

**MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

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

**Present:**

Councillor C Holliday (Vice Chairman)

Councillors:	S E Bartington	H B Eaglestone
	A K Beames	D Enright
	C Brown	D Harvey
	H W Chirgwin	T J Morris
	B J Churchill	C E Reynolds
	P J Dorward	D Temple

Officers:	Town Clerk	RFO
	Facilities Manager	Committee Clerk

460 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Doughty, King, Price and Woodward

461 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Mrs B Churchill declared a non-pecuniary interest as her husband was a member of the Witney Photographic Club.

462 **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2015 for signature by the Chairman.

**a) MATTERS ARISING:**

Minute 370 – Matters referred from the Community Services Committee – Witney Music Festival and LibFest – Cllr Morris asked that his vote in favour of a resolution to agree to both events on the dates they wanted be recorded as he had originally requested after the meeting.

463 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public were present.

464 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES AND VANDALISM**

The Facilities Manager submitted a report (previously circulated) concerning vandalism and anti-social behaviour, which she presented to Council. She added that there had been examples of anti-social behaviour on The Leys since she wrote the report, but this had not incurred any costs for the Council.

In answer to a question, the Facilities Manager indicated that the Police had used their new powers recently; however the Police were sometimes unable to respond promptly when called. The Town Clerk confirmed that correspondence about this had been sent to both the PCC and the MP during the past year. During discussion of this issue, the following points were made by Members:-

- It was noted that the Police had announced measures to deal with issues on The Leys by Twitter; it would be helpful if they communicated with the Town Council first;
- Should the Council write to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) or speak with the appropriate Community Police Team first?
- This issue has been raised directly with the PCC and the teams and orders are in place to enable a response; perhaps the Council should look at the cause of these problems and seek to address it?
- It was noted that the Police had issued 2 fixed penalty notices to residents – it would be helpful if this sort of action was more widely publicised;
- In the first instance, it would be a good idea to go through the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) to raise concerns with the local Police team. The suggestion of publicising fixed penalty notices could also be raised this way. Members of Council felt that this would be the most appropriate first step

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that the report be noted;
- 2) that the Chairman of the NAG puts forward the Council's concern about Police response to complaints about anti social behaviour on The Leys to the appropriate Police team;
- 3) that the Chairman of the NAG also be asked to ensure there is greater publicity when fixed penalty notices for anti-social behaviour are issued.

465 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES**

- a) Planning and Development Committee of 4<sup>th</sup> August, 25<sup>th</sup> August and 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015

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

In answer to a question, he confirmed that the Planning Committee were using the new planning system (provision of electronic copies of planning applications) recently introduced by West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC), and that it was working very well. The provision of paper copies had not yet been withdrawn by WODC.

The Town Clerk informed the Council that Bill's restaurant had withdrawn its application for a larger outside seating area.

(Cllrs Beames and Dorward entered the meeting at 7.17pm)

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

b) Amenities Committee Minutes of 14<sup>th</sup> September 2015

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

Cllr Bartington welcomed the success of the Splash Park, and proposed that the Council committed to support a residents-led group to take forward a recreation area at Oxlease, using WREN funding.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that the minutes of the Amenities Committee as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved;
- 2) that the Council supports a residents-led group to take forward a recreation area at Oxlease using WREN funding.

c) Public Halls Sub-Committee Minutes 7<sup>th</sup> September 2015

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

In answer to questions, the Facilities Manager provided the following information:

- The majority of fire protection work has now been carried out;
- An event was held at the Corn Exchange last weekend, and some excellent feedback was received.

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

d) Community Services Committee Minutes 7<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Councillor Enright presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance

Concerning the matter of Witney In Bloom, Cllr Harvey asked that residents of Burwell Meadow be allowed to plant bulbs there, subject to the approval of relevant Council Officers, without the need for this to go through the Committee process.

There was one small correction: the correct spelling of Cllr Bartington's name.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that the minutes of the Community Services Committee as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved;
- 2) to agree that the residents of Burwell Meadow be permitted to plant bulbs subject to the approval of Council Officers, without the need for this issue to be referred back to Committee.

- e) Policy & Resources Committee Minutes 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015 (with Personnel Sub Committee 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015)

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

The Town Clerk informed Council that Cineworld was showing a film concerning child protection on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> October at 9.30am – Councillors were welcome to attend.

There was one small correction: it was 2120 Witney Squadron of the Royal Air Force Cadets.

It was agreed to remove recommendation 5 from the Personnel Sub Committee (minute S354 – Staffing Review, Facilities Team refers) on the grounds that a Working Party was already in place.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved;
- 2) that recommendation 5 from the Personnel Sub Committee as described above be removed.

466 **OXFORDSHIRE TOGETHER**

The Town Clerk submitted a copy of the “Oxfordshire Together – Transitional Offer of Highways Services Booklet (previously circulated) to Council. She explained that she had attended a presentation from the Oxfordshire County Council Localities Team where it was suggested that Town and Parish Councils might take on more County Council services. The Town Clerk suggested that the Localities Team be invited to make a presentation to Witney Town Council, at which services specific to the Town Council and to Witney could be discussed.

**RESOLVED:** to invite the Oxfordshire County Council Localities Team to make a presentation to Witney Town Council as described above.

467 **HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE**

The Facilities Manager submitted a report (previously circulated) concerning health and safety issues at St Mary’s Church. She presented this report to Council, and informed Members that one memorial had deteriorated to such an extent that some emergency work had already been carried out.

In answer to a question, she confirmed that as this was now a health and safety issue the Town Council was obliged to take action. It might be possible to recoup costs from the families that owned the memorials concerned at a later date, should details of ownership be confirmed.

**RESOLVED:** to approve the work and costs as detailed in the report.

468 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents for sealing.

469 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS & 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.

470 **PROPERTY MATTERS**

The Town Clerk updated the Members on the situation concerning one of the Council's tenants, as detailed in the e-mail correspondence from the Council's property agent, Wilsons Commercial.

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Clerk's oral report be noted, and she proceeds as instructed by the Council in the confidential appendix attached to these minutes

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The meeting closed at 7.40pm.

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**Confidential appendix to minute 470:**

Members considered the confidential email from Wilson's Commercial and the proposals for a new business tenancy. The Town Clerk suggested that this could be checked by the Council's Solicitor if members so desired. Members felt that the advice from Wilson's Commercial could be safely accepted, given that they had dealt with this tenancy for a number of years.

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Clerk instructs the Council's agents to proceed with the lease for the new business tenancy as outlined in the confidential report.