up a lot of time and took me on a full tour of all the areas that might be liable to flooding, that he felt I needed to know about if I was going to serve my residents well.

There's no doubt - that was what it was all about with Phil, serving his residents and after that, we came to know each other quite well. We discovered that we have a shared passion for angling. Although we never actually got around to going fishing

together, we often talked about it. It was something we were going to do and the very day before he died, we had a brief WhatsApp conversation in which we resolved to fish together this summer.

Now that would have been a delightful day, sitting together by the water side, but that is not going to happen. But still he leaves me with the blessed memory of his kindness, helpfulness, his gentleness and his wisdom. I hope and pray that flights of angels have sung him to his rest and in his heavenly home there is a well-stocked river.

Councillor Dominic Morris

What's come through for me this morning, is that Phil was the epitome of what growing Gloucestershire's talent should look like. In the Cabinet we spend a lot of time talking about growing our own and getting the right people in to our Council and it's become clear to me this morning that Phil was everything that Gloucestershire talent should embody. I first met Phil properly after my first chairing of the Environment Scrutiny Committee. Its intimidating at the best of times, but joining the Council during Covid, with our intake where we had no idea who anyone was, we had only ever seen people in 2D or 1D.

Phil took me to one side and what he said to me will remain between us, but it was quite clear with that glimmer in the eye, the passion and the grit, and I will always be grateful to him for that.

The second thing I remember about Phil is visiting his patch, and one of the greatest privileges as a Cabinet Member is to put politics aside and see how much time, effort and energy people put into their patch. My goodness I learnt a lot from Phil and how he went about his business. It was immediately clear when you're sat around the table, there are some really difficult issues on somebody else's patch and by the way people, businesses, communities talk and look to their councillor. Phil had it in spades.

The final thing I remember is his passion for rivers and flooding (also known as 'Flood Plain Phil'), and his national role in difficult flooding issues and his passion taking forward the Rivers Task Group, which I was really grateful to him for.

Finally, how much I learnt from him in a short period of time and I regret I didn't get to see him in full swing as the operator that he clearly was. I think, just to finish, he was that glorious Gloucestershire man, and as we look to grow our own talent in Gloucestershire, whether that's officers or councillors, it's Phil that comes to mind as to what we should be aiming for.

Councillor Robert Vines

I didn't know Phil for the first 50 years of his life, but towards the end of last century I was elected to Tewkesbury Borough Council together with Phil. Subsequently I was elected to the County Council and so Phil was there as well. Every time I met Phil, I was always greeted with "Hi mate, how are you doing" and from that day onwards we've been mates. He is my mate and he will always be my mate. I was fortunate to be Leader of Tewkesbury Council for a few years and it's not an easy job. Phil was there supporting me, my Lieutenant, and he always had my back. He

always informed me when there were disputes and issues to make my life easier and I've always appreciated him for that.

I'm not going to repeat all the glowing terms that other people have used, because that's taken as read, but Phil was quite easy going, a warm generous man with a really good heart and he was very knowledgeable. Not just on flooding, as Cllr Morgan alluded to - he was very knowledgeable across the board. He was a stickler for detail - you had to get it right. I remember asking the questions at a political quiz and Phil was there with his family, and one of the questions was, how many miles did The Proclaimers walk in their well-known song. Well the answer was 500 miles - easy, who could argue with that? Phil did! As it was 500 miles and 500 more, so the answer should be a 1,000 miles. So I bowed to his knowledge then but it was always done in the nicest possible way.

I visited Phil in hospital just before he died and we had a long chat and he was looking forward to coming out, and as Councillor Robinson said he was a keen angler, something I didn't know about him. I said to him, "Well, when you come out to recover, take it easy and don't rush into things, don't overdo it". And he said "No, I think I'll do a bit of fishing and ease myself back into it". Well that wasn't to be, unfortunately, and although Phil is now gone, he certainly won't be forgotten, as we will all remember him in the future but for everything he did and everything he meant to us.

Councillor Alastair Chambers

The same as other members have said, he made us feel very welcome and supported us when we were like rabbits in the headlights - when we were not too sure where to go or what to do. When we had Council over at the Health Centre, I was always fortunate to be sat next to him and he would tell me about his daughters, and the things he had got for them, the bar he was building in his garden and would show me pictures and talk to me about fishing. I'm fortunate enough to have a fishing lake at my home. As I have never fished he was going to come over and teach me and I was looking forward to it. A really, really nice man who would always spend time for other people. I never knew he was ill and he would never make a big deal about it and would ask how I was. Such a proud and very nice man who had a lot of time for people, his family and a lot of love for his daughters.

The Chairman thanked members for their tremendous tributes and thanked Phil's daughters for attending the Council meeting. It was noted that Councillor Phil Awford's service would take place on the 12th April at Tewkesbury Abbey.

b) Ray Theodoulou

Members were invited to pay tribute to Ray Theodoulou who passed away on the 9 March 2023. Ray represented the communities of Fairford and Lechlade on Thames on the County Council for many years. The following Councillors paid their

respects:

Councillor Mark Hawthorne

I had the privilege of working with Ray as a cabinet member for ten years, six of which he served as my Deputy Leader. Ray remains the longest serving cabinet member to date. Fifteen years dedicated to serving this county, dedicated to serving local residents.

Ray was first elected to this council 2001 and joined Cotswolds District Council two years later. He was part of the first Conservative Cabinet under Barry Dare and held the finance portfolio for fourteen years until he stood down from Cabinet to be the Chairman of the Council - a role I know he really relished, and he had to deal with keeping us all in check and dealing with remote meetings in the early days of Covid, which had its own challenges.

Ray and I shared an office for the first 12 months when I was elected. I'm not quite sure how that first year went. I was probably a bit boisterous for him, and I, for my part, thought he was part of that Cotswolds Cavalry that I'd always heard of as a city boy, but never met. We ended the year being opponents in the group leadership contest for Leader of the County Council but once the dust had settled, we gained a new understanding of each other and a new found respect - one that saw us form a very close-knit team for the next 9 years.

For Ray brought a huge amount of knowledge, experience and understanding to the role of Finance Cabinet Member. He formed an excellent team with Stephen Wood and then with Jo Walker, leading the Council through some of the toughest financial challenges we have faced as a sector for a generation.

Ray's attention to detail meant that the section of the budget often overlooked by members, namely the council treasury management and capital programme, was well looked after. Unlike other councils, we did not burden our revenue account with debt payments we could not afford, and together with his stewardship of the Pensions Committee he significantly strengthened and bolstered the overall financial position of this Council.

Ray and the work he did, often behind the scenes, ensured the financial stability of this Council for over a decade and enabled us to maintain funding and investment in vital frontline services during really challenging financial times.

But it wasn't just the work he did on the finances that we remember him for, it's the support and friendship he gave as well. Ray had a very dry sense of humour; an extremely cheeky laugh and he always greeted you with his trademark "whatcha" which immediately put you at your ease.

I'm sure many members will recall being regaled by his many and varied anecdotes, which revealed an extraordinary life and a huge breadth of experience. But it was just the way he could get everyone to relax regardless of the backdrop.

I recall one time we arrived very late into a Travelodge-type hotel in Antwerp as part of an exciting trip to visit an incinerator. We were all very tired and hungry, and somewhat downhearted to discover the only food option in the hotel was a machine dispensing microwavable croque monsieurs!

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Ray, however, was determined to make the most of it, and for the next hour had us all laughing and joking, eating our microwaved snacks, while telling us one amusing anecdote after another.

It maybe wasn't a side of Ray that people always saw in this chamber, but it was the Ray I remember most fondly.

Ray's time here on the Council is an exemplar of what public service should be. He dedicated himself to serving the residents of Gloucestershire and the community of Fairford he represented. He was a real gentleman, a colleague and a Friend.

I am honoured to have known him, I was privileged to have worked with him, our county is lesser for his passing and he will be greatly missed by all.

Councillor Jeremy Hilton

I first met Ray not long after I got re-elected to the council in 2001 and we had a Lib Dem/Labour administration, and I took a place in the Cabinet. We set up a group called the Strategic Capital Working Group. we had to adjust the numbers as Ray was very keen to join to learn as much as he possibly could about the finances, particularly the capital finances of the County Council. He participated well in that and I'm sure it helped him when he got into position of Cabinet Member for Finance. We thank him for the County Council finances being in a good position, compared to some other authorities and he should be thanked for that.

I always found him to be a very pleasant character who didn't wear a tie very often and he often wore a pullover with a hole in it and I remember teasing him about it once and he had a go at me about my polyester suit I was wearing. We had a good time together and I enjoyed his company, he was always pleasant and did a very good job as Chairman of this Council, he was quite informal but very business-like in the way he chaired it and he was fair as well. I remember when I put my hand up to speak he noted that and called members to speak in order and that is the sign of a great Chair.

I give my condolences to the family, I also remember the time when I stood down as Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group and he stopped me in the corridor and thanked me for my service. I was impressed by that even though he was a Tory.

Councillor Graham Morgan

I joined the Council the same time as Ray in 2001 and, like the Leader, I thought this must be one of the 'Cotswold Calvary' that the miners in the forest had told me about. As I grew to know him over the years, we became quite friendly and he was a very different character compared to the beginning. On the planning site visits he had great knowledge of his own area and he was taken back by my knowledge of mineral extraction and we got on very well. I always thought he was probably the finest person to have dealing with the finances and pensions as he was very able. Ray did a great job as Chairman and I give my condolences to his family.

Councillor Cate Cody

We would like to pass on our condolences to his family, friends and colleagues at this sad time.

Councillor Joe Harris

Ray was a really lovely guy regardless of any political differences and on this side of the chamber, he had a bit of a bit of a nickname. Remember that budget meeting - I think he sort of rounded off by saying "I'll be raising a glass of champagne" and we had a lot fun with that. It was 'Champagne Ray', and you knew he liked the finer things in life. My personal name for him was 'Mr Waitrose', as I would always bump into him in Cirencester Waitrose by the hummus and we'd have a chat.

He was one of those people that were part of the furniture, certainly here but also at Cotswold District Council. I did find Ray quite intimidating at first, as he was very articulate, and I don't think he would mind me saying, he was quite posh by Cotswold standards, and we would have quite a bit of banter about that.

At that time, he was the Deputy Leader and I was a member of this group. He could be a bit standoff-ish at times but I'm pleased to say that certainly when he stepped down from the political leadership of council, we got on very well and we bonded along over a whole range of things, not just in Waitrose, He was a lovely bloke and there will be a great hole in his community and our thoughts are with his wife, Elizabeth and their family.

At Cotswold District Council they paid tribute to Ray and he always had anecdotes about a member of his family that was of a different political persuasion to him. It was testament to the man that he had a daughter who was a Lib Dem, a son who was a Corbynista and another one who was a Conservative. It always sounded so impressive, I'm sure the debate at that dinner table was very interesting. So we mourn Ray's passing but I'm sure he's up there on a cloud somewhere raising a glass of champagne to all of us.

Councillor Lynden Stowe

What a magnificent second career Ray had in Local Government, which was just a few weeks short of a combined service of 40 years, across Cotswold and this Council. At Cotswold District Council, Ray was Chair of Planning Committee and later Chair of Audit, but it was really as a backroom financial sage that he was most treasured by colleagues there. Others have mentioned the role he played here and it was no mean achievement to be able to deliver 'Meeting the Challenge' and at the same time rebuild the council's finances and pay off debt.

I think there are three of us who worked with Ray on the Pensions Committee and it was on that Committee really that I believe Ray was at his happiest. Ray was absolutely in his element. This was home turf for Ray - his investment background and his financial insights were invaluable to that Committee, and even more so when Ray was instrumental in the ground breaking development of the Brunel Pension Partnership.

In fact, he served as the first Chair of that Oversight Board, I know through a lot of conversations I had with Ray how much he really enjoyed that work. Personally, I was lucky to be able to think of Ray as a friend. He was an incredibly loyal colleague and a very generous mentor as others have mentioned before, because I back filled two or three roles here that Ray held previously. He was always on the

end of the telephone, generally his call, so as many others have said, Gloucestershire and indeed the Cotswolds has lost a really good friend.

Councillor Dominic Morris

As a member of the 'Cotswold Calvary', I just wanted to tell a few stories about how Ray rode to my rescue, as Calvary does and did so for GCC on the finances. I had the privilege of being chosen by the people of Fairford and Lechlade to take over from Ray in 2021. I say it was a privilege but it's actually pretty intimidating. Ray was an omnipresent colossus in Fairford and Lechlade and the villages. It was so intimidating that I started introducing myself as Ray's downgrade rather than upgrade and I still do today.

He did warn me when I said I'd like a shot, and he said "There is a lot of work - are you sure you're up for it?" Everyday those words ring in my ears.

It's impossible for me to talk about Ray without talking about Ray and family Morris. Ray has been part of family Morris and Coneygar Farm since before I was born. I met him before I got into politics a couple of years ago. My Grandma recruited Ray to the Conservative Party, when the Theodoulous moved to Quenington many moons ago.

During the reign of Mrs Thatcher - my Grandma had been raised as one of nine in a very deprived smallholding in western Wales - she took great pride in knocking up and down doors across our villages and raising money for the Conservative Party - that noble endeavour to pay for democracy from the grassroots up. Grandma knocked on Ray's door - I think they had barely finished unpacking. Ray would tell it as a wonderful story but Grandma finished the conversation with Ray signed up to Conservative Party and he wrote a cheque so generous, that Grandma literally skipped home.

That began Ray's second career dedicated to public service and others have spoken more broadly about everything he achieved and the level of duty at Gloucestershire County Council and Cotswold District Council level.

So I wanted to talk personally about Ray, Quenington, Lechlade and the villages. Ray was pretty much my first experience in politics, I think I was seven and he incredibly kindly chauffeured my Grandma to concerts where my dad was conducting and my mum was a soloist. I sat in the back of the car and listened and I don't know whether he fuelled my addiction for politics or whether he scared me off it for a few more years than perhaps it should have done.

The language was new to a seven-year-old and it was advanced language, listening to Ray talking about an incredible depth about individual planning issues, families that needed a hand, communities that needed this and that. I sat there and was like "Wow - this is a whole new world to me as a young boy" I had no idea all this stuff is going on and the amount of time and effort it took for Ray to sort it out.

Ray has always been there for family Morris and two instances come to mind, the first was when the roof was stolen from my grain drier, and we weren't insured. The Cotswold District Council planning man arrived with his authoritarian clipboard and started explaining to us that if we didn't replace the roof for which we weren't insured, we would be put in jail. I've never seen my dad's upper lip quiver and Ray

rushed up, having heard about this (not from us) and brought common sense and decency and a route forward.

I actually live in my own home because of Ray, as when I moved back from war zones overseas, we applied to convert all the sheds in the farmyard, as farmers are sometimes asset rich, but cash poor - at a time when we needed to keep our money on the farm and in the business. Cotswold District Council planning said we couldn't do this and it was unreasonable, and again Ray brought common sense and took it to the Planning Committee, and (credit to some of the opposition here today), they said why is this even coming across our desk. That was Ray - he just brought common sense and decency and a way forward.

Since I've got into politics, I've realised that the way Ray treated our family was not the exception, it was typical and actually Ray treated all of our constituents in the villages as if they were his friends. Even though he had just met them, he was looking after us all. He tirelessly attended Parish and Town Councils of Kempsford, Fairford, Lechlade, Quenington, Coln, Hatherop, Aldsworth and the Barringtons, every month. As I said, it will ring to my ears. "That it is a lot of work, Dom. Are you sure you're up to it."

Doing the rounds this month though, zooming out in the community in the way Ray treated everybody as he treated us, it's been a privilege to hear the stories of what Ray achieved and what he did across Fairford, Lechlade and the villages. Two big ones jump to mind. When the Memorial Hall in Lechlade burnt down, Ray led the way in building back better before it was a slogan, by finding extra money to put back a better hall than one the community had lost.

One of my first experiences on the campaign trail in Fairford, was Boxing Day midnight of 2020, when we were told at short notice by the Environment Agency that Fairford should prepare for risk to life and destruction of property. As we ran around with sandbags, with drains bubbling up and worried residents, I couldn't help but think, as we got away with it by literally have a cm or mm, I think that Fairford would have been underwater if it wasn't for this flood alleviation scheme that Ray had pushed through.

My favourite story about Ray is a lighter one. It's not quite champagne but is sashimi. (I had to 'Google' sashimi). At the height of the Covid crisis, I started my first shadowing of Ray in one of the Parish Councils and the end of my first Parish Council meeting, Ray signed off with "Right! Got to go, team. I'm cooking sashimi for tea."

I thought, it's a pretty big crisis here, people are having a hard time. I'm not too sure I would have ended the call with a lovely, wonderful, glorious dinner. I just thought about it and the next Parish Council a few days later, he said the same and I realised he was pulling the leg of Parish and Town Councillors at his own expense. Some councillors hadn't actually realised that he wasn't making sashimi and was probably having baked beans on toast - and that was a credit to a man who was comfortable in his own skin, and was really, really clear about what he was there to do and could make fun of himself.

I think that the sort of quintessential 'noblesse oblige' should be treasured. I could go on for hours talking about Ray stories but I don't think I need too because I think

everyone here gets that he was an outstanding gent who dedicated his career to public service.

Despite my dad's recent heart surgery and difficult condition, he is determined to play at Ray's funeral. I was fortunate to have a look at the order of service and caught a glimpse of the song that will carry Ray out. I won't give it away but I was listening to it last night and it brought a tear to my eye, as it captured Ray. It's an uplifting tune that captures his unwavering twinkle, his constant determination and steely eyed strength and stride as he marched about his business, which for so long was looking after our communities, our businesses and our families. The people of Fairford, Lechlade and the villages have lost one of its community platoon commanders or cavalry commanders, the essence of service in Ray and I shall struggle to ever become an upgrade, but I will do my best. Rest in Peace Ray.

c) Nigel Jones, Baron Jones of Cheltenham

Members were invited to pay tribute to Nigel Jones who passed away on 12 November 2022. He served on the Council prior to becoming an MP in 1992. The following Councillors paid their respects:

Councillor Paul Baker

I first met Nigel as a member of Cheltenham's Young Liberals. I can't believe how many years ago that was, but it was more than a few. One of my earliest memories of Nigel was the setting up of a mobile shop, where we would buy groceries and take them around to elderly and disabled communities in Cheltenham who couldn't get out and about and we would sell these goods at cost. It was not only a service but a really good point of engagement with those people and that was what Nigel was all about. That was our very first campaign experience in Cheltenham all those years ago.

Nigel was a County Councillor for Park and Lansdown between 1989 and 1993 and I'm unable to speak about his term of office at that time. He then became the town's first Liberal MP and he served for 13 years. In 2005 he was elevated to the Lords and became Lord Jones of Cheltenham, but Nigel always preferred Nigel.

Nigel was like his predecessor Charles Irving. He was a hardworking, diligent local MP. They would both be described as Mr Cheltenham by constituents. Nigel had strong values and would stand up for fairness in a free and open society, equality and community. He was kind, compassionate and a true friend to me particularly during some very challenging times with Cheltenham Town Football Club.

He was witty and was always great company., Above all, Nigel was a family man and he is so missed by his lovely family, Katie, Amy, Lucy and Sam and by all those who had the good fortune to meet him.

Councillor Mark Hawthorne

I only knew Nigel through his reputation and he clearly served here on this authority in the past but it is as the MP for Cheltenham that he will be fondly remembered. I was slightly too young to remember that first time he got elected but it caught my

eye as an unusual result and one that took many by surprise. It is very clear that Nigel had a real passion for Cheltenham and a real passion for his community and I think that shows through every time he asked the electorate to back him again for re-election.

I think this represents the passing again of someone whose contribution to our county cannot be underestimated. He has so many friends and colleagues in this chamber still, that have fond memories of his contribution for Gloucestershire. I never had the opportunity to meet him but I knew him by reputation and we should thank him for his service, and think of his family, friends and colleagues today for mourning his passing.

Councillor David Drew

My service on this council didn't coincide with Nigel. I knew him well as an MP and when he was elevated to the Lords. I think my experience of Nigel was his calmness, his dignity and his ability to overcome real difficulties. Those of us who remember what happened to Andrew Pennington and what happened that dreadful evening - no public servant should ever face what he had to face - and how he came back from that sort of incident, takes a great deal of fortitude and really showed Nigel's strength.

Of course, we met many times on trains, tubes and we discussed football and we shared his love of science and technology, and it was on the Science and Technology Committee he served because of his love of Information Technology (IT). He didn't sort my IT problems but you know he could still be trusted to share some of the things that were happening in the wider world. He visited Africa - Botswana - regularly and we shared a common interest in Africa and that continent.

Nigel was a good man and I never saw him riled by anything, despite all the issues and the way in which he was elected in 1992, in that difficult election for the reasons I shall remember. He never in anyway bore a grudge against any single person. You know politics at national level can be quite hard. It was always something that never crossed Nigel's mind, that you would take something personally which might have been said in haste about you and what you stood for. So I remember Nigel very fondly. I did call him a friend and I was very grateful that I've known him and was able to serve with him.

Councillor Colin Hay

I served with Nigel on the County Council and as young liberals we were at meetings together. We also had other things in common as my oldest daughter is the same age as his son, Sam, and (as it happens) within a few months my younger daughter was born at the same time as their twins.

He was so good and you said it was a surprise [his election as an MP] - Nigel worked really, really hard on that campaign. He knew how to campaign, clearly a Liberal and then Liberal Democrat. He was very well respected within Parliament, as mentioned, and was full of anecdotes, a great sense of humour and although, as David said, he didn't see him riled, he had a passion for what he did.

Like the other two people that we're remembering, such sad losses in Phil and Ray. All three were passionate, all three were about their communities and were the very

best in Local Government. People go into politics for all the right reasons. Some then drift, but you know they all go into it for the right reasons. I'm very proud to be a councillor, I think it's a really worthy thing, which isn't often reflected by public opinion at times. Nigel, along with our other two lost colleagues, is an exemplar of that.

For Nigel to have suffered the attack that he did was a stunning shock and he could so easily have died that day. He defended himself and his hands were so badly cuts from the sword as he deflected it from his stomach. Andy stepped in and saved his life, for which he got the George Cross posthumously and that was such a sad loss. And to remember Andy - that was the one day remaining in my memory that council was called together because it was such a shock for everybody and this council chamber were together in mourning that loss. As one of our sitting colleagues had given his life to defend his friend and MP.

That took an awful lot out of Nigel. He suffered with heart problems over the years but carried on through and gave up as an MP and became a member of the House of Lords and he really enjoyed the way which the House of Lords worked together and the knowledge. There are those who feel that House of Lords is an anachronism and we should have her an elected second chamber, but Nigel is one who said "Yeah, it shouldn't work but it sort of does, and it's really engaging". He was a very active Lord going to Parliament most days of the week and sitting in the House of Lords.

He really felt they were achieving an awful lot. So you can think that it's just somewhere where MPs and others retire to, robed up and did some boozing in the bar (he probably did a little bit of that) but he also did lots of really good work and in-depth work in the House of Lords and Nigel was very much engaged in that and he's a great loss.

Councillor David Willingham

I was proud to know Nigel, albeit only in his time as a Member in the House of Lords but he was clearly committed to Cheltenham. His service is a reminder to all of us of the risks that people take when they put their head above the parapet and stand for public office. He helped me when I was first elected as a Borough Councillor and offered to help me if I had any issues. We needed to get written public questions in to Government regarding public safety through the licencing process. Seeing my words written on House of Lords questions, just showed that he was willing to support people and tried to make a difference in politics at the highest level, for those back in a small municipal borough district authority. That showed his approach to politics, it was making a positive difference for everybody. I give my condolences to his family and friends as he will be very sorely missed.

Councillor Tim Harman

I knew him well for long time, as our paths crossed in many ways, as I now represent the area which he did then. I was an officer of Cheltenham Borough Council and knew him as a Councillor and I was the Deputy Returning Officer as it was a high-profile election in 1992. We had a lot of media attention then, and he succeeded at being elected.

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Subsequently we also had a shared interest in cricket and would often watch together. On one occasion, I was on the committee and it was the 150th anniversary of WG Grace's birth and they had a costume cricket match, with Nigel dressed as WG and me dressed as Gilbert Jessop. So I actually got to bat with WG Grace and, fortunately, Gilbert Jessop got to run out at WG Grace. It was not intentional; he just wasn't as quick as I thought he was - but we got on well.

I then left the council and got called back in to help coordinate the funeral arrangements for Andy. On the morning of the murder I actually spoke to Andy on the High Street - it was traumatic for everybody. I remember that Nigel attended the funeral with his hands bandaged due to his wounds and understandably it affected him deeply. He lived in my ward for a number of years and we shared in humour. May he rest in peace.

d) Andy Carr, Asset Management & Property Services, GCC

Members paid tribute to Andy Carr who had passed away some weeks earlier, saying.

Councillor Lynden Stowe

On behalf of all members, I wish to extend sincere condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Andy Carr. He recently died after a career with the County Council of some 43 years. Andy had first joined GCC the age of 16. Heralding from Manchester, he was a leading member of the Gloucestershire branch of the Manchester City supporters club. He was on the cusp of a well-deserved retirement having been a key member of the Asset Management Property Team for many years.

He was very much involved in the negotiations with our District councils of GCC planning applications. Many of the newly built additions to our GCC estates and the public realm over recent years will be a true and lasting legacy around his work. He was working on several projects at the time of his sad passing and his knowledge and friendships will be sorely missed.

Councillor Jeremy Hilton

I was shocked to learn about Andy's death, as he was a constituent of mine and lived nearby. We'd often pass each other and have a chat. I did meet him a few weeks ago when he was on his doorstep of his home, sorting through papers and charging his car as he hardly ever used it, and planning his move to Hucclecote and planning his retirement. It is sad that he has passed away after such a long service to GCC. My condolences to his family, as he was a great guy (but he did support the wrong football team but we didn't fall out over that).

At the end of the tributes, the Chairman asked members to stand in silence as a mark of respect for Phil, Ray, Nigel and Andy.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Severn public questions had been submitted prior to the meeting. The following supplementary questions were asked:

Question 1 – Alan Bailey asked when Parish Councils could expect to see a consultation plan for the connections to the ‘Missing Link’ National Road scheme that GCC would be responsible for.

Cllr David Gray accepted that it was a considerable scheme and would have knock-on consequences on the surrounding areas. He explained a number of public meeting and consultations had been held and additional events would be run.

Question 2 – Alan Bailey asked whether priorities would be reviewed such that they aligned with the delivery of the Missing Link. He also asked who would lead the planning group as responsibilities were split across Gloucestershire County Council and Cotswold District Council.

Cllr David Gray expressed that he would not be able to give specific answers but understood the member of the public’s concern over the local community not being sufficiently consulted.

Question 4 – John Irving asked for a specific response for damage caused to 24 Vicarage Lane because of heavy lorry traffic.

Cllr Dom Morris expressed concern for residents of the Lane but also for the member of the public’s specific property. He explained he would ask officers again to look into the enforcement side of ensuring heavy lorries were not using that road.

Question 7 – Paul Morrish asked for greater consideration and action to be given to reducing road speed limits from 30mph to 20mph given the reduction in incidents in other areas of the country that had implemented these changes.

Cllr Dave Norman explained that it was important to explore reductions in speed on a case-by-case basis and to go through due process each time. He said that he was happy to meet with the member of public outside of this meeting to explore his individual request.

6. CORPORATE PARENTING

- 6.1 Cllr Stephen Davies, Cabinet member for Children’s Safeguarding and Early Years, presented the report. It was highlighted that improvements were being seen across key indicators. There were, however, issues around the cost of specialist placements and the number of children placed out of County.
- 6.2 A member asked why only 94% of foster carers were DBS checked and whether this could be fixed. The Cabinet Member said he would come back to the member with a written response.
- 6.3 In response to a question about dental assessments it was explained that they were done through the NHS and the numbers of completed dental assessments was improving as they worked through the backlog.

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- 6.4 In response to a question about staff turnover, it was explained that over 30% of staff were agency workers and that more detail would be provided in a written response.
- 6.5 A member raised concern over the number of children that had moved between multiple homes and highlighted the importance of a stable environment. It was explained that there was an ongoing recruitment campaign for additional foster carers and Children's Services were working towards building their own accommodation and capacity to help mitigation this in the future.
- 6.6 The issue of social worker vacancies was raised, and it was explained that this was an area under regular discussion. The Social Worker Academy was set up to combat staff shortages, and Children's Services would be employing as many newly qualified graduates from the Academy as they could.
- 6.7 It was also asked whether detailed information on children who had been suspended from school was available, in particular, if they were awaiting Special Education Needs assessments. Cllr Stephen Davies agreed to provide a written response.

7. PETITIONS

- 7.1 A petition from Cllr Tim Harman, on behalf of residents of Upper Bath Street in Cheltenham, requesting changes to the existing parking scheme, was presented to Councillor Dom Morris.

8. MOTIONS

Motion 913 – Mandatory Voter ID

- 8.1 Cllr Wendy Thomas proposed, and Cllr John Bloxsom seconded the following motion:

Council believes that voting at elections is the cornerstone of democracy at both local and national level and that participation in elections should be encouraged in all those who are qualified regardless of age, ethnicity, income or any protected characteristic.

We note that the New Burdens Funding Allocations Grant for 2022/23 and 2023/24 that has been allocated to the six District Councils in Gloucestershire will total £180, 639. There are some serious questions about whether this funding will be adequate to cover each of these councils' costs and what the funding position would be if there were general election called.

These measures will be an expensive distraction, adding costs onto election authorities, which are experiencing budget pressures and staff shortages, and create barriers to voting, in particular for already disadvantaged groups, rather than promoting voter registration and actual voting.

The published list of acceptable ID required to vote is limited and Council is concerned that this measure could have a negative impact on voter turnout.

Council therefore resolves that the Leader should write to Minister for the Cabinet Office to call for adequate funding for the organisation of local elections, staff recruitment and training and for public awareness raising, in order to minimise the risk of voter disenfranchisement due to unawareness of, and lack of preparedness, with the new requirements.

Council believes that it is important that voting remains accessible for all and that the application process for a free voter card should be easy and accessible and therefore further resolves to actively co-operate with the district councils to support the promotion of public awareness, the making of applications for Voter Cards and their timely issuing.

- 8.2 Cllr Thomas suggested that there was little evidence and data behind the decision from Government to implement mandatory voter ID. The reported levels of electoral fraud in recent years had been incredibly low, for example in 2021, there were 315 allegations reported, with only one leading to a caution. It was suggested that this was an expensive and complicated solution to a non-existing problem and had the potential to lead to inaccessible and unworkable elections, particularly those due this May (2023). She expressed concern that the changes disproportionality affected younger people, who were less likely to have the adequate ID readily available and were already more likely to be disenfranchised. It was also suggested that the money allocated to date for local authorities did not cover all the additional costs of implementing this new voting system, adding that this money could have been put towards encouraging people to vote overall.
- 8.3 In seconding the motion, Cllr Bloxsom shared that the Electoral Commission found 4% of the UK population did not have the required ID, which equated to around 2 million voters. The Home Office online tracker to date showed they had only received 29,000 applications for the free ID card. He reiterated that he felt this was going to lead to a major problem at the polling stations. He added his serious concern around the cost for local authorities to implement these changes with the estimated total cost being £180m UK-wide over the next 10 years. Despite this, so far only a £180,000 upfront grant had been allocated for the six district councils in Gloucestershire. The remaining would require councils to apply after the event for justification-led bids to reimburse additional costs. He stressed that there needed to be as much time and resource as possible available for the local authorities to run this year's elections as safely as possible. He echoed comments from Cllr Thomas around the existence of data to support this change and its potential to further deter people from voting.
- 8.4 Cllr Tim Harman proposed the following amendment to the motion:
- Council believes that voting at elections is the cornerstone of democracy at both local and national level and that participation in elections should be*

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encouraged in all those who are qualified regardless of age, ethnicity, income or any protected characteristic.

We note that the New Burdens Funding Allocations Grant for 2022/23 and 2023/24 that has been allocated to the six District Councils in Gloucestershire will total £180, 639. ~~There are some serious questions about whether this funding will be adequate to cover each of these councils' costs and what the funding position would be if there were general election called.~~

~~These measures will be an expensive distraction, adding costs onto election authorities, which are experiencing budget pressures and staff shortages, and create barriers to voting, in particular for already disadvantaged groups, rather than promoting voter registration and actual voting.~~

We welcome that a comprehensive awareness campaign that is being run by the government and Electoral Commission, including targeted work and advice for Local Authorities and charities to engage those most likely to need support with the changes: Disabled people; Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities; Older people; People experiencing homelessness; People who are registered to vote anonymously; Trans and non-binary people.

The published list of acceptable ID required to vote is limited and Council is concerned that this measure could have a negative impact on voter turnout comprehensive and includes the option to register for a free Voter Card which will ensure that no one is prohibited from voting due to financial barriers.

*Council therefore resolves that the Leader should support our district councils in raising any funding challenges not met by the New Burdens funding by writing to the ~~write to~~ Minister for the Cabinet Office to ~~call for~~ **ensure** adequate funding for the organisation of local elections, staff recruitment and training and for public awareness raising, in order to minimise the risk of voter disenfranchisement due to unawareness of, and lack of preparedness, with the new requirements.*

Council believes that it is important that voting remains accessible for all and that the application process for a free voter card should be easy and accessible and therefore further resolves to actively cooperate with the district councils to support the promotion of public awareness, the making of applications for Voter Cards and their timely issuing.

- 8.5 Cllr Harman stated that the UK was very much in the minority for not having voter ID requirements in comparison to Europe. He reminded members that this motion was actually about ensuring adequate funding for the local authorities implementing this legislation (which had already been passed), not to reopen the debate about its introduction. He highlighted that the proposed amendment addressed two key points: in a two-tier local government structure, it was the district councils who facilitated elections, not the county council and that there was a comprehensive campaign being led by Government to raise awareness of the changes. The amendment

supported the need of the original motion to ensure district councils were adequately funded to implement these changes.

- 8.6 Cllr Stephen Davies seconded the proposed amendment but reserved his right to speak.
- 8.7 The amendment was not accepted as a friendly amendment. The debate therefore continued on the amendment.
- 8.8 Several members expressed why they would not vote for the amendment. They suggested that this change in legislation was not about large-scale voter fraud but actually as a way to suppress voter turnout, particularly within certain demographics, many of whom were already disenfranchised. They saw it as a gross waste of £180m, particularly given the current economic circumstances and an unnecessary barrier to democracy. It was also suggested that the public awareness campaign had not been effective.
- 8.9 In a country where voter turnout was already low, some members felt it was incumbent on everyone to ensure voting was made as simple and as easy as possible, not to put further barriers in the way. They shared views expressed by residents that were either unaware of the new requirements or who said that it had deterred them for wanting to vote in the future.
- 8.10 Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Leader of the Council, expressed his confusion at the ongoing debate. He reiterated comments from Cllr Harman that the motion was about the process being fully funded and properly promoted, which he felt the amendment did not change. The amended motion remained committed to supporting adequate funding for communications and implementation. In response to the argument around lack of evidence, Cllr Hawthorne stressed that this type of fraud was so easy to do that he felt it was undetectable in most cases.
- 8.11 Several members expressed that the allegation this legislation was being used for voter suppression was unacceptable. They referenced the amended paragraph highlighting the targeted engagement campaign which was included in the Governments communication plan.
- 8.12 Cllr Ben Evans proposed, seconded by Cllr Lisa Spivey, that members moved to vote on the amendment. This was supported unanimously.
- 8.13 Cllr Davies as seconder of the amendment lost his reserved right to speak due to the amendment going to the vote.
- 8.14 The proposer of the amendment summarised that the need for voter ID had been in operation for over 20 years in Northern Ireland.
- 8.15 The proposer of the original motion Cllr Thomas summarised in suggesting that the use of the word 'comprehensive' within the amendment was not suitable, echoing comments that the communications strategy had been flawed and the Electoral Commission itself said the 2023 elections were

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likely to be unworkable and less accessible due to the short timeframe in which to embed and implement all the changes.

8.16 On being put to the vote, the amendment was carried by a majority vote and became the substantive motion.

8.17 The substantive motion was then put to the vote and it was

RESOLVED that

Council believes that voting at elections is the cornerstone of democracy at both local and national level and that participation in elections should be encouraged in all those who are qualified regardless of age, ethnicity, income or any protected characteristic.

We note that the New Burdens Funding Allocations Grant for 2022/23 and 2023/24 that has been allocated to the six District Councils in Gloucestershire will total £180, 639.

We welcome that a comprehensive awareness campaign that is being run by the government and Electoral Commission, including targeted work and advice for Local Authorities and charities to engage those most likely to need support with the changes: Disabled people; Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities; Older people; People experiencing homelessness; People who are registered to vote anonymously; Trans and non-binary people.

The published list of acceptable ID required to vote is comprehensive and includes the option to register for a free Voter Card which will ensure that no one is prohibited from voting due to financial barriers.

Council therefore resolves that the Leader should support our district councils in raising any funding challenges not met by the New Burdens funding by writing to the Minister for the Cabinet Office to ensure adequate funding for the organisation of local elections, staff recruitment and training and for public awareness raising, in order to minimise the risk of voter disenfranchisement due to unawareness of, and lack of preparedness, with the new requirements.

Council believes that it is important that voting remains accessible for all and that the application process for a free voter card should be easy and accessible and therefore further resolves to actively cooperate with the district councils to support the promotion of public awareness, the making of applications for Voter Cards and their timely issuing.

Motion 914 - National Bus Fare Cap Grant Scheme

8.18 Cllr Cate Cody proposed, and Cllr Beki Hoyland seconded the motion as follows:

Council notes:

- *The Bus Fare Cap Grant scheme is a Government funded scheme introduced on most single (including Child and Student) bus journeys across England from 1st January 2023 until 31st March 2023.*
- *This is a positive intervention to help with the cost of living, taking many return journeys on the bus around the county from £7:50 to £4, nearly halving the cost per day.*
- *A comparable journey of a 40 mile round trip in the car will cost approximately £10.*
- *Making the bus affordable means that more people, particularly in this largely rural County, could be encouraged to start using the bus rather than private cars for regular journeys.*
- *Elsewhere in Europe, governments are taking great steps to promote and sustain public transport, eg Germany with its new €49 monthly pass, valid across the country <https://www.politico.eu/article/german-government-approves-nationwide-49-euro-public-transport-ticket/amp/>*
- *Encouraging more bus journeys and therefore fewer car journeys is one way that this council can take effective action in line with the climate emergency declaration of 2019.*

Council resolves to:

- *Write to the Department for Transport and our six MPs to let them know how much we have appreciated this scheme and that we judge it would be beneficial to Gloucestershire to extend the duration of the scheme indefinitely.*
- 8.19 Cllr Cody opened by welcoming the extension from the Government for the £2 fare scheme until June 2023. It was stated that for Gloucestershire, 32% of emissions came from transport use and a full bus was one of the best ways to reduce this pollution, as well as reducing congestion and the need for road maintenance. It was shared that since the £2 fare scheme had been introduced, she had noticed many more people wanting to try bus travel, even if just for some of their journeys. To extend this scheme indefinitely would give people more time to form and embed new habits and change the way they travelled permanently. Bus transport was a cheaper option than driving overall and was of course a win for the environment.
- 8.20 Cllr Hoyland seconded the motion and highlighted an example of the difference bus travel could make. She stated that the 790 miles of the M25, if just used by cars carrying the average load of 1.6 occupants travelling at 60mph, had capacity for 19,000 people. Coaches travelling at the same speed, each carrying 30 passengers, raised the M25's capacity to 260,000 and reduced carbon emissions per passenger mile by an average of 88%. She shared examples of other governments around the world who had subsidised public transport to make sure it was a viable alternative such as The Deutschland-Ticket in Germany. A monthly subscription ticket of 49 Euros gave unlimited travel on all local public transport. It was summarised

that Government had to be part of the paradigm shift, it could not be done without support for the infrastructure and the market; to change from a society designed and built round the car to one where owning your own private car was rarely necessary.

- 8.21 Members across the chamber spoke in support of this motion. Cllr Philip Robinson, Cabinet Member for Bus Transport, welcomed its content wholeheartedly. He shared with members that the new Secretary of State for Transport had recently approved the Council's request for extending the COVID-19 Bus Service Support Grant with a further £155m, as well as extending the £2 fare cap for a further 3 months. He suggested that this showed how serious the Government was taking the need to improve public transport, which was shared by the administration at GCC. Extending the £2 fare cap indefinitely would continue to help support residents with cost-of-living pressures and increase bus usage, which was key to protecting and growing the bus network.
- 8.22 Some members raised concern that the motion did not go far enough. There remained extensive areas of Gloucestershire only having access to minimal services, as well as the lack of connection across providers/routes/other transport modes on ticket prices and disparity in access to real-time information at bus stops. They felt if Government were serious about improving bus usage, there was far more left to do. It was added that Government could not expect local authorities to run an efficient bus service by throwing 'lifelines' on funding. The extension of the £2 fare cap would be a hollow gesture if the pressure did not remain to tackle all these other issues.
- 8.23 On being put to the vote, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

Council notes:

- *The Bus Fare Cap Grant scheme is a Government funded scheme introduced on most single (including Child and Student) bus journeys across England from 1st January 2023 until 31st March 2023.*
- *This is a positive intervention to help with the cost of living, taking many return journeys on the bus around the county from £7:50 to £4, nearly halving the cost per day.*
- *A comparable journey of a 40-mile round trip in the car will cost approximately £10.*
- *Making the bus affordable means that more people, particularly in this largely rural County, could be encouraged to start using the bus rather than private cars for regular journeys.*
- *Elsewhere in Europe, governments are taking great steps to promote and sustain public transport, e.g., Germany with its new €49 monthly pass, valid across the country <https://www.politico.eu/article/german-governmentapproves-nationwide-49-euro-public-transport-ticket/amp/>*

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

- *Encouraging more bus journeys and therefore fewer car journeys is one way that this council can take effective action in line with the climate emergency declaration of 2019.*

Council resolves to:

- *Write to the Department for Transport and our six MPs to let them know how much we have appreciated this scheme and that we judge it would be beneficial to Gloucestershire to extend the duration of the scheme indefinitely.*

Motion 915 - Supporting a Carers Minimum Wage

8.24 Cllr Jeremy Hilton proposed, and Cllr Ben Evans seconded the motion as follows:

This Council notes:

- *That senior Westminster politicians are calling for an uplift in the national minimum wage to those working in the social care sector, by adding an additional £2 per hour to the standard rate.*
- *That there are chronic staff shortages in social care, which in turn is putting pressure on the NHS who can't place people and free up beds.*
- *There are currently 165,000 vacancies across England in social care, up 55,000 from a year ago; Gloucestershire currently has 1744 vacancies in social care. This is a vacancy rate is 9.4%.*
- *Workforce data shows people leaving social care for jobs in retail related roles that are better paid.*
- *According to the Resolution Foundation, over half of the 1.7 million roles in Adult Social Care would see their pay increase under this plan.*
- *There are around 16,500 people working in social care in Gloucestershire, so based on the national averages between 8,000 and 9,000 people locally would benefit directly from the policy.*
- *Around 1 in 3 care workers are paid minimum wage (Source: Skills for Care - Pay in the adult social care sector).*
- *The Resolution Foundation 'Who Cares?' report estimates the cost of the policy nationally to be £890M.*

(This cost would be funded by doubling remote gaming duty from 21% to 42% (raising another £970M, assuming no behaviour change). Public Health England estimate the cost each year of gambling related harm in the UK is £1.3 Billion a year through ill-health, family and employment breakdown and crime, so would be also discouraging gambling through the tax and so any behaviour change would have associated cost benefits.)

This Council believes that:

- *Care workers are a vital part of the workforce and have, for far too long, been undervalued in terms of their pay.*
- *That a Carers Minimum Wage should be introduced, which would see people in social care paid at least £2 an hour more than the national minimum wage at the time*
- *This would bring their minimum pay up to £11.50 p/h today and £12.42 p/h from April*

This Council therefore resolves to:

- *Write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Mr Steve Barclay MP, asking him to review pay in social care and to commit to a Carers Minimum Wage.*
- *Seek the support of the Local Government Association for the introduction of a Carers Minimum Wage.*
- *Pledge our support as a Council for seeing a Carers Minimum Wage introduced.*

8.25 Cllr Hilton shared that he had brought this motion due to a personal experience of needing to secure care for a family member. The brokerage team at GCC had great difficulty trying to commission a care package, which they attributed to ongoing issues relating to recruitment and retention. However, once the package was commissioned, the family experienced incredibly kind, gentle, and professional staff. However, those staff and were currently being paid less than £10 an hour. It was stated that there were currently 165,000 vacancies across England and 1,744 in Gloucestershire. Care workers provided vitally important care for the most vulnerable in our society and the proposed wage increase would go some way towards improving recruitment, retention, and staff reward.

8.26 Cllr Evans echoed comments made by the proposer that care staff across the country go above and beyond to do a remarkable job for our loved ones. This resolution would go some way towards being really clear how much they are valued by us as a Council and individually for their diligent care and skill in their work.

8.27 Cllr Carole Allaway-Martin proposed an amendment to the motion which was seconded by Cllr Mark Hawthorne. The amendment was accepted as friendly by the proposer of the original motion and therefore became part of the substantive motion:

This Council notes:

- *That senior Westminster politicians are calling for an uplift in the national minimum wage to those working in the social care sector, by adding an additional £2 per hour to the standard rate.*

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

- That there are chronic staff shortages in social care, which in turn is putting pressure on the NHS who can't place people and free up beds.
- There are currently 165,000 vacancies across England in social care, up 55,000 from a year ago; Gloucestershire currently has 1744 vacancies in social care. This is a vacancy rate is 9.4%
- Workforce data shows people leaving social care for jobs in retail related roles that are better paid According to the Resolution Foundation, over half of the 1.7 million roles in Adult Social Care would see their pay increase under this plan.
- There are around 16,500 people working in social care in Gloucestershire, so based on the national averages between 8,000 and 9,000 people locally would benefit directly from the policy.
- Around 1 in 3 care workers are paid minimum wage (Source: Skills for Care - Pay in the adult social care sector)
- ~~The Resolution Foundation 'Who Cares?' report estimates the cost of the policy nationally to be £890M (This cost would be funded by doubling remote gaming duty from 21% to 42% (raising another £970M, assuming no behaviour change). Public Health England estimate the cost each year of gambling related harm in the UK is £1.3 Billion a year through ill-health, family and employment breakdown and crime, so would be also discouraging gambling through the tax and so any behaviour change would have associated cost benefits.)~~

This Council believes that:

- Care workers are a vital part of the workforce and have, for far too long, been undervalued in terms of their pay.
- The government, local authorities, and relevant associations should work together to explore and then implement measures to attract and retain care workers. ~~That a~~ This should include, but not be restricted to, looking at a Carers Minimum Wage ~~should be introduced~~, which would see people in social care paid at least £2 an hour more than the national minimum wage at the time.
- This would bring their minimum pay up to £11.50 p/h today and £12.42 p/h from April.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Mr Steve Barclay MP, asking him to review pay in social care and to commit to a Carers Minimum Wage
- Seek the support of the Local Government Association for the introduction of a Carers Minimum Wage
- Pledge our support the Local Government Association's call for a 10-year workforce plan for Adult Social Care
- Pledge our support as a Council for seeing a Carers Minimum Wage introduced.

- 8.28 Cllr Allaway-Martin, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care Commissioning, shared some additional context to the current pressures. She stated that although this was an issue about pay and conditions of work, there were many other areas where care workers wanted to see an improvement, for example, access to salary, career pathways, training, and parity of esteem with NHS colleagues. The existing historical and complex system meant that care providers were commercial businesses that set their own terms and conditions within a competitive market. A recent study in Gloucestershire which engaged with providers found that their perspective on the cost of care very much echoed aspirations of the workforce and its customers. They wanted to be sufficiently resourced to sustain and improve outcomes for those in their care. The now amended motion would add weight to the recent draft recommendations of the Hewitt Review.
- 8.29 Members highlighted that this was one of the lowest paid jobs in our economy, and it was the workforce we trusted with our most precious people. These were people that we praised during Covid for supporting our society, and it was fundamental to show how much we value in financial terms, the contribution they make. A member added another ongoing issue around carers not currently being paid for travel time between clients.
- 8.30 Cllr Mark Hawthorne, Leader of the Council, welcomed this debate and updated members on the huge amount of work and money invested in this area already by the Council and other local authorities. This included sign on, and retention, bonuses to try to recruit and stabilise the workforce. Many millions of pounds had been paid out, and vitally, directly to the carer workers and not the companies. It was stressed that members should not underestimate the importance of achieving parity with the NHS as without it, local authorities ended up competing for good quality staff. In addition, there was a need for the LGA to consider a 10-year workforce strategy which not only addressed ensuring acceptable pay but also recognised that this was a shrinking workforce nationally.
- 8.31 In summing up, the proposer thanked members for their support, echoing comments about the complex and wider picture of pressures in this sector, particularly in reference to the need for parity with NHS colleagues. Cllr Hilton felt this motion could result in a proposal that would have an immediate improvement for the workforce.
- 8.32 On being put to the vote, it was unanimously

RESOLVED that

This Council notes:

- *That senior Westminster politicians are calling for an uplift in the national minimum wage to those working in the social care sector, by adding an additional £2 per hour to the standard rate.*
- *That there are chronic staff shortages in social care, which in turn is putting pressure on the NHS who can't place people and free up beds.*

Minutes subject to their acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting

- *There are currently 165,000 vacancies across England in social care, up 55,000 from a year ago; Gloucestershire currently has 1744 vacancies in social care. This is a vacancy rate is 9.4%*
- *Workforce data shows people leaving social care for jobs in retail related roles that are better paid According to the Resolution Foundation, over half of the 1.7 million roles in Adult Social Care would see their pay increase under this plan.*
- *There are around 16,500 people working in social care in Gloucestershire, so based on the national averages between 8,000 and 9,000 people locally would benefit directly from the policy.*
- *Around 1 in 3 care workers are paid minimum wage (Source: Skills for Care - Pay in the adult social care sector)*

This Council believes that:

- *Care workers are a vital part of the workforce and have, for far too long, been undervalued in terms of their pay.*
- *The government, local authorities, and relevant associations should work together to explore and then implement measures to attract and retain care workers. This should include, but not be restricted to, looking at a Carers Minimum Wage, which would see people in social care paid at least £2 an hour more than the national minimum wage at the time.*
- *This would bring their minimum pay up to £11.50 p/h today and £12.42 p/h from April.*

This Council therefore resolves to:

- *Write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Mr Steve Barclay MP, asking him to review pay in social care and to commit to a Carers Minimum Wage*
- *Seek the support of the Local Government Association for the introduction of a Carers Minimum Wage*
- *Pledge our support the Local Government Association's call for a 10-year workforce plan for Adult Social Care*
- *Pledge our support as a Council for seeing a Carers Minimum Wage introduced.*

9. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

Fifty Member questions had been submitted prior to the meeting. The following supplementary questions were asked:

Question 1 – Paul Hodgkinson asked what the Cabinet Member would be doing to ensure local roads and communities experienced as minimal inconvenience as possible due to diversions from work on Cheltenham Hill.

Cllr Dom Morris explained that it was an important resurfacing scheme, and the road needed repair. There had been engagement with affected communities and that engagement would continue to ensure minimum disruption.

Question 7 – Paul Hodgkinson asked if the Cabinet member could do more work to assess whether a Gloucestershire Youth Council could be set up.

Cllr Stephen Davies agreed that there was more work to be done in this area, and the correct channel for this should be through the Children's Coalition in Gloucestershire. He did not agree however that a Youth Council was the best way forward.

Question 8 – Paul Baker asked whether the Cabinet Member would bring the shortage of SEND places in Gloucestershire to scrutiny.

Cllr Philip Robinson explained that it was down to scrutiny to decide what would be brought to meetings and he was happy to discuss if this was requested.

Question 9 – Paul Baker asked for a sense of when a review into road and pavement maintenance would be completed and presented to members.

Cllr Dom Morris explained that the review was part of the Transformation Plan but it was still in its very early stages so there was no specified timeline for the completion of that review yet.

Question 12 – Jeremy Hilton expressed concern over the speed of consultation for new parking regulations in Kingsholm and asked if the Cabinet member could do more to speed things up.

Cllr Dom Morris reiterated that there was a significant Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) backlog and work was being done to reduce it.

Question 15 – David Drew expressed concern over a road closure on Slad Road that was extended from three to six weeks. He asked why his objection to this was ignored.

Cllr Dom Morris reiterated that the work had to be done as it was posing a risk to the highway.

Question 16 – David Drew asked what the process was to make sure externalised contractors were on track with TROs.

Cllr Dom Morris explained that the TRO backlog was a big issue and that contractors had been brought in to speed up the process. They were also investing in officers and advertising for roles within GCC to increase TRO capacity and remove the need for contractors longer term.

Question 18 – Roger Whyborn asked if the Cabinet Member could share the feedback from the failed transport bids.

Cllr Robinson explained that there was some feedback on multi-operator ticketing and data analysis from various meetings with the Department for Transport. He was happy to discuss further feedback with the Councillor as it came through.

Question 19 – David Willingham asked for a commitment that contact details for community connections would be placed at bus stops on the now defunct F bus

route. He also raised that Google was still telling people that that service was running.

Cllr Robinson committed to taking this up with officers.

Question 20 – David Willingham asked whether funding could be directed to the development of a bus station that connected the train station and the town centre in Leckhampton.

Cllr Robinson committed to exploring this with officers.

Question 22 – Steve Robinson asked whether it was true that the Cabinet Member was aware that the risk of Apetito ending provision was identified at the time the contract was changed.

Cllr Kathy Williams explained that she had not been aware of that.

Question 23 – Steve Robinson asked whether all those who had been eligible for hot or frozen meals would still be provided those.

Cllr Kathy Williams confirmed that that would be the case.

Question 25 – Steve Robinson asked if the new contractors that were taken on would be paid the same as Apetito.

Cllr Kathy Williams confirmed that the contractors would be paid the same and the meals would cost the same.

Additional clarification was sought and has been provided as a supplement at the end of the minutes.

Question 26 – Steve Robinson asked when new contractors are brought in, whether there are assurances placed on them for a standard of work.

Cllr Dom Morris explained that in certain circumstances, particular contractors' equipment might not be suitable, so other contractors might be required. In these cases, the expectation was that the new contractor would still deliver projects that complied with GCC's quality standards.

Question 27 – Gill Moseley asked whether the Cabinet Member would ride on the 232 'Daffodil Line'.

Cllr Philip Robinson explained that he had not set a date for a trip but was looking forward to it.

Question 28 – Gill Moseley asked for a guarantee that fly tipping information would be actively monitored to assess the effectiveness of the decision to stop accepting tyres at Household Recycling Centres (HRCs).

Cllr David Gray explained that fly tipping data would be closely monitored and there would be a reassessment of the situation if the data indicated a deterioration.

Question 29 – David Brown asked for a full briefing about what options there were from the Integrated Care Board.

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Cllr Lynden Stowe explained that viability was difficult for setting up new GP surgeries and he would make sure the Councillor got the full briefing.

Question 33 – Colin Hay asked about whether it was possible for the public to be able to submit their ideas for upkeep of the cycle ways.

Cllr Dom Morris explained that it had been an incredibly cold winter and primary and secondary routes had been served well through the coldest periods. There were funds in the budget for a Winter Preparation Co-ordinator to review things that could have been done better which would help with ensuring the upkeep is maintained across all routes (including cycle ways). Included in this work would be a mechanism for engagement.

Question 34 & 35 Lisa Spivey asked the Cabinet Member how long he thought communities should wait for a needed TRO.

Cllr Dom Morris reiterated there was a plan in place to reduce the TRO backlog.

Question 42 – Paul Baker asked how many safe walking and cycle routes had been completed and whether analysis had been done to work out how students were getting to school.

Cllr Philip Robinson agreed to provide written answer with further details.

Question 45 – David Willingham asked whether the Cabinet Member really believed that the diversion route through the A417 was safe for cyclists.

Cllr Dom Morris explained that he had asked officers to review the diversion and they had confirmed it was compliant and safe.

Question 46 – David Willingham asked for a commitment that this would be the last time the Council recommended a dangerous route for cyclists.

Cllr Dom Morris explained that he was an advocate for road safety and was regularly checking the safety of routes with officers.

Question 49 – David Willingham expressed concern that a one-day sporting event had received more re-surfacing funding than had been allocated to delivering safe cycling around a multi-month road closure.

Cllr Dom Morris would not compare different resurfacing projects against each other when they concerned such different issues. He said he would be happy to discuss specific issues and safe cycling in general in more depth with the councillor.

Question 50 – Alex Hegenbarth asked whether there was scope for Highways to work in tighter collaboration with property developers and utility companies to reduce disruption.

Cllr Dom Morris explained that efforts were being made to choreograph efforts and that four utility companies had been underperforming and that was an issue he took very seriously.

10. SCRUTINY REPORTS

- 10.1 Cllr John Bloxsom, Vice Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, gave an update on the discussions held at the committee meeting held on 28 February 2023.
- 10.2 Cllr Bloxsom informed members that, at the meeting, it had been agreed that the committee would invite Cllr Mark Hawthorne, (Leader of the Council), and Cllr Lynden Stowe, (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Change), to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 19 April 2023 to give an overview of the council's plans for the next financial year.
- 10.3 Cllr Rebecca Hoyland requested an update on Council Motion 908, (Violence Against Women and Girls), considered at the council meeting on 9 November 2022, and the commitment to seek White Ribbon accreditation, (a nationally recognised accreditation demonstrating an organisation's commitment to ending male violence against women).
- 10.4 Cllr Stephan Fifield, Chair of the Adult Social Care and Communities Scrutiny Committee, informed Cllr Halifax he had been unable to attend the committee meeting on 7 March 2023, but that a detailed presentation had been provided in response to Motion 908. Cllr Fifield agreed to seek a full update on the response to Motion 908 and report back to Cllr Halifax after the meeting.
- 10.5 The scrutiny update was noted.

11. APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

- 11.1 Leader of the Council and Chair of the Appointments Committee, Cllr Mark Hawthorne, presented the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24.
- 11.2 Cllr Hawthorne informed members that, at the Appointments Committee meeting on 3 March 2023, (in accordance with the 2011 Localism Act and associated statutory guidance requiring the Council to produce a Pay Policy Statement for each financial year), the committee had noted changes from the previous year and had agreed to recommend to council that the revised Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 be adopted.
- 11.3 Responding to a suggestion from Cllr Rebecca Halifax that more focus be placed on local recruitment, it was explained that recruitment from the local area was a consideration. However, given that the majority of senior and key roles at the council required high levels of expertise and experience, it was important not to limit the recruitment process by defining who should be targeted but by the quality of the candidate.
- 11.4 Cllr Cate Cody asked questions in relation to pay ratios and the gender pay gap. Acknowledging that the council did not have a specific policy on pay ratios, but instead recognised the Hutton Review of Fair Pay in the Public

Sector recommendation of a maximum ratio of 1:20 between the highest and lowest remunerated posts, Cllr Cody enquired why the council website did not reflect this recommendation, but instead, reported a different ratio, that of highest paid to median paid. Cllr Hawthorne noted the disparity and agreed to provide a written response once the issue was looked into.

11.5 Cllr Hawthorne agreed to provide explanations on issues relating to the gender pay gap after the meeting.

11.6 Council noted the Appointments Committee report and unanimously

RESOLVED to adopt the Pay Policy Statement 2023/24.

12. PENSIONS FUND ANNUAL REPORT

12.1 Deputy Leader and Chair of the Gloucestershire Pension Committee, Cllr Lyndon Stowe, presented the Gloucestershire Pension Fund Annual Report 2021/22.

12.2 The Annual Report provided information on the management of the Fund, an analysis of investment activity and performance, details of Fund membership and a summary of Fund benefits. The report also contained the formal accounts of the Fund for the year ended 31 March 2022 and copies of the Fund's strategy and policy statements.

12.3 Referring to the executive summary section of the report on page 118 of the agenda, (page 58 of the report), and the actuarial valuations of the Fund reported at three yearly intervals during the period 2010 to 2029, Cllr Stowe confirmed that, in spite of the severe disruption to the markets from Covid-19 in March 2020, and the war in Ukraine, the funding level of the Fund at 31 March 2023 was likely to be better than expected, (anticipated to reach a valuation of 143%). This was an unprecedented increase from that reported in March 2019, (110%), and the previous three valuations.

12.4 In addition to consideration of the Pension Fund Annual Report, (and in accordance with the Council's Constitution), the Pension Committee and Full Council were required to receive an annual report from the Gloucestershire Pension Board. The report included information on the work programme undertaken by the Pension Board in 2021/22, with any risks or concerns identified. The Pension Board Annual Report presented to Council at this meeting was contained within the Annual Report at page 132 of the agenda (page 72 of the Annual Report),

12.5 Acknowledging the in-depth amount of work involved in producing the reports, Cllr Colin Hay, (a member of the Pension Committee), suggested a little more consideration might be required when selecting some of the images used to showcase the Pension Board Annual Report. The comment was noted.

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- 12.6 Responding to questions from Cllr David Willingham in relation to the Brunel Pension Partnership, (a collaboration involving nine other Local Government Pension Scheme Funds from the South West of England), Cllr Stowe recommended members refer to the Brunel Partnership website at <https://www.brunelpensionpartnership.org/>.
- 12.7 It was later suggested that the Pension Committee consider arranging an information sharing seminar that officers and members from the district councils might find useful. The suggestion was noted, with the proposal that the suggestion be considered at the next Pension Committee meeting.
- 12.8 Thanking officers for their work in producing the reports, Council noted the Gloucestershire Pension Fund Annual Report and Pension Board Annual Report 2021/22.

CHAIRPERSON

Meeting concluded at 14:40.

Post-meeting note – additional information for Questions 22, 23 & 25

The contract with Apetito ran until 31 March 2023. In line with the Council's commissioning processes work commenced in 2021 to recommission the contract. This was an open procurement process and so any provider could submit a tender to provide service from April 2023 onwards. Apetito took a business decision to withdraw from the community meals market and so did not bid for the contract. When a contract is tendered because of the open nature of the procurement process there is always a possibility that the incumbent provider will not win the contract.

It has been challenging to find new community meal providers to provide a consistent offer across the county. The cost of the new service from 1 April 2023 is higher than the service previously commissioned. The Council has, therefore had to increase the budget available to support this service and this will absorb most of the additional cost. However, the cost to the users of service has also increased from £3.50 to £5 and the Council's subsidy has increased from £1.99 to over £7 in some cases.

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