

MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 26 June 2017

At 7pm in The Gallery Room, Corn Exchange

Present:

Councillor C K Woodward (Chairman)

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

Officers:	Town Clerk	Responsible Financial Officer
	Administrator & Mayor's PA	

Also present: Wendy Dawson – Base 33
Eric Marshall – Witney Music Festival
Craig Raven – Synapse Events Group
PC C Cochrane – Witney Neighbourhood Police Team
24 members of the public and 1 Member of the Press

Prior to the business of the Council taking place, Cllr Woodward invited those present to join the Council in a moments silence to reflect on the terrible atrocities that had taken place across the country since the last meeting and for the emergency services that dealt with them.

301 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

302 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

303 **MINUTES**

The Council received and considered the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting of 10 May 2017.

a) **RESOLVED:** to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 10 May 2017 for signature by the Chairman.

b) **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of this meeting.

304 **PUBLIC PARTICPATION**

Following a request to speak at the meeting the Chairman, on this occasion only, gave express permission to Mr Marshall and Mr Raven to address the Council as a proposal from Mr Marshall was discussed at the Community Services meeting on 5 June. It was stressed that, the statements could not be debated and was in contravention of normal policy and Standing Order 42F. The Chairman thanked both representatives for their comments.

305 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

PC Cochrane of the Thames Valley Police offered an update on policing in the town and advised that a new structure had come into practice with a new Superintendent for the area. Crime figures had only recently been published and since January, Witney was one of the safest places in the Thames Valley with a 17% crime rate. There had been an increase in demand but Witney had a good community spirit. In response to a member's question, he advised that the police had received a very small number of noise complaints regarding the Music Festival and an assault and some drunkenness at LibFest. He could not see any future issue or concern with the events but that would be a question for his Superintendent.

306 **PRESENTATION FROM BASE 33**

The Chairman invited Wendy Dawson of Base 33 to speak to the Council who offered members a presentation on the work and progress Base 33 were making. There was excitement about a Youth Council which would be working with the Council, they would be looking to move due to an increase in demand, they had fundraised for a minibus to reach further into West Oxfordshire and they were working on a theatre production in relation to cyber-bullying. In response to a member's question, it was confirmed that funding for a cyber café was still available and the project would hopefully still take place. The Chairman expressed thanks for the update.

307 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

a) **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 9 MAY, 30 MAY & 20 JUNE 2017**

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 9 May, 30 May and 20 June 2017 as detailed, be received with the following amendment and any recommendations therein approved.

30 May – that Cllr Morris attended the meeting.

b) **ESTATES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 15 MAY 2017**

The Chairman of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance. A member expressed thanks for the addition of disabled car parking places at West Witney.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Estates Management Committee of 15 May 2017 as detailed be received and any recommendation therein approved.

c) SPORTS & RECREATION COMMITTEE – 22 MAY 2017

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

Minute R238 - A member asked about replacement recycling bins and asked if other Town Council owned bins would be replaced. The Town Clerk advised that a replacement programme had previously been agreed over the next 2-3 years.

Minute R240 – Two members referred to the shutdown and renovation of football pitches at the Leys in June or July 2018. It appeared that festival date changes would not be possible and it would be disappointing if they could not take place. It was asked if the dates could be reconsidered and a suitable alternative found by the committee to allow the inclusion of events on the site during 2018.

Minute R240 – A member asked if there had been any progress in speaking with McDonalds regarding litter. The Town Clerk advised that the item would be actioned after resolution at this meeting.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Sports & Recreation Committee of 22 May 2017 as detailed be received and any recommendation therein approved.

d) COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 5 JUNE 2017

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

Minute C262 – A member asked if there was any update on the Graffiti Wall and if a grant-funding application had been made. The chairman of the committee advised there was not yet an update.

Minute C264 – Cllr Dorward stated that the events held on the Leys were well attended and successful but understanding what went well and what needs improving in the form of a project plan was needed. Early input with a worthwhile committee was needed to ensure future events run smoothly. He proposed that a Working Party should be formed and a wash-up meeting with the Music Festival organisers should be held at the earliest opportunity consisting of himself, Cllr Price and the Chairman, Cllr Woodward. This was seconded by Cllr Woodward and agreed by the Council. Cllr Price added that an invitation should be offered to other event organisers and parties at the Leys for a consistent approach. Cllr Dorward accepted the amendment to his proposal and it was carried.

Minute C268 – A member advised that some of the bus shelters around the town were already looking better following preparation for the Witney & Abingdon College art project which would be taking place over the summer. This could hopefully be a yearly heritage project that could involve more of the town in the future. The Town Clerk outlined the timetable of the project with the hope of an exhibition of work in July or August and installation in September.

Minute C268 – A member asked for confirmation of the location of a proposed new bus stop and shelter in Woodstock Road. The Town Clerk advised.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the minutes of the Community Services Committee of 5 June 2017 as detailed be received and any recommendation therein approved;
 - 2) that the Council establishes a Working Party for events at the Leys Recreation Ground as proposed which meets at the earliest opportunity.
- e) POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 12 JUNE 2017

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

Minute F277 – A member queried the shortfall in the funds for the Oxlease Play Area. The Leader of the Council advised that additional fundraising would need to be carried out and the actual figure was not seen as substantial.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee of 12 June 2017 be received and any recommendations contained therein be accepted.

308 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received and considered the Mayor's report of engagements. Cllr Woodward advised that he and the Deputy Mayor enjoyed going out and meeting people and had carried out in region of 25 engagements since taking office. Cllr Holliday congratulated the Chairman and added that he was pleased he was continuing the good work.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

309 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader reported that following a meeting with Robert Courts MP regarding community group fundraising, procurement and VAT he had received a reply from the Treasury which had not satisfactorily answered his question so would be contacting them directly.

The Leader had also received a letter from Mr Courts regarding joint working with the Witney Music Festival. He advised the Council and members of the public that he had been dealing with it as correspondence to the Leader and responded hoping that this could happen in the future.

RESOLVED: that the correspondence be noted.

310 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Chairman, for the benefit of members and public, read out correspondence from the Department for Communities & Local Government regarding Oxfordshire County Council's bid for Unitary Authority.

RESOLVED: that the correspondence be noted.

311 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no questions posed by members to the Leader of the Council at the meeting.

312 **ACCOUNTS & AUDIT (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2015 – ANNUAL RETURN 2016/17**

Members received and considered the Annual Return for the Year ended 31 March 2017 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 2017 be approved;
- 3) that the Annual Governance Statement at Section 2 of the Annual Return for the Year ended 31 March 2017, where questions 1 to 9 were answered yes, be approved;
- 4) that the unaudited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2017 be noted.

313 **HEALTH & SAFETY**

a) Annual Audit

Members received a report from G H Safety on Health & Safety compliance and were given an updated version at the meeting. Members heard that this was a working document and they were pleased that urgent matters had been dealt with thanks being offered to Officers.

Members, who were designated Council representatives on the respective organisations, also updated compliance issues at Madley Park Hall and West Witney Sports & Social Club.

RESOLVED: that the report and update be noted.

b) St Mary's Closed Churchyard – Stability of Pillars

Members received a special report on the stability of the pillars at St Mary's Church following a committee decision from 15th May 2017 meeting.

This was now an urgent situation as contractors were working in the churchyard. There had been no response to information requests from the church or whether a Stonemason had been instructed and a meeting with them could not be arranged until the middle of July. A member asked if cast iron bollards could be erected in front of the pillars to avoid damage continually occurring while another asked if it would be possible to strengthen the corners of the pillars.

Cllr Morris advised it was a complex matter and proposed that he be given delegated authority to deal with it and if no response was forthcoming there would be little option but to fence off the pillars to make it safe. Cllr Enright seconded the proposal and it was carried.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Morris be given delegated authority to seek a resolution with the Church regarding the damage to the pillars in the churchyard.

314 **VANDALISM**

Members received a list of vandalism at Council sites from January 2017 which outlined the costs and implications involved. A member advised that there had been continued vandalism and anti-social behaviour at the Leys with plants being taken out and having to be re-planted three times. The Chairman asked if the vandalism list could be reported to the local press.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the report be noted.
- 2) that the vandalism list be passed on to the Local Press to ask for inclusion in the paper.

315 **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 7.55pm

Chairman