



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 14th OCTOBER 2024

PRESENT: Councillor G Coates (Mayor), Councillors C Bain, C Adams, N Arkney, L Clarke, M Clarke, R Claymore, T Clements, M Couchman, S Daniels, C Dean, S Doyle, D Foster, H Hadley, R Kingstone, K Norchi, J Oates, P Pallett, B Price, L Smith, S Smith, N Statham, M Summers, J Wadrup, L Wood and A Wells

The following officers were present: Stephen Gabriel (Chief Executive), Lorraine Fowkes (Monitoring Officer), Nicola Hesketh (Monitoring Officer) and Tracey Pointon (Legal Admin & Democratic Services Manager)

40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Bailey, B Clarke, T Jay and P Turner

41 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2024 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by L Wood seconded by Councillor C Dean)

42 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that Cllr Kingstone was the original petitioner to see a front desk returned to the town centre.

43 TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, LEADER, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Mayor made the following announcement

Tonight, we are launching a piece of work from The Tamworth Unity Project, 'We are Tamworth', it's a video aimed at promoting unity across communities in Tamworth following the awful events of August 4th.

It's a great contribution by CIC our voluntary sector partners who have pulled this video together. I'm sure you will all agree that Tamworth is place where we all continue to promote unity and cohesion.

Cllr S Daniels made the following announcement:

Thank you for showing that video and this builds on this. I wanted to celebrate some of the events that have taken place in Tamworth over the Summer and Autumn and publicly thank those who have been involved in making that happen because we know it doesn't happen without hours of work and commitment. Amongst things we have had D Day Anniversary, Armed Forces Day, the key anniversary for King Athelston, We love Tamworth, Street Eats & Beats, Art for Tamworth & Dine & Devour and not to mention a wealth of events in our local villages. These only happen because a huge number of organisations, groups and individuals step up. They organise, attend and encourage people to participate in activities and in doing so, like the video they sign post what Tamworth as to offer, charities, arts projects, sports culture and I hope members and those in the audience tonight have the chance to attend at least one of them but if not, fear not, one of our Mayors events is coming up soon in our ward Bolehall, a Charity Halloween Disco and in the town centre the fireworks are on, on 2nd November but for me personally on 10th November is one of the most important events Remembrance Sunday at St Editha's and at other churches around the town centre. Historically, this is the day when many military youth groups come together to pay their respects to those who served and died so that we today can enjoy the freedom as a result of their service and their sacrifice and I especially wanted to remember that this evening because one of those freedoms is the right to freedom of expression to enter debate in a mature professional manner, and to recognise differences is what makes us stronger together. I also wanted to mention the service Mr Mayor because an important symbol of the service is the poppy. Thanks to our local branches of the Royal British Legion the Poppy appeal donations support the needs of the armed forces today and Councillor Bain and I were welcomed by the British legion selling poppy's and I will be doing so again this year. So, members we know that we are here to help our communities and volunteering for the poppy appeal is a great way to do that. Councillor Clements you are a brilliant representative for the Tamworth British Legion and I'm sure you would be happy to support anyone who would want to volunteer this year and I look forward to seeing you all at the various remembrance services our town.

44 UPDATE ON URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive informed the Council of a decision made under urgent action powers regarding the appointment of a Section 151 Officer.

45 REVISED COMMITTEE ALLOCATION DUE TO THE CHANGE IN POLITICAL BALANCE

The Mayor announced the following changes to committees

Cllr R Kingstone replaces Cllr T Jay on Appointments & Staffing

Cllr Jan Wadrup replaces Cllr T Jay on Corporate Scrutiny
 Cllr J Oates will sit on Audit & Governance
 Cllr T Jay replaces Cllr T Clements on Chief Officer Conduct Committee
 Cllr T Jay replaces Cllr T Clements on Statutory Officer Conduct Committee

46 TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING MOTION, NOTICE OF WHICH HAS BEEN DULY GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE NO. 4.12.1 BY COUNCILLORS M SUMMERS, P TURNER, T CLEMENTS, M BAILEY, S SMITH AND S DOYLE

Council considered the following motion, notice of which has been duly given in accordance with Procedure Rule No. 4.12.1 by Councillors M Summers, P Turner, T Clements, M Bailey, S Smith.

To give all members the chance to fully discuss the ramifications of re-opening Marmion House for a public front desk service and the intention to refurbish the old council chamber.

The following motion was put forward

Tamworth Borough Council to hold a strategic review of the current situation looking at all opportunities to relocate our head quarters including looking at purchasing and relocating to Moorgate School

(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor M Summers)

Cllr M Summers called for a named vote supported by Cllr J Oates, Cllr T Clements, Cllr S Smith & Cllr B Price

For	Against	Abstain
Councillor R Claymore	Councillor C Adams	Councillor G Coates
Councillor T Clements	Councillor N Arkney	
Councillor S Doyle	Councillor C Bain	
Councillor R Kingstone	Councillor L Clarke	
Councillor J Oates	Councillor M Clarke	
Councillor B Price	Councillor M Couchman	
Councillor S Smith	Councillor S Daniels	
Councillor M Summers	Councillor C Dean	
Councillor J Wadrup	Councillor D Foster	
	Councillor H Hadley	
	Councillor K Norchi	
	Councillor P Pallett	
	Councillor L Smith	
	Councillor N Statham	
	Councillor A Wells	
	Councillor L Wood	

For 9 votes
 Against 16 votes
 1 Abstention

The motion was not carried**47 TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING MOTION, NOTICE OF WHICH HAS BEEN DULY GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE NO. 4.12.1 BY COUNCILLORS J OATES, M SUMMER, T CLEMENTS, P TURNER, S DOYLE AND S SMITH**

Council considered the following motion, notice of which has been duly given in accordance with Procedure Rule No. 4.12.1 by Councillors J Oates, M Summer, T Clements, P Turner, S Doyle and S Smith.

To discuss the Labour Government's recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit

The following motion was moved

That this Council Notes:

1. The Labour Government's recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.
2. The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.
3. The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of Tamworth and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
4. The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.
5. The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.

That this Council believes:

1. That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
2. While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across Tamworth sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
3. The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.
4. The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

That this Council resolves to:

1. Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.
2. Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.
3. Commit the Council to protect those pensioners living alone who will lose their winter fuel allowance from the potential of also losing their single persons council tax relief.
4. Commit the Council to signing the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.
5. Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations such as Community Together CIC to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Tamworth are supported in claiming their entitlement

(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor T Clements)

Councillor C Dean moved a motion for items under that this council notes and that this council believes to be considered and voted as one item and for items under that this council resolves to be considered and voted individually.

(Moved by Councillor C Dean and seconded by Councillor J Oates)

This motion was passed

The following motions were discussed and debated

That this Council Notes:

1. The Labour Government's recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.
2. The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.
3. The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of Tamworth and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
4. The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.
5. The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.

That this Council believes:

1. That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
2. While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across Tamworth sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
3. The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.
4. The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

These motions were voted en bloc and the motions were not carried.

The following motions were voted for individually

That Council resolves to

1. Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.

The following amendment to this motion was moved by Councillor C Dean and seconded by Councillor J Oates that the motion be changed to:

Continue with a Council led awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.

This motion was passed.

2. Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.

This motion was not carried

3. Commit the Council to protect those pensioners living alone who will lose their winter fuel allowance from the potential of also losing their single persons council tax relief.

This motion was not carried

4. Commit the Council to signing the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.

This motion was not carried

5. Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations such as Community Together CIC to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Tamworth are supported in claiming their entitlement.

A motion was moved by Councillor C Dean and seconded by Councillor M Couchman to amend the wording to

5. That this Council welcomes the Government decision to extend the household support fund with a further £421 million and that we continue to support local efforts to encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations such as Community Together CIC heart of Tamworth and Home Energy Advice Tamworth to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Tamworth are supported in claiming their entitlement.

(Moved by Councillor C Dean and seconded by Councillor M Couchman)

This amendment was passed

The motion was carried

The Mayor