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**DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**16 NOVEMBER 2016**

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Present:

**MEMBERS:**

Councillor Williams (Leader) Councillors, G Adshead, W Wyatt-Lowe, Bhinder, Banks, C Wyatt-Lowe, Anderson, Birnie, Herbert Chapman, Clark, D Collins, E Collins, Douris, Elliot, Fantham, Fisher, Gbola Adeleke, Griffiths, Mrs Bassadone, Harden, P Hearn, S Hearn, Hicks, Imarni, Link, Maddern, Mahmood, Marshall, Matthews, McLean, Mills, Whitman, Peter, Riddick, Silwal, G Sutton, R Sutton, Taylor, Timmis and Tindall

**OFFICERS:**

Chief Executive, Corporate Director - Finance and Operations, Corporate Director - Housing & Regeneration, Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Group Manager - Democratic Services and Kelvin Soley

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

**1 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 28 September and 26 October 2016 were agreed by the Members present and were then signed by the Mayor.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

**4 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**4.1 By the Mayor**

None.

**4.2 By the Chief Executive:**

The Chief Executive announced the results of the Adeyfield West by election held on 29 September 2016.

**4.3 By the Group Leaders:**

Councillor Williams gave apologies on behalf of Councillors Ashbourn, Brown, Guest, Howard, Ransley and Ritchie.

#### **4.4. Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet:**

##### **Councillor Williams, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership**

Members were encouraged to attend the Budget training being held on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 2016 as it was good preparation for the budget scrutiny process beginning in December.

##### **Questions and Answers**

Councillor Tindall referred to the Crown estates roadshow in St Albans recently and was surprised on the size of the proposal being considered as it would impinge considerably on Dacorum. He asked that this council receive a presentation so we know how to address our concerns.

Councillor Williams agreed that this was a considerably significant proposal on the edge of Hemel Hempstead which could have significant consequences on this borough. He explained that it was a long process which Dacorum needed to work closely on with St Albans to monitor.

Councillor C Wyatt Lowe noted that this was impinging directly on the ward she represents and asked that officers kept members updated and involved in the process.

Councillor Bassadone said that St Albans had circulated the plan in November 2013. She said that Leverstock Green Association needed useful information to take to the AGM in the future.

##### **Councillor Imarni arrived at 7.37pm**

Councillor Williams said he would keep members informed as much as possible, bearing in mind it was a St Albans plan and therefore Dacorum would not have the final decision.

Councillor Birnie asked if the land belonged to the crown estate.  
Councillor Williams confirmed this was the case.

##### **Councillor Mills arrived at 7.40pm**

##### **Councillor G Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration**

###### **Maylands Business Centre extension**

- The site has now been cleared
- All planning conditions have been discharged
- Construction Work is starting on site for this 5-unit development
- Completion expected by May 2017

###### **Water Gardens**

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Notable progress including:

- All railings to bridges and balconies now installed
- Turf laid on the bank by Waterhouse Street – progressing well

### **GB High Street Awards Best town centre category**

- Just a final reminder to vote – closes on Friday 18 Nov – go to [www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk](http://www.thegreatbritishhighstreet.co.uk)
- Our officers hosted a visit by the judges on 3 Nov, received a very comprehensive tour of the town centre
- We will get the result on 12 December

### Questions & Answers

Councillor Tindall was impressed with the grass area at the Water Gardens. He asked what action would be taken to ensure the geese did not ruin it.

Councillor Sutton said they were looking at options available but assured members that the grass was protected.

### **Councillor Marshall, Portfolio Holder for Environmental, Sustainability and Regulatory Services**

#### **Environmental Services**

The last Garden Refuse collection rounds are in the weeks commencing 28 November and 2 December. The service will recommence early March. New calendars are in the course of being distributed.

A new “Love Food Hate Waste Challenge” has started, runs to 27 November, to encourage less food waste. Open to all residents. Residents who sign up get daily tips on saving food and free kitchen goodies. This campaign was run in the summer and participants averaged a saving of £60 per month and a reduction in food waste of over 50%.

173,500 bulbs have been machine planted this season and a further 58,300 bulbs are to be hand planted, so the Borough will look fantastic in the Spring.

DBC’s Youth Tenant Involvement Team toured the Cupid Green depot recently to learn about recycling and see where the recycled materials go after having been collected by the refuse collectors. There was also a presentation on the impact of littering.

Cllr Janice Marshall invited questions.

### Questions and Answers

Councillor England noted the increased litter problem in his ward around the Jarman Park area. He had recently undertaken a litter pick to help the situation. He asked if there was an update on replacement basket bins as the problem has increased since some were removed.

Councillor Marshall thanked Councillor England for carrying out the litter pick. She said she would look into the issue of replacing the bins. There was a problem with open

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basket bins as the litter could fall out; therefore they were looking to have bins with lids.

Councillor England continued to ask if councillors were advised when such bins were to be removed.

Councillor Marshall said that this was a minor detail for the function of the service and therefore councillors would not be advised. She would look into this issue and respond to Councillor England via email.

### **Councillor Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources**

#### **Finance:**

The Council has received a confirmation from Public Sector Audit Appointments that Dacorum will be one of the few Councils named in their annual report (this is not a bad thing). The report names those Councils which have managed to receive an unqualified audit opinion on the Statement of Accounts by the 31<sup>st</sup> July, which is two months prior to the statutory deadline. The Finance team go about their business in an understated way. As a lady MP said 'I think its important to do a good job and not to feel that you've got to make a grand gesture, but just to get on and deliver' – Teresa May.

Work continues on the 2017/18 budget, and the draft budget proposals are going to joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> December.

#### **Revenue & Benefits:**

The team has started preparation for the business rates revaluation which takes effect from April 2017, and has sent a leaflet to all local ratepayers which advises them to visit the Valuation Office website to check their new rateable value.

Recent publication by DWP of national benefits performance data for the first quarter of 2016/17 confirms the ongoing improvements made by the benefits team. Since the same period last year, we have moved up the rankings of 379 Authorities by 64 places for new claims and 115 places for change of circumstances.

#### **Commercial Assets & Property Development:**

We have issued the tender for the Stock Condition Survey and are awaiting returns. This will enable better allocation of funds and a reduction in unplanned maintenance and forms part of the approved action plan from the Asset Management Strategy.

The ongoing work to maximise capital receipt is continuing with the fourth garage site being marketed. A fifth site is in preparation.

Planning permission has been secured for the development of the Multi Storey Car Park in Berkhamsted and the tender has been issued.

#### **Commissioning, Procurement & Compliance:**

The Facilities Management Service contract with Interserve (Facilities Management) Ltd has entered the mobilisation stage. The initial focus is on agreeing the security arrangements for the Forum from the Practical Completion date, and the safe management and working practices of the staff and contractors who will be on-site during the final fit-out stage between Practical Completion and the DBC staff moving in.

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Bids have been received for the Forum Coffee Bar/Café and are currently being evaluated. It is anticipated that this service will be live in the Forum in February 2017.

The commissioning process has commenced on the replacement Parking Enforcement Contract, this will include reviewing current and future service requirements, technological innovation, legislative requirements and market dialogue. The current contract with Watford Borough Council and Indigo Park Services UK Limited ends in early 2018.

Thank you. That concludes my report and I welcome any questions.

### Questions & Answers

Councillor Douris acknowledged that there was an excellent audit performance report and therefore would he accept a request to share thanks and appreciation to the relevant finance teams and departments as they richly deserve such praise.

Councillor Elliot agreed and noted that DBC were an exemplar in this sector and he would pass on such praise.

### **Councillor Mrs Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing**

#### **Tenant Involvement**

We recently launched our latest tenant involvement strategy. The strategy is designed to engage a wider population in designing and developing the services that the Housing Service provides. Although the strategy focuses on engaging with the tenant population it recognises the need to engage effectively with leaseholders and housing applicants.

The launch of the tenant involvement strategy signalled the Council's commitment to refreshing some of our formal involvement mechanisms. The Tenant and Leasehold Committee for example has been relaunched; meeting as a Committee for the first time in October.

#### **Recharges**

The Housing Service has been enhancing our processes of collecting money owed to the service following damage or neglect. We have employed a fulltime staff member to work on income recovery (with an annual collection target of £100,000) from 1 October.

We have worked in partnership with Osborne to identify rechargeable work as early as possible and to empower their operatives to pause work before the tenant has agreed to pay.

This process is working well and enabling value resources to be brought into the service.

#### **Community Wellbeing Project**

We have received a grant of £33,000 through Public Health Herts to provide outreach to vulnerable adults in Adeyfield, Highfield, Grovehill, Bennetts End or Tring. The service aims to reduce child poverty and housing and health outcomes. It is focused on individuals in receipt of income related benefits, who are aged under 40, who have experienced some rent arrears in the last 12 months and have requested a high numbers of repairs. Tenants living in the private sector who are considered to be at risk of homelessness will also be targeted.

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The service commenced in October and will be running for 10 months.

## **Pet Policy**

We have updated our award winning approach to dealing with pets in Council owned properties. Dacorum Borough Council continues to build on the approach that we have set out to promote responsible pet ownership. For example; we support dog owners to have them microchipped – we encourage tenants to ask for permission before getting a pet, to ensure that can look after them – we support older tenants where appropriate to get a pet as it is proven to improve their quality of life.

## **Strategic Housing**

Strategic Housing management team have continued to place high focus on performance challenge and looking at opportunities to develop the service. As a result there has been ongoing improvement work within all areas, which has had an impact on KPI's such as average time to re-let homes, which is down 6 days on the figure from last September. In addition the service continues to strive to develop further improvements when working towards Gold Standard, this month sees the launch of our rough sleeper campaign and Homelessness Strategy.

Over the summer Aspen Court, London Road, Apsley and Elizabeth Court Queen Street developments were completed and occupied. These 2 developments provided 41 new Council Homes for social rent in Dacorum.

Able house continues on site and is due to complete in March next year. Wood House contract has been awarded to Jarvis and they will start on site early November.

Work on Stationers Place, Apsley, Swing Gate Lane in Berkhamsted and Martindale school site continues.

## **Property & Place**

### **Osborne - Total Asset Management.**

The action plan that was put in place in July to address two areas of declining performance, the number of appointments kept and responsive repairs not being completed within the target, has resulted in improvements. The performance indicators for September and October were all within tolerance or above target.

### **Sun Realm - Gas Servicing and Installation**

The servicing and installation contract continues to deliver consistently high levels of compliance, currently 99.99%. There is one overdue property, which is being progressed with the support of the ASB team and external agencies, due to the vulnerability of the tenant's mental health, which can result in aggressive outbursts. Customer satisfaction with the service remains high.

## Questions & Answers

There were no questions raised.

## **Councillor Harden, Portfolio Holder for Residents and Corporate Services**

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## **Resident Services:**

### **People:**

Supporting the Voluntary Sector: Community Action Dacorum have signed the contract and a Press release out. Service begun on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October.

Reducing Social Isolation: Age UK have signed the contract and the press release is out and Service begun on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October.

Information, Advice and Advocacy: Citizens Advice Dacorum have signed the contract and a Press release out. Service begun on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July.

Promoting Healthy Relationships: Mediation Herts and the press release is out and Service will begin on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December.

Living Stable Lives: WDP has been appointed and the press release is due. Service is due to start during Dec but they were currently working on KPIs.

Voluntary sector commissioning project is now complete producing £68,550 saving and with updated KPIs will provide better outcomes for our residents.

## **ICT**

DBC has been certified by the PSN for another year. We did so this year without being required to make any significant changes in infrastructure or how we manage devices (such as iPads, PCs, etc.)

## **Resident Services:**

### **Neighbourhood Action**

The Max Whitlock event in town centre was a great success attracting over 1000 people.

The Max Whitlock competition for schools was very successful with over 1100 entries.

The Love Your Neighbourhood event in Chaulden – The focus was Health for all ages.

This ran in partnership with the local GP surgery and 64 residents attended.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

The ASB Team was a finalist in Resolve Anti-Social Behaviour Awards 2016 - Best Project Award for Silver Street which is advice and guidance for older people to help prevent them becoming victims of crime.

### **Hemel Cycle Hub**

Works to the building are still ongoing. Bikes for the organised cycle rides have arrived and 4 rides have already taken place with a total so far of 58 participants.

### **Christmas Lights Neighbourhood Centres**

The schedule for Christmas Lights being switched on in the Neighbourhood Centres is as follows:

26th November:

- Queen's Square, Adeyfield

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2nd December:

- Rossgate Shops, Gadebridge
- Chaulden Shops
- Boxmoor Christmas Tree switch-on

3rd December:

- Stoneycroft Shops, Warners End
- GroveHill Shops

### Questions & Answers

Councillor Griffiths asked if the Portfolio Holder was aware that Leverstock Green turned their Christmas lights on last week.

Councillor Harden was unaware of this and congratulated them.

## **5 QUESTIONS**

None

## **6 NOTICE OF MOTION**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Tindall and seconded by Councillor Link.

"Dacorum Borough Council believes that local pharmacies are an integral part of the Borough's Health Structure and that the Government's plans in relation to the funding of local pharmacies

(a) threaten patient access to pharmacies and pharmacy services throughout the Borough, especially in rural areas

(b) risk reducing services such as free delivery of prescription drugs, family planning advice and advice on medicines and other remedies

(c) will thereby put more pressure on GPs, hospitals and social care, at odds with the strategies currently pursued by the NHS in Hertfordshire.

We therefore

(a) call on the Government to abandon these cuts and maintain a fully-funded community pharmacy service and

(b) urge the Leader of the Council to write to the two Dacorum Members of Parliament requesting they lobby the Secretary of State for Health accordingly."

Councillor Tindall introduced the motion;

Councillor Ron Tindall said we are following over 2 million people who have signed the petition to persuade the government not to follow through with their proposals. Community Pharmacies are a key resource for communities with 95% of people living and working within 20 minutes of a pharmacy.

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The proposals as currently presented will be another blow to the quality of care for patients facing cuts in their income from December, with further cuts expected in April next year. The cuts will be across the board and irrespective of the quality of service or patient choice. Reducing community pharmacy funding could result in the closure of up to one third of those pharmacies.

The proposed reduction could affect Public Health Prevention and the ability of pharmacies to deal with more clinical outcomes leaving GPs free to concentrate on clinically complicated ones and thus relieve pressure on hospitals. This at a time when pharmacies are being urged by the government to help to relieve GPs workload.

We ask that the Members of Parliament for Dacorum take note of the concerns, and lobby the government accordingly.

#### Questions & Answers

Councillor Williams had carefully considered the motion however did not feel he could support it as it did not include any real facts, only assumptions. He felt that pharmacies who embrace new services will see an increase in income so they would survive the new arrangements. He was unsure how this would affect the local residents as there was not enough information to consider.

He felt that the Health Committee should discuss it and involve relevant agencies to form a more in-depth discussion. He had every sympathy, but no real facts and therefore he could not support the motion based on assumptions. He felt it would be counter intuitive to not enable pharmacies to deliver what the NHS say they will.

Councillor Taylor was unable to support the motion. He was speaking as Vice-Chairman of the Health in Dacorum Committee, in the absence of the Chairman. He had been aware of this issue at the Health Committee and advised members that a letter had been sent to the Minister for Health asking for further information as it would be more concrete.

Councillor England would be supporting the motion as he felt the council should show pro-active support of local pharmacies.

Councillor Griffiths understood the importance of being proactive but felt that the motion did not give any facts. She had not personally heard from any concerned pharmacies and therefore was unaware if it would even be of benefit to them. She would therefore not be supporting the motion.

Following contributions from other councillors, Councillor Tindall stated that opposition to the motion based on a lack of information and assumptions was not valid as the information used had been taken from the statement of 1<sup>st</sup> November of the Hertfordshire Local Pharmaceutical Committee and also the response from the Local Government Association. He considered it fair to expect that one part of government would understand another.

The motion was put to a vote:

For: 4  
Against: 33  
Abstained: 5

The motion was lost.

None

**8 CABINET REFERRALS**

None

**9 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS**

None

**10 REFERRAL FROM HEALTH IN DACORUM COMMITTEE - MINUTE OS/233/16**

**Acute Hospital Care In West Hertfordshire:**

That Dacorum Borough Council shows its proactive support of maintaining a hospital presence in West Herts in general and Dacorum in particular in the most appropriate location to give the people of Dacorum the best possible care.

Councillor Taylor introduced the proposal:

At our Health in Dacorum (HiD) Committee meeting on 14 September 2016 we agreed to a proposal that we would seek to obtain sanction from the leader of the Council to heighten our overt support of our aim to achieve a Hospital facility for Hemel Hempstead.

I was tasked to research the possibility of bringing the matter to the attention of our group and subsequently presenting a proposal at the next full Council meeting. I contacted the Leader of the Council, Cllr Andrew Williams to ask if we could present our case at the next Group meeting on 27 September and at the following day's Full Council meeting, make our proposal that DBC shows greater overt support of proposals for hospital services in West Herts in general and DBC in particular. I had researched a number of issues both ahead of that HiD meeting and also following it, due to what I had perceived to be something of a predetermined outcome.

The Watford Campus project was well underway with the new access road to Watford hospital due to be completed before the end of this year. Also, Underground railway access had been authorised and Watford Council was included as one of a number of "partners" in the much-heralded Watford scheme.

Dacorum Hospital Action Group had enlisted support for its plan, based on the Northumbrian example and already operating successfully, from the Hemel Hempstead MP, Rt Hon Mike Penning which I had been involved with. Other groups were also holding campaign meetings for their proposals.

DBC have never, in my opinion, been overtly supportive any of the schemes in such a way as Watford Council are to retain their hospital next door to Watford football ground. My proposal was for DBC to actually openly commit to "our" hospital provision.

Unfortunately, the leader advised me that the agenda for the group meeting following September's HiD meeting was full and as I felt we needed more than a few minutes asked if we could have an opportunity at November's Group and Council meetings. The postponement was fortuitous as much public activity occurred soon after, confirming my fear that Watford was a "done deal".

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I still felt that we MUST show commitment and an additional HiD meeting was held on 7<sup>th</sup> November, which the leader of the Council attended and to which he contributed. The issue was then added to last night's Group meeting and tonight's agenda, thus being the reason I now stand before you.

The HiD meeting on 7 November was attended by the three senior NHS executives for our area;

David Evans	Programme Director - Your Care, Your Future
David Law	Chief Executive Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust
Helen Brown	Director of Strategy & Corporate Services, West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust

together with other outside representatives, Councillors and officers.

After much debate Cllr Williams affirmed this Council's understanding of the huge challenge in funding and providing healthcare in Hertfordshire. That DBC has always opposed the downgrading of the Hemel Hempstead site and held fast to the view that a new facility – one not on the Watford site - is required as the proposals being put forward by The NHS do not serve either the interest of, nor suit the needs of, our community.

I therefore beg to propose:-

Regarding Acute Hospital Care in West Hertfordshire:

That Dacorum Borough Council shows its proactive support of maintaining a hospital presence in West Herts in general and Dacorum in particular in the most appropriate locations to give the people of Dacorum access to the best possible care. I so move.

**Councillor Timmis seconded the proposal:**

We welcome an upgrading of the acute hospital facilities, but not at Watford. In the light of the people we represent here in Dacorum, remembering that we are not just talking about Hemel Hempstead, but also Berkhamsted, Tring, Kings Langley and surrounding villages, the Watford decision is unfair and discriminates against Dacorum residents. This is a population of approximately 150,000 people, and is expanding, while at the same time the West Herts Hospitals Trust (WHHT) is reducing health facilities in the Borough, such as closing Gossoms End and Tring Health Centre. The problem for our residents is the distance and access to Watford Hospital. And why pour more money into a hospital that was described as inadequate by the Care and Quality Commission?

Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) supports the proposal of a new hospital on a Greenfield site equidistant from Watford, St Albans and Dacorum. But instead the WHHT has chosen to upgrade Watford Hospital which will take 10 years and will inevitably lead to disrupted services during that time.

So therefore I am seconding the motion 'That DBC shows support for maintaining a hospital presence in West Herts in general and Dacorum in particular' (in the appropriate location to give people of Dacorum access to the best possible care.)

Questions and Answers

**CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Williams did not feel that the motion fully reflected the discussion at the Health Committee meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November. He accepted in part that DBC had been less proactive because the situation had been the same for the past 10-15 years. He acknowledged that the healthcare situation had moved on and we accepted a large acute hospital would be the solution for West Herts. He understood the NHS funding issues but believed it was the wrong decision to have Watford as the sole provider without providing a proper health solution.

He felt that Watford were unable to provide the facilities Dacorum residents needed. He would ensure that the council continue to support the Hospital Action group and local MP and would never give up.

Councillor Tindall would support the proposal. He recognised the need for a new hospital in the area but felt it would be better located around junction 20 of the M25 motorway. He asked if the implication of asking for money for a Greenfield site would mean no monies would be allocated, was a threat to Hemel Hempstead.

Councillor Anderson spoke on behalf of the kings Langley ward and assured members that they supported the proposal too. They were far happier with a hospital on the site near the motorway rather than having a service station. He felt the whole idea of acute services was to be providing 'local' services. He said that the clinical and access nonsense needed to be abolished as the claims were untrue. He said the council needed to fight its corner.

Councillor Maddern explained that she had represented DBC at the HCC Health Committee. A letter had been sent to NHS England suggesting the favoured option of a new green field site and that they would be happy to support renovations at the Watford site. The committee had taken a vote on this and some had preferred a more central site rather than develop the Watford site.

Councillor Taylor appreciated Council's input.

The recommendation was put to vote:

For: 41

Abstained: 1

The motion was carried.

## **11 CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Councillor England to replace Councillor Link on the Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Mills and Councillor Adeleke to join the Appeals panel.

Councillor Adeleke to join the Licensing Health & Safety Committee.

Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe to join JNC

## **12 CHANGE TO COMMITTEE DATES**

The Audit Committee taking place on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November will begin at 7pm

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**13 STANDARDS COMMITTEE - LOCALISM ACT 2011 - RE-APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON**

That Council re-appoints Rachel Keil as the Council's Independent Person until Annual Council held in 2019.

Councillor Williams noted that this was the last Full Council meeting in the Civic Centre. He added that he felt very unfortunate to have been a part of the council for the past 29 and a half years and to be involved in the move to the new building. He said it was a start of an exciting new era and new ways of working. He congratulated the Corporate Director for Housing & Regeneration and everyone involved in the project in delivering it on time and on budget.

Councillor Tindall added his thanks to the Portfolio Holder and members of the Cabinet for the courtesy given to each of the councillors. He said there had been some disagreements but hoped this working relationship would continue in the new building.

The Meeting ended at 8.45 pm

**CHAIRMAN**