

**MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Wednesday 24 June 2015**

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

**Present:**

Councillor J S King (Chairman)

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

Officers:                      Responsible Finance Officer  
                                    Facilities Manager                      Democratic Services Officer

Also present:    3 members of the Witney Fairtrade Action Group  
                                    PC Tony Miles

275    **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for their absence was received from Cllr C K Woodward and the Town Clerk.

276    **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Mrs B Churchill declared a non-pecuniary interest as she is the Town Council's nominated Trustee on the Witney Corn Exchange Shadow Board.

Cllr T Morris also declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was a Member of Round Table.

277    **MINUTES**

**a)        RESOLVED:**

1.        that the Minutes of the Ordinary meeting held on 30 March 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
2.        that the Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 20 May 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**b)        MATTERS ARISING:**

Cllr D Temple pointed out that his name was missing from the list of councillors present on 20 May 2015.

Cllr B Churchill raised the question regarding the Town Hall signage from the minutes of 30 March 2015 so the RFO will investigate and report back.

278 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A representative from the Witney Fairtrade Action Group presented the Chairman with a Certificate which renewed the Town's Fairtrade Status for a further two years.

She explained the hard work behind re-accreditation and thanked the Council for its support. The Fairtrade movement gave people in Africa clean water and the opportunity for girls to attend school to have an education. Along with the opportunity of being able to provide lavatories in schools

Members thanked the Fairtrade Action Group for its presentation. They left the meeting at 7.12pm

279 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES & VANDALISM**

a) Witney Neighbourhood Update - PC Tony Miles was in attendance and gave an update on Policing issues in Witney. He said that there has been a reduction in anti-social behaviour and criminal damage at Waddards Meadow and King George V playing fields and they will remain on the patrol plan to maintain this improvement.

A Member congratulated the Police on the work they have done so far, however he said there still seemed to be a problem at the Leys early to mid-evening with groups of youngsters. He asked if there could be extra patrolling at this time. He would also like to see more presence at the skate park too if possible, he said the amount of rubbish that is left here is alarming.

A Member identified problems of nitrous oxide canisters in the parks and she wondered what efforts were being used to tackle this problem. PC Miles replied that it was a long standing issue where they have tailored patrols to discourage people going there to use the canisters.

Another Member pointed out that there were still issues with speeding around town, especially in Corn Street where he said he had been woken up by speeding cars. He went on to say that there have been two incidences recently regarding a parked lorry by Our Lady of Lourdes primary school and problems with lorries going through red lights. PC Miles mentioned that they do have a presence in Corn Street at certain times to try to reduce the speeding.

b) Vandalism Report – the Facilities Manager gave a verbal report to the Council in which she advised there was a drop in reports of vandalism and anti-social behaviour especially at the King George V playing fields. There had been some damage across the council estate and the Police had been in touch where it had been reported to them, for example there was a small fire at Burwell fields. There was the usual vandalism in the parks with the arrival of the good weather and lighter evenings:

- Both the life buoys at the lake have been destroyed which is costing 2 x £65 to replace.
- The roof tiles at Burwell Hall have been dislodged by young people climbing on the roof
- Vandalism to trees
- Anti-social behaviour of broken glass and bottles left at the Skate Park/Tennis courts
- Anti-social behaviour attempts to access the site at the Leys

The Community Police Team had promised to plan these areas on their regular patrols. Cllr C Reynolds asked for a written copy of the Facilities Managers verbal report.

PC Miles was thanked by all and left the meeting at 7.34

**RESOLVED:**

1. that the verbal reports be noted
2. that the Facilities Manager circulates her written report to all Councillors

280 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a) The Council received and considered the report of the Mayor's recent engagements, as circulated prior to the meeting. The Mayor commented that during his engagement with the Lions Club of Witney he was presented with a piece of Witney Blanket.
- b) The Council considered the Mayors verbal report regarding the Chains of Office. He pointed out that the chain was now full and needed a new set of links added for the names of mayors to be engraved on. He thought a new chain would cost around £1,000 and he suggested two options:
  - i) to remove the oldest chain and replace with a new one which would include adapting the box to accommodate the old one
  - ii) to add a new chain, remove the oldest chain and then to incorporate the old chain into the Deputy Mayor's regalia and provide a new case for it either adapt the case or purchase a new one. .

**RESOLVED:**

1. that the Mayors report be noted
2. that option (ii) be the preferred option to be explored by the Town Clerk with a delegated budget up to £2,000 in order to get the chain updated with the outstanding mayors names.

281 **FAIRTRADE**

This agenda item was dealt with under Public Participation.

282 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

- a) Planning and Development Committee of 31 March 2015, 21 April, 5 May and 2 June 2015

Cllr Morris advised that on page 4 of the minutes dated 31 March the mentioned fire was on Woodstock Road and not Long Hanborough as recorded in the minutes.

**RESOLVED:** that, subject to the above amendment to the minutes of 31 March 2015, the minutes of the Planning & Development meetings as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved.

b) Amenities Committee Minutes of 1 June 2015

A member brought up the tennis court signage at West Witney Sports Ground, the Facilities Manager advised that she had not received any official confirmation as yet.

In reply to a Members question the Facilities Manager advised that the wall repairs at St Mary Churchyard was planned during the school holidays as the school buses turning was an issue that Highways brought up.

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

c) Community Services Committee Minutes 8 June 2015

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

d) Policy & Resources Committee Minutes 15 June 2015

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

283 **ACCOUNTS & AUDIT (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2011 – ANNUAL RETURN 2014/15**

Members had previously been circulated a copy of the Annual Return for 2014/15 along with the report of the Responsible Financial Officer.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that the report be noted;
- 2) that the Statement of Accounts at Section 1 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2015 be approved;
- 3) that the Annual Governance Statement at Section 2 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2015, where questions 1 to 9 were answered yes, be approved;
- 4) that the unaudited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2015 be noted;

284 **STRENGTHENING PARISH & TOWN COUNCIL ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Council received and considered the DCLG consultation document on extending the remit of the Local Government Ombudsman to larger parish and town councils.

In the absence of the Town Clerk the Chairman read out some comments from her following her attendance at a recent seminar of the consultation.

A Member commented that they should be accountable to the people who elected them, but agreed with the Town Clerks comments regarding consistency of legislation.

**RESOLVED:** that the Town Clerk submits the response on behalf of the Town Council as follows:

- Question 1. Yes  
Question 2. £35,000 Yes  
Question 3. Yes all agreed  
Question 4. Yes all agreed – the rules should be consistent  
Question 5. Depends on the period fixed. Only whilst the Parish council fits 2 & 3

285 **HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE**

The Council received and considered the verbal report from the Facilities Manager which covered current projects and day to day activities. She highlighted the fact that the Facilities team were behind on tool box talks and risk assessments due to project works and the loss of the Facilities Supervisor, but this was being managed.

The Facilities Manager updated Members on the situation with regard to the Corn Exchange. Members were concerned whether the Corn Exchange was insured if the FRA and snagging had not been completed. The Facilities Manager commented that the local fire authority had given an advisory agreement for the Corn Exchange. The Members debated the issues and requested Officers check the status of the building.

**RESOLVED:**

1. that the Facilities Manager's verbal report be noted
2. that the RFO checks the insurance status of the Corn Exchange and advise Councillors via email as a matter of urgency.

286 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents to be sealed.

287 **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.

288 **LANGDALE HALL**

Due to the absence of the Town Clerk this Item was postponed until the Extraordinary Council Meeting scheduled to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

289 **CORN EXCHANGE**

The Council consider the e-mail correspondence from the Chairman of the Shadow Trust as circulated with the agenda.

The RFO explained the background behind the funding for the Corn Exchange set aside in the 2015/16 budget (minute F557/14 refers), and the subsequent allocation of the funding towards the running costs (minute H172/15).

**RESOLVED:**

1. that the correspondence be noted
2. that the matter be brought back to the Extraordinary Council Meeting scheduled to be held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

***Note Minute No's 290-292 not used***

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The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

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