

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**SPECIAL COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER**

**24TH FEBRUARY 2016 (6PM)**

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**Present:**

Councillors: C Rogers (Chairman), A T Hingley (Vice-Chairman), S Arnold, J Aston, J Baker, G W Ballinger, R Bishop, J-P Campion, S J Chambers, S J M Clee, J R Desmond, N J Desmond, H E Dyke, P Dyke, S E Fearn, J Greener, I Hardiman, S Harrington, J A Hart, M J Hart, N Knowles, D Little, T A Muir, F M Oborski MBE, J Phillips, J D Smith, S J Williams, G C Yarranton, K Henderson, Mrs L Henderson, T L Onslow and J A Shaw.

**C.1 Prayers**

Prayers were said by Pastor Rob Palmer of Franche Community Church, Kidderminster.

**C.2 Apologies for Absence**

**Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Rayner.**

**C.3 Declarations of Interests by Members**

There were no declarations of interests.

**C.4 Electoral Arrangements for Wyre Forest District Council**

Council received a report from the Chief Executive which asked Council to decide whether or not to change the cycle of elections for Wyre Forest District Council.

The Leader of the Council presented the report to Council and stated that he hoped history would be made in the chamber this evening. The Council had elected Members in thirds since 1974. Other local authorities and Worcestershire County Council elected their Members every four years and he believed that the community wished for elections every four years. The financial savings could generate approximately £200k over a four year period and this was an opportunity that the Council could not afford to miss. A public consultation had been conducted with 70% supporting the proposal. Six parish councils had responded and they were also in favour.

A lengthy debate ensued with some Members perceiving that yearly elections

would be good for the district Council.

In response to a question raised by a Member, the solicitor to the Council responded that the reason why judicial review was mentioned in the report was that it was a significant governance item which would require a decision by Council. There could also be a risk to the Council's reputation as the item was significant. She reiterated that Council had voted on other measures that had had contributed to considerable savings and informed Members that there were not many Council decisions that required a special majority but this decision did.

Some Members perceived that moving to elections every four years was not good for democracy.

Many Members supported the proposal and commented that the Council could not ignore the savings that could be made. It was also thought that it was very confusing for members of the public to have elections every year and it was also difficult for the Council to plan for the medium term.

Upon a vote, the decision to move to four yearly elections was carried by more than two thirds of Councillors voting in favour (27 for, 5 against).

**Decision:**

**It be resolved that under sections 32 and 33 of the Local Government and Involvement in Public Health Act 2007, whole council elections in May 2019 be implanted and every four years thereafter.**

The meeting ended at 6.51pm.