

MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 22 June 2016

At 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor C Holliday (Chairman)

Councillors: S E Bartington H B Eaglestone
A K Beames A D Harvey
C Brown C E Reynolds
H W Chirgwin D Temple
B J Churchill C K Woodward

Officers: Town Clerk Responsible Financial Officer
Democratic Services Officer Facilities Manager
Works and Contracts Supervisor

Also present: 2 members of the public

332 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs Doughty, Enright, King and Price.

324 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllrs Churchill and Woodward declared a non-pecuniary interest as they were Trustees of the Witney Corn Exchange Trust. Cllrs Churchill and C Brown declared non-pecuniary interests in their association with West Witney Sports Ground Social Club.

325 **MINUTES**

a) RESOLVED: to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the annual meeting held on 4 May 2016 for signature by the Chairman with the following amendments:-

Page 1 – Cllr C K Woodward was elected Deputy Mayor and not Cllr C Holliday
Page 2 – Cllr C K Woodward was elected Deputy Leader and not Cllr T J Morris
Page 7 – Mrs Paula Richardson and Cllr H Chirgwin are to serve on the Cogges Welfare Trust.

b) MATTERS ARISING there were no matters arising from the minutes to be discussed at the meeting.

326 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The members of the public present did not wish to address the Council.

327 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

A report had been received from the Police as no one was available to attend the meeting.

A member raised her concerns about the anti-social behaviour at Cogges Car Park and wanted to know what the police were doing about this. The Chairman said that he would feed this back to the police.

Another member was disappointed that there wasn't a Police Officer present. The DSO commented that was a new PC starting in Witney in July and it was hoped that he would attend future meetings.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

328 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

a) **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 10 & 31 MAY 2016**

The Chairman of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance. A member commented that she was unhappy to see that the land at Downs Road was to be built on as she thought it should be reserved for sport.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee of 10 and 31 May 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved.

b) **PUBLIC HALLS SUB COMMITTEE 7 JUNE 2016**

The Chairman of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Public Halls Sub Committee of 7 June 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein be approved.

c) **WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND SUB COMMITTEE 20 JUNE 2016**

The Chairman of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the West Witney Sports Ground Sub Committee of 20 June 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein be approved.

d) **AMENITIES COMMITTEE 23 MAY 2016**

The Chairman of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

A member asked if several items from the minutes had been completed yet. The Town Clerk explained that recommendations were only progressed once the minutes had been ratified by the Full Council.

A member complained about the paths at The Leys, as they were very uneven and uncomfortable to drive a disability scooter along. Another member commented that she had been investigating TOE (Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment) grants and there was one that would fund footpaths.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Amenities Committee of 23 May 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein be approved.

e) COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE 6 JUNE 2016

The Chairman of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance with the amendment that the Vice Chairman was elected – Cllr Brown was Vice Chairman for the ensuing municipal year.

A member referred to minute C269 and asked that it be recorded she had advised that advice on defibrillators be sought from South Central Ambulance Service.

A member wanted to know when councillors had been informed about the noticeboard at the entrance to the Woolgate Centre being removed. She had received a lot of complaints from residents. The Town Clerk replied that WODC had issued a press release about it. The new proposed location nearer the Town Hall would be able to direct people to the Town Hall as well as serving as a noticeboard. The member was unhappy with the new location.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Community Services Committee of 6 June 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein be approved.

f) POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE 31 MAY & 13 JUNE 2016

The Chairman of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

A member referred to the Corn Exchange lift in the minutes of 13 June 2016 and stated that she believed it had been second hand when installed. A member replied that this was something for the second phase of the development.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee of 31 May and 13 June 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein be approved.

g) PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION WORKING PARTY 10 JUNE 2016

The Chairman of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

She advised that the next meeting would be on 8 July. A member thanked the Administrative Assistant for producing the minutes from a very busy meeting.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Public Transportation Working Party of 10 June 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein be approved.

329 CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Council received and considered a report of events attended by the Mayor and his Deputy. A member congratulated them on attending so many events.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

330 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader reported that Cllr Churchill had attended an NHS Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group Conference on his behalf. She proceeded to give a report of the conference which had been concerned with planning for the next five years.

She asked that she be given permission to attend the next meeting in August launching the formal consultation and she would report back.

The Leader reported that he and the Town Clerk had attended a workshop on the formation of a unitary council delivered by Oxfordshire County Council. This had asked what would parishes like to take on and what services would be devolved to them. Most were interested in planning issues, although a lot of parishes said that they did not have the resources to take on more services. There would need to be financial backing too.

The Leader's advice to members was to wait until the next report came out and the Council could form a view based on that.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the verbal report from the Leader be noted
- 2) that Cllr Churchill be permitted to attend the next NHS Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group Conference and a Consultation Working Party could be held to receive her report.

331 **ATTENDANCE REGISTER**

The Council received and considered the attendance register. Cllrs Morris and Churchill had achieved 100% attendance.

A member asked what level of attendance was expected as she noted that some members were below 50%. The Town Clerk replied that 100% attendance was expected. A member added that if you did not attend any meeting within a 6 month period, you would be excluded from the Council.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

332 **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The Council received and considered the report of the Facilities Manager as circulated with the agenda.

a) Policy Update

Members were unsure if such a substantial document constituted a Health and Safety Policy. One member commented that it looked more like an induction manual and thought it should only be 3 or 4 pages setting out key roles. He asked if the Council could have a smart plan or an update every cycle of meetings. The Facilities Manager replied that this was already in place and the Council did receive an update at the end of every meeting cycle.

The Member asked if the Council could receive an abridged Health and Safety Policy. The Facilities Manager replied that it was her legal duty to ensure the Council reviewed the whole policy annually. This version had updated and reviewed by the Council's Health and Safety Consultant.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that changes to the Health and Safety Policy be noted and Councillors note their own responsibilities within it;
- 2) that the outcomes and actions in place as a result of the review be noted;
- 3) that members receive an abridged Health and Safety Policy Statement in time for the next meeting.

b) Terms and Conditions of Hire

The Council received and considered the revised terms and conditions of hire as circulated with the agenda. A Member was concerned that it looked as though if the Council accepted a booking it was saying that that event was safe. He thought that was a lot of pressure for the Council to be under. He thought that the onus should be on the hirer and proposed that these documents should be looked at again.

The Facilities Manager advised that the revised documents were based on those of other Town Councils. She explained that in asking hirers for items such as a risk assessment and event plan the Town Council was not accepting responsibility, just asking hirers if they had done everything possible to run a safe event on Council land – due diligence.

RESOLVED:

- 4) that the changes for hall hire be noted and agreed;
- 5) that the large events policy is reviewed again and brought back to a future meeting.

c) Staff Training

Members received and considered an update on staff training as detailed in the Facilities Managers report circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

- 6) that the training update be noted and the actions contained therein be agreed

333 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Town Clerk advised that the 8 July 2016 was the deadline for the consultation on Unitary Councils to be completed.

The Leader thought that it would not be appropriate for District and County Councillors to take part.

RESOLVED: that an Extra-ordinary meeting of the Council be held to consider a response to the consultation, WITH THE exclusion of District and County Councillors.

334 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no questions to the Leader of the Council.

335 **ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2011 – ANNUAL RETURN 2015/16**

Members received and considered the Annual Return for the Year ended 31 March 2016 as circulated with the agenda.

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 2016 be approved;
- 3) that the Annual Governance Statement at Section 2 of the Annual Return for the Year ended 31 March 2016, where questions 1 to 9 were answered yes, be approved;
- 4) that the unaudited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2016 be noted.

336 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents to be sealed.

337 **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

338 **CORN EXCHANGE**

The Council received a confidential verbal update from the Town Clerk on the Corn Exchange.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the Town Clerk's confidential verbal report be noted;
- 2) that a meeting be organised with the Town Clerk, the Council's solicitor/property agent and Cllrs Morris, Dorward, and Bartington;
- 3) that those Councillors be given delegated authority for further negotiations;

4) that all members were kept informed at all stages.

339 **LANGDALE HALL**

The Council received a confidential verbal update from the Town Clerk on the Langdale Hall.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk's verbal update be noted and the third option offered be actioned.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Chair.

Note minute no 340 not used