

5th March 2019

Minutes of the proceedings at the **FORTY FIFTH ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** held this day in the **MAIN HALL, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM** from 7.30pm to 8.30pm.

PRESENT

The Worshipful the Town Mayor of Wokingham
(Councillor Julian McGhee-Sumner - in the Chair)
Cllrs: M Ashwell, M Bishop, C J Bowring, N Campbell-White, Mrs UK Clark, D O H Davies, Mrs A N Drake, Ms L Forbes, Mrs G Hewetson, T J Lack, D G Lee, J P Mirfin, K G Morgan, M L Richards, I L Shepherd-Dubey, Mrs S Steatham and Mrs A Tebboth.

IN ATTENDANCE

35 members of the public
Town Clerk
Responsible Finance Officer
Civic Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from the following Councillors: C R George, Ms S C Gurney, C Moore, M Monk, S Odedra and A N Waters and R J Wyatt

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 2)

The Minutes of the forty fourth Annual Town Meeting, held on 10th April 2018, were submitted to the meeting (pages 312 to 325, copies circulated at meeting).

It was proposed by Cllr D O H Davies and seconded by Cllr K Morgan and it was

**RESOLVED
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that the Minutes be received as a true and complete record and be confirmed and signed by the Town Mayor.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Agenda Item 3)

No matters were raised.

NOTICE CONVENING MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

The Town Clerk stated that the Notice had been posted in accordance with statutory procedures.

TOWN MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Town Mayor gave the Annual Report as follows:

Good evening Ladies & Gentlemen, and thank you for attending this evening's annual town meeting.

I always embrace any opportunity to showcase our beautiful Victorian Town Hall, and I'm delighted to see so many of you here with us this evening. The annual Town meeting is our end-of-year meeting where the various committee chairmen report directly to you on their committees' achievements over the past year. It's also an excellent opportunity for members of the public to ask any questions be they pre-submitted or on the night, and we will of course do our utmost to answer those. Where it is not possible to answer a questions this evening we will provide the questioner with a written reply as soon as possible,

I'd like to begin this annual report by thanking my Councillor colleagues for their time effort and dedication in serving our Town, and to thank them for the great commitment and service that they have shown over the past year, which is of course voluntary and unpaid.

I'd also like to thank our superb Town Clerk, Jan Nowecki; and the dedicated team that she leads in providing the services so valued by the Town. It has not been the easiest of years but I'm delighted to see the Market Place now completed and things beginning to return to normal. All our officers have worked very hard in challenging circumstances and I'd like to add my thanks to them for the great work that they do.

I would also like to thank our mini-Mayor, Amber Murray who has also accompanied me to a number of events.

Every time we undertake a Civic event, I am always rewarded by the large number of Wokingham residents who come out to support us, and despite the Market Place completion taking longer than anticipated, I continue to see a great deal of public-spiritedness from our local residents. We continue to invest in our marketing campaigns and the information we share via Love Wokingham which showcases what events are being put on continues to increase and again appears to be well received by our residents.

We have with us tonight the Chairmen of our various committees, Councillor David Davies, Leader of the Town Council and Chairman of the Finance & Personnel Committee; Councillor Andrew Waters, Chairman of the Planning and Transportation Committee; Councillor Nick Campbell-White, Chairman of the Amenities Committee; Councillor David Lee, Chairman of the Civic Committee; Councillor Gwyneth Hewetson, Chairman of the Arts and Culture committee and Councillor Lynne Forbes who will be updating us about Graffiti.

I will now hand you over to Councillor David Davies

I will now hand you over to the Committee Chairmen to present their reports starting with Cllr David Davies, Chairman of the Finance and Personnel Committee.

COMMITTEES' ANNUAL REPORTS (Agenda Item 6)

Chairman of Finance and Personnel Committee

Cllr Davies stood and presented his report as follows:

I am David Davies, Chair of the Finance and Personnel Committee, leader of the Town Council and member for Wescott East for nearly eight years.

The Finance and Personnel committee manages budgets and personnel on behalf of the Full Council, supporting staff and officers of the Council. On the latter point I would like to thank all our officers who do such an amazing job in the day to day running of the Council and following through on the decisions and initiatives taken by Councillors. In particular I would like to thank Nicky Harmsworth, our RFO, who ensure that our budgets are so well managed and helps us find ways to continue to fund the many events and activities that the Council holds dear in the face of increasing costs, and also our Town Clerk, Jan Nowecki who acts effectively as our CEO, or MD, and does an incredible job of managing the Council, going above and beyond when needed such as acting as a point of contact and communication during the market place works. I am certain that we would not be able to achieve all we do were it not for her.

In the past year we have lost our Markets and Bloom Officer - Robert Sherrard, who I would like to thank for all his service, and Marianna Pentek has joined in this role and is doing an excellent job as we both prepare for this year's Bloom, and work to make the best of the wonderful new space we have outside.

Whilst we are a Town Council, we are relatively large, our budget is slightly under £1.6m and a large part of the committee is simply the monitoring of budgets, questioning and challenging the reporting and ensuring that we are making the best use of your money. We receive income from the precept from taxpayers, as well as the Community Infrastructure Levy, or legacy S106 funding, and events such as the market or indeed weddings as David Dunham knows well, and my congratulations to him for his wedding and wonderful choice of venue. The committee also works with the internal and external auditors and as always, and thanks to our RFO, we again have received a clean bill of health.

There are a number of specific areas that the committee is directly responsible for however over and above simply managing the money. We are responsible for ensuring that the more mundane services such as insurance are providing us best value and in a related field, we ensure that risks to the Council are understood and controlled and we have plans and contingencies for, almost, any eventuality.

We lead the engagement with our tenants in the Town Hall building and have attempted to help the traders within the town during the disruption as a result of the work on the Market place and have, for example, jointly funded the production of videos to try and promote the town during these works and through the very effective Love Wokingham pages.

Moving on we are the primary point of contact with the Police and with the Strategy committee are looking at options for the deploying CCTV in the town area alongside that coming as part of the regenerations. Sadly, we have seen a significant increase in the anti-social behaviour in the past year and we have twin aims of doing what we can to prevent these issues, as well as holding the police to task for this.

The Market Place has been a focus for the whole council for this year, and you may have seen in the press that we have been able to get ahead of repayments of the loan taken to cover the costs of the works to the Town Council years early. This was always going to be an extremely large project and the final costs for WTC are £2.1m. This is more than a facelift and has ensured that the damp problems are solved, controlled tree routes and resulted in a safer surface, as anyone who has used both surfaces in the rain will know. From a financial perspective we had a small reserve built up over many years however the additional costs for the build work were entirely funded by CIL, otherwise known as developer contributions, and therefore has no costs to the taxpayer and indeed must be spent on developments of this nature. We are now awaiting the final audit of the work and whilst this is now a Borough matter, as the primary user and custodian of the market place will ensure that any changes required to make the area safe for those with disabilities or all users, are implemented in line with the recommendations of that audit. Our last interim audit strongly recommended no action at that stage to allow usage to bed in, hence there being no changes at this point, but we wait with interest to see and push for action on the recommendations of this final audit.

Finally, and in many ways enjoyable part of the committees work is the distribution of grants. Every year we distribute between £60k and £70k to

charities and good causes, however every year we typically receive requests for twice that amount. We have some wonderful groups that we have supported over the years and others we consistently support such as the May Fair and Winter Carnival. It is amazing to be able to give this money and make a real difference to people and I would encourage groups and charities looking for support to apply, particularly for seed funding to get a good idea off the ground.

We always look to support groups that align to our own vision "To encourage the life and vibrancy of Wokingham Town for its existing and future residents and businesses". These are the final days of this Council as we head into elections in May. I know that whatever happens those in front of you will change and I commend to the incoming Council to continue these ambitions and great works for the next four years.

Being a Town Councillor is an entirely voluntary position and takes requires commitment of only a few hours a month depending upon the number of committees you take part in. For those interested details can be found on our website as to how you can stand for election.

I hope that I will return in May, but it has been an honour to serve you for these last four years.

I'll hand over now to my fellow councillors who will tell you more about the various things that we do.

Next the Mayor asked Cllr Kevin Morgan, the Vice-Chairman, to present the Planning and Transport Committee report:

Vice-Chairman of Planning and Transport Committee

Cllr Kevin Morgan stood and presented the report as follows on behalf of the Chairman Cllr Waters:

Unfortunately I cannot be with you tonight, but would like to offer my sincere thanks to all of the Councillors with whom I have served on the Planning & Transport Committee and say on behalf of all of us, how proud we are to represent all of you, the residents of Wokingham town.

This is my final annual report as Chair of the P&T committee bringing to a close the four year term of this council.

Like the preceding three years, this past twelve months has been a very active period for the committee as the town continues to redevelop its retail area and absorb the new housing created in the Northern SDL. As ever the committee has been at the forefront of efforts to prevent ill-considered development proposals. Some highlights of the work we have undertaken:

- Considered 300 Applications
- Discussed 45 Applications
- Passed Comment on 30 Applications
- Raised objections to 14 Applications of which, as of today's date 6 were either refused by WBC or withdrawn
- Held meeting with Developers and public on the proposed Development in Wellington Road
- Welcomed representatives of local Churches, the press and public at P&T Meetings
- Involved in Consultation process on Local Plan
- Involved in Consultation on the Market Place TRO

- Along with other Town & Parish Councils letter written to 4 local MP's regarding the Planning Inspectorate overturning the Planning Authority decisions and allowing for further development. Supportive replies received from all

Looking back, I wonder how the last four years have gone so quickly. Most of us were newly elected Councillors serving our first term when we joined the P&T Committee under the Chairmanship of David Lee. When David became the Head of Strategic Planning at the Borough Council halfway through our term, I replaced him at the helm, but I will always thank him for the very hard work he put in with us when we first came together as it laid the foundation for the success of our committee through our term of office.

The people around our committee table has remained largely unchanged over the past four years, and despite our differing political orientations, we have become a tight knit apolitical team with one simple overriding objective, which is to do the right thing for the residents of this town.'

Next the Mayor asked Cllr David Lee to present the Civic Committee report:

Committee Member of Civic Advisory Committee

Cllr David Lee stood and presented his report as follows:

The Civic Committee has had a full year of events and celebrations. The major event in 2018 was of course the 100th anniversary of the ending of the First World War. Wokingham Town Council was proud to host and facilitate a number of commemorative events to remember and honour the bravery of those who fought, lived and died during this period.

The 100th anniversary saw large crowds out commemorating this very special anniversary and I would like to thank all those who took part, including so many youth organisations and armed forces representatives.

I would particularly like to thank Nikki Payler and all the staff for all their hard work in organising this important anniversary. A special thank you has to go to our Mace Bearer David Dunham and Councillor Tony Lack for all their help including the building and decorating of the Field of Remembrance.

While it is important to remember those who fought and gave their lives in WW1 and WW2 and the many conflicts since it is also important that we honour those amongst us who without seeking praise or money work tirelessly to help others and help to make our Town a better place to live in.

These people do sterling work by giving a helping hand to others, running great charities, organising litter picks and running really excellent youth organisations.

So, each year your Town Council runs a Civic Awards ceremony when the Town Council invites nominations for individuals living or working within Wokingham who deserve recognition for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the wellbeing of our town.

This is your opportunity, as residents, to give recognition to that special someone who cares beyond the call of duty. Some examples might be for a person:

- who has made outstanding contributions to the town

- that provides services that enhance the wellbeing of others
- who improves and enhances the development of young people and children

This list is by no means exclusive. Other examples will always be considered.

The nominations are judged by a selection panel of judges including members of Wokingham Town Council's Civic Committee and the High Steward of Wokingham, Lucy Zeal and other Town representatives from the churches and youth organisations.

So if you know someone who fits this description please put their name forward.

2018 saw the retirement of our High Steward Lady Elizabeth Godsall after 26 years of service to the Town. An afternoon tea was held to mark this special event which was attended by many of Lady Elizabeth's friends and colleagues. Lady Elizabeth has carried on the tradition of High Steward which goes back some 400 years when the first High Steward Sir Henry Neville took on the task. Not only was Lady Elizabeth the first lady to occupy this position but she was the nine times great granddaughter of Sir Henry. We are therefore delighted that family tradition is being carried on by her successor Lady Elizabeth's daughter Lucy Zeal.

Another successful event was our Heritage Open Day last year where we celebrated Extraordinary Women and recognised both historical women and others who you told us are extraordinary today.

These are just a few of the many activities that your civic committee works on and provides during the year but I must share with you that this Saturday 14th September the Council will be marking the 800th anniversary of receiving a Charter to hold a market and we are currently planning medieval activities both inside and outside in addition to a full market on the day. So please look out for more details later in the year as our plans develop.

Next the Mayor asked Cllr Nick Campbell-White to present the Amenities Committee report:

Chairman of Amenities Committee

Cllr Campbell-White stood and presented his report as follows:

The Amenities Committee has the largest workload and is responsible for all WTC Buildings, Parks and Open Spaces, Christmas Lights, Allotments, Horticultural competitions, Litter and Graffiti, and now, again, the Market Place.

Buildings

This summer, we will be replacing the three central heating boilers, one of which had long ago expired, with more modern and efficient ones which is of course essential for the efficient running of the building.

Parks and Open Spaces

We maintain a number of parks and open spaces for the benefit of the community, these are: Howard Palmer Gardens, Joel Park and Holt Copse, King George V, Langborough, Leslie Sears, Redlands Farm and Viking Field.

We are pleased to share that we will be upgrading the playground in Joel Park this summer and we have already been asking residents for feedback. We've enjoyed reading your views and we hope with this information, we can create a lovely playground for our younger generation.

We are also looking forward to taking on the new Elms Field playground in the summer and we've been looking at the new play equipment for this area too. We continue to support the Holt Copse volunteers with their maintenance and improvements to Joel Park who are a great asset to the area. Last year they funded and managed a £7,000 scheme to lay extensive land drains to alleviate the permanently wet central area of the grass down from Holt School to Jubilee Avenue, which has proved really successful.

We are also leasing a white van for the Council primarily for our groundsman to use whilst carrying out maintenance.

Christmas Lights

I hope you enjoyed our improved Christmas Lights display.

You will no doubt recall the mindless vandalism of our Christmas Tree where the lights were systematically cut, children's decorations trashed and our picket fencing smashed.

Councillors rallied on Boxing Day to clear up the mess and damage as far as was possible and to make everything safe. Regrettably the police have been unable to find the perpetrators and the remedial costs will be over £3000.

Since then, a decision has been made to install CCTV all around the Town Hall to give a 360 degree view. We hope this will deter such actions in the future.

Allotments

- We currently have 4 allotment sites with 385 plots. The waiting list at the moment is short, so if you are interested in taking on an allotment, please contact us.
- Shortly 2 more allotment sites will be added as a result of the new house building. If they are not taken up by the new residents, as we expect they will be, they will be available for those on the town waiting list.

Horticultural Competitions

- Various individuals and groups worked closely with us to enter the Thames and Chilterns in Bloom competition again last year. They all did a fantastic job and together we won another Silver Gilt for our town.
- We will be entering this again as well as holding our own gardening competitions so look out for more information soon.
- We have extended our hanging basket contract.

Markets and Market Place

We had a very successful launch of the new Market Place in September to welcome everyone back. The Market has already grown in both the number of traders we have and with the number of people visiting so look out for regular updates about who is trading and when on our Wokingham Market facebook page.

Litter and Graffiti

- Councillor Tony Lack works tirelessly to try to keep the Town and Wards litter and graffiti free, removing much of the graffiti himself.
- He has taken on the role of co-ordinating the Wokingham Litter Heroes and would welcome further offers of help, particularly Saturdays.

- Cllr Lynn Forbes who leads our Litter and Graffiti working party has a long term programme to educate our schoolchildren about this and shortly she will tell you how she is doing this.

Thanks

- I would like to offer many thanks to the Amenities Committee for all their hard work, we are fortunate to have such a dedicated team
 - Paul Smith -Amenities Officer
 - Rob Vincent - Buildings and Ground Officer
 - The Grounds and Market staff
 - Information Centre Officers and Kevin Belstone who manage all the room bookings and setting up of events for so many functions.
- If you would like any information about hiring either of our venues, brochures are readily available from our Information Centre.

Cllr Nick Campbell-White asked Cllr Lynn Forbes to provide an update on behalf of the Graffiti working party:

Graffiti Working Party

Cllr Lynn Forbes explained that she has been working with local secondary schools to get them engaged at the early stage to educate them about preventing and managing graffiti.

Our winners of the Schools project this year is Emmbrook Secondary school; Year 8 are now delivering their project against their implementation plan.

We are already planning the competition for 2019/20 and liaising with Forest, St Crispin's and Emmbrook who will be working on their projects to surprise us again this year with their innovation.

Next the Mayor asked Cllr Mrs Gwynneth Hewetson (Chairman) to present the Arts and Culture Committee report:

Chairman of Arts & Culture Committee

Cllr Mrs Hewetson stood and presented her report as follows:

Eight years as a Councillor and this is my 8th meeting as Arts & Culture Committee Chairman. The time has been rewarding and fun and we couldn't have achieved any of it without the help of our Officers, particularly Gemma Cumming (The A&C Officer) the local organisations – Wokingham Choral Society, St Sebastian's Band, the Lions and Rotary, the Wokingham Theatre, more arts and the Wokingham Society to name just a few.

As this will be my final year, I would like to do a short review of our achievements since the A&C was created. We had a memorable start with The Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in 2012. It was a hugely popular event, despite the weather, and the Concert on the Saturday evening was a sell out. The request was to keep up the momentum so in 2014 we had our first International Street Concert which has grown consistently and last year we had more than 5,000 people in the audience.

Most of the events begin in May and they are well publicised with the Cultural Month Brochure, now also in its 6th year. This features our talented local organisations together with Town Council events and the forty pages are crammed with suggestions of things to do around Wokingham Town. If your

interests are more cerebral then please do not forget the Virtual Museum which may be accessed from WTC website or our App.

Howard Palmer Gardens has become a popular venue and Theatre in the Park is yet another well attended, annual event guaranteed to attract an enthusiastic audience. Our new Market place is looking like an excellent venue for our well-established Sunny Saturdays entertainment and I hope that your enjoyment of the performances will be enhanced accordingly.

One event that became too popular to continue in HPG is the May Fun Day and over the last few years it has been very successful in Langborough Recreation Ground. We have found that, when the weather allows, a lot of families take advantage of the extra space and bring picnics.

December is now well known for the Living Advent Calendar, 24 events that take place each day during Advent. They may only last around 20 minutes, but the quality of the entertainment is excellent and twelve different Charities collect over the period. Time to reflect on the real meaning of Christmas, on the Community and those less fortunate than ourselves as well as meeting up with old friends. One resident still holds the record for never having missed a night since the LAC began in 2012 – 192 Events.

We have tried to spread our events throughout the year and our demographic. In two terms we have achieved a great deal and I hope our new Council will continue to build on this and see the huge value in bringing our Community together. We identified a few gaps and last year we introduced a Book Fair for our youngsters in October and next year funding has been approved for a Board Gaming Event which should appeal to our Youth and Young Adults and is to be held in February.

Having concentrated on the Cultural Life of the Town we felt that art should not be omitted in the regeneration and as space was being maximised we felt that the addition of a few mosaics would enhance the look and interest in the new spaces created. We have five in place and soon the history behind them will be recorded in an App so don't forget to download WTC app from the AppStore. We will also have leaflets available for those residents who prefer a hard copy. There are more mosaics intended for Elms Field so if you have more than just a passing interest, we have sponsorship opportunities!

As this is the final time I will be able to address you all I would like to thank everyone here tonight for all they do to make Wokingham one of the best places to live, either by an incredibly high standard of musical and theatrical performances; in motivating our next generation; in keeping our public spaces looking beautiful; in caring for and fundraising for the vulnerable members of our society; in helping residents back into jobs or out of temporary difficulties and finally but not least as Town Councillors. I have enjoyed my time and feel very fortunate to have served with such an amazing Town Clerk, Jan Nowecki, always self-effacing but hands on, encouraging and leading from the front. Thanks to you all.

The Mayor thanked all the Chairman for their reports.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (Agenda Item 7)

The Mayor advised that some questions have been received in advance which will be answered first. These are:

The Town Clerk read out a question from Janet White:

Market Place

'Are the two sets of new disabled parking bays near Market Place going to be more clearly marked than at present? It is difficult to see where they are, especially in the dark and when the surface is wet, and it would be much easier if the individual bays were marked with yellow lines and a wheelchair symbol, such as people are used to seeing.'

The Town Clerk read out a question from Catherine Smith:

Market Place

'When will the many, current failings in the Town Centre regarding provision for visually impaired residents be rectified?'

This includes the correct colour paving for the tactile area at crossings, the L shaped tails for the tactile crossings, ensuring that all crossings' tactile areas line up correctly and providing a contrast between the edges of the kerbs and pavements, also separating off disabled and loading bays from vulnerable pedestrians.'

Catherine Smith commented that the hearing loop was not working.

The Town Clerk responded to apologise and to advise that the Council would look at this following the meeting.

The Mayor asked Cllr D Davies to respond to these questions who gave the following reply:

Thank you for your questions and I will take them together. We have received comments in relation to the definition in the new disabled bays and kerb height etc. Wokingham Borough Council will be considering these once it has received the outcome of the final Road Safety Audit after which it will determine what, if any, changes need to be made and these will be actioned accordingly, balancing all the competing demands for the town. Road Safety Audits are undertaken by teams of specialists trained in road safety engineering and accident prevention. Quite rightly they are completely independent of the Council and its contractors.

- The scheme has been designed in line with standards and guidance.
- It was consulted on, with all consultation feedback being made available on both Councils' websites,
- The scheme has had an independent Road Safety Audit (RSA) at each stage of the project in line with standards (Design Manual for Roads and Bridges – DMRB)
- The bays within the town are marked out as required with adequate signage which makes them enforceable. The design did include some disabled inserts carved within stone slabs. These inserts did not arrive before the works were finished and are currently awaiting installation. It was decided that they would be installed post completion of the RSA3 (Final) along with any other works potentially identified etc. Once installed this will help further define the 7 disabled bays within the town.

I will ensure that your specific comments/questions are passed onto WBC to be added to others that have already been received.

Keith Malvern asked:

Funding of the Market Place

'Six months after the works were complete at the Market Place, which together with the efforts made to get more market traders, have made a very positive difference to the centre of the Town.

There is however still some confusion about the way that this joint scheme has been funded. The Wokingham Paper (6/9) quotes a WBC Executive member saying that "The overall cost to the local taxpayer ... is zero, because the investment ... is funded entirely by developer contributions". However in the Wokingham Paper (24/1) the Leader of this Council says that "...early repayment of the majority of the money borrowed (will lead to) ... reducing the cost in delivery ...". So will it be costing us money?

Before we have to start paying our Council Tax this year can we have a statement of the true picture'

The Mayor asked Cllr D Davies to respond who gave the following reply:

Thank you for your question.

As you have noted the project was joint funded by the two councils. I can only answer on behalf of this Council:

- We have made a contribution of £2.1m in total to cover WTC's share of the project and our contribution was always predicated on the projected developer contributions (CIL) which WTC is entitled to receive
- WTC took out a Public Works Loans Board Loan £1.15m which allowed us to ensure the needed cash flow. The early repayment has saved WTC £48k in interest and we expect to be able to make a further early repayment later this year.
- We fully expect the CIL income coming in to cover WTC's share of the cost of this project.

Kerry Clissold asked:

Tree Maintenance

'Can you confirm that street trees, hedge trees and trees around Wokingham Town, both newly planted and mature, have a continuing maintenance plan and that trees that are removed will be replaced like for like where appropriate?

In Sheffield the PFI Streets Ahead project is predicted to remove up to half of the city's street trees, the Secretary of State for the Environment has described this as 'Environmental Vandalism'. Wokingham's Green Routes are an important part of our town's heritage and must be protected.'

The Mayor asked Cllr N Campbell-White to respond who gave the following reply:

Thank you for your question and I recognise the concerns you are raising. All of the trees and hedges within the Town boundaries are not the responsibility of WTC, the majority falling under the remit of WBC, and so I can only respond in terms of the approach we take as a Town Council.

We value our parks and open spaces and pride ourselves in how we manage them. We have an annual tree survey and work to its recommendations. Where a tree needs to be replaced we will carefully consider whether this is 'like for like' or whether another species might be better placed in that space. Currently we are actively working in Joel Park planting new trees following our most recent survey. We value the relationship we have with your association and our officers do seek advice from you during the course of our work from time to time so that we do our very best to maintain our green spaces for everyone to enjoy.

Nicholas Martin asked:

5G transmission

'What is the Town Council's attitude toward 5G transmission within Wokingham Town itself?

In the context that two Wokingham Borough Councillors are very worried about the roll out of 5G, as are significant numbers of others – many are ignorant that 5G is one millimetre waves which do not travel far. This means the plan is to convert LED streetlights to carry the 5G signals. And trees would need to be chopped down which would change the nature of the town and its surroundings.

Dr Martin Pall and any other scientists in 3600 peer reviewed papers have shown 4G is already having bad health effects. 4 G is 2.4 GHz. 5G is 60 to 300 GHz which is much, much, much, more powerful.

This is a very relevant and important question for the inhabitants of Wokingham given that there are no known safety standards for 5G. That means that if Wokingham Town Council and Wokingham Borough Council allow these 5G trials or allow 5G per se in their areas of authority, they will be infringing the Nuremburg Code.'

The Mayor responded and gave the following reply:

This is an area that as a Town Council we do not hold responsibility for. Wokingham Borough Council as the Planning Authority does determine any positioning and they have access to advisers to support those decisions.

Whilst recognising that there are differing views about this technology we would be guided by government advice on such matters and to your specific technical points 5G is being operated in the UK at 700 MHz, 3.4 – 3.8 GHz and 24.25 – 27.5 GHz and the permitted power for these remains at 64 dBm. Current government scientific advice is that 4G, 5G and other non-ionising radiation is demonstrably safe at the legislated power levels and frequencies and therefore we do not agree that WTC face any jeopardy in relation to the Nuremberg Code of 1947.

When the Mayor asked if there were any further questions, a gentleman asked for clarification as to whether the CIL money was paying for the loan for the market plus interest too?

Cllr D Davies advised that it does cover both.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT ELECTORS MAY WISH TO RAISE (Agenda Item 8)

No other business was discussed

GRANTS (Agenda Item 9)

The Mayor then asked the RFO to announce the following names of the grant recipients for them to collect their certificates for grants they will be receiving for the financial year 2019/2020

The RFO explained that our service providers had the security of funding in April again but mentioned the fantastic work of all the service providers who are:

All Saints Church
The Cultural Partnership: More Arts
Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers (HCCV)
Lions Club of Wokingham - May Fayre
St Catherine's Church
St Paul's Church
St Sebastian Band
Wokingham Winter Carnival
Sports Sponsorship Fund

Other organisations that received grants were:

ARC Youth Counselling
Citizens Advice Wokingham
Friends of Emmbrook
3rd Wokingham Scout group
Dingley's Promise
Home Start
Readibus
South East Berks Gang Show
Wokingham Choral Society
Wokingham Job Support Centre
Wokingham Volunteer Centre
Wokingham Pantomime Society
Wokingham Theatre

CHAIRMAN