

MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 23 March 2016

At 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor J S King (Chairman)

Councillors: S E Bartington D S T Enright
A K Beames T J Morris
C Brown L M Price
H W Chirgwin C E Reynolds
B J Churchill C K Woodward
H Eaglestone

Officers: Town Clerk Responsible Financial Officer
Democratic Services Officer

148 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs Doughty and Harvey.

149 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr B Churchill and Cllr C Woodward declared a non-pecuniary interest as they were Trustees of the Witney Corn Exchange Trust. Cllr J King, B Churchill and Cllr C Brown declared non-pecuniary interests in their association with West Witney Sports.

150 **MINUTES**

a) **RESOLVED:** to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2016 for signature by the Chairman.

b) **MATTERS ARISING**

Page 1 – Cllr Holliday had been present at the meeting.

Page 2 – Minute 063 d) – a member reported that some of the potholes on the cycle path at The Leys had been filled in. Another member said that she had visited the location with the Area Steward and some of them did not meet the criteria for repair. It was suggested that a strongly worded letter about the potholes could be written to the County Council.

Cllr Enright entered at 7.05pm.

151 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present for this item.

The Town Clerk took the opportunity to bring to Members attention a book she had accepted on behalf of the Council from Eleonore Bruyere in her capacity as a Committee Member of the Witney & District Twinning Association. Eleonore had recently returned from a family visit to

Canada and had come across a book about the History of Blankets published by Hudson's Bay Company and it had a chapter on Witney and the blanket industry.

152 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

There were no police present at the meeting. A member reported that as Chairman of the NAG she had reported her concerns that police did not attend Council meetings. The major issue in her opinion was cycling and parking on pavements.

Another member expressed her disappointment that the police were not present at the meeting. She reported that the Madley Park residents association – with the support of the Community Safety Team – were trialling a yellow letter system advising badly parked cars that they were causing an obstruction. She was also very concerned at the spate of violent incidents taking place in convenience stores around the town and she felt these issues should be addressed.

The Chairman of the NAG offered to take any concerns to their next meeting.

A member commented that he was also concerned about cycling on pavements but he was very worried that sat navs were sending people up the slip road exit onto the A40 at Ducklington Lane instead of left to Thorney Leys. This would be fed back to the NAG.

Another member expressed sympathy for the police as they had limited resources and thought that the Town Council could help raise awareness of cycling and parking issues – perhaps by putting something on the website about where the worst areas were. A member felt that in fact the lack of cross town cycle routes were a problem and that the Council should be working with cyclists and trying not to alienate them.

153 **CIVIC ANOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received and considered a list of engagements attended by the Mayor, as circulated prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

154 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

a) Planning and Development Committee Minutes 26 January, 16 February and 8 March 2016

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee of 26 January, 16 February and 8 March 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendations approved.

b) Public Halls Sub Committee Minutes 29 February 2016

A member asked if there was any update on the situation regarding the Shadow Trust. The Chairman reported that a meeting had been held the previous evening and he thought it had been very positive. The Trust had opened a bank account and were still waiting for charitable status.

The Town Clerk asked if the Council would now delegate authority to her to pay over some of the grant as the Trust had incurred costs associated with its set-up – she advised that there was approximately £45,000 left from the original £50,000 set-up grant.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the minutes of the Public Halls Sub Committee meeting of 29 February 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved;
- 2) that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to pay the request for payment to the Trust from the start-up grant.

c) West Witney Sports Ground Sub Committee Minutes 16 March 2016

Members asked for an update on the current situation with regard to the outstanding compliance issues. The Town Clerk reported that the Council's Health and Safety Consultant had visited the site, as instructed by the Sub-Committee, and his report was circulated. There had been some improvements but there was still quite a lot to be addressed.

A member thought that the Club should be asked for a timeframe for completion of works, not just guidelines. Another member said that the Council and the Club should be working together and pointed out that the Council's Health & Safety Consultant had said that they kept the building in a clean and orderly manner.

Members agreed that deadlines were important but also expressed a desire to offer assistance. It was proposed that the Council's Facilities Manager (subject to sickness absence) or the Works Contracts Supervisor should take a lead on this and meet with the Club.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the minutes of the West Witney Sports Ground Sub Committee meeting of 16 March 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved;
- 2) that the Club should be asked for a timeframe for completion of works, not just guidelines and that the Facilities Manager/Works Contracts Supervisor be tasked with meeting with the Club and offering them assistance.

d) Amenities Committee Minutes 29 February 2016

There were two typos: minute no A101 – agetna should read agenda and minute A096 – eariler should read earlier.

A member asked for an update on repairs to the archway at St. Mary's Church. The Town Clerk explained that she and the Works Contracts Supervisor had met with the Church Wardens and had been looking at options including possibly removing the archway as it had in the past year been hit by vehicles on three occasions. However, the archway was listed and therefore could not be removed. The Church was keen for it to have some protection. The process was in the hands of the insurers and the Church had applied for a faculty so repairs could be made.

A member commented that he had been litter picking at The Leys and had seen cars parking down by the Buttercross Lane housing in the location where the resident's fence was being hit by cars. He explained that the old white lines on the road from what used to be the entrance to Poundstretchers looked like parking bays and it was people trying to park within these lines that were hitting the fence. He suggested writing to the County Council to see if they could be removed.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Amenities Committee held on 29 February 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved.

e) Community Services Committee Minutes 7 March 2016

A member said that he had received a phone call from Emily Wilson regarding the fair at the Witney Music Festival. She said that they would be happy to provide a fair if required.

The Committee Chairman referred to minute no C110 and asked if there was an update on whether the events would go through the Safety Advisory Group. The Town Clerk advised she had spoken to WODC and neither event would be subjected to scrutiny by the SAG, partly due to District's restructuring. However she had been assured that the Fire Officer had approved the fireworks subject to certain conditions.

The Committee Chairman invited other members to comment on the fireworks, bearing in mind that the proposed location was close to the combustible area of the work's yard, a residential area and trading estates. A member pointed out that it was also relatively close to the A40. A discussion followed, with many members expressing concern. One member was concerned that the area was not large enough to have the required safety zone.

The Committee Chairman suggested that the Council should work with the organisers on the fireworks. Perhaps the Council's Health and Safety advisers could offer advice on what might be appropriate. A member explained that the Festival was happy to scale down the fireworks if needed.

The Town Clerk advised that the Music Festival organisers had wanted to make a presentation to the Members outside of public participation as they didn't believe that five minutes was sufficient, and she pointed out that unfortunately they arrived late to the Community Services meeting. Members discussed this. The Town Clerk advised that it was likely there would be a need for an Extra Ordinary meeting of Council later in the month, at which they could come and present to Council then.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the minutes of the Community Services meeting held on 7 March 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved;
- 2) that the Witney Music Festival organisers be invited to attend a meeting of Council to give their presentation under public participation.

f) Christmas Lights Working Party Minutes 21 March 2016

It was pointed out by a member that any decisions taken at the meeting needed to be agreed by the Service Groups, who were due to meet on 31 March 2016.

The Town Clerk advised that the road closures were organised under the 1847 Act through WODC so hopefully there would not be any financial implications.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Christmas Lights Working Party held on 21 March 2016 as detailed be approved and any recommendations therein approved.

g) Policy and Resources Committee Minutes 14 March 2016

A member asked if any progress had been made on a policy on drones. The Town Clerk advised that subject to approval of these minutes tonight she would draft one, however she had already started research on this.

The Town Clerk asked if members had all received their newsletters as the payment to the distributors was currently being withheld, given the comments received at the Annual Town Meeting. Those members who had not received them gave their postcodes to the Town Clerk so she could take the matter further.

A member referred to the Grounds Maintenance Contract and asked if the Council was still considering sharing services with the County/District Council. The Town Clerk replied that this had been discussed previously and there were financial implications to the Town Council. The District Council and Ubico would be eligible to tender for the Town Council's contract.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 14 March 2016 be received and any recommendations therein be approved.

155 **GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE**

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk regarding the General Power of Competence.

RESOLVED: that from this day, until the next Annual Council Meeting after Ordinary Elections that having met the conditions of eligibility as defined in the Localism Act 2011, to adopt the General Power of Competence.

156 **STANDING ORDERS**

The proposed Standing Orders which had, in line with Standing Order 61(b), stood adjourned since the meeting held on 20 January 2016 (minute 066 refers), were presented for discussion, amendment if deemed necessary and ultimately adoption.

RESOLVED: that the Standing Orders as presented be adopted to take effect from the next meeting, being 4 May 2016.

157 **CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Council received and considered the Corporate Risk Assessment and the Town Clerk's report as circulated with the agenda. She highlighted that the document had previously been considered by the Policy and Resources Committee. Members raised a few queries but there were no serious concerns.

RESOLVED: that the Corporate Risk Assessment and Action Plan as presented be approved and the Chairman of the Council be authorised to sign it.

158 **AGREEMENT OF THE MAYOR ELECT FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2016/17**

Cllr Morris proposed Cllr C Holliday as Mayor elect. Cllr Price proposed Cllr D Enright as Mayor elect.

It was put to the vote: 12 members voted for Cllr Holliday and 3 members voted for Cllr Enright.

RESOLVED: that Cllr C Holliday be appointed Mayor Elect, to be Mayor for the municipal year 2016/17.

159 **CONSIDERATION OF MOTION PROPOSED BY Cllr DR S BARTINGTON**

Cllr Bartington proposed a motion to Council as follows:-

“Witney Town Council supports the principle of developing a Sustainable Public Transport Strategy to ensure the provision of sufficient and suitable public transport services for the people of Witney. This objective will be achieved through establishment of the Public Transportation Working Party, to provide recommendations to this Council on all matters relating to public transportation by undertaking tasks including, but not limited to those described below:

- Perform an objective, strategic assessment of current and future public transportation infrastructure requirements and service needs in Witney.
- Establish a Witney Public Transport Standard to inform development of a Sustainable Public Transport Strategy.
- Recognise cycling as part of a Sustainable Public Transport Strategy and develop the means to incorporate cycling within this strategy.
- Investigate, appraise and evaluate public transportation service delivery models, including those that may be secured with reasonable investment by Witney Town Council.
- Support integration and implementation of the Sustainable Public Transport Strategy within the Witney Neighbourhood Plan.

This Council recognises the importance of such a strategy that is appropriate for a sizeable market town with predicted population growth to over 30,000 residents. Delivery of this strategy would demonstrate this Council’s commitment to providing capable local leadership for sustainable infrastructure development and will achieve significant social, environmental and economic benefits for the residents of Witney.”

Cllr Reynolds left the meeting at 8.17pm.

Members were in favour of the motion although one member asked that the disabled were considered. Cllr Dr Bartington amended her proposal to include provision for the disabled.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Bartington’s motion as amended to incorporate the provision for disabled residents, be supported and adopted.

160 **CORRESPONDENCE FOR NOTE AND DISCUSSION**

- a) E-mail from Need not Greed Oxfordshire
- b) Letter to District Council Leaders from Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Leader of OCC in response to the “Devolution Deal for Oxfordshire”

A member commented that she had read the correspondence with great interest. There was no mention of public consultation and she explained that she was a member of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, which was very concerned at not having been consulted.

A member asked why the letter had been circulated and the Town Clerk explained that it had been written to Councillors. Furthermore she was of the opinion that any possible changes might affect the Town Council. She felt it was important to keep Members informed.

- c) Public Service Reorganisation for Oxfordshire – e-mail from Peter Clark, Head of Paid Service OCC

RESOLVED: that the correspondence presented at a,b and c be noted.

161 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents to be sealed.

162 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: that in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

163 **CONFIDENTIAL VERBAL REPORT FROM THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD EARLIER**

The Town Clerk gave a confidential verbal report from the Policy and Resources Committee held earlier.

RESOLVED: that the confidential report be noted.

The meeting closed at 9pm.

Chairman.