

MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 23 June 2014

At 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor Mrs J C Baker (Chairman)

Councillors: H B Eaglestone D S Enright
C Holliday A D Harvey
Ms M J C Curry D A Snow
RFN Curry

Officers: Town Clerk Democratic Services Officer
Facilities Manager

Also present: Mr Derek Kemp of D C K Beavers Ltd
Acting Sergeant PC Matt Gamble - Thames Valley Police

275 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence was received from Cllrs A K Beames, B J Churchill, J S King, T J Morris and C K Woodward. Cllrs Beames and King were attending a CPRE meeting in Filikins.

276 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

277 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 2 April 2014 and the Annual meeting held on 7 May 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

278 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 APRIL 2014**

The Town Clerk referred to minute 175 and informed members that Squadron 2646 had accepted the invitation to parade through Witney on Sunday 14 September 2014.

279 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON 7 MAY 2014**

There were no matters arising from this meeting to be discussed.

280 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

281 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

The Chairman welcomed P C Matt Gamble. PC Gamble explained that Sergeant Leanne Phillips had moved on to a new role and he was therefore currently Acting Sergeant.

The Police had recently carried out speed checks in local areas, a licencing operation - which had included a drug swab machine, and extra patrols had been in place to cover the England World Cup Games. Have Your Say meetings had been held in the town centre and Madley Park and a lot of bike marking had been done. There were some drug warrants issues and the campaign to stop bikes cycling on the pavements had continued – this was a number one complaint. There was also a summer burglary campaign to commence on 24 July and the Police would be attending Witney Carnival.

Finally there was the ongoing issue of vandalism and ASB (antisocial behaviour). There were a number of ASB campaigns running with dedicated ASB patrols. He confirmed that a Schools Officer was now in place that had been into secondary schools and worked with pupils. The schools had been very supportive when their pupils had been identified having committed ASB. The schools were embarrassed by this. The Police had also been trying to educate young people on the effects of vandalism.

The Community Safety Partnership had provided money for some operations. P C Gamble understood that people were nervous about raising issues with the police for fear of reprisals. However, he would encourage people to ring 101 if it was a non-urgent crime and 999 if it was urgent. The Police had met with Jim Casson, the Park Ranger, who had provided a list of the most troublesome areas of the town. Lastly he advised it was hoped to organise a “Community Clean Up” and asked for locations of areas that needed attention.

Cllr M J C Curry reported her concerns with regard to the Tower Hill and Windrush Cemeteries. She commented that she was no longer advising people to ring 101 as nothing ever happened and now told people to ring 999 instead. She felt that the Country Park needed almost constant patrol and appealed to the police to step up and help. There had been a generally lacklustre response. PC Gamble apologised for this. The Chairman commented that it was clear from P C Gamble’s report that things were improving.

Cllr R F N Curry asked what happened when vandals were caught. P C Gamble replied that it depended on their age and previous criminal history. Court penalties were out of police hands and the justice system liked to give under 18’s another chance. Cllr R F N Curry suggested writing to the local MP to paint a picture of the cost of vandalism and the lack of deterrent to the under 18’s.

The Facilities Manager gave her experience of having to ring 101 on two occasions recently. She said the police just seemed to move troublemakers on if they were littering or spitting. She suggested that the Buttercross would be an excellent location for the Community Clean Up day.

Cllr Harvey reported earlier that afternoon he had an excellent meeting at the District Council where the police had taken points on board. There seemed a willingness to take action before the summer holidays. He looked forward to hearing the results in the next update.

Cllr Harvey wanted to clarify that every instance of vandalism should be reported and receive a crime number. The Facilities Manager said that everything over £50 value was reported. Since the Park Ranger had started work it had become easier as he could report things as he came across them. However, she had never received any further contact from the police. Cllr Harvey explained that in his meeting earlier, the police had only 3 instances of vandalism reported, and so something was clearly going wrong. The Facilities Manager

would keep a log of every instance. Cllr Harvey suggested doing this for a 3 month period and then asking the police what had happened to follow up the reports made.

Cllr R F N Curry had discovered that if you reported something, you were given a reference number and would only get a crime number if the police thought they could catch someone for the crime – this influenced statistics. If a log were kept and it differed from police records, it should be reported to the Police Crime Commissioner.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that a log of all reports made to the police be kept;
- 2) that a the Town Clerk writes to the MP expressing concern at the cost of vandalism and the lack of deterrent to under 18's.

282 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman introduced a request from another Member that the Council should purchase and fly the Armed Forces Flag on 28 June 2014. The Council discussed this request and it was suggested that if the people involved wanted to make such requests, including the Town Council support for events, they should do so in the autumn of this year in preparation for next year.

RESOLVED: that the Union Jack flag be flown on Armed Forces day.

283 **ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2011 – ANNUAL RETURN 2013/14**

Members had previously been circulated a copy of the Annual Return for 2013/14 and a copy of the final report from the Council's independent Internal Auditor, which confirmed there were no issues. The Town Clerk pointed out the Internal Auditor had duly signed off the certificate at section 4 of the Annual Return.

The Town Clerk brought to Members attention the Annual Governance Statement (Section 2), and referred Members to her report where she had demonstrated the internal controls currently in place.

The Town Clerk handed over to Mr Kemp of D C K Beavers Ltd, who assisted with the production of the year-end financial statements. Mr Kemp explained that Councillors were taking responsibility for the Annual Return by approving the Annual Governance Statement. In order to summarise the Council's financial position at the year-end he referred Members to page 23 of the unaudited statement of accounts. The Council had budgeted to transfer £144,000 to reserves and had transferred more than expected and still had some funds left. It was a good set of results and budget management. The Internal Auditor had checked the figures and had given the Council a "clean bill of health". He would recommend that the Council adopted the statement of accounts and the Annual Return.

Cllr Harvey congratulated the Town Clerk on the results and proposed to agree the recommendations contained in her report. The Chairman thought that all councillors needed to be aware of their responsibilities in looking after the finances that had been entrusted to them. She understood that Financial Statements did not have to be prepared but noted that the Town Council did so. Cllr Enright joined Cllr Harvey in congratulating the Town Clerk.

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 2014 be approved;
- 3) that the Annual Governance Statement at Section 2 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2014, where questions 1 to 9 were answered yes, be approved;
- 4) that the unaudited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2014 be noted;
- 5) that the final Internal Audit report be noted.

284 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

a) Planning and Development Committee of 22 April, 6 May and 27 May 2014

Cllr R F N Curry raised his concerns with regard to minute no 192 and the fact that he felt it should have been raised at the Traffic Advisory Committee. The Town Clerk reminded Members this matter had been raised at the last full Council meeting on 2 April 2014 by Chairman Cllr Dorward, and the matter had been referred to the Council's Planning Committee at that point. Cllr Harvey confirmed it had also been raised at the Traffic Advisory Committee, although the County Council officers did not consider much could be done. The Committee had requested a review of the whole road from the Henry Box Field down to the new Mill development after the Sainsbury's roundabout.

In response to Cllr Harvey's concerns regarding minute no 239 (1) the Town Clerk explained that she had referred this application back to Cllr Beames as Chairman of the Committee because she and the applicant had been concerned the Committee had not understood the application. The original comment made by the Committee had stood.

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

b) Amenities Committee of 12 May 2014

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Amenities Committee of 12 May 2014 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved.

c) Recreation Committee of 19 May 2014

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Recreation Committee of 19 May 2014 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved.

d) Policy and Finance Committee of 9 June 2014

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee of 9 June 2014 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved.

285 **MEMBERSHIP OF OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS – TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Council received and considered the report of the Democratic Services Officer. The Town Clerk explained Cllr Harvey had been nominated by the District Council as a representative on the Traffic Advisory Committee and therefore could not sit as a Town Councillor as well. It was up to members to decide if they wished to elect another member.

Cllr R F N Curry proposed Cllr Holliday as all other members were from South Witney.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Holliday takes the place of Cllr Harvey as a Town Council representative on the Traffic Advisory Committee.

286 **CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE POST OFFICE**

The Council received and considered correspondence from the Post Office in connection with its recent relocation to W H Smith as circulated with the agenda. Members had a brief discussion on the improvements they had seen, but considered they should keep a watching brief to ensure it remained accessible for the disabled.

RESOLVED: that the letter be noted.

287 **HEALTH AND SAFETY AUDIT – UPDATE**

The Facilities Manager had circulated members with documentation from a recent unannounced Health and Safety audit. She drew attention to the Executive Summary. Health and Safety had been a huge task and a lot of work. There had been a positive view of events and also of the Park Ranger.

67% of the last year's required actions were complete. This did not seem high but the Facilities Manager was pleased with what had been achieved within budget constraints. Outstanding items would be taken back to the appropriate committees. The report contained one error – West Witney District Council should in fact be West Witney Sports and Social Club.

Cllr Harvey congratulated officers. He proposed that the report should be noted and suggested that if members had any questions, they should direct them to the Facilities Manager.

RESOLVED: that the Health and Safety Audit report be noted.

288 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents to be sealed.

The meeting closed at 8.07pm.

Chairman.