

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT NELSON TOWN HALL
ON 27th NOVEMBER 2023**

PRESENT –

His Worship the Mayor (Councillor B. Newman – in the Chair)

Councillors

M. Adnan

F. Ahmad

N. Ahmed

S. Ahmed

D. Albin

Z. Ali

M. Ammer

R. Anwar

N. Ashraf

M. Aslam

N. Butterworth

C. Church

M. Hanif

M. Iqbal

Y. Iqbal

K. Mohammad

D. Lord

K. McGladdery

A. Mahmood

K. Salter

M. Strickland

Y. Tennant

D. Whipp

T. Whipp

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D. Cockburn-Price, S. Cockburn-Price, D. Gallear, S. Land, M. Stone and A. Surcliffe).



44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were reminded of the legal requirements concerning the declaration of interests.

45. PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

It was moved by Councillor A. Mahmood and seconded by Councillor M. Hanif –

Pendle Borough Council is deeply shocked and saddened at the dramatic escalation of the conflict between Palestine and Israel.

The conflict has led to a humanitarian crisis which can only be resolved by an end to the violence. We want to formally join the voices calling for an immediate ceasefire in the region and show our support for the international community to broker a peaceful and just resolution.

The Council condemns the outrageous attack by Hamas on 7th October killing 1200 civilians in Israel and demand the immediate release to all hostages.

The Council notes:

- At the time of writing there have been 12,000 deaths in Gaza including nearly 5,000 children. The United Nations has described the situation now as a graveyard for children. A group of United Nations experts expressed concerns the situation in Gaza has reached a 'catastrophic tipping point.'
- The United Nations relief agency for Palestinians says on average one child is killed and two are injured every 10 minutes during the war. Save The Children confirmed the number of

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children killed in Gaza in the first 3 weeks of the conflict by the Israeli government surpasses numbers killed in all conflicts since 2019. As the United Nations Secretary General said, “no party to an armed conflict is above international law.”

- There is still a dire need for food, water, medicine, fuel and essential supplies in Gaza. Two million Gazans are struggling to find drinking water. Operations and amputations are being conducted without anaesthesia.
- The call for an immediate ceasefire is not only echoed by the United Nations General Assembly, UNRWA, World Health Organisation, War on Want, World Food Programme CAFOD, Amnesty International Christian Aid and over 600 NGO’s from across the world. Pope Frances and the Archbishop of Canterbury have called for similar. The French President Emmanuel Macron and the Irish Government have recently called for a ceasefire.
- At a domestic political level, the Mayors of London, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire alongside the Scottish First Minister and Shadow First Minister have demanded an immediate ceasefire. So have over 100 MPs including nearly 20 Labour Shadow Front Bench members alongside the trade union movement and hundreds of Councillors.
- There are very strong feelings amongst Pendle residents over a long period of time regarding the Palestine/Israel conflict.
- The Council has town twinning links with Beit Leed, Palestine over a number of years, with reciprocal visits.
- There is a danger that an extended conflict may have adverse effects on the world economy and hence the local economy and so may already be exacerbating the cost-of-living crisis or may soon start to have such an impact.
- There can be no justification for the loss of innocent lives, and all atrocities committed against civilians must be condemned and investigated.
- All forms of racism, including anti-Palestinian racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia have no place in our area and condemns any attacks on Palestinian, Jewish, Muslims or people of any other faith or none.
- Sir Kier Starmer was wrong to say, in an interview with LBC radio, that Israel “does have that right” to withhold food, water and electricity from Gaza.

This Council therefore resolves to publicly back an immediate and permanent ceasefire in the region by all parties and the unconditional release of all hostages.

This Council also resolves to ask the Chief Executive to:

- (1) Write to the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition/Labour Leader and the Leader of the Liberal Democrats:
 - (a) Asking them to support the upholding of international law, with appropriate investigation and accountability for breaches including the use of white phosphorus and war crimes.
 - (b) Asking for all efforts be made to ensure Israel does not ‘land grab’ and illegally occupy Gaza making a two-state solution impossible.
 - (c) Asking them to support the unfettered humanitarian access to Gaza to alleviate the unacceptable levels of human suffering in the region.
 - (d) Asking them to intervene and ask the Israeli government to stop escalation of violence from illegal settlers in the West Bank who are driving Palestinians from their homes; and
 - (e) Asking them to endorse a serious and concerted reinvigoration of international efforts for a two-state solution.
 - (f) Israel and Hamas to stop all violence.

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- (2) Write to the Leader of the Opposition Sir Kier Starmer asking for his apology and retract his statement supporting collective punishment.
- (3) Write to Pendle's MP Andrew Stephenson asking him to explain why he didn't support the ceasefire and why he didn't attend Parliament when the issue was being discussed. Also, ask him to represent the views of his constituents in the future and call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire.
- (4) Build on existing efforts to raise awareness of and challenge all forms of racism including antisemitism, islamophobia, and anti-Palestinian racism.

Upon being put to the vote it was –

RESOLVED

Accordingly.

His Worship the Mayor _____