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FULL COUNCIL

21 OCTOBER 2020

Present: Councillors Sinden (Chair), Bacon (Vice-Chair), Barnett, Batsford, Battley, S Beaney, Berelson, Bishop, Chowney, Cox, Davies, Evans, Fitzgerald, Levane, O'Callaghan, Roberts, Rogers, Sabetian, Scott, Turner, Webb, Louise, Lee, K Beaney, Edwards, Foster, Marlow-Eastwood, Patmore and Rankin.

126. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Councillors Forward, Charman and Beaver.

127. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 18th March 2020 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the emergency decision taken on 15th July 2020 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings.

128. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Committee	Minute	Interest
Webb	Motion	134	Personal - Is a member of East Sussex County Council Pension Fund Committee

129. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND LEADER

The Deputy Leader of the Council said that the last few months have seen unprecedented change both globally and in Hastings in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Hastings Borough Council has committed itself to standing with residents, ensuring they remain safe throughout this difficult time. The council has worked with residents and local partners to support the most vulnerable through the Community Hub. Local businesses have been provided with advice on how to operate safely and over £20 million of grants have been distributed to over 1700 businesses. At the same time council officers have adapted to make sure key services continue to be delivered. The Deputy Leader thanked local key workers, emergency responders, businesses and residents who have responded to the challenge and noted that it is fitting that this year the 1066 Award is presented to the people of Hastings.

130. QUESTIONS (IF ANY) FROM:

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130.1 Members of the Public under Rule 11

Questions were received from the public and written answers published on the council website alongside the meeting agenda.

Due to the technical challenges of live streaming members of the public into the meeting, supplementary questions were submitted in writing and received a written answer.

All public questions and answers are available as an appendix to the minutes.

130.2 Councillors under Rule 12

Questions to the Deputy Leader and portfolio holders were asked and answered in accordance with Rule 12.1 as follows:

Questioner	Subject	Reply given by
Councillor Lee	<p><u>Democratic Scrutiny</u> – Following recent criticism about a perceived lack of scrutiny, what will the council be doing to make up for this?</p> <p>Councillor Fitzgerald replied that it is not unusual to have no opposition members as part of the cabinet. Scrutiny will continue through the usual means such as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Audit Committee and Full Council. In addition, opposition councillors have continued to be consulted on decisions made under emergency powers.</p>	Councillor Fitzgerald
Councillor Davies	<p><u>Street Cleaning</u> – Can an update be provided on how the in-house street cleaning operation is performing?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett replied that independent inspections show a very clear improvement in the cleanliness of Hastings over recent months.</p>	Councillor Barnett
Councillor Rankin	<p><u>Financial Risk</u> - Aside from central government funding, what are the biggest risks are to the council's finances?</p> <p>Councillor Chowney replied that it is difficult to tell at this stage but there is likely to be a long-term impact to local</p>	Councillor Chowney

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	<p>government finances. The council has lost a lot of income during the lockdown period. Further lockdowns may have a negative impact on council finances through loss of income and increased claims for the council tax support scheme.</p>	
Councillor Sabetian	<p><u>Town Centre Benches</u> - Can you tell us the reason for the removal of the benches in the town centre in the summer?</p> <p>Councillor Barnett replied that the area had been adopted by a group with alcohol and drug issues. Their behaviour was rude, lewd and intimidating. The benches were removed to reclaim the area for the public and local businesses. This will be followed by enforcement action and further support for addicts.</p>	Councillor Barnett
Councillor K Beaney	<p><u>Bulverhythe</u> - The council has spent over £930,000 on consultants to build homes on the Bulverhythe recreation ground. Will you promise residents you won't spend a penny more on this project?</p> <p>Councillor Fitzgerald replied that the council is committed to due diligence and the scheme will deliver much needed housing.</p>	Councillor Fitzgerald
Councillor Patmore	<p><u>West Marina</u> - In October we were informed that a lease was about to be signed. Can we have an update on this development?</p> <p>Councillor Chowney apologised for the delay which has been perpetuated due to the lockdown and Covid-19. However, it is understood the lease is now close to being signed.</p>	Councillor Chowney
Councillor Battley	<p><u>Green Flag Award</u> - Can you update us on the recent Green Flag and Active Hastings awards?</p> <p>Councillor Evans replied that Active Hastings were finalists at the national community fitness awards. The whole</p>	Councillor Evans

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	team were nominated for the community team award and one member of the team won the inclusion award. The parks and green spaces department won the Green Flag Award with Alexandra Park, St Leonards Gardens and Hastings Country Park retaining Green Flag status.	
Councillor Levane	<u>Selective Licensing</u> – What is the latest position on renewal of the Selective Licensing scheme? Councillor Batsford replied that the scheme protects a large number of residents in Hastings and has resulted in improvements to the quality of homes rented in the borough.	Councillor Batsford

131. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Evans proposed a motion, as set out in the agenda, which was seconded by Councillor Davies.

Councillors debated the motion.

RESOLVED (by 20 for, 8 against) that the Council do accept the motion as set out below:

(I move) That Hastings Borough Council mark the 75 years since the atomic bombing of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, instantly killing an estimated 185,000 civilians, which is more than double the population of Hastings, by a letter of solidarity and friendship to the municipal authorities of both cities.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Hastings Borough Council calls upon the UK government to reverse plans to spend £205bn on the upgrade of our national nuclear arsenal.

As the representatives of our community it is our patriotic duty to ask for this money to be spent on guaranteeing the citizens of deprived coastal towns, such as Hastings, have access to world class health, education and housing.

It is our obligation as the stewards of our local environment to call on the government to spend this money in protecting our local, national and global environment.

We recognise the horrors of war for everyone unfortunate enough to be caught up in one, witnessing and experiencing violence which undoubtably scare people for life, both mentally and physically. Many of the homeless people on our streets bravely

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served in British wars, while refugees from those very same wars now flee for their lives and end up on our shores in Hastings. There are many victims of war.

To this end we resolve to write to the S-of-S for Defence asking for absolute guarantees that our serving citizens are in receipt of the very best to guarantee their safe return from active duty to family and into satisfying future employment.

We also resolve to write to the Home Office asking for Britain to take its fair responsibility for people displaced in war, which this country has been actively involved with, acknowledging international human rights.

From Hastings, a small town on a global stage, we can still reach out to unite with other voices to promote peace and reconciliation by supporting a Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Treaty. Therefore, we call on our government to sign and ratify it.

132. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Marlow-Eastwood proposed a motion, as set out in the agenda, which was seconded by Councillor Lee.

Councillors debated the motion.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that the Council do accept the motion as set out below:

Recognition for posterity, of the outstanding achievements by the frontline workers of Hastings Borough.

Considering the incredible hard work, under the most difficult circumstances that most of us have ever had to face in our lifetimes. I would like to propose a motion, to recognise the phenomenal ongoing effort, that the many people of our Borough, working on the frontline have made and are continuing to deliver; supporting us during this most devastating time. By erecting in a prominent place, a permanent reminder, recognising and thanking them ALL, on our behalf.

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 7:26pm and the meeting reconvened at 7:38pm.

133. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Louise proposed a motion, as set out in the agenda, which was seconded by Councillor Lee.

Councillor Rogers proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor O'Callaghan, to add the following:

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“In agreeing this definition and these examples we also endorse the Home Office select committee recommendations to ensure that freedom of speech is maintained in the context of discourse about Israel and Palestine, without allowing antisemitism to permeate any debate.

Namely:

It is not antisemitic to criticise the Government of Israel, without additional evidence to suggest antisemitic intent.

It is not antisemitic to hold the Israeli Government to the same standards as other liberal democracies, or to take a particular interest in the Israeli Government’s policies or actions, without additional evidence to suggest antisemitic intent.

We will uphold the rights of the people of Hastings to criticise or challenge any government, for their abuse of basic human and democratic rights.”

Councillor Louise accepted the amendment and the motion as amended became the substantive motion debated by Councillors.

RESOLVED (by 27 for with 1 abstention) that the Council do accept the motion as set out below:

Hastings is a Community of Sanctuary and a town with increasingly diverse communities and residents. This Council recognises that it needs to lead by example on anti-racist conduct and the growing tide of antisemitism we are seeing in this country. Hate crime figures show that antisemitic hate crimes, along with all religious hate crimes, have risen alarmingly in the last five years.

In 2018 – 2019, antisemitism accounted for 18% of all religious hate crime in the UK, despite the Jewish population being less than 0.5% of the total population. The IHRA definition is the most widely accepted and recognised definition of anti-Jewish racism, and the vast majority of the Jewish community welcomes it as providing the protection they need. Therefore this Council resolves to join with 260 other local authorities, and the national Conservative and Labour Parties, to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism with all its working examples, to be included in the Council’s policy and practices.

The IHRA Definition

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

The following examples may serve as illustrations: Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of

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Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

In agreeing this definition and these examples we also endorse the Home Office select committee recommendations to ensure that freedom of speech is maintained in

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the context of discourse about Israel and Palestine, without allowing antisemitism to permeate any debate.

Namely:

It is not antisemitic to criticise the Government of Israel, without additional evidence to suggest antisemitic intent.

It is not antisemitic to hold the Israeli Government to the same standards as other liberal democracies, or to take a particular interest in the Israeli Government's policies or actions, without additional evidence to suggest antisemitic intent.

We will uphold the rights of the people of Hastings to criticise or challenge any government, for their abuse of basic human and democratic rights.

134. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Cox proposed a motion, as set out in the agenda, which was seconded by Councillor Webb.

Councillors debated the motion.

RESOLVED (unanimously) that the Council do accept the motion as set out below:

Hastings Borough Council has already made clear its commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy, and continues with its ambitious target to make Hastings carbon neutral by 2030.

Further to this, we recognise...

- that very large financial setup and running costs involved in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers result in it being impossible for local renewable electricity generators to do so,
- that making these financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation would enable and empower new local businesses, or councils, to be providers of locally generated renewable electricity directly to local customers, and
- that revenues received by new local renewable electricity providers could be used to help improve the local economy, local services and facilities and to reduce local greenhouse gas emissions;

We therefore resolve to support the Local Electricity Bill, currently supported also by 210 MPs from all political parties, 56 local authorities, 56 national charities and other national organisations including big energy suppliers. The bill, if made law, would establish a Right to Local Supply which would promote local renewable electricity

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supply companies and co-operatives by making the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate to the size of the supply operation; and

We further resolve to:

- inform the local media of this decision,
- write to local the MP, asking her to support the Bill, and
- write to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People, expressing our support.

135. MOTION (RULE 14)

Councillor Rogers proposed a motion, as set out in the agenda, which was seconded by Councillor Levane.

Councillor K Beaney proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Marlow-Eastwood, to delete the following:

“3. We will continue to work as part of a City of Sanctuary to press local and national leaders to Lift the Ban on refugees being able to work”

Councillor Rogers did not accept the amendment.

The Mayor suspended rule 16.6b of Council procedure rules, allowing the proposed amendment to be debated at the same time as the main motion, seconded by Councillor Fitzgerald.

Councillors debated the motion and proposed amendment. The amendment proposed by Councillor K Beaney was rejected by 21 votes against, to 7 for.

RESOLVED (by 21 for, 7 against) that the Council do accept the motion as set out below:

Hastings has a long tradition of welcoming people from a range of diverse backgrounds and celebrating difference, something which we all should be proud. Just some of the things we as a town have been support are:

City of Sanctuary, Lift the Ban, Black History month, International Women’s Day, Holocaust Memorial Day, One Hastings Many Voices.

We work closely as a council to support and engage with the numerous faith groups right across the Borough with strong links for example to the Hastings Mosque, the Inter Faith Forum and the Chinese Community where we join together every year to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

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Our festivals which the council are proud to be involved in include Hastings Pride, Jack in the Green, Bonfire celebrations, Hastings Old Town Week and Carnival, Hastings Week, Storytelling Festival and these help to bring together our community.

The advent of COVID, unprecedented in our lifetime, saw our town come together to set up things like the food hub, and provide accommodation for the homeless to ensure that people at the margins of our society were protected. We can be proud of our town's response.

Unfortunately, COVID has also served to highlight the inequalities in our society. The poorest and most economically disadvantaged are likely to be the hardest hit by this terrible disease. We also know that people from a BAME background have suffered higher mortality rates than the general population and keenly await the outcomes of ongoing research looking to explain these differences.

During this time the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement has been a stark reminder also of the inequalities that people of a BAME background still face. Hate crimes of homophobia and towards religious groups continue to rise.

Unfortunately, there is evidence to suggest that some groups are looking to exploit these differences and divide communities. We cannot afford to let the rich fabric of our town to be torn apart by letting such ideas take hold.

While we must await the outcomes of varying pieces of research and the government's commitment to a public enquiry on COVID with interest – there remain practical steps we can take now to help ensure the diverse communities of Hastings & St Leonard's continue to not only survive and but also to thrive. This motion, therefore, commits the council to the following practical steps:

1. The council reaffirms its commitment to combat, racism and prejudice in all its forms. In order to ensure that every individual feels safe, protected and comfortable we will look to work closely with the diverse range of communities in our town.

2. As part of our commitment to the above the council will formally adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)'s working definition on antisemitism which defines antisemitism thus:

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

3. We will continue to work as part of a City of Sanctuary to press local and national leaders to Lift the Ban on refugees being able to work.

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4. We will work with the Local Strategic Partnership to bring forward an Equalities Charter that is updated and refreshed to account for the issues raised by COVID and the BLM movement – which will include an associated action plan.
5. The council will produce its initial interim report in this regard no later than February 2021.
6. The council will look to have the renewed charter and any associated policy changes in place by no later than August 2021.
7. The council will ensure that the new charter, once in place, is subject to a review every two years.

136. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

Councillor Lee proposed a motion regarding the membership of committees, as set out in the resolution below.

RESOLVED that the council adopt the following arrangements for the membership of committees:

- 1. Councillors Lee and Edwards be appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, in place of Councillors Foster and K Beaney**
- 2. Councillors Foster and Patmore be appointed to the Planning Committee, in place of Councillors Beaver and Edwards**

As Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Councillor Davies thanked Councillors Foster and K Beaney for their work on the Committee. As Chair of the Planning Committee Councillor Roberts thanked Councillors Beaver and Edwards for their work on the Committee.

(The Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 9.15pm)

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Questioner	Question	Answer
<p>1.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 1</p>	<p>I have been a Hastings Resident since 2008 and though not politically active locally I remain concerned and observant. I am aware of the motion being proposed to adopt the IHRA definition of anti-semitism at Full Council, October 21st 2020.</p> <p>I am a Labour voter both locally and nationally who condemns racism in all its forms. Given the rise in anti-semitism nationally and the embarrassing and inadequate mishandling of anti-semitism within the Labour Party, I seriously question why the IHRA definition of anti-semitism has not already been adopted.</p> <p>I register my support for the motion and ask the Leader of the Council, what possible reasons could she and the Labour Group have for not adopting the IHRA definition.</p>	<p>Councillor Forward:</p> <p>The agenda for the Council meeting on 21st October contains a motion from Cllr Rogers, proposing the adoption of the IHRA definition.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>Even though the 2011 census showed that only 0.2% of Hastings residents identified as Jewish, does the Leader of the Council agree that the Council's adoption of the IHRA definition of Antisemitism would demonstrate the Council's leadership against antisemitism as a wider societal problem which must be challenged everywhere, regardless of a local authority's demographic?</p>	<p>Councillor Forward:</p> <p>The agenda for the Council meeting on 21st October contains a motion from Cllr Rogers, proposing the adoption of the IHRA definition.</p>

3.	<p>What action is Hastings BC going to take to address its national reputation as a safe haven for anti-Semites, with organisations such as the Jewish Voice for Labour and the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign being free to promote antisemitic events and speakers in Hastings?</p> <p>How will such actions support those both in the council and in Hastings who are victims of antisemitism?</p>	<p>Councillor Forward:</p> <p>The agenda for the Council meeting on 21st October contains a motion from Cllr Rogers, proposing the adoption of the IHRA definition.</p>
4.	<p>If it has been made clear to Hastings Borough Council that Council Tax payers of any religious heritage would feel safer and more protected having the Council adopt an internationally recognised definition of anti-discrimination as Council policy, why would it choose not to do so?</p>	<p>Councillor Forward:</p> <p>The agenda for the Council meeting on 21st October contains a motion from Cllr Rogers, proposing the adoption of the IHRA definition.</p>
Page 2	<p>Hastings is unfortunately becoming known nationally as a safe-haven for antisemites, with various groups, for example, JVL and the PSC, regularly engaging in antisemitic activity and spreading misinformation in the town.</p> <p>My own experience is that they have created a hostile and fearful environment for Jews who have pride in their religion and identity. This has been brought to the Council's notice on several occasions, including by the resignation of a Councillor due to antisemitism locally and nationally.</p> <p>Can the Leader of the Council explain why this administration has done nothing to address this very serious issue? Further, what actions will they take to strengthen their anti-racism policies so that Jews feel safe and respected in the town?</p>	<p>Councillor Forward:</p> <p>The agenda for the Council meeting on 21st October contains a motion from Cllr Rogers, proposing the adoption of the IHRA definition.</p>

6.	Will the Council confirm that supporting Jewish people Hastings by adopting the IHRA's full definition of antisemitism, including all given examples, does not in any way conflict with or prevent legitimate and well-formulated criticism of the Israeli government?	Councillor Forward: The agenda for the Council meeting on 21 st October contains a motion from Cllr Rogers, proposing the adoption of the IHRA definition.
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