

**MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Wednesday 25 November 2015**

**At 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall**

**Present:**

Councillor J S King (Chairman)

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

Officers:	Town Clerk	Responsible Financial Officer
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Also present: 1 member of the public

576 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for their absence was received from Cllr P Dorward, Cllr D Harvey and Cllr D Temple.

577 **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 and Cllr C Brown declared non-pecuniary interests in their association with West Witney Sports.

578 **MINUTES**

a) **RESOLVED:** to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the following meetings for signature by the Chairman:

- a. Ordinary meeting held on 30 September 2015
- b. Extraordinary meeting held on 21 October 2015

b) **MATTERS ARISING:**

Minute 464 – Witney Community Policing Issues and Vandalism – Cllr Churchill reported that as requested, in her capacity as Chairman of the Neighbourhood Action Group, she had contacted the local Neighbourhood Sergeant and could confirm that the police had been doing extra patrols on the Leys. However it was not always the Witney team who actioned the bookings so they continue to work on the reporting of incidents to the Town Council. The police are also keen for the CCTV on the Leys to be installed to facilitate their work.

579 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was one member of the public present who did not wish to speak.

580 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

PS Kerry O'Leary from the Witney Neighbourhood Police Team was unable to attend in person but she provided an update which the Town Clerk read out. Inspector Holland had moved onto a new role and the new Neighbourhood Inspector was Matthew Fishwick. The email detailed the following reports of Criminal Damage since the 1<sup>st</sup> October and those specifically relevant were:

01/10/15 - Damage caused to a sign at The Leys – Negative lines of enquiry, suspect not identified.

7/11/15 - Damage to a sign at the Coffee Shed- No lines of enquiry, suspect not identified.

8/11/15- Damage caused to Remembrance Tree - investigation ongoing, suspect identified. OIC is PC Dickinson.

In response to a Members question the Town Clerk confirmed that she had chased the Public Protection Manager on the procurement of the CCTV at the Leys. She believed that due to changes in officers at WODC there had been some delay.

**RESOLVED:** that the verbal report be noted.

581 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received details of the Mayor's engagements as circulated with the agenda.

The Mayor expressed his thanks directly to Polly Inness, Communications and Events Officer, and the Town Clerk for the letters they wrote on his behalf in relation to the Paris bombings and Remembrance Sunday Parade. He had received many phone calls congratulating him on the letters and he wanted to recognise the support from the Officers and staff at the council.

He also thanked his fellow councillors for their commitment and support to the council during the year wishing all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted.

582 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

a) **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 6 & 27 OCTOBER AND 17 NOVEMBER 2015**

Cllr Beames presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Cllr Enright again asked if the planning committee was using the new electronic system that WODC had introduced and was informed that they were but the system had limitations.

Minute P475 – A Member commentated that the Christmas Stall looked good in its new site and the moving of the bicycle racks to facilitate its use of this area meant they were actually much better sited. A Member noted that the trader had expressed their concern about the lack of trade now from footfall of passing shoppers however the current economic climate was affecting traders in general. Another Member also noted that once this weekend was over people would start focusing more on Christmas and that may help trade.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee as detailed be received and any recommendation therein approved.

b) AMENITIES COMMITTEE 2 NOVEMBER 2015

Cllr Churchill presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

The Town Clerk gave the following updates:

- Minute A527 – Rowan Cottage -this was ratified by email so the additional work could go ahead.
- Minute A528 – Witney Lawn Tennis Club – she pointed out that the smaller signs had been moved inside the hedge and facing the tennis courts. She would write following this meeting to request that the main sign be sited flush with the existing Town Council sign on the main road.
- Minute A529 – Minutes of the Sub Committees - C) Public Halls 2 November 2015 – The proper buffer and cleaning regime had now been implemented in the Corn Exchange for the maintenance of the wooden floors. Therefore Council needed to decide whether the Boxing Day Music Event that Mr Condon would like to put on, could go ahead. A Member reiterated his view that the Council should be taking all and any suitable bookings to promote its business.
- Minute A533 – Grounds Maintenance – Grass Cutting – the Town Clerk explained following the Amenities meeting she had met with Claire Locke, WODC to discuss the proposed 'land swop' further. She had also ascertained from the Council's consultant advising on the GM Contract that there will be some financial implications if the proposed land swops went ahead. As yet the proposal has not gone to WODC cabinet. However the implementation date was likely to be October 2016 in line with the re-letting of the Town Council's grounds maintenance contract. A Member raised the situation with regard to the OCC land – Oxfordshire Together Project. The Town Clerk reminded Members that there was a presentation on 30 November on this.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that the minutes of the Amenities Committee as detailed be received and any recommendation therein approved.
- 2) that the event for Boxing Day event Mr Cordon wished to run be given the go ahead.

c) CEMETERIES AND CLOSED CHURCHYARDS SUB COMMITTEE 26 OCTOBER 2015

Cllr Churchill presented the above minutes to Council and moved for their acceptance.

Cllr Barrington noted that the spelling of her name had not been corrected in the minutes.

Minute CC507 – The Town Clerk advised that she was scheduled to meet the Rector of St Marys Church to discuss the memorial maintenance and the agreement already obtained from

English Heritage to stake and chicken wire around the unsafe ones. She had ascertained that there was no faculty in place to undertake further works, nor did the Council have the budget.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards Sub Committee as detailed be received and any recommendation therein approved.

d) PUBLIC HALLS SUB-COMMITTEE 2 NOVEMBER 2015

Cllr Reynolds presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Public Halls Sub Committee as detailed be received and any recommendation therein approved.

e) COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE 10 NOVEMBER 2015

Cllr Woodward presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

With regard to minute C543 and the intention to establish a Communications Steering Party his intention was for the group to engage with the electorate as much as possible.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Community Services Committee as detailed be received and any recommendation therein approved.

f) POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE 16 NOVEMBER 2015

Cllr King presented the above minutes to Council and moved for their acceptance.

Minute F557 – Cllr Morris stated that he had spoken to the Town Clerk about this item and it would be brought back to the next Policy and Resources Committee.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee as detailed be received and any recommendation therein approved.

583 CONCLUSION OF AUDIT FOR 31 MARCH 2015

Members received and considered the report of the RFO and the report from the External Auditors concluding the audit of the Annual Return for 31 March 2015.

Cllr Morris reiterated his comments made at the Policy and Resources meeting that the issues raised by the audit were ones that he would challenge with the auditors as technicalities and not really issues of concern.

**RESOLVED:** that the conclusion of the audit be noted.

584 WITNEY EMBROIDERY GROUP - WALL HANGING

The request from the Witney Embroidery Group to hang its wall hanging in the Corn Exchange was discussed. Cllr Churchill proposed the council should go ahead with this and it would look good hanging on the stairs.

**RESOLVED:** that the wall hanging be accepted and displayed in the Corn Exchange on the stairs

585 **CONSULTATION: APPLICATION FOR HAILEY PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA DESIGNATION FOR THE PURPOSES OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Members received and considered the correspondence from the Community Planning Officer for West Oxfordshire District Council as circulated with the agenda. They discussed the issues of parish boundaries, boundary commission and future changes due to housing developments and neighbourhood plans. It was acknowledged that Merryfield Farm was included which was within the Witney boundary.

**RESOLVED:** that the correspondence be noted.

586 **FORMULATION OF A COMMUNICATION STEERING GROUP**

The Community Services Committee had recommended the formation of a Communication Steering Group.

The Chairman of that Committee explained its anticipated purpose and suggested that the group would look to have its initial meeting early in the new year with all councillors invited to contribute after that.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that the constitution and arrangements of the steering group be determined at the first meeting;
- 2) that the membership of the steering group be detailed as below:

Cllr Woodward                      Cllr Harvey                      Cllr Holliday

587 **FORMULATION OF A WORKING PARTY TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL'S STANDING ORDERS AND ASSOCIATED CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

The Town Clerk explained that she was currently undertaking a review of the Council's Standing Orders and requested that a working party be formulated in order to scrutinise the draft documents prior to presentation to full Council.

**RESOLVED:** that a working party be set up and the membership be:

Cllr King              Cllr Holliday              Cllr Morris              Cllr Woodward              Cllr Enright

588 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

The Council noted that the following document had been signed by the Mayor and Town Clerk with the Seal of the Town Council affixed.

<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>Details</u></b>
78	Madley Park Hall Lease

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The meeting closed at 7.50pm

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Chairman