

**MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday 10 December 2018**

**At 7pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall**

**Present:**

Councillor B J Churchill (Chairman)

Councillors: C Brown                      D S T Enright  
                  H W Chirgwin                A D Harvey  
                  P J Dorward                        A McMahan  
                  H B Eaglestone                    L M Price

Officers:        Mrs Sharon Groth - Town Clerk  
                     Mrs Nicky Cayley - Democratic Services Officer  
                     Mr Adam Clapton – Office Manager

Others:            4 members of the public

607 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs Bartington, Beames, Morris and Woodward.

608 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Chirgwin declared an interest in any discussions relating to West Oxfordshire Community Transport as he was a shareholder, and also in relation to an update that he would be giving on Volunteer Link up as his wife was the Manager.

Cllr Price declared an interest in any discussions relating to West Oxfordshire Community Transport as she was a director.

Cllrs Churchill and Enright also declared interests in any discussions relating to West Oxfordshire Community Transport as they were shareholders.

609 **MINUTES**

The Council received and considered the minutes of the Council meeting held on 8 October 2018.

a) **RESOLVED:** to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2018 for signature by the Chairman.

b) **MATTERS ARISING:**

Minute 516: A member stated that whilst he had considered putting a motion to Council concerning supporting the IHRA Definition of Anti-Semitism, he was now satisfied that the Council's own policies covered this and had therefore withdrawn

his motion. However, he asked that it be recorded that he fully supported the IHRA definition.

610 **ELECTION OF LEADER**

Cllrs Harvey and Enright were proposed as the new Leader of the Council. Members voted with 7 voting for Cllr Harvey and 2 for Cllr Enright. Cllr Harvey was therefore elected Leader for the remaining municipal year.

Members then voted for a Deputy Leader – Cllr Eaglestone was nominated and 8 members voted for him with one abstention. Cllr Eaglestone was therefore elected Deputy Leader for the remaining municipal year.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that Cllr Harvey be the Leader for the remaining municipal year;
- 2) that Cllr Eaglestone be the Deputy Leader for the remaining municipal year.

611 **NOTICE OF CASUAL VACANCY – EAST WARD**

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk following the resignation of Mr Holliday. After discussion members decided not to co-opt a new councillor as the remaining term of office was short. Members voted on this with 7 members in favour and 2 abstentions.

Members agreed that as there were only 9 councillors present it would not be appropriate to fill committee places and therefore this was deferred until the Council meeting the following week.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that the report be noted;
- 2) that the vacancy should not be filled by co-option;
- 3) that the decision on filling the remaining vacancies in committees be deferred until the next Council meeting on 17 December 2018.

612 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned in line with Standing Order 42 so that Margaret Burden could address the Council on the subject of the reduction in the grant to West Oxfordshire Community Transport as recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee.

Following her address, Christina Hopkins addressed the Council on the subject of the loan of the Council's stage for events in the Langdale Hall and the Corn Exchange.

Following these addresses, the Council reconvened.

*Margaret Burden left the meeting at this point.*

613 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

Sgt Cochrane was currently on leave and therefore there was no update on policing issues.

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

Cllr Laura Price

Cllr Price gave an update on OCC's Transformation Project which was moving ahead and investing in digital ways of working and the ethos of digital first. Redundancies would be minimised. The joint Chief Exec with Cherwell District Council was producing interesting ideas on joint working with District Councils. She also encouraged councillors to attend the A40 consultation session the following evening in the Corn Exchange.

Cllr Duncan Enright

Cllr Enright informed the Council that WODC would be investing £10 million with Cottsway to provide more affordable housing. The Local Plan indicated where this would be built. Next year WODC would be considering a controversial planning application for a new motor museum in Enstone. He felt this may affect Witney. WODC was also offering training to Parish Clerks and Councillors on the new Local Plan and National Planning Framework Policy. A member queried what was meant by affordable housing. Cllr Enright replied either part ownership with the housing association or a house sold at 80 or 60% of the market rate.

615 **REPORT BACK FROM COUNCILLORS ON THE WORK WITH EXTERNAL BODIES WHERE THEY SERVE AS THE TOWN COUNCIL'S REPRESENTATIVE**

Cllr Howard Chirgwin

Cllr Chirgwin had attended the Madley Park Hall AGM as he was a trustee and things were going well. He had also attended the Cogges Trust Charity meeting and had been invited to the Madley Park Residents Association meeting – the association was very active.

He had attended the Volunteer Link Up AGM and reported that they were very grateful for their grant from the Town Council but they had lost their major funding from OCC. This meant that the service may have to end in a year's time, whilst it was coming under increasing pressure from the NHS and OCC also.

Cllr Craig Brown

Cllr Brown reported that Witney Town Charity was due to meet early next year. He had also attended a Witney Educational Foundation Trust meeting and wanted to emphasise to the college that they were happy to consider grant funding.

616 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

a) **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 16 OCTOBER, 6 NOVEMBER AND 27 NOVEMBER 2018**

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

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee of 16 October, 6 November and 27 November 2018 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein approved.

b) ESTATES MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 5 NOVEMBER 2018

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

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Estates Management Committee of 5 November 2018 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein approved.

c) SPORTS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE – 12 NOVEMBER 2018

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 12 November 2018 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein be approved.

d) COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – 19 NOVEMBER 2018

The Vice Chairman of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance as the Chairman had resigned as a Councillor.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Community Services Committee of 19 November 2018 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein approved.

e) POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 26 NOVEMBER 2018

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

The Town Clerk referred to minute no 581 concerning the recommendation on the grant from Witney Community Transport. She would include this in her budget report for next week's meeting.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee of 26 November 2018 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein approved.

f) MINUTES OF WORKING PARTIES

World War One Working Party – 20 November 2018

Cllr Dorward presented the minutes to Council and moved their acceptance. He added that he had now obtained two Witney Blankets that would be turned into permanent poppy tributes and hung in the Corn Exchange.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the World War One Working Party of 20 November 2018 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein approved.

617 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received and considered the Mayor's report of engagements undertaken.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted.

618 **VANDALISM REPORT**

The Council received and considered an updated list of vandalism circulated prior to the meeting

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted.

619 **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The Council received and considered the joint report of the Town Clerk/Operations and Estates Officer concerning an event recently held in the Corn Exchange and the regulations regarding maximum occupancy under fire regulations.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted.

620 **MOTION FROM CLLR LAURA PRICE**

The Council received and considered the following motion from Cllr Price:-

*Witney Town Council recognises that the closure of Oxfordshire's Youth Work service, followed by the eventual closure of the Hub, combined with the loss of charity Base33 earlier this year, has resulted in a serious lack of provision for our town's young people.*

*Anti-social behaviour forms a regular part of the report from our Neighbourhood Police Service and incidents of vandalism of Town Council property create a constant cost pressure. Wider issues such as "county lines" where children are groomed and drawn into criminal activity trafficking drugs and child sexual exploitation also pose a serious threat.*

*We know that as Town Council we are well placed to take a leading role in finding solutions to the challenges that our community faces, bringing together Councils and public bodies, charities and local residents.*

*The Council will therefore use its unique position to host an urgent forum, inviting representatives from all relevant groups and organisations, to consider how we can create a sustainable form of youth work in the Town to ensure that all our citizens can reach their full potential.*

Discussion followed around whether it was the Town Council's place to take a lead on such issues and whether it would be better coming directly from OCC which used to have responsibility for Youth Work.

The Town Clerk commented that from her experience of colleagues around the country, there was nothing unusual for a Parish Council to be getting involved in Youth Work. There was a small budget of £500 ring-fenced for work with young people.

A member proposed an amendment to the motion so that the last paragraph read:

*The County and Town Councils will therefore use their unique positions to host an urgent forum, inviting representatives from all relevant groups and organisations, to consider how we can create a sustainable form of youth work in the Town to ensure that all our citizens can reach their full potential.*

**RESOLVED:** that the motion be passed with the amendment as detailed above.

621 **MOTION FROM CLLR DUNCAN ENRIGHT**

The Council received and considered the following motion from Cllr Duncan Enright:

*This Council recognises that from time to time members may behave in a way which is not consistent with the best principles of public life. We all may be guilty of this at times and reaffirm our belief in these principles which should be used sensitively and confidentially to guide members, and will be covered as an essential part of member training and induction in future.*

*The Council therefore reaffirms the role of Councillors as champions of their residents and supporters of the Council, dogged and fearless scrutineers of all Council services and functions including by referring to audit and third parties to ensure we meet the highest standards of service. It also reaffirms its strong belief in the Nolan Principles of Public Life, as expressed in the Council's Code of Conduct which forms the Constitution of Witney Town Council and including namely:*

1. *Selflessness: Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.*
2. *Integrity: Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.*
3. *Objectivity: Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.*
4. *Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.*
5. *Openness: Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.*
6. *Honesty: Holders of public office should be truthful.*
7. *Leadership: Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.*

Members thanked Cllr Enright for bringing the motion to Council and all supported it.

**RESOLVED:** that the motion as detailed be passed.

622 **MOTION FROM CLLR DUNCAN ENRIGHT**

The Council received and considered the following motion from Cllr Duncan Enright:

*Witney Town Council agrees that the stage it owns can be used for any events in Langdale Hall.*

Cllr Enright added that he could not remember the Council passing a policy under which its furniture could not be loaned. The Town Clerk clarified that the policy had been passed on 19 July 2016. It had been brought about by a request for 20 tables and a full report on this had been produced.

The Chairman of the Estates Management Committee proposed that it should go back to that Committee for consideration and members all concurred.

**RESOLVED:** that Cllr Enright's motion should be further debated at the next meeting of the Estates Management Committee.

623 **OXFORDSHIRE PLAN 2050 – STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI) CONSULTATION**

The Committee received and considered the consultation on the Oxfordshire Plan SCI.

**RESOLVED:** that the consultation be noted.

624 **PUBLIC CONSULTATION – IMPROVING TRANSPORT ALONG THE A40 CORRIDOR**

The Committee received and considered the consultation from Oxfordshire County Council. There was some discussion about the Northern Gateway project and whether it would be going ahead.

**RESOLVED:** that the consultation be noted.

625 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader asked that all councillors attended the budget meetings next week.

626 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER**

Cllr Dorward stated that he would like to see a blue plaque mounted on Batt House in tribute to Alice Batt. He asked through the Leader if the Council would support this. Members all voted in favour. The Town Clerk asked where this would be funded from and if it was to form part of the blue plaque trail? Cllr Dorward replied that before anything he would need to discuss it with the current owners of the house.

**RESOLVED:** that the Council would support in principle a blue plaque being placed on Batt House in memory of Alice Batt.

627 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Council received and considered a letter from resident expressing thanks for the Armistice Centenary Celebrations, along with a selection of comments from the public at large.

A member asked that thanks be recorded to Mr Adam Clapton for his hard work on this project.

**RESOLVED:** that the Correspondence be noted.

628 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents to be sealed.

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The meeting closed at 8.25pm.

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Chairman