

# 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Minutes of the proceedings of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held this day in the **MAIN HALL, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM**, from 7.30pm to 8.20pm.

## **PRESENT:**

Chairman: Cllr P M Lucey (Mayor)

Cllrs: M Ashwell, M Bishop, C J Bowring, N Campbell-White, Mrs UK Clark, D O H Davies, Mrs A N Drake, L Forbes, C R George, S C Gurney, Mrs G S Hewetson, T Lack, D G Lee, J P McGhee-Sumner, C D Moore, K G Morgan, S Odedra, M L Richards, I L Shepherd-Dubey, S Steatham, A N Waters, R J Wyatt.

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Jan Nowecki – Town Clerk

Nicky Harmsworth – Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

## **PRAYERS**

Prayers were led by Reverend Catherine Bowstead of the Methodist Church who offered support to the friends and family of Fred Clark, a past Mayor of Wokingham Town Council, who had recently died.

## **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs J P Mirfin and M Monk.

## **MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)**

Caroline Smith, the Manager of Cancer Research UK in the Market Place asked the following question:

In the recent months the Town has seen many changes, mostly concerning the regeneration projects and associated road works around the town. This along with the opening of the Lexicon is not helping keeping the town alive and prospering. As a retailer the work is now having a marked impact on footfall and takings. My shop is not alone in this so, will the Town councillors please consider give some help to retailers such as free parking or some other form of compensation to encourage footfall during the prolonged works?

Cllr Davies responded that:

- He is very conscious of the difficulties being presented by the refurbishment and working alongside WBC to see what can be offered directly in response to suggestions and questions that are being asked by many of the retailers
- In respect to the specific questions WTC does not have authority over car parking but is reflecting the concerns and requests back to members at WBC
- In terms of the possibility of financial relief through a rate rebate. Again this is not an area the Town Council has any authority over. WBC had organised a briefing for members of the Wokingham Business Association and he hopes that businesses are pursuing both the national route in terms of rating valuation but also the local route with WBC itself.

- Both councils are working with WBA to try to best promote the town; this has and will continue to include banners, adverts and some promotional material and this week a promotional video is being recorded involving businesses encouraging shoppers to keep coming to the town. This will be used for social media and local venues etc to get the message out.
- WBA, with Specsavers leading, is also organising a Christmas Treasure Hunt around the shops in town and WTC has offered help and will certainly be active in ensuring this is publicised widely.
- WTC is also involved in a marketing group with WBC and WBA looking at ways we can all promote the town during this period. The group is also starting to look at how we can continue to promote the town as a destination in the longer term.
- WTC itself has just invested in new officer who will give more capacity to build up the market when comes back to Market Place which we believe will help town overall.
- He completely understand the concerns being raised and the genuine difficulties the work is creating as the project is being delivered but it is a significant investment in the future of the town which we believe will benefit everyone longer term and that is why the Town Council are working in partnership with WBC to bring it about.

A further supplementary question was asked whether as Christmas season is approaching would the normal activities such as the Winter Carnival, dressing the Christmas Tree, Living advent calendar would still be happening.

Cllr Davies advised:

- It was business as usual for the Winter Carnival with the exception that the parade would not be happening.
- All other Wokingham Town Council events would be happening but adjustments for all events would be made.

Cllr Bowring advised:

- That a paper was going to Wokingham Borough Council Executive on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October to request free parking in WBC car parks after 3pm from November to January to help retailers.

#### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING (Agenda Item 4)**

It was proposed by Cllr Lee and seconded by Cllr J McGhee-Sumner and the following was

**RESOLVED  
29618**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Council Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2017 (pages 15414 to 15415) be confirmed as a true and correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

#### **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS (Agenda Item 5)**

The Mayor sent get well wishes to Mrs Barbara Young, a long standing volunteer for the information centre.

A photobook for Cllr Mrs Hewetson's year as Mayor was presented to her.

Cllr Mrs Clark thanked the Mayor for giving up his time to welcome her Swedish Guests to the Town Hall last Sunday.

The Mayor's list of engagements were received and noted.

## **PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **(Agenda Item 6)**

Cllr Waters gave an overview on what the Committee had been involved with as shown in the minutes. Cllr Waters gave thanks to the Town Clerk for all the great work she has been doing dealing with complaints about the Market Place Improvements and also to Cllrs C George, L Forbes and N Campbell-White for their suggestions with traffic congestion around the Town.

It was proposed by Cllr A Waters and seconded by Cllr C George and the following was

**RESOLVED  
29619**

that the minutes and any recommendations of the Planning and Transportation Committee meetings held on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017 (pages 15416 to 15419) and 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2017 (pages 15440 to 15442) be received.

## **AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **(Agenda Item 7)**

Cllr N Campbell-White gave an overview on what the Committee had been involved with as shown in the minutes.

It was proposed by Cllr N Campbell-White and seconded by Cllr C George and the following was

**RESOLVED  
29620**

that the minutes and any recommendations of the Amenities Committee meetings held on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2017 (pages 15420 to 15400) be received.

Cllr Ashwell thanked Cllr Forbes and Cllr Lack for producing the first Graffiti working party newsletter and their engagement with local Secondary Schools. Cllr Forbes asked if anyone had any contacts with the Holt School to let her know.

## **FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **(Agenda Item 8)**

Cllr D Davies gave an overview on what the Committee had been involved with as shown in the minutes.

It was proposed by Cllr D Davies and seconded by Cllr R J Wyatt and the following was

**RESOLVED  
29621**

that the minutes and any recommendations of the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 2017 (pages 15430 to 15439) be received.

## **CIVIC COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **(Agenda Item 9)**

Cllr Mrs Hewetson gave an overview on what the Committee had been involved with as shown in the minutes. Councillors were advised that the two minute silence for Armistice Day would be re-located to Howard Palmer Gardens. A list from the Civic Officer was circulated asking for confirmation of Councillors attendance for the Remembrance Service.

It was proposed by Cllr Mrs Hewetson and seconded by Cllr J McGhee - Sumner and the following was

**RESOLVED  
29622**

that the minutes and any recommendations of the Civic Committee meetings held on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017 (pages 15443 to 15447) be received.

## **STRATEGY WORKING PARTY**

**(Agenda Item 10)**

It was proposed by Cllr D O H Davies and seconded by Cllr S Gurney and the following was

**RESOLVED  
29623**

that the notes and any recommendations of the Strategy Working Party held on the on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2017 be received.

**MARKETS DEVELOPMENT WORKING PARTY**

**(Agenda Item 11)**

The Town Clerk's update report 13/2017 was received and noted.

The Mayor advised that Mark Goldup had recently been appointed as the Market and Bloom Officer for the Town Council.

It was proposed by Cllr P Lucey and seconded by Cllr C George and the following was

**RESOLVED  
29624**

that the notes and any recommendations of the Market Development Working Party held on the on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017 be received.

**ANNUAL RETURN – CONCLUSION OF AUDIT MARCH 2017**

**(Agenda Item 12)**

The External Auditors certificate and opinion regarding the completion of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2017 was received and it was noted that there were no matters, to which attention should be drawn. The Leader thanked the RFO for her involvement in obtaining this outcome.

**COUNCIL REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

**(Agenda Item 13)**

Reports were received from Councillors who represent the Town Council on the following outside bodies:

- Wokingham United Charities – Verbal report from Cllr Wyatt
- Wokingham Volunteer Centre – Cllr Steatham advised that the manager of the the centre had thanked her for attending meetings but owing to the closure of the Town Mobility Service she was no longer require to attend future meetings.
- Wokingham Sports Council
- Citizens Advice Wokingham
- Borough Parish Liaison – Verbal report from Cllr Waters

**EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**(Agenda Item 14)**

It was proposed by Cllr D Lee and seconded by Cllr D Davies and it was

**RESOLVED  
29625**

that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted i.e. commercial, financial and personnel it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and instructed to withdraw.

**WOKINGHAM HIGH STEWARD**

**(Agenda Item 15)**

The Civic Officer's report 03/2017 was received and noted.

It was proposed by Cllr Mrs Hewetson and seconded by Cllr Mrs Clark and the following was

**RESOLVED**  
**29626**

that Lucy Zeal be proposed as the new High Steward from May 2018.

The Chairman asked for a vote on this recommendation, with 21 Councillors in favour with 2 Councillors against .

Cllr Lee congratulated Lady Elizabeth on the excellent work she does and hoped there would be a celebration once she steps down from the role and suggested a painting could be commissioned. Cllr Hewetson advised that ideas would be discussed.

**CHAIRMAN**