

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL**

THURSDAY, 21 MAY 2026

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena,
Rugby Road, West Bridgford
and live streamed on Rushcliffe Borough Council's YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors J Cottee (Chair), R Butler (Vice-Chair), M Barney, J Billin, T Birch, R Bird, A Brennan, A Brown, J Chaplain, K Chewings, N Clarke, T Combellack, S Dellar, A Edyvean, S Ellis, M Gaunt, E Georgiou, P Gowland, C Grocock, R Inglis, R Mallender, S Mallender, D Mason, P Matthews, H Om, H Parekh, A Phillips, L Plant, D Polenta, N Regan, D Simms, D Soloman, R Upton, D Virdi, J Walker, R Walker, L Way, T Wells, G Wheeler, J Wheeler and G Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

L Ashmore	Director of Development and Economic Growth
C Caven-Attack	Assistant Director of Corporate Services
A Hill	Chief Executive
P Linfield	Director of Finance and Corporate Services
E Richardson	Democratic Services Officer
H Tambini	Democratic Services Manager

APOLOGIES:

Councillors S Calvert, G Fletcher and C Thomas

1 Declarations of Interest

The Assistant Director – Corporate Services declared an interest in Item 13 Appointment to the Role of Monitoring Officer and advised that she would leave the room during the debate on this item.

2 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 March 2026

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday, 5 March 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

3 Address of retiring Mayor

Councillor Cottee, Mayor of Rushcliffe for 2025/26, thanked Council for entrusting him with the position of Mayor and stated that he had had a wonderful year, which he had thoroughly enjoyed. He referred to the numerous

events he had attended throughout the Borough, including the recent installation of the new Dean at Southwell Minster, the Scouts' Big Weekend and the Nottinghamshire County Show. He referred to his charity, the Richard Whitehead Foundation, and confirmed that his last event would be a charity race night in June, to raise further funds.

The Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor, Councillors and officers for their support throughout the year and his Chaplain, Father Tom Meyrick, and presented him with a gift. The Mayor thanked his wife Loraine for her help and stated that he could not have taken on the role without her support and presented her with flowers. The Mayor and Mayoress also thanked the Mayor's Secretary, Emma Richardson, and presented her with flowers.

4 Vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor

The Leader, Councillor Clarke, MBE proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor, Councillor Cottee, stating that he had been an excellent ambassador for the Borough, undertaking various duties across the community. The Leader referred to the many events undertaken by the Mayor, as detailed in his photograph album, including sailing on narrow boats, flag raising for Armed Forces, Merchant Navy and Commonwealth Day, attending Proms in the Park, the Hickling Scarecrow Festival and Christmas events, attending charity events for Richard Whitehead, whilst being ably supported by his wife, Loraine. The Leader concluded by thanking Councillor Cottee for his service during this year and presented him with his photograph album, Mayor's portrait and past Mayor's badge.

On behalf of the Labour Group, Councillor Jen Walker thanked the Mayor for his service over the past year, which he had undertaken with dignity and commitment. She stated that whilst sharing different political views, the Labour Group acknowledged the Mayor's dedication to public service and to the people of Rushcliffe. Councillor Walker welcomed Councillor Butler, as the new Mayor, and hoped that he would be a strong, fair voice for everyone. She confirmed that whilst the Labour Group would continue to speak up for the communities they represented, this evening was about respecting service and democratic traditions and she reiterated thanks to the Mayor.

Councillor Edyvean congratulated the Mayor on his successful year and the service he had given.

Councillor Sue Mallender reiterated those thanks and stated that she was very impressed with the work he had undertaken for his charity, which she and Councillor Richard Mallender supported when they could.

Councillor Birch thanked the Mayor for his service and wished him well for the future.

On behalf of the Leake Independent Group, Councillor Billin extended heartfelt thanks to the Mayor and referred to the tremendous year for his charity, which he also had a close affinity with. He thanked the Mayor for hosting afternoon tea for the East Leake Community Care Association, to celebrate them winning the King's Award.

5 Election of Mayor 2026/27

It was proposed by Councillor Barney that Councillor Butler be elected as Mayor of the Borough of Rushcliffe for the civic year 2026/27.

Councillor Barney congratulated Councillor Cottee on his successful year, thanked him for his hard work and Loraine for supporting him so ably. Councillor Barney stated that it was a great privilege and pleasure to nominate Councillor Butler to serve as the next Mayor, as he had long demonstrated the qualities that this office demanded, integrity, compassion and commitment, with a genuine dedication to public service. Throughout his decades as a Councillor, he had shown unwavering commitment to residents, and it was not just his experience but the manner in which he served that distinguished him. He believed that Councillor Butler had earned the respect of colleagues across the Council Chamber and the trust of the communities he represented, as he understood the importance of bringing people together.

Councillor Barney stated that Councillor Butler moved to the Borough aged four, moving to Cotgrave in 1990. His working career had been varied, including retail, advertising and marketing, working for the Nottingham Evening Post and promoting work based learning and training for younger and older people. Councillor Butler was first elected to Cotgrave Town Council in 1999, Nottinghamshire County Council in 2001, followed by Rushcliffe Borough Council in 2003, and he remained a member on all three councils. Since then, he had sat on the majority of committees holding most roles, and in 2024-25 he was elected as Chairman at Nottinghamshire County Council, performing that role very successfully. Councillor Barney referred to Councillor Butler's love of the countryside, music, literature and to his passion for the DAF Variomatic car. He went on to advise that Councillor Butler was following in highly commendable footsteps, as his father, Councillor Roy Butler served as Mayor in 2000/01, and that he would be immensely proud of him tonight. Councillor Barney felt that Councillor Butler would also be an outstanding ambassador for Rushcliffe and would carry out his role with distinction, warmth and dedication.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor Mason reiterated Councillor Butler's dedication to local residents over many years, as well as the support he had given to Councillors from all political parties. She referred to his sense of humour and that he always saw the good in people and believed he would have an excellent year and wished him well.

There being no further nominations, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Butler be elected as Mayor of the Borough of Rushcliffe for the civic year 2026/27.

Councillor Butler then read and signed the declaration of acceptance of office and after thanking his proposer, seconder and fellow Councillors, took the Chair and was invested with the Chain of Office.

The Mayor thanked Councillors for entrusting him with the office, and Councillors Barney and Mason for their kind words. The Mayor stated that it was an honour to be chosen, it meant a great deal to him, and in particular he was thinking about his father this evening. He was looking forward to attending

events around the Borough, as Rushcliffe truly was a great place to live. He thanked Councillor Cottee for his service over the year and that it had been a pleasure to be his deputy and he thanked the Reverend Paul Massey for agreeing to be his Chaplain. He referred to his charity, Guide Dogs, and stated that most people took their senses for granted, and it was important to think how different and challenging life would be without your sight. Thousands of people were visually impaired and guide dogs provided a lifeline for them. Training a guide dog was very specialised and expensive and he hoped to raise money and awareness to help this organisation continue its incredible work, and he welcomed representatives from the charity, including two guide dogs they had brought to the meeting. He thanked Councillor Brown, who was planning a 24 hour bus tour on 1 August, and hoped that everyone would support him, with the donations going to the Mayor's charity. The Mayor stated that he hoped that this would be the first of several events throughout the year. He hoped that going forward at Council meetings, everyone would work together and remember that Councillors were here for the residents of Rushcliffe. He concluded by thanking Councillors and his guests for attending and to those watching remotely.

6 Election of Deputy Mayor 2026/27

It was proposed by Councillor Brown that Councillor Parekh be elected as Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Rushcliffe for the civic year 2026/27.

Councillor Brown congratulated the Mayor on his appointment and stated that he was pleased to nominate Councillor Parekh, whose journey into public life was deeply rooted in service to people and community. Born in Mumbai, Councillor Parekh came to the UK in 2006 to complete her master's degree in social work, a profession she chose to make a difference. Councillor Parekh had planned to return to India; however, she met her future husband, married and made the UK her home, where she quickly became active in the local community, volunteering and organising events, whilst continuing her career as a Social Worker. Councillor Brown stated that she had been encouraged to become involved in politics, and had agreed to do so, as long as she could remain focused on serving and advocating for residents, which she had, and he believed that she would make an excellent Deputy Mayor.

In seconding the recommendation, Councillor G Wheeler congratulated the Mayor, thanked Councillor Cottee and added his support to the nomination of Councillor Parekh as Deputy Mayor. He referred to the Covid pandemic, and Councillor Parekh's hard work in supporting frontline workers and the vulnerable, which she had continued to do, in various voluntary roles, working closely with charities, schools, faith groups and local organisations, to tackle food poverty in particular. She also took an active role in the Christmas Shoebox Appeal, with over 1,000 distributed to those in need. Councillor Wheeler wished Councillor Parekh well in her forthcoming year as Deputy Mayor.

There being no further nominations, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Parekh be elected as Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Rushcliffe for the civic year 2026/27.

Councillor Parekh then read and signed the declaration of acceptance of office and after thanking her proposer, seconder, and fellow Councillors, was invested with his Chain of Office by the Mayor.

Councillor Parekh thanked Councillors Brown and Wheeler for their kind words, congratulated the Mayor on his appointment, and stated that she looked forward to learning from and working with him during the year. She also thanked Councillors for supporting her and stated that she took this responsibility very seriously and would work to serve the Borough with commitment and respect. Councillor Parekh felt pride in becoming the first person of Indian descent, one of the youngest and few women to hold this role, and she hoped that this moment reflected a Council that was open and inclusive. She thanked her husband for his constant support, her 10 year old twins, for keeping her grounded and reminding her every day of the importance of community and her parents, whose sacrifice and unwavering support had made this journey possible. Councillor Parekh stated that her passion had always been on community service, bringing people together and ensuring that every voice mattered. As Deputy Mayor, she would continue to support communities, champion local causes and serve with openness, kindness and determination.

7 Leader's Announcements

The Leader, Councillor Clarke MBE congratulated the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on their appointments and wished them both well for the forthcoming year.

The Leader referred to the East Midlands Tri-Sector Challenge event, which had recently been held and congratulated the team from Rushcliffe, Mike Alder, Claudia Bowring, Rhiannon Berry, Ian Hartley, Sofia Melvin and Seb Soar for winning the Best Team award, and Seb Soar for winning the Team Leader award. The Leader stated that in all of the categories, the team was either runner up or the winner, which was a fantastic achievement in such a competitive event.

He went onto mention the Great Central Railway (GCR) Transport Heritage Museum at Ruddington and advised that he was proud to have facilitated a visit by the East Midlands Combined Council Authority (EMCCA) Mayor last week, which coinciding with the Flying Scotsman and Tornado operating from there. It was hoped that the visit would encourage the Mayor to support additional investment and promotion of this excellent tourism venue. The Leader also wished Notts County well in its play-off final at Wembley next week.

The Leader noted the recent tragic events in Golders Green, which had contributed to the Government raising the national terrorism threat level from substantial to severe. Whilst expressing thoughts for the victims, he urged everyone to remain vigilant and stated it was vital that all communities in Rushcliffe should feel safe.

The Leader stated that he had attended the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum (UKREiIF) yesterday and was on a panel with the EMCCA

Mayor promoting tourism in the East Midlands, with his particular focus on Rushcliffe. Given the prominence of this international event, it was important for Rushcliffe to be involved and he was pleased to confirm that it had been a very successful day.

The Leader concluded by informing Council that two members of staff were leaving the Council, the Monitoring Officer, Sara Pregon, who would be moving to Nottinghamshire County Council as its new Deputy Monitoring Officer, and whilst he was pleased for her, she would be greatly missed at Rushcliffe. The Leader thanked her for the support she had given to everyone and wished her well. The Leader advised that the Director – Development and Economic Growth, Leanne Ashmore would be leaving to take up a post at Nottingham Trent University, and again whilst he was pleased for her, she would be greatly missed. The Leader referred to the many key projects and plans that she had led, that she had been a great asset to the Council, and he wished her well.

8 Chief Executive's Announcements

In echoing the thanks given by the Leader, the Chief Executive stated that he felt extremely fortunate to have had both Sara and Leanne as part of his team, and whilst he was sad to see them leave, he was always pleased, and it was part of his role to encourage and ensure that people could progress and that Rushcliffe's reputation moved forward. He stated that also having Leanne's support as a Deputy Chief Executive had been key, he referred to the number of legacy projects that she had been involved in and felt that she should be proud of that going forward. He passed on his personal thanks to both of them.

9 Appointments of Committees and Member Groups 2026/27

The Leader and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership, Councillor Clarke MBE presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services, outlining the nominations for the appointment of committees and member groups for 2026/27.

It was proposed by Councillor Clarke MBE and seconded by Councillor Brennan and **RESOLVED** that the nominations to committees and member groups for 2026/27 be approved as follows:

A. Scrutiny Committees

Corporate Overview Group

Councillors Williams (Chair), Billin, Brown, Combella, Gaunt, Plant and Simms

Governance Scrutiny Group

Councillors Simms (Chair), Gaunt (Vice-Chair), Edyvean, Gowland, Om, Regan, Thomas, Wells and G Wheeler

Growth and Development Scrutiny Group

Councillors Combella (Chair), Billin (Vice-Chair), Bird, Brown, Calvert, Chaplain, Ellis, Mason and R Walker

Communities Scrutiny Group

Councillor Brown (Chair), Plant (Vice-Chair), Barney, Billin, Grocock, Mason, Matthews, Parekh and Phillips

B. Regulatory Committees

Licensing Committee

Councillors Regan (Chair), Chaplain, Chewings, Cottee, Fletcher, R Mallender, Mason, Matthews, Om, Phillips, Polenta, Simms, Way, G Wheeler and Williams

Planning Committee

Councillors R Walker (Chair), Georgiou (Vice-Chair), Barney, Birch, Calvert, Chaplain, Ellis, S Mallender, Mason, Thomas and Wells

Employment Appeals Committee

Councillors Clarke MBE (Chair), Brown, Grocock, Phillips and J Wheeler

Interviewing Committee

Councillors Clarke MBE (Chair), Brennan, R Mallender, J Walker and J Wheeler

Standards Committee

Councillors Om (Chair), Chewings, Dellar, Matthews, Parekh, Plant, Simms, A Wood (Parish Member) and K White (Independent Member)

C. Member Groups

Local Development Framework Group

Councillors Upton (Chair), R Walker (Vice-Chair), Barney, Bird, Brown, Calvert, Chewings, Ellis, Georgiou, Gowland, S Mallender, Mason, Plant, Thomas and Wells

Member Development Group

Councillors Matthews (Chair), Butler, Combellack, Cottee, Edyvean, Gaunt, Plant, Soloman and Williams

Rushcliffe Strategic Growth Board

Councillors Clarke MBE (Chair), Brennan, Edyvean, Grocock, Upton, Viridi, Way, J Walker and J Wheeler

Civic Hospitality Panel

Councillor Butler (Chair), Birch, Brennan, Clarke MBE, Fletcher, Parekh and Polenta

West Bridgford Special Expenses and Community Infrastructure Levy Advisory Group

Councillor Viridi (Chair), Calvert, Chaplain, Dellar, R Mallender, Matthews, Om, Parekh and J Wheeler

Local Government Reorganisation Task and Finish Group

Councillor Clarke MBE (Chair), Brown, Calvert, Chaplain, Chewings, Edyvean, Georgiou, Grocock, Inglis, R Mallender, Mason, Om, Soloman, Thomas, Viridi,

10 **Approval of Timetable of Meetings 2026/27**

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership, Councillor Clarke MBE presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services, setting out the timetable of meetings for the municipal year 2026/27.

It was proposed by Councillor Clarke MBE and seconded by Councillor Brennan and **RESOLVED** that the timetable of meetings for the municipal year 2026/27, as attached at the Appendix to the officer's report, be approved

11 **Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies 2026/27**

The Mayor reported an update to the report in relation to number 10, Rural Community Action for Nottinghamshire (RCAN). RCAN had informed the Council that it no longer had local authority representatives sitting on its Board of Directors, so there would therefore be no appointment to this group.

The Mayor advised that there were two contested positions for number 5, the East Midlands Airport Independent Consultative Committee and number 11, the Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park, which each had one seat, but two nominations for both.

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership, Councillor Clarke MBE presented the report of the Director – Finance and Corporate Services setting out the appointments to Outside Bodies for the municipal year 2026/27 and confirmed the updates given by the Mayor and that recommendation c) related to RCAN would not be voted on.

The Leader moved that Council accept the nominations of the uncontested positions as one vote before moving on to consider the two contested positions.

The recommendation was seconded by Councillor Brennan.

Following the voting for the two contested positions, it was **RESOLVED** that the appointments to Outside Bodies for the municipal year 2026/27 be as follows:

City of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Economic Prosperity Committee
Leader/Deputy Leader (Substitute)

East Midlands Councils (including other representative roles within this appointment) Leader/Deputy Leader (Substitute)

Greater Nottingham Joint Planning Advisory Board
Appropriate Cabinet Portfolio Holder

Local Government Association – General Assembly (including other representative roles within this appointment)
Leader/Deputy Leader (Substitute)

East Midlands Airport Independent Consultative Committee
Councillor Edyvean

Health and Well Being Board
Appropriate Cabinet Portfolio Holder

Nottinghamshire Police and Crime Panel
Appropriate Cabinet Portfolio Holder

Nottinghamshire Waste Management Board
Appropriate Cabinet Portfolio Holder

Freeport Board
Leader and Deputy Leader (Alternate Board Member)

Friends of Rushcliffe Country Park
Councillor Wells

Local Area Forum – West Bridgford
Councillors Calvert (Abbey ward), Om (Compton Acres ward), Parekh (Edwalton ward), J Wheeler (Gamston ward), R Mallender (Lady Bay ward), Matthews (Lutterell ward), Polenta (Musters ward) and Plant (Trent Bridge ward)

Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board
Councillors Billin, Combella, Fletcher and Wells

12 **Approval of Monitoring Officer Designation**

Having declared an interest, the Assistant Director – Corporate Service left the room.

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Borough-wide Leadership, Councillor Clarke MBE presented the report of the Chief Executive, detailing the appointment to the Monitoring Officer role.

The Leader advised that this related to the potential appointment of an officer to act in the Monitoring Officer role from 15 June 2026, until the substantive role was recruited to. He referred to paragraph 4.2 of the report, which highlighted the competitive and rigorous recruitment process that had taken place to replace the current Monitoring Officer, Sara Pregon, who was leaving the authority. As the Council had been unable to appoint to the role, the recruitment process would need to be repeated; however, a designated officer had to be in place and the report recommended that the current Assistant Director – Corporate Services, Charlotte Caven-Atack should be appointed to the role in the interim. The Leader referred to her considerable experience of the democratic process and the Constitution and felt that she was the appropriate choice.

Councillor Brennan seconded the recommendation.

It was **RESOLVED** that Charlotte Caven-Atack be appointed and designated as the Council's Monitoring Officer from 15 June 2026, until the substantive role is recruited to.

The Assistant Director – Corporate Service returned to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.

CHAIR