

SWT Full Council - 23 February 2021

Present: Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey (Chair)

Councillors Simon Coles, Ian Aldridge, Benet Allen, Lee Baker, Marcus Barr, Mark Blaker, Chris Booth, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Dixie Darch, Hugh Davies, Kelly Durdan, Caroline Ellis, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, Andrew Govier, Roger Habgood, Andrew Hadley, John Hassall, Ross Henley, Marcia Hill, John Hunt, Marcus Kravis, Andy Milne, Richard Lees, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Mark Lithgow, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Craig Palmer, Derek Perry, Martin Peters, Andy Pritchard, Steven Pugsley, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Phil Stone, Andrew Sully, Nick Thwaites, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Terry Venner, Sarah Wakefield, Alan Wedderkopp, Danny Wedderkopp, Brenda Weston, Keith Wheatley, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

Officers: Dawn Adey, James Barra, Lesley Dolan, James Hassett, Alison North, Andrew Pritchard, Marcus Prouse, Clare Rendell, Amy Tregellas, Emily Collacott, Jo Comer, Gordon Dwyer, Martin Evans, Chris Hall, Jack Johnston, Jo O'Hara, Scott Weetch and Joe Wharton

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

124. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Paul Bolton, Dave Durdan, Simon Nicholls and Peter Pilkington.

125. **Minutes of the previous meeting of Full Council**

(Minutes of the meeting of Full Council held on 15 December 2020 circulated with the agenda)

Resolved that the minutes of Full Council held on 15 December 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

126. **Declarations of Interest**

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr L Baker	All Items	Cheddon Fitzpaine & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr M Barr	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Blaker	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington and Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr N Cavill	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Davies	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Govier	All Items	SCC & Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr Mrs Hill	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Hunt	All Items	SCC & Bishop's Hull	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Lithgow	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Milne	All Items	Porlock	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Morgan	All Items	Stogursey	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Palmer	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Perry	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Peters	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Prior-Sankey	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr V Stock-Williams	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr N Thwaites	All Items	Dulverton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr T Venner	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr A Wedderkopp	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Wedderkopp	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

The following councillors declared a personal interest on agenda item 9, Review of Voluntary and Community Sector Grants:-
Councillors Caroline Ellis, Libby Lisgo, Marcia Hill and Brenda Weston.

The following councillors declared a pecuniary interest on agenda item 9, Review of Voluntary and Community Sector Grants and left the meeting for the debate:-
Councillor Andrew Pritchard as an employee of an organisation that had benefited from a grant.

Councillor Roger Habgood as the trustee of two organisations that had received a grant.

The following councillors declared a personal interest in agenda item 13, Decisions taken under the urgency rules regarding the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) Scheme – Tiers 2 and 3:-
Councillors Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Andrew Hadley, Mark Lithgow, Fran Smith, Andrew Sully, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Terry Venner and Loretta Whetlor.

The following councillors declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 13, Decisions taken under the urgency rules regarding the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) Scheme – Tiers 2 and 3 and left the meeting for the debate:-
Councillor Mark Blaker as he had benefited from a grant.

Councillor Roger Habgood as the trustee of two organisations that had received a grant.

Councillor Marcus Kravis as a company he owned had received a grant.

Councillor Steven Pugsley as the director of an organisation that had received a grant.

Councillor Hugh Davies declared a personal interest on agenda item 11, Strategic Heritage Update.

127. **Public Participation**

Submission from Mr David Redgewell

We were still very concerned about provision of safe stopping places in Taunton town centre essential on journeys from Castle Way, The Parade and Corporation Street. Before lockdown we were very concerned about the lack of social distancing among passengers in Taunton town centre and the risk of super spreading and we would like to see Somerset West and Taunton Council through its bus scrutiny commission to work on improving bus passengers

interchange facilities. The vision for Taunton development which we welcomed but needed a lot of good urban design work showed no provision for bus and coach interchange facilities. We felt there was a need for a Transport vision for the Town centre with a bus gate included on East Reach, The Parade with access for walking, cycling, disabled vehicles and public transport. And bus passenger's facilities similar to the new bus boulevard interchange on Flemming Way in Swindon or in Cheltenham with bus and coach facilities in Royal Wells, The Promenade with real-time passenger's information and in the high street. Somerset West and Taunton Council needed to bid for Government grant through the South West Transport Board for bus and coach interchange facilities in Taunton town centre. We needed to make sure any future plans for the development of Taunton Town Centre included public transport interchange facilities.

Q) Could you please explain what bus provision and infrastructure there would be in the new development of Taunton Town Centre?

Cheltenham had good bus passenger's facilities in Royal Wells and The Promenade. In Exeter a brand new bus station was opening soon and a brand new bus station had opened in Gloucester as a transport hub with a second phase to link to the railway station and a new bus interchange in Weston Super Mare was to be constructed all with Department for Transport government grant. Swindon had just been given £25 million to regenerate the town centre and there was a new bus and coach station on Flemming Way. On railway service we welcomed the on-going work on Taunton Railway station public transport interchange but as first group had pointed out not a replacement for good bus interchange facilities in the town centre and improvement to the station and work on Wellington railway station. We hoped to see the West Somerset railway line reopened this summer between Bishops Lydeard, Watchet and Minehead. With a Dmu shuttle from Taunton.

Bus service to Taunton racecourse vaccinations centre.

On the issue of public transport access to which we were very concerned the Taunton racecourse vaccinations centre had only a limited bus service by route 99 Taunton to Chard service operated by First Group South West the buses of Somerset every 3 hours.

Lucy Travis of Somerset catch the bus campaign has been contacted by patients in 70, 80 and 90 who had struggled to access the centre. Who had raised the issue with Somerset County Council and First Group who were going to run a shuttle bus service and then divert the park and ride bus service to the site and required an extra gate to be opened for bus service to turn around unfortunately, this was blocked by Somerset NHS Trust Clinical Commission Group Vaccinations Lead.

With 900 patients a day apart from the 99 bus and a walk from First South West service 6 from Chestnut Drive the buses of Somerset than a 20 minute walk.

The only provision was slinky bus or community bus which was not turn up and go service and had to be booked in advance and had limited capacity.

Q) Could Somerset West and Taunton Council please work with Somerset County Council the transport authority, Somerset Clinical Commission Group, NHS Trust Vaccinations Lead, local MPs and First Group to put a public bus on the racecourse vaccinations centre?

In the same way as a shuttle bus was being operated by Somerset County Council, Mendip District Council, Somerset Clinical Commission Group between

Wells bus station, Shepton cenotaph bus interchange and the Bath and West Showground vaccinations centre operated by First Group West of England Mendip Explorer buses. Every 30 mins. A similar service was operating between Bath Spa bus and coach station and the vaccinations centre at Bath racecourse with a bus service every 20 operated by First Group West of England Bath buses. We do hope that some urgent progress could be made to Taunton bus station especially as the next group of patients were disabled people and wheelchair accessible buses were very important.

Submission from Mr Bruce Heywood on agenda item 16, Motion to appeal to reverse UK Government emergency authorisation to use neonicotinoids on sugar beet

The use of neonics was a highly emotive subject because of the harm and potential harm they could do to bees and other insects. I believe they should be available only when absolutely necessary as part of the arable farmer's toolkit to help control the aphids that transmit the Virus Yellows to sugar beet plants, and the Barley Yellow Dwarf disease transmitted to cereals. To ban them out of hand was not wise, instead they should be tightly regulated and controlled. After all they were the only really effective aphides that there were available to growers. Last year was a bad year for virus yellows which hit the sugar beet crop hard because of the high aphid numbers, with some farmers losing up to 80% of their crop. If farmers have another bad year it would mean the possible abandonment of growing sugar beet altogether in this country.

Where would much of our sugar come from then? Brazil, India, Thailand, China? What guarantees that it would be grown to the control standards that we have in the UK? How could we be sure that there were no chemicals such as neonics or organophosphates used in its production that left residues in the sugar?

Having no sugar beet and sugar produced in this country would mean three important issues, firstly the enormous carbon footprint shipping sugar across the globe and secondly it would mean money leaving this country instead of staying within our own economy, and thirdly most important of all, it would mean that the problems of growing a sugar producing crop, such as sugar cane, were simply moved into countries where production standards and controls were nothing like we have in this country. So please consider the enormous harmful environmental impact that that would generate. Moving the problems to other countries was to me was not a responsible thing to do, but just hypocrisy.

Submission from Mr Richard Payne on agenda item 16, Motion to appeal to reverse UK Government emergency authorisation to use neonicotinoids on sugar beet

As a West Somerset farmer, I am emailing in respect of Somerset West and Taunton's proposed motion against the emergency authorisation of neonicotinoid seed treatment on sugar beet. It would appear that this motion had been tabled after consulting a very narrow body of research and data, emanating from organisations who were largely opposed to any form of plant protection, often NOT based on current science.

Firstly, it was important to note that there was no sugar beet grown in the south west and as such indicates the lack of understanding surrounding such a complex argument. It also represented the "thin end of the wedge," which may lead to more unilateral decisions for the SW which did not take into account

national and international science and 'best practice.' I therefore wanted to take this opportunity to set out why farmers, the NFU and British Sugar made this application and counter some of the misinformation that was being reported. I would also like to point out that I did not grow sugar beet, but have had to give up growing oil seed rape due to the neonic ban, as the crop could not survive cabbage stem flea beetle attacks in the autumn. This had severe financial implications for many farming businesses, as OSR was the only profitable break crop in our rotation. As OSR was a flowering crop, we as farmers could understand the merit in the ban as we needed, and indeed wanted to protect bees more than most. But not for sugar beet and for cereals. Both were non-flowering crops, and did NOT attract bees throughout the life of the crop. Sadly, the ban had encouraged more insecticide spraying to combat aphids, which in my opinion was far more harmful for the environment.

Virus Yellows disease was having an unprecedented impact on Britain's sugar beet crop, with some growers experiencing yield losses of up to 80% for the 2020 crop. The home-grown sugar beet industry had been, and continued to, work incredibly hard to find long-term solutions to Virus Yellows disease. As such, the government's consultation on gene editing was incredibly welcome, as changes in this policy would help to accelerate some of the work in this area, including genetic resistance and tolerance to diseases such as Virus Yellows.

The government's decision to grant emergency use in 2021 therefore demonstrated their understanding of how serious this disease was for our home-grown sugar industry and for the viability of farm businesses. Of course, there were strict conditions in terms of the use being limited and controlled. The terms of the Emergency Authorisation dictated that the product would be used in a limited and controlled way. This included:

- The authorisation was limited to 120 days
- The product would only be used if the independent Roth Amsted Research prediction model reached the threshold that indicated aphid numbers would cause a significant problem for the 2021 sugar beet crop
- Reduced rate of the product (25% reduction in rate)
- Only cereal crops (which were non-bee attractive) could be planted within 22 months of the sugar beet crop being planted and no oilseed rape crop could be planted within 32 months of the sugar beet crop being planted
- No further use of the product was permitted on the same field within 46 months of the treated sugar beet seed being planted
- Growers would adhere to industry-recommended herbicide programmes to minimise the number of flowering weeds in treated sugar beet crops and reduce the risk of indirect exposure of pollinators to neonicotinoid seed treatments.

It must be reiterated that this authorisation was only for the sugar beet crop of England and not for fodder or bioenergy beet grown more extensively across the whole of the UK. Consequently, the extent and use of the neonicotinoid product would be limited to those counties that grow the sugar crop, and treatments then only applied if needed, on the trigger of the independent Virus Yellows forecast in February 2021.

It was important to note that 13 EU countries had also granted derogations to use neonicotinoids in 2021, demonstrating the scale of the Virus Yellows disease throughout Europe and the need to take action as a matter of urgency to fight this disease. If use were not also granted in the UK, it would see our own growers displaced by imported sugar beet or cane that may be grown using this product.

I am not sure what research or lobbying had been put before the councillors proposing this appeal, nor was that their expertise greater or more current than EU wide scientific thinking.

Councillor Dixie Darch gave the following response:-

Thank you Messrs. Heywood and Payne for your letters in response to the proposed motion. It was always helpful for councillors to hear a range of perspectives in order to make an informed decision and it was particularly welcome to hear the views of farmers.

The use of neonicotinoids was indeed an emotive subject and some social media campaigns had failed to set out the complex issues behind the decision. For this reason, the motion presented this evening with supporting evidence dealt directly with the Government document published on January 8th; it acknowledged the limits and controls set out in the authorisation and avoided an emotive stance. Whilst it was reported that some farmers had lost up to 80% of their crop, according to *Farmers Weekly* (December 2020), overall production was down by 25%, suggesting rates vary with individual farmers. We explicitly acknowledged the impact on sugar beet farmers, particularly given the potentially challenging situation of post-Brexit trade arrangements (as stated in point 7 under “Council notes”). You were right about the risk that UK sugar beet could be replaced by imports from other countries which had less stringent environmental standards and we addressed this in point 2 of our resolution, requesting the inclusion of a message to MPs “that they urged Government to support domestic sugar beet producers by ensuring all sugar imports were produced, at minimum, to the same environmental standards as apply to UK sugar producers.” The motion also acknowledged that EU countries had authorised neonicotinoid use.

We also acknowledged the controls in place to limit the application of neonicotinoids and restrictions on planting after use. However, our view was that this authorisation was a short-term solution which risked exacerbating the longer-term crisis of insect decline, new evidence of which had emerged since January 8th. The concern was larger than sugar beet: it was about the global ecological and climate crisis. According to DEFRA, research estimated the value of the UK’s 1,500 species of pollinators to crops at £400-680 million per year due to improved productivity and we put this at risk by use of neonics.

Given that this pesticide remained in the soil after application where it could harm invertebrates and potentially find its way into water courses, we saw alternative support for sugar beet farmers including allowances for crop loss within contracts and acceleration of blight resistant strains and/or biological controls as the better way forward. It would not be unreasonable for the consumer to take a short-term price increase on sugar, the over consumption of which contributed to a number of serious health conditions, costing lives and NHS resources.

Clearly the “bigger picture” encompassed the environment and climate change, and the effect of neonicotinoids pesticides on the pollinators, although relatively local, should not be discounted or down-played.

We could assure you that no lobbying had taken place, either to us as proposers of this motion, or by us to other councillors. The latter had received the document included in the Full Council papers and the link to the Government document, which most would have read as well as carrying out their own research. SW&T councillors were regularly presented with conflicting viewpoints and made their own independent judgments. Our interest was in the environment and global

climate change, any change had to start somewhere: this was the “bigger picture” and rest assured we were aware of it. An interesting debate was likely and we looked forward to hearing all views.

128. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Chair of the Council**

The Chair of the Council acknowledged the sad loss of Cliff Mann, who was a consultant at Musgrove Park Hospital.

129. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council**

The Leader of the Council advised that the Stronger Somerset consultation had been launched by Government on Monday 22 February 2021. She asked all councillors to spread the message and encouraged everyone to take part as the consultation was only open for 8 weeks.

130. **To receive any questions from Councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13**

The Chair advised that no questions had been received under Procedure Rule 13.

131. **Council Tax Setting 2021-22**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Concern was raised on the precept amount set by the Police, as places in the former West Somerset part of the district rarely saw a Police Officer patrolling in their area. However, Councillors from the former Taunton Deane part of the district advised that they had received good support from the Police and were happy to pay the increase.
- Councillors queried why there was such a comparison in the precepts for the Town/Parish Councils in the former West Somerset and Taunton areas.
The Lead Finance Business Partner advised that the Unparished Area of Taunton precept had been agreed within the budget setting for Somerset West and Taunton (SWT). Town/Parish Councils were not limited with their precepts as SWT was. The Taunton Chartered Trustees did not have the same powers as a Town/Parish Council so could only set a precept for the mayoralty functions. The Community Governance Review should resolve this for the future of the Unparished area.
- The Leader of the Council advised that the Community Governance Review was an important piece of work to be carried out especially with the possibility of a unitary council being formed in the next couple of years.
- The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources thanked the councillors for all their comments.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(2)(i), the Chair called for a recorded vote to be taken and recorded in the Minutes.

The recommendations, which are detailed below, were put and were **CARRIED** with forty-nine councillors in favour and three abstaining:-

Resolved that Full Council:-

- 2.1 Approved the formal Council Tax Resolution in Appendix A; and
- 2.2 Noted that if the formal Council Tax Resolution at Appendix A was approved, the total Band D Council Tax would be:

	2020/21	2021/22	Increase
	£	£	%
Somerset West and Taunton Council	162.88	167.88	3.04
Somerset West and Taunton Council – SRA	1.75	1.75	0.00
Somerset County Council	1,163.47	1,189.13	1.99
Somerset County Council – Social Care	112.89	151.56	3.00
Somerset County Council – SRA	12.84	12.84	0.00
Police and Crime Commissioner	227.81	241.20	5.88
Devon and Somerset Fire Authority	88.24	90.00	1.99
Sub-Total	1,769.88	1,854.36	4.77
Town and Parish Council (average)	43.86	45.35	3.40
Total	1,813.74	1,899.71	4.74

Those voting **FOR** the **MOTION**: Councillors I Aldridge, B Allen, L Baker, M Blaker, C Booth, S Buller, N Cavill, S Coles, D Darch, H Davies, C Ellis, H Farbahi, E Firmin, A Govier, A Hadley, J Hassall, R Henley, Mrs M Hill, J Hunt, M Kravis, R Lees, S Lees, L Lisgo, M Lithgow, J Lloyd, D Mansell, A Milne, C Palmer, D Perry, M Peters, H Prior-Sankey, A Pritchard, M Rigby, F Smith, F Smith-Roberts, V Stock-Williams, P Stone, A Sully, N Thwaites, A Trollope-Bellew, R Tully, T Venner, S Wakefield, A Wedderkopp, D Wedderkopp, B Weston, K Wheatley, L Whetlor and G Wren.

Those **ABSTAINING** from voting: Councillors M Barr, R Habgood and S Pugsley.

132. **Review of Voluntary and Community Sector Grants**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors thanked the Portfolio Holder for Community and officers for all their hard work.
- Councillors thanked the Portfolio Holder for Community for the continued support given to the Advice Bureaus, which enabled them to continue to provide valued support to the residents of SWT.
- Councillors were keen to be involved in the review and to have input through the member working group.
- Concern was raised that discrimination and abuse had not been included in section 4.4 of the report and requested that they be added.
The Portfolio Holder for Community was happy to add the comments to the report.

- Councillors thanked the officers for the work carried out to ensure that continued support was given to the many charity and voluntary groups within the SWT area.
- Councillors highlighted the valued support the charity and voluntary groups had provided during the Covid Pandemic.
- Councillors highlighted how well the groups used the grants received from SWT.
- The Portfolio Holder for Community thanked councillors for all their comments and agreed those made on the support provided by the charity and voluntary groups throughout the Covid Pandemic.

Resolved that Full Council approved:-

- 2.1 To maintain current levels of funding for the final year of the current agreement to end in March 2022;
- 2.2 To agree schedule of grants set out at table 'Voluntary and Community Sector Grants in section 6.2 below; and
- 2.3 A cross party Members Working Group was established to work with officers to ensure that clear funding criteria were in place for future work with the Voluntary and Community Sector beyond March 2022.

133. **Access to Information - Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved that the press and the public be excluded from the meeting for the item numbered 11 on the Agenda as the item contained exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

134. **Strategic Heritage Update**

Resolved that Full Council approved the recommendations, with an additional recommendation, within the confidential report.

135. **Re-admittance of the Press and Public**

136. **Decisions taken under the urgency rules regarding the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) Scheme – Tiers 2 and 3**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors thanked officers for their hard work on the scheme.
- Councillors highlighted that the scheme had shown customers how efficient the council could be.

Resolved that Full Council

- 2.1 Noted the decision made;
- 2.2 Delegated authority to the S151 Officer to add the additional Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) expenditure and related grant income to the Council's 2020/21 budget in line with the total amounts of £1,271,028 allocated by Government for this purpose;

2.3 Delegated authority to the S151 Officer to carry forward unspent balances of the Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) budget to 2021/22 where funds could be retained for eligible costs falling into next financial year, net of any amount to be returned to Government. Grant income received and not spent by 31 March 2021 for this purpose to be held in earmarked reserves and matched against costs in 2021/22; and

2.4 Agreed that decisions to make any amendments to the scheme, in order to respond to the needs of businesses, were delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Economic Development and the Director of Development and Place.

137. **Committee Dates for New Municipal Year - For Information Only**

Resolved that Full Council noted the committee dates for the new municipal year.

The Chair proposed a 30 minute time extension which was carried.

138. **Motion to Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors expressed their support for the Motion and the further action it took for climate change.
- Concern was raised that the type of technology used was not fully utilised.
- Some councillors believed the Motion was impractical.
- Councillors highlighted that the Council had declared a climate emergency and that the Motion was part of the next steps for action.

Resolved that Full Council:-

- 1) Supported the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill;
- 2) Informed the local media of this decision;
- 3) To write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill; and
- 4) To write to the CEE Bill Alliance (www.ceebill.uk), the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, expressing its support (campaign@ceebill.uk).

The Chair proposed a 30 minute time extension which was carried.

139. **Motion to appeal to reverse UK Government emergency authorisation to use neonicotinoids on sugar beet**

During the discussion, the following points were raised:-

- Councillors were happy to support the Motion as neonics were harmful to bees and other pollinators.
- Some councillors agreed to support the Motion as they could not see an alternative for a solution.
- Some councillors were not supportive as they stated the cold weather had impacted on the aphids and that the Government had been trying to remove the use of neonics for some time.

- Councillors highlighted that there were no sugar beet crops within the SWT area and so therefore the Motion was not relevant.

Resolved that Full Council:-

- 1) Write to and lobby both our members of Parliament, urging them to consider repeal of this authorisation pointing out that the Government has stated through DEFRA that protecting pollinators was a priority;
- 2) Include in a message to MPs a request that they urged government to support domestic sugar beet producers by ensuring all sugar imports were produced, at minimum, to the same environmental standards as apply to UK sugar producers; and
- 3) Until this repeal was implemented a commitment was given that emergency authorisations would only be given in exceptional circumstances for proven need with tight controls to protect pollinators. Any licence needed to be monitored for compliance.

(The Meeting ended at 10.00 pm)