

MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 7 December 2016

At 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor C Holliday (Chairman)

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

Officers: Town Clerk Responsible Financial Officer
 Democratic Services Officer

Also present: 2 Members of Thames Valley Police

676 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

677 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Churchill declared a non-pecuniary interest as she was a Trustee of the Corn Exchange Witney Trust.

678 **MINUTES**

a) RESOLVED: to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2016 and the Extraordinary Minutes of 1 November 2016 for signature by the Chairman with the following amendment to the minutes of 5 October:-

Cllr T J Morris should be added to the Members who were present.

b) MATTERS ARISING – Minutes of 5 October 2016:

565(c) - A Member asked for an update on the Oxlease Play Area Project. The Member leading the project replied that there had been a successful public meeting and the project had now raised £70,000. This included the Tesco grant. The Bruce Wake Trust had also donated money for a disabled accessible picnic table. The Member was congratulated on her success.

565(d) – A Member asked how Councillors had got on raising money for the Christmas Lights. The Chairman of the Christmas Lights Working Party replied that sponsorship had been obtained from Scott Fraser and Breckon and Beckon for the Christmas Tree.

679 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

680 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

Sergeant Kerry O’Leary and PC Chris Cochrane were in attendance. Members asked various questions relating to the number of non-domestic burglaries, parking on pavements in Madley Park, bikes without lights and riding on pavements an electronic car jamming.

In response Sgt O’Leary advised she did not have precise figures relating to non-domestic burglaries, but there had been break-ins to The Beanbag, Bakers the Butchers, the Shakeshop and Weatherspoons. Overall crime was down by 14%. She did however highlight that there had been an increase to theft from a person. The police had been trying to advise people on how to look after their belongings. A Member commented that the Purse bells were excellent. The Police commented that they had unfortunately given out all of their supply and were looking for funding for more.

With regard to parking on pavements in Madley Park, Sgt O’Leary informed that the police were aware of this and would try to increase patrols. In the meantime people should continue to call 101. The Police had also been targeting people cycling on pavements and would be running another campaign next year. It was pointed out that Corn Street was very bad. PC Cochrane said that in his experience it tended to be older people who did not feel safe on the road. The police used their discretion on whether to fine people. They felt that education was the preferred option. The Member thanked the police and accepted that education was the way forward.

A Member added that Witney was a relatively safe place and thanked the police for the work done this year and wished them a peaceful Christmas.

In respect of the concern regarding electronic car jamming which enabled people to steal cars by preventing them locking, P C Cochrane advised that there had been no reports of this in this area although there had been incidents on motorways.

681 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

a) **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 4 OCTOBER, 25 OCTOBER AND 15 NOVEMBER 2016**

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

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee of 4 October, 25 October and 15 November 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendations therein approved.

b) **AMENITIES COMMITTEE – 14 NOVEMBER 2016**

The Chairman of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance. A Member asked that the Works Contracts Supervisor was referred to by his correct title.

A Member asked if there had been any contact with Mr Clack of the Cricket Club. The Town Clerk confirmed that a letter would be written subsequent to the Council meeting.

In response to a Members question the Town Clerk explained that Peter Mitchell was a consultant with expertise in all matters connected with cemeteries and burials who had been commissioned to undertake a report on the Windrush Cemetery, as agreed by the Cemeteries & Closed Churchyards Sub-Committee.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Amenities Committee of 14 November 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendation therein approved.

c) COMMUNITY SERVICES – 21 NOVEMBER 2016

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

A Member reported that the Council was getting a lot of feedback on how good the Christmas Lights were this year. He asked if they were now all up. The RFO replied that there were still some outstanding lights and there had been a meeting with the contractors. The Member asked that thanks were sent to the Works Contracts Supervisor for his work on this.

The Town Clerk drew Members' attention to the request for benches, particularly in Corn Street. She has subsequently received communication from a resident who lived where one of the benches had previously been sited was very concerned that it might be replaced, due to anti-social behaviour. She would bring the resident's e mail to the Community Services Committee in January.

A Member gave an update on the fight to keep Deer Park Medical Centre open. Legal avenues were being pursued. She asked for letters to be sent to the HOSC (Health Overview Scrutiny Committee) at Oxfordshire County Council to point out the detriment of the closure before a planned meeting on Monday. She thanked Cllrs Doughty and Price for their work. Another Member advised that he understood that the meeting was a toolkit meeting and he agreed with a letter being sent saying that the closure was a significant change to health care provision in Witney. This could be combined with the letter previously agreed complaining the he as Leader of the Town Council had not been able to speak at a previous meeting. This should be copied to the Leader of the County Council.

Cllr Bartington explained that she had not been attending the Dementia Action Alliance meetings as a Town Councillor but as a Public Health Doctor. She had not promised anything that had not already been agreed by Council.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Community Services Committee of 21 November 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendation therein approved.

d) POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 28 NOVEMBER 2016

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

A Member asked if it could be confirmed that the precept would be increased by 3.36%. The Town Clerk replied that this was correct subject to approval by Council at the meeting on 14 December 2017.

A Member referred to the cost of a Neighbourhood Plan. He proposed that instead of this there could be a Neighbourhood Local Plan. The Chairman noted that this was an agenda item for discussion later.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee of 28 November 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendation therein approved.

e) CONSULTATION WORKING PARTY – 7 NOVEMBER 2016

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Working Party were not present at the meeting to present the minutes. Therefore the Town Clerk invited Members to receive and consider the minutes. She reminded Members that the Daytime Support Consultation still needed consideration and a meeting had been scheduled for 13 December. Cllr Morris offered his apologies, Cllr Churchill offered to substitute for him.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Consultation Working Party of 7 November 2016 as detailed be received and any recommendation therein approved.

682 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received and considered a report of events attended by the Mayor.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

683 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader informed the Council that there had been further communication with John Harwood of CEWT. He had received a letter saying that the Trust did not want to work with the Council under the terms offered and were obtaining external advice. He reminded Members that the resolution could not be discussed again for 6 months.

The Leader updated the Council on a meeting he had with Cottsway Housing Association in respect to the Park Road allotments and the rental increase, and the Park Road Play Area, unfortunately for the latter there was no documentation to prove that the land belonged to the Town Council. Cottsway had agreed to licence the land to the Town Council in order for it to be used as a play area.

He reported that positive discussions on the Langdale Hall had been held with the Guidepost Trust. The building was no longer for sale and was intended to be a community hub. The Mayor added the Guidepost Trust was now talking to Base 33 about the Langdale Hall.

RESOLVED: that the update on communications be noted.

684 **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence for consideration.

685 **CONSULTATION ON REMOVAL OF PUBLIC PAYPHONES IN WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT**

This item had been referred to the Council by the Consultation Working Party. The Consultation Working Party had requested information on how many calls from the payphones that were proposed for removal were emergency phone calls. The DSO had contacted BT but no response had been received.

A Member commented that it did seem as though the phones were not commonly used, but he agreed with the Consultation Working Party's recommendation that the Council should ask to adopt the ones earmarked for removal to be used as site for defibrillators. The DSO advised that it was only the red telephone boxes that were available for adoption. The Member requested that BT should be asked if all the boxes could be adopted.

RESOLVED: that BT be contacted and asked if the Council could adopt all of the phone boxes earmarked for removal for use as defibrillator hubs.

686 **KINGSFIELD CRESCENT HEDGE AND NEWLAND ALLOTMENTS – BOUNDARY OWNERSHIP**

The Council received and considered the report of the Works Contracts Supervisor. He had met with Mr Tremlett and had agreed a boundary line allowing Mr Tremlett to deal with the hedge whilst preventing loss of amenity land. A map showing the line had been circulated to Members.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and the suggested boundary line between 49 Kingsfield Crescent and Newland allotments as per the circulated plan be agreed.

687 **NALC DEPENDENTS CARERS ALLOWANCE SURVEY**

The Council received and considered a survey from the National Association of Local Councils on dependents carers allowance for Councillors during meetings. Members answered "yes" to every question.

RESOLVED: that the survey is returned with all questions answered as yes.

688 **GRANT APPLICATION – LOWER WINDRUSH VALLEY PROJECT**

The Council received and considered the report of the DSO. The application had been considered at the Policy and Resources Committee which had asked for clarification on how the grant was to be spent. It had been confirmed that the requested amount of £515 was to cover the entire cost of printing the leaflet.

A Member commented that as the leaflet covered several parishes, he thought the cost should be met from all of the parishes.

Another Member felt that a leaflet would attract people to the Lake and Country Park and he was in favour of granting the money as the benefit was enough to recommend it. He proposed that the money was granted. All Members were in favour of this with the exception of Cllr Chirgwin who abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED: that the Lower Windrush Valley project be granted the sum of £515.00.

689 **NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk. A Member noted that the Council had resolved to move forward with this. However, he had carried out some research and felt that a Community Led Plan would be more economic. He proposed that the Council resolved to do a Community Led Plan and invite Mr Ray Hall to lead the project.

Another Member said that he supported this proposal as the plan would come from the community. He proposed that the Council resolved to support the community to come forward to engage in a Community Led Plan.

All Members were in favour of the second proposal.

RESOLVED: that the Council resolved to support the community to come forward to engage in a Community Led Plan.

690 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER**

Cllr P Dorward – telephone boxes

Cllr Dorward suggested that the Council could ask the schools if they wanted to do something with the telephone boxes and agreed that it would be good to adopt them.

Another Member reported that he has seen a phone box converted into a library.

691 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

RESOLVED: that the seal of the Council be affixed to any documents arising from decisions taken by the meeting of this Council.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Chair.