

MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 4 December 2017

At 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor C K Woodward (Chairman)

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

Officers: Town Clerk Democratic Services Officer

Also present: 3 members of the public

616 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs Chirgwin and Reynolds.

617 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Price declared an interest in agenda item 3 (minutes of the last meeting) as she was one of the people who ran Witney Soul Club; Cllrs Churchill and Woodward declared interests in agenda item 12 as they were both members of the Corn Exchange Trust.

618 **MINUTES**

The Council received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2017.

a) **RESOLVED:** to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2017 for signature by the Chairman.

b) **MATTERS ARISING:**

Minute no. 500: Cllr Dorward had circulated a document to members from the Witney Music Festival. He explained that it was intended for the event to start on the Friday night now for local aspiring bands. The organisers wanted to run an identical after party to last year. There would be the addition of Witney Soul Club synchronising music with the rides.

Jack FM was interested in broadcasting and Radio Oxford would be recording for later broadcast. There would be 2 stages with the second being used for the Friday night local bands. Cllr Dorward said that this was not a final document but showed the direction that the festival was moving in and the dialogue that he had been a part of.

The Chairman stated that this document was not for discussion that evening as it would be taken through the relevant committees.

619 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

620 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

The Police were unable to attend the meeting but sent the following update:

I would like to thank you for your continued support throughout this tough time and the Witney police station really did appreciate the letter to the Commissioner.

Regarding the burglaries in Witney throughout November we had a total of 11 Burglaries. We arrested 3 males who are still under investigation.

We believe that there are two crime groups involved, one which are opportunists and are smashing rear patio doors and stealing cash and Jewellery. The other crime group we believe are cross boarder offenders and are breaking into houses and stealing car keys to high powered cars and then stealing the cars from the driveway.

We are working with boarding forces to help identify these offenders. The Problem Solving Police team are now on dedicated late/night shifts with the sole purpose to prevent, deter and catch these offenders.

We have also closed down another drugs house for 3 months and working with the mortgage company to start re possession proceedings to make sure the occupant is not allowed to return to the address once the 3 month closure expires.

The PCSO's have been working hard caring and supporting the victims of crime and have been holding crime prevention events throughout November, this will continue through December. So far they have handed out 2000 crime prevention packs, signed up approximately 100 people to TVP Alert and several new Neighbourhood Watch schemes are in the process of being set up. During the weekends there will be an increased presence in the town centre to deter shoplifters at the weekends leading up to Christmas.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

621 **AN UPDATE FROM WITNEY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

Cllr Morris provided an update on West Oxfordshire District Council's new company, Publica, to which all officers had been TUPE to. Budget performance was good, mainly due to savings from the introduction of Publica.

Cllr Price updated members on budget setting at OCC, which was well underway and did not have as many cuts as last year. Children's services had been inspected and there were some issues with SEN provision. Social care was also being reviewed. As Base 33 had closed, its trustees were in touch with OCC to try to ensure that vulnerable people were picked up. There had been a lot of road repairs including new markings in the town.

Cllr Doughty provided an update on the meetings with the Oxfordshire CCG on healthcare provision. There were ongoing meetings with the community and she encouraged everyone to attend and put forward their views. The next meeting would be held that Thursday in the Corn Exchange but in order to attend it was necessary to book a place.

Cllr Enright reported that there had been a lot of work by WODC on housing provision in the district and what could be done to help homelessness.

Cllr Dorward had attended the WODC Financial Management and Scrutiny Committee and also a meeting about superfast broadband. He had asked the Planners to ensure that there was provision for this and also electric car charging point on new developments.

Cllr Bartington reported OCC funding into social housing and infrastructure, and an update on the Oxford – Cambridge expressway and cycle routes into the city. The review of Adult Social care had seen the provision as graded good and better than average. There was a programme to recruit more social care workers. There were also campaigns on anti-scam and smoke alarms.

RESOLVED: that the verbal updates be noted.

622 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

a) **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 24 OCTOBER AND 14 NOVEMBER 2017**

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

Minute P551 – 24 October 2017

A member asked if a meeting of the Community Led Plan had been convened yet. Cllr Holliday reported that this would be in January 2018.

Minutes of 14 November 2017

A member commented that the meeting had been held in the Corn Exchange and not the town hall. This would be corrected in the next cycle.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee of 24 October and 14 November 2017 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein approved.

b) **ESTATES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 30 OCTOBER 2017**

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

Minute E522 – West Witney Sports Ground

A member commented that the deadline for compliance for the club had been 15 December. He was pleased to report that he had been working with the new committee who were very keen for the club to stay open and full compliance had now been achieved. The club was very excited

about hosting Park Run when it started next year. Members congratulated the member on his efforts to help the club.

A member asked about the live in steward. The member who had assisted the club agreed that this was an issue that needed to be addressed but it needed careful thinking.

Minute E520 – Madley Park Hall

A member expressed concern that the roof of the bicycle racks were to be removed. The Town Clerk replied that the Trust had specifically requested this due to repeated vandalism.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Estates Management Committee of 30 October 2017 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein approved.

c) SPORTS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE – 6 NOVEMBER 2017

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

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Sports and Recreation Committee of 6 November 2017 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein approved.

d) COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 13 NOVEMBER 2017

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

Cllr Enright commented that he had sent his apologies for this meeting and had not been present.

Minute C552 a)- Events

A member asked if the ratification of these recommendations would affect people who had already made a booking. The Town Clerk replied that the terms and conditions would come into effect immediately if the recommendations were ratified and that it would cover all future events. The Music Festival had been made aware of this.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Community Services Committee of 13 November 2017 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein approved with Cllr Enright being added to the list of apologies and removed from the list of attendees.

e) POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 20 NOVEMBER 2017

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

Minute F605 – Discretionary Grant Awards

A member commented that he had proposed a grant for Base 33 which had now sadly closed. Another member wondered if the money could be used for another youth initiative. The Town Clerk advised that this would be discussed at the budget meeting the following week.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee of 20 November 2017 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein approved.

f) YOUTH COUNCIL WORKING PARTY– 27 NOVEMBER 2017

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

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Youth Council Working Party of 27 November 2017 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein be approved.

623 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received and considered a report of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor’s Engagements.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

624 **REVIEW OF COUNCIL POLICIES**

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk and the review of the following policies:-

- a) Tree Policy
- b) Complaints Procedure
- c) Training and Development Policy

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted and all three policies as presented be formally adopted.

625 **NALC LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME**

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk. The Council were very much in favour of applying for the foundation award at a cost of £50.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report is noted;
2. that the Town Council has the necessary documents, policies and procedures as set out above and publishes them online where appropriate;
3. that the Town Council apply for the Foundation Award in May 2018, reviews the evidence required for the Gold Quality Award in December 2018 and aspires to achieve Gold Quality Status by May 2019;
4. that the status is reviewed annually in December to confirm eligibility

626 **FUTURE OF THE CORN EXCHANGE**

The Leader had received an e-mail from Mr John Harwood, the Chairman of the Corn Exchange Witney Trust, which had been circulated with the agenda. He had asked if the Trust should be wound up as per legal advice. However, if the Council felt that discussions could be reopened then the Trust could be kept running.

The Council discussed the issues involved and the history of the situation. Most members felt that there was still some value in the concept of a Trust being involved in the Corn Exchange, although this was not necessarily in the form of running the building from day to day. The Town Clerk reminded members that the Trust had wanted an annual grant starting at £50,000 and they had not been interested previously in a partnership arrangement.

Members agreed, however, that the Trust needed to come forward with ideas before any further discussions took place.

RESOLVED:

1. that the correspondence from Mr Harwood be noted;
2. that the Trust be invited to meet as Trustees to formulate ideas that could then be discussed by Council.*

**Cllr Dorward abstained from voting and Cllr Eaglestone voted against this recommendation.*

627 **APPOINTMENTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES**

Cllr Temple was nominated and seconded as a replacement for Cllr Doughty on the Witney Town Charity until 2020.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Temple replaces Cllr Doughty as representative for Cllr Doughty on the Witney Town Charity until 2020.

628 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader informed the Council that at the following week's meeting there would be a presentation on West Witney Sports Village. He asked that any literature be circulated beforehand.

RESOLVED: that the communication be noted.

629 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

A member asked when the 100,000 houses that had been allocated to Oxfordshire would be given planning permission. The Leader replied that the Spatial Plan was coming in and this would be a county wide partnership to agree where homes should be built with the associated infrastructure.

RESOLVED: that the question be noted.

630 **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was a letter from the Police and Crime Commissioner in response to the letter from the Town Council. Also circulated were an e-mail from Base 33 and correspondence from the Boundary Commission.

Although there was no change to Witney's boundary, a member encouraged everyone to respond and call for the constituency name to be changed to West Oxfordshire.

The Town Clerk added that on Friday officers would be dressing as elves in aid of the Alzheimer's Society. Members were encouraged to call in and make a donation.

RESOLVED: that the correspondence be noted.

631 **CARPET BEDDING**

The Council received and considered the report from the Operations and Estates Officer. Members felt that the cost of a carpet bedding roundel in an RAF design was too expensive. The Town Clerk advised that this included planting and ongoing maintenance. A member said that Abingdon and Witney College were looking for a bed. The Town Clerk asked if they could do a carpet bed design. The member replied that she would contact Cllr Chirgwin who would be meeting them and ask for further information.

Members asked if alternate quotes could be sought or other plants such as tulips used.

The Leader thought it would be good to open a dialogue with the college, but cautioned members that the Council may miss out as the order deadline was very soon.

RESOLVED: that delegated authority be given to Cllrs Morris, Holliday, Chirgwin and Bartington to speak to the college about what they might be able to do with the bed.

632 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents for sealing.

The meeting closed at 8.24pm

Chairman