

Meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

Date Thursday, 5 November 2009 (10.30 am – 3.44 pm)

Membership

Persons absent are marked with `A`

COUNCILLOR

David Taylor (Chairman)

Thomas A J Pettengell (Vice Chairman)

	Reg Adair		Bruce Laughton
	John Allin		Keith Longdon
A	Fiona Asbury	A	Rachel Madden
	Chris Barnfather	A	Geoff Merry
	Michael Bennett		Mick Murphy
A	Victor Bobo		Philip Owen
	Joyce Bosnjak		Carol Pepper
	Richard Butler		Mrs Sheila Place
	Steve Carr		Darrell Pulk
	Steve Carroll		Mike Quigley MBE
	Allen Clarke		Mrs Wendy Quigley
	Ged Clarke		Alan Rhodes
	John Clarke		Ken Rigby
	L B Cooper		Kevin Rostance
	John Cottee		Mrs Sue Saddington
A	Michael J Cox		Mel Shepherd MBE
	Jim Creamer		Mrs S Smedley
	Bob Cross		Mark Spencer
	Mrs Kay Cutts		June Stendall
	V H Dobson		Andy Stewart
	Sybil Fielding		Martin Suthers OBE
	Stephen Garner		Lynn Sykes
	Michelle Gent		Parry Tsimbiridis
	Glynn Gilfoyle		Gail Turner
	Keith Girling		Keith Walker
	John M Hemsall		Stuart Wallace
	Stan Heptinstall MBE		Les Ward
	Rev. Tom Irvine		Gordon Wheeler
	Richard Jackson		Brian Wombwell
	Rod Kempster		Martin Wright
	Eric Kerry		Liz Yates
	John Knight		Jason Zadrozny

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mick Burrows	(Chief Executive)
Jayne Francis-Ward	(Monitoring Officer)
Carl Bilbey	(Chief Executive's Department)
Keith Ford	(Chief Executive's Department)
Chris Holmes	(Chief Executive's Department)
Daniel Roberts	(Chief Executive's Department)
David Pearson	(Adult Services and Health)
John Slater	(Children and Young People's Services)
Tim Malynn	(Communities)
Tim Gregory	(Corporate Services)
Alan Sumbly	(Corporate Services)
Peter Saunders	(Corporate Communications)

OPENING PRAYER

Upon the Council convening, prayers were led by the Chairman's Chaplain. Members stood in silence in memory of Councillor Tom Appleby.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED: 2009/053

That the Minutes of the last meeting of the County Council held on 24th September 2009 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fiona Asbury, Victor Bobo, Michael J Cox, Rachel Madden, Geoff Merry, Martin Suthers OBE and Brian Wombwell.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interests were made at this point.

Councillor Steve Carr subsequently declared a personal interest in agenda item number 10 – Treasury Management as an employee of Royal Bank of Scotland, which did not preclude him from speaking or voting on that item.

4. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

Councillors June Stendall, Stephen Garner, Mrs Kay Cutts, Joyce Bosnjak and Jason Zadrozny spoke in tribute to Councillor Tom Appleby.

Councillor John Cottee congratulated staff at Rufford Country Park on achieving Silver in the Enjoying England Excellence Awards, East Midlands Regional category for 2009. The Chairman was presented with the award and certificate.

Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts expressed regret at the manner in which Members had been informed about the Budget proposals, following the information leak to The Evening Post. It was underlined that this leak had prevented the planned process for sharing this information from being followed.

Councillor Alan Rhodes reported that a £65 donation had been made to the Royal British Legion on behalf of the Labour Group, in lieu of lunch.

5. PETITIONS

(a) PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

The following petitions were presented to the Chairman as indicated below:-

1. Councillor Gordon Wheeler – request for a crossing on Boundary Road
2. Councillor Mel Shepherd MBE – Traffic and Road Surface on Woodthorpe Drive

RESOLVED: 2009/054

That the petitions be referred to the appropriate Cabinet Members for consideration in accordance with Standing Orders.

(b) REPORT BACK ON PETITIONS

Councillor Steve Carr stated that he disagreed with the response to the petition he had presented about the display of 'sports knives' for sale.

RESOLVED: 2009/055

That the contents and proposed action of the report back on the petitions received on 18th June and 24th September be noted and the petitioners be informed accordingly.

6. QUESTIONS

(a) QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7.1

Ten questions had been received as follows:-

1. from Councillor Stella Smedley about flexible democracy (Councillor Mick Murphy replied)

2. from Councillor Alan Rhodes concerning Worksop Library and Community Hub (Councillor John Cottee replied)
3. from Councillor Stella Smedley regarding a grant from UK Coal (Councillor Richard Jackson replied)
4. from Councillor Darrell Pulk regarding Nottinghamshire's Economic Recovery (Councillor Reg Adair replied)
5. from Councillor Steve Carroll regarding elderly care investment (Councillor Mel Shepherd replied)
6. from Councillor John Knight regarding the Spanish War Memorial display board (Councillor John Cottee replied)
7. from Councillor Stephen Garner regarding food provided at Full Council meetings. (This question was withdrawn by Councillor Garner at the meeting in light of the Leader's recent announcement about this issue).
8. from Councillor Parry Tsimbirdis regarding dog deaths after visiting Haywood Oaks area near Blidworth (Councillor Mick Murphy replied)
9. from Councillor Stella Smedley regarding costs for the planned extended bus services in the County (Councillor Richard Jackson replied)
10. from Councillor Joyce Bosnjak regarding the proposed 0% Council Tax rise (Councillor Reg Adair replied).

The full response of answers to these questions under Standing Order 7.1 are set out in Appendix A to these Minutes.

(b) QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7.2

There were no questions to the Chairs of the Police Authority and the Fire Authority.

7. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

(a) CABINET MEMBERS

The Leader presented the reports to the meeting.

Comments and questions are included at appendix B to these minutes.

During consideration of these reports Council adjourned from 12.45 pm until 2.00 pm. Upon resumption of the meeting, Councillor Wendy Quigley presented £190 to the Chairman's Charity, which had been raised through donations from Conservative and Independent Councillors and officers for lunch.

RESOLVED 2009/56

That the portfolio reports be noted.

(b) CHAIR OF OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Councillor Joyce Bosnak presented the report.

RESOLVED 2009/057

That the report be noted.

8. REVIEW OF POLICY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND MEMBERSHIP OF 11th SESSION PERFORMING ARTS WORKSHOPS AND PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Councillor Philip Owen introduced the report and moved a motion in terms of the resolution 2009/058 below.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Lynn Sykes.

The motion was put to the meeting and was carried on a show of hands.

The requisite number of Members requested a recorded vote and it was ascertained that the following 36 Members voted 'For' the motion.

'FOR'

Reg Adair
Chris Barnfather
Michael Bennett
Richard Butler
Ged Clarke
Allen Clarke
L B Cooper
John Cottee
Mrs Kay Cutts
V H Dobson
Stephen Garner
Keith Girling
John M Hemsall

Richard Jackson
Rod Kempster
Eric Kerry
Bruce Laughton
Mick Murphy
Philip Owen
Carol Pepper
Thomas A J Pettengell
Mike Quigley MBE
Mrs Wendy Quigley
Kevin Rostance
Mrs Sue Saddington
Mel Shepherd MBE

Mark Spencer
June Stendall
Andy Stewart
Lynn Sykes
David Taylor

Stuart Wallace
Les Ward
Gordon Wheeler
Martin Wright
Liz Yates

and the following 17 Members voted 'against' the motion:-

'AGAINST'

John Allin
Joyce Bosnjak
Steve Carr
Steve Carroll
John Clarke
Jim Creamer
Sybil Fielding
Glynn Gilfoyle
Stan Heptinstall MBE

John Knight
Mrs Sheila Place
Darrell Pulk
Alan Rhodes
Ken Rigby
Mrs S Smedley
Parry Tsimbiridis
Jason Zadrozny

The motion was declared to be carried and it was:-

RESOLVED: 2009/058

That:

1. the report be noted;
2. that the new eligibility criteria and conditions governing any over-subscription for the Arts Support Service's 11th Session Performing Arts Workshops and Performance Opportunities be approved.

9. ADOPTION OF THE COMPACT PLUS BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL

On a motion by Councillor Mel Shepherd OBE, seconded by Councillor Kevin Rostance, it was

RESOLVED: 2009/059

That the County Council adopt the Compact Plus, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

10. TREASURY MANAGEMENT

On a motion by Councillor Reg Adair, seconded by Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts, it was

RESOLVED: 2009/060

That the annual report on Treasury Management be approved.

11. URGENT ITEM – ESTABLISHMENT OF LOCAL JOINT RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

In accordance with Section 100 B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chair agreed to the submission of this item as a matter of urgency, in order to consider the establishment of this Committee as soon as possible, in light of the outcomes of the meeting of the Informal Consultative Joint Forum held on 3 November 2009.

On a motion by Councillor Andy Stewart, seconded by Councillor Chris Barnfather, it was

RESOLVED 2009/061

That the Local Joint Resolutions Committee be established comprising of 9 Members (5 Conservative Group, 2 Labour Group, 1 Independent Group and 1 Liberal Democrat Group).

12. ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS

There were no motions to adjourn the Council.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 3.43 pm

CHAIRMAN

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APPENDIX A

COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5TH NOVEMBER 2009

QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 7.1

Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety from Councillor Stella Smedley

Following the absolute debacle at the Newark and Sherwood Members' Forum in October, where, despite quorate, the Conservative members decided to change the agenda because they did not have a majority presence, are we going to see the introduction of a 'flexible' democracy at County Hall, to nicely complement the airbrushing of history?

Response by Councillor Mick Murphy, Cabinet Member for Community Safety:

"Chairman, may I thank Councillor Smedley for her question and in response would clarify my role in this matter.

The Community Safety Portfolio hosts the Members Forum Funding Budget and my role as Portfolio Holder is to approve the written proposals as agreed by the Members Forum itself.

To date I have not received a proposal from the Newark and Sherwood Members Forum but when I do so, I will give my earliest attention.

I am not a member of the Newark and Sherwood Members Forum. I was not at the meeting in question or that you refer to so I cannot comment any further."

Question to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property from Councillor Alan Rhodes

Will the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property join me in welcoming the excellent progress being made in the construction of the new library and community hub in Worksop, developed, planned and delivered by the County Council under the former Labour administration?

Response by Councillor John Cottee, Cabinet Member for Culture and Community, answered on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property:

"Yes, I am pleased to report that the construction of the new Library building in Worksop is on schedule and within budget.

The construction phase will be completed by the end of May 2010, followed by a period of fit-out and training, enabling all the services to be established and ready for public access in the autumn.”

Question to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Community from Councillor Stella Smedley

The Member will recall that Nottinghamshire County Council received a grant from UK Coal in order to facilitate the regeneration of pit tips and pit sites around Nottinghamshire.

Could the Member tell me whether the £60,000 which was left over from the UK Coal money is still available, or whether it has been absorbed into our general budget?

The people of Ollerton have expressed a desire to have a statue of a miner erected and this would be a good way of spending the money. Or is it this administration’s intention to once again turn their backs on Ollerton, and further betray one of the towns that formed the foundations of this County.

Response by Councillor Richard Jackson, Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways, on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Culture and Community:

“The money received from UK Coal has been spent on the regeneration of pit tips and pit sites in Nottinghamshire, and various work is still ongoing.

There is a sum which is actually £45,000 remaining and whilst this has not been absorbed into any general budgets, it is being held to fund any additional works needed in connection with the current schemes and is not available for any other purposes.

There is, as Councillor Smedley would know, already a statue of a miner on the top of the Silverhill tip restoration which is representative of the whole County. We have no plans for any further statues.”

Question to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property from Councillor Darrell Pulk

With a general election on the horizon, and the country likely to come out of recession in December or January, it seems like absolute madness to be considering cutting valuable support services which the public rely on.

History has told us that the Conservatives can’t abide the public sector, but they ought to remember that those wages end up in the coffers of their friends in the private sector.

Can the member tell me if he thinks that his party are inadvertently trying to sabotage economic recovery in Nottinghamshire purely for political gain?

Response from Councillor Reg Adair, Cabinet Member Finance and Property:

"I consider it my responsibility as Cabinet Member for Finance and Property to make the correct decisions to protect our most valuable support services at all times and regardless of whether there is a General Election on the horizon or not.

The aim of this Conservative County administration is to provide efficient, effective and value for money services to the Nottinghamshire taxpayers for the next four years.

On several occasions in recent years, Labour either postponed or avoided necessary but potentially unpopular decisions because they didn't have the collective courage to see them through. That's why Nottinghamshire's Council tax is so high, and that's why some of the actions we have to consider now are more difficult than they would have been if responsible decisions had been taken sooner.

But let me be clear, Chairman. This Administration has the courage to do what's right. We will prioritise and protect the services that are most essential to our residents and improve such provision where previous regimes have failed to deliver.

However much Labour tries to peddle the myth, Conservatives are not and never have been enemies of the public sector. The difference between us and Labour is that we hold the public sector properly to account. We remember that this sector exists to serve others, not to serve itself.

We believe that every penny of public money we spend should add value to the service we provide. Where the private sector can deliver a service as well or even better than we can, we encourage them to do it. We do not tolerate excessive bureaucracy, duplication and waste.

Chairman, I find it somewhat hypocritical that a Labour councillor should accuse us of trying to sabotage economic recovery in Nottinghamshire for political gain. If his party and government, his Chancellors and his administration had shown the courage to protect our economy and tackle Council Tax when circumstances were better, they might not have been reduced to 13 Members in County Hall and they might have been *slightly* less likely to lose the next General Election."

Question to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health from Councillor Steve Carroll

It was recently announced that Ashcroft Residential Care home in my ward was closing. As much as loss as this is, we all have to acknowledge that Health and

Safety regulations are paramount where the welfare of those in our care is concerned.

I would like to ask the Cabinet Member whether his party will now commit to following through our programme of elderly care investment to ensure that the County is able to start building the new home, specialist units and extra care facilities without further delay?

Response by Councillor Mel Shepherd MBE, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health:

“Before I actually give my reply, can I just say that, like the Leader, I very much regret that our proposals have come out in the way that they have come out. We did plan to inform service users, inform people at residential homes, etc, of our intentions within 24 hours before the announcement and what has happened today it’s meant that people have learned things through the post, via radio and in some cases they may not readily understand and they may be upset by these. Our intention was to make sure that that would not happen and I very much regret that it has. It was also my intention that we should brief members of the opposition party shortly before so they also knew what we intended to do and that is most unfortunate, I apologise to you for that but that was not part of my doing, it was part of somebody else’s doing.

Back to the question, Chairman. I thank Councillor Carroll for his question and for allowing me the opportunity to update colleagues in relation to this matter.

The County Council are currently reviewing all projects that will incur a capital spend. Aiming for Excellence, which includes the development of services for older people including extra care, is one of those projects.

A decision about the future strategy has now been made and Members will receive a copy of the budget at lunchtime, which will be accompanied by our proposals for consultation on ‘Aiming for Excellence’.

There will also be a report to Cabinet on 18th November.”

Question to the Cabinet Member for Culture and Community from Councillor John Knight

While we completely welcome the new war memorial that has been put up, can we have specific reason as to why the Spanish War Memorial display board had to be removed?

We appreciate that the plaques are still in place, but without the display board, it takes away the context of their presence to those who are new to County Hall. Also, people with visual impairments have already told me that they’ve had difficulty in figuring out what the plaques are supposed to represent, now the display board has been removed.

There's ample room for the display board to still be there, and I hope the member can confirm to me today that the Conservatives will be having a change of heart, and will put it back up.

Response by Councillor John Cottee, Cabinet Member for Culture and Community:

"We have not and will not remove the Spanish Civil War Memorial. It is a beautiful piece of artwork at the front of County Hall and it will stay. As Councillor Knight correctly states, we have simply replaced the information display board, which replicates the text on the plaques which also remain.

A new brass memorial plaque has now been unveiled to remember all people who lost their lives protecting our freedom and the interests of this country and our County, both in a domestic and foreign context. The beauty of this memorial is in the broadness of its meaning. It can mean different things to different people but serves a positive purpose for all. It can signify our remembrance of the casualties of major historical conflicts including World War I, the Spanish Civil War, World War II, the Korean War and others.

It remembers more recent wartime sacrifices such as the Falklands, Iraq and Afghanistan. And it also remembers individual sacrifice; for example, local heroism by our emergency services such as Police and Fire, who put themselves directly in harm's way to protect and rescue others.

Councillor Knight has phrased his question in a constructive way, so I have replied in a constructive manner. Unfortunately, some Labour members seem determined to make capital out of the remembrance issue with media photo shoots and cheap political comments.

Whenever a new Council administration is elected, it is quite natural to expect some changes of emphasis from its predecessor. We have opted to introduce a memorial with a broader theme and we have made some minor changes to the physical layout around County Hall. This is not unreasonable and it is not intended to disrespect anything or anyone – quite the opposite in fact."

Question to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety from Councillor Parry Tsimbirdis

The Member will be aware that, recently, a number of dogs have mysteriously died from causes unknown after having been to the Haywood Oaks area near Blidworth, and there have also been reports of some horses taking ill. This area is very popular for recreation for people and their pets from all over the area, including my constituency.

Could he tell me about the County Council's role in working with the Environment Agency to monitor the situation, and to ensure that all safety measures have been taken into account.

Response by Councillor Mick Murphy, Cabinet Member for Community Safety:

"I am aware of the concerns that he raises but, at this stage, this is not an issue for the County Council to become directly involved in.

The land is owned by the Forestry Commission who are undertaking an investigation into this matter. Obviously I do share the concerns of people who use this recreational area and I am advised that the Forestry Commission have put up warning signs at the woods and warnings have been issued to dog walkers to keep their pets on leashes.

The outcome of the Forestry Commission investigation is still to be awaited. We are aware and we are monitoring it."

Question to the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways from Councillor Stella Smedley

It has come to light that the Cabinet Member was exercising a little bit of creative licence with his comparative figures, in respect of likening the Tram investment to the investment in buses needed.

Can he please clarify to the chamber what the projected annual spend on the tram would have been over the life of the 21 year programme, and what the annual spend will be over a similar timescale with his party's plan for extended bus services in the County, including the costs of their manifesto pledge to provide free bus travel for school pupils in the County?

Response by Councillor Richard Jackson, Cabinet Member for Transport & Highways:

"I would like to thank Councillor Smedley for giving me the opportunity to again highlight in this Chamber the scale of savings that will be made for the Council Tax payers of Nottinghamshire as a result of this Council's decision in September to withdraw its support for Nottingham's very expensive tram extension project.

The estimated £18.5m Net Present Value costs equates to just over £1m per annum cash over the life of the project using a discount factor of 3.5% (which is what we are currently using to evaluate capital projects). This would mean a cash amount of around £28m over the life of the project.

Clearly there are uncertainties which could affect the project cost such as tender price, interest rates and the cost of borrowing and most of these would only be known at financial close, which could be some years away. The project budget

allows for an optimism bias to cover some of the uncertainties, but no-one knows if this is enough.

In my report on the tram to the last meeting of County Council I made it clear that withdrawal from the current project does not signal a change in the Council's overall vision for public transport. Indeed this could include support for other light rail systems and other extensions to NET Line One provided that they have a robust business case and less direct environmental and other negative impacts on local communities than those associated with the plans for Phase Two.

It is clearly premature for me to estimate the annual spend on County bus services over the next twenty years any more than Councillor Smedley would have done a few months ago when she was in my position. What I can assure Councillor Smedley is that it will be substantially more without the burden of funding the tram extension than with it."

Question to the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property from Councillor Joyce Bosnjak

The proposed 0% rise in Council Tax will have a perverse inequality about it. Those who live in the lowest banded properties will save little, yet suffer most from the withdrawal of services to pay for such a scheme.

On the flipside, those who stand to save the most, who live in the most expensive properties, are the ones who are best positioned to weather a small council tax rise because of their financial position.

Will the member confirm to me that, in the face of fiscal and socio-economic logic, the intended 0% council tax rise will only benefit the wealthiest, is totally political, and only serves to benefit his political party's general election aspirations?

Response from Councillor Reg Adair, Cabinet Member Finance and Property:

"Councillor Laughton assures me that even before I was elected to this Council, many discussions took place during budget debates about the relative fairness of Council Tax, arguing over who paid, who was exempt, who did best and who did badly.

However many people there are in higher banded properties or lower banded properties, and however many exemptions or benefits there may be, there are always those who fall in-between; honest, hard-working families who earn just enough to receive no particular state assistance, but for whom the significant Council Tax increases of recent years have been a real burden.

As you know, Joyce, the Conservative Party nationally is committed to a Council Tax freeze. County Conservatives pledged ourselves to a Council tax freeze in

our manifesto, and as we were elected on that manifesto I can only conclude the public agrees with us and will hold us to it.

So why is a freeze so important for everybody? Well, let's remember that when it comes to Council Tax, this is not any old county. Nottinghamshire has consistently levied the highest (or near highest) Council Tax in the country for many years.

Under Labour we saw increases of 9.9% in 1999, 8.25% in 2002 and 9.5% in 2003. In those days the Labour Group brazenly increased Council Tax as much as it could do without being rapped on the knuckles by its own Government. After that, recent increases of 4.9%, 4.7% and 3% have seemed almost like light relief, yet because of this County's inflated base budget even the smaller increases cost our taxpayers more in relative terms.

That's why, after 28 years of Labour, our residents deserve a proper council tax break. This Conservative administration's priority will indeed be to protect the services that are needed most of all, and by the definition that means services for the poorest and most vulnerable sections of society.

To make sure these services are in place, and to get Council Tax under control, we will reprioritise and review certain areas of expenditure. We will be honest with people, explain what needs to be done, explain why we are doing it, and we will see it through.

You are certainly right that I aspire to see a Conservative Government next year, but my focus and commitment is to this County. I am looking to present a stronger, prouder, and more efficient Nottinghamshire in four years' time, providing responsive core services to those who need our help most."

APPENDIX B

COUNTY COUNCIL 5th NOVEMBER 2009

REPORTS FROM CABINET MEMBERS

1. Leader's report

Members expressed surprise that the report did not contain more strategic information, rather than details of visits and civic events. Councillor Mrs Kay Cutts provided further information on the visits and events detailed in the report.

2. Adult Social Care and Health

In response to a question, Councillor Shepherd confirmed that he was impressed with the extra care scheme provided at Moorfields Court in Southwell and that the residents and staff seemed very happy.

3. Community Safety

In response to a request from Members, Councillor Murphy provided an assurance that the proposal to discontinue weeks of action, contained in the budget report, would be fully consulted upon.

Members commended the successful input from Trading Standards into tackling the issue of fireworks this year and highlighted the potential implications of budget savings proposals on this service. Councillor Murphy agreed that Trading Standards provided an excellent service for the community, including the work around age related sales, another area of work commended by Members. Members highlighted that a lack of sales made in test purchases did not necessarily equate to complete success in underage sales, in light of possible sales to regular local customers.

Members underlined the need to consider, as part of the budget consultation, the important role of partnership working in tackling anti-social behaviour, including issues such as fireworks. Councillor Murphy acknowledged the role of partnership working in successfully addressing his key priorities of anti-social behaviour and under-age drinking.

4. Culture and Community

Members welcomed the success of local library events, sports coaches, small arts groups, Nottinghamshire Archives and Rufford Abbey Country Park but queried whether such success could be maintained in light of the proposed budget savings affecting these areas. With regard to libraries, Members also queried the self-service proposals, the possibility of redundancies within libraries, and the investment plans for smaller libraries.

The Cabinet Member was thanked for his support of the Greenwood Community Forest Partnership's 'Trees for Shade' grant scheme and the Broxtowe 'Free

Trees Give Away' and Members asked for their congratulations to be passed on to the staff of Rufford Abbey Country Park for their achievement in the Enjoying England Excellence Awards and to the members of the Cantamus Girls Choir of Mansfield for their successes in the Voyage of Songs international choral competition in Penang, Malaysia.

In response, Councillor Cottee stated that the self-service plans for libraries had been proposed by the previous Administration and may result in some redundancies in the long run, although any such services would be implemented over a six month period. He added that he had no intention of closing libraries and underlined that every department had been asked to offer up potential savings, in light of the current climate. He pointed out that Nottingham City Council had reduced its funding to Nottingham Playhouse by 15%. He recognised the important role which Nottinghamshire Archives played within the community. He thanked Members for their congratulations and acknowledged the role of the previous Administration in developing Rufford Abbey Country Park.

5. Environment and Sustainability

Members queried the implications of the budget savings proposals, such as the discontinuation of the waste awareness scheme and the closure of Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRC), on initiatives such as the Joint Waste Management Group, the Love Food Hate Waste Campaign, the increasing use of bio energy boilers and the Christmas Waste Campaign. Members felt that the next meeting of the Joint Waste Management Group on 26th November 2009 was a good opportunity for consultation on the budget proposals and expressed concern at the proposal to end the free disposal of asbestos. The logic behind the proposal to extend the HWRC Permit Scheme to all sign written vehicles was questioned in light of the need to increase revenue and clarification was sought about the long-term future of the Building Better Communities in light of the Deputy Portfolio Holder's pre-election comments. The Cabinet Member was thanked for taking the time to deal with queries outside of Council meetings.

In response, Councillor Butler stated that he currently supported the Building Better Communities initiative due to the external funding it received, although the name of this scheme could alter in future. He underlined that capacity issues were behind the proposals to close HWRCs and that alternative services would be provided for residents. The potential benefits of bio energy boilers and the Council's Woodheat programme would be assessed by an Overview Committee working group. The Christmas Waste Campaign would continue in 2009 whilst the budget consultation was still underway. Councillor Butler clarified that the HWRC permit scheme had been extended due to problems arising from the sometimes petty enforcement of the restrictions applicable under the current scheme. In response to a question, Councillor Butler underlined that the previous Administration was responsible for the closure of Danes Hill HWRC.

Councillor Laughton raised under Standing Order 9.8 that comments made in his budget speech continued to be misquoted and that he had not expressed an

interest in abolishing the Building Better Communities scheme, other than if funding could not be allocated fairly.

6. Finance and Property

In response to a question about comments made by a Conservative spokesperson regarding the potential future reduction in the number of schools under a Conservative Central Government, Councillor Adair stated that he was not aware of such comments and therefore was not in a position to talk about them. He added that the programme of work to make County schools fit for purpose was underway.

7. Transport and Highways

Members expressed concerns about the lack of a residential parking scheme on Peveril Road in Beeston, the ongoing delays in developing Mansfield Bus Station, the effect of Capital Programme reductions on the proposed Hucknall Town Centre scheme, the reasons offered for not progressing the Ollerton Roundabout scheme, the prioritisation process for footway improvements and the future of the scheme to develop the Hucknall bypass in Ashfield.

The Cabinet Member was thanked for his role in implementing the residential parking scheme in Station Road, Beeston Rylands and commended for making footway improvements a priority.

In response, Councillor Jackson clarified that Peveril Road was near the top of the list of priorities for future residential parking schemes and that the Council remained 100% committed to progressing the development of Mansfield Bus Station. He underlined that the Department for Transport, rather than the Department for Trade and Industry, was responsible for the delays in the funding of the development of Hucknall Town Centre, and that these delays could be best addressed by a cross-party lobby. With regard to Ollerton roundabout, Councillor Jackson stated that he was not willing to commit half of the County's available Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2) funding to a single scheme and neither would he commit expenditure to LTP 3 until Government funding had been confirmed. Although this scheme had been shelved, rather than scrapped, he did not want to raise expectations about future development. Councillor Jackson clarified that the footway improvements would be prioritised by need.