

# 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Minutes of the proceedings of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Main Hall, Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022 from 7.30pm to 8.25pm.

## **PRESENT:**

Chairman: Cllr M Gee (Mayor)

Cllrs: A Box, R Bishop-Firth, E Bishop, N Campbell-White, P Cunnington, M Ferrai, N Fox, S Gurney, D Hinton, P Hornsby, D Lee, T Lack, P Lucey, M Malvern, K Malvern, I Shepherd-Dubey.

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Jan Nowecki – Town Clerk.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs: J Ainslie, P Dennis, L Forbes, M Fumagalli, D King, A Mather, A Tebboth.

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

None were declared.

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

Cllr Peter Lucey raised the following:

I truly appreciate the major work and investment in our new marketplace. I am therefore confused as to the new paintings on the lovely stone. The white dashes are at least neat, but I am disturbed by ugly yellow daubings. Why have these defaced our new marketplace? The major issue is the horrible yellow lines, which have been seemingly added without care or skill. Can I please have an explanation as to why these have been painted, and can we at least clear up and correct the uneven yellow daubs?

The Town Clerk explained that WBC had been losing appeals in relation to enforcement tickets and that the adjudicator had indicated that signage on the loading and disabled bays was not sufficiently clear. The misuse of the bays particularly impacted on disabled drivers and so this needed to be addressed. WBC has therefore marked the area and has indicated that it complies with an approach acceptable for heritage areas. Also included is the marking of the bay on Market Place itself which is the allocated parking for WTC and forms part of the overall Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). Councillors commented that this also negatively impacted on the overall appearance of the area.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk would approach WBC Highways to register the Council's disappointment about the markings to see if anything could be done to improve matters.

**ACTION: TOWN CLERK**

CHAIRMANS INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_



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

It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr M Malvern and the following was

**RESOLVED  
30490**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Council Meetings held on 15<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022 (pages 16527-16542) be received as a true and correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

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

The Mayor's list of engagements dated 25<sup>th</sup> May to 22<sup>nd</sup> July were received and noted.

The Mayor highlighted that:

- She had been delighted to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee with many residents and was very pleased at the success of the Jubilee Concert. She thanked staff and both the Amenities and Arts & Culture Committees for delivering such an inclusive and distinctive event for the town.
- She has been made an Honorary member of Wokingham Lions and been very impressed by the work they do to bring enjoyable events to the town. This year Lions will be supporting the Mayor's Charity, Kaleidoscopic.
- The Mayor and Deputy have visited market traders and retailers within the town.
- The Mayor thanked her Deputy for the support she is offering.
- The new Mini-Mayor has been selected from Windmill Primary school. She will be attending a school assembly in September to present his robe and chain.
- Special thank you was offered to the Wokingham in Bloom Team. As Chair of the Bloom Committee, Cllr M Malvern was invited to comment. She had been very pleased to be involved with the judging day and through that process it was very positive to see the breadth of projects that are now taking place and of particular note the connectivity between them and the mutual support which has led to the development of the work. Results will be at the end of September.

It is traditional for the outgoing Mayor to receive a memento of their time in office. The Mayor invited Cllr Lack to step forward and presented him with a photobook recording his two years in office.

## **PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 6)**

Cllr N Fox noted the following that had been discussed in the meetings:

- The Committee is concerned about the incremental growth of 5G masts and their positioning within the town. There is no strategic overview of locations and this has been requested from WBC.
- The Wellington Road application is offering 17 affordable homes. The lack of solar panels will be raised and there has been discussion in relation to car parking with 14 allocated spaces so that some flats will be let with no parking.
  - Cllr Campbell-White queried about comments within the minutes and asked for clarification about why the committee felt the application was 'improved' and also whether WTC has sent comments back to WBC in relation to environmental standards, lift and removal of trees. The Chairman agreed to come back to Cllr Campbell-White with a response to his queries.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_



It was proposed by Cllr Fox and seconded by Cllr K Malvern and the following was

**RESOLVED  
30491**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning & Transportation Committee Meetings held on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022 (pages 16516 to 16520), 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (pages 16548 to 16552) and 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022 (pages 16554 to 16559) be received.

A vote was taken on these meetings and was unanimous.

**FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 7)**

Cllr D Lee highlighted that the Committee was pleased to allocate further resources to the earmarked reserve for Play Park refurbishment to ensure this programme will be fully budgeted. It was agreed that up to £250k could be placed in short-term investments to offer the Council some return. Overall, the Committee wanted to make clear to all Councillors the need for careful consideration about any new financial requests, given the pressure on funds due to inflation etc

It was proposed by Cllr D Lee and seconded by Cllr P Cunnington and the following was

**RESOLVED  
30492**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Finance & Personnel Committee Meetings held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 (pages 16521 to 16526), 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022 (page 16553) and 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022 (pages 16563 to 16573) be received.

A vote was taken and this was unanimous.

**AMENITIES COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 8)**

Cllr T Lack advised that

- There had been significant discussion about the mole problem at Leslie Sears and it has been agreed that trapping will recommence at the appropriate time. Resident engagement will be starting in September to try to establish a Friends of Leslie Sears where both positive and challenging issues can be discussed formatively
- Graffiti continues to be tackled around the town
- Committee agreed that there will be some refresh of play parks but no major refurbishment at the moment
- The e-bike event was successful but will be brought back to the town centre for 2023
- Pleased to note that S106 funding continues to be accessed to provide further waterless toilets at allotment sites
- Water Refill scheme is now more evident once again in the town given COVID restrictions have been removed.

It was proposed by Cllr T Lack and seconded by Cllr N Campbell-White and the following was

**RESOLVED  
30493**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Amenities Committee Meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022 (pages 16543 to 16547) and 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022 (pages 16574 to 16577) be received.

A vote was taken and with one abstention these were agreed.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_



### **ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 9)**

Cllr Gurney updated members:

- Following the success of the Jubilee Concert it has been agreed that Elms Field should be used in the future for the annual concert
- The Living Advent Calendar will not take place this year as morearts do not have sufficient capacity to deliver. Grant funding will be returned and it is the intention that the event will take place in 2023. Officers are investigating the feasibility of extending the already planned annual Christmas 'sing-along'.
- The Committee is recognising that most events will need a 30% uplift in budget to continue delivering at the existing level. There will be contracts to let for some events this year and uplifted budgets will be proposed.
- The artist is progressing with the creation of the panels at Erftstadt Court and these are expected to be completed by September and in place in October.

It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr M Malvern and the following was

**RESOLVED  
30494**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Arts & Culture Committee Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022 (pages 16560 to 16562) be received.

A vote was taken and this was unanimous.

### **REMUNERATION PANEL (Agenda Item 10)**

The meeting discussed the request from Wokingham Borough Council to respond to a short questionnaire about the likelihood that Wokingham Town Council would award Councillors' allowances at some point in the future

- The Town Clerk clarified the current position in that the Independent Remuneration Panel at WBC is currently reviewing remuneration for Borough members. As part of this review, following updated national guidance, it will be considering the level for Town & Parish Councils. Subsequent to this determination, all Town & Parish Councils can resolve whether they want to award any remuneration to elected members.
- It was agreed that the response to the questionnaire should be left as open as possible to allow for the matter to be fully discussed once the Remuneration Panel has reported. It was noted that, due to the timing, consideration would need to be given to the fact that there is an election in 2023 and the appropriateness of this Council determining such a key matter for a future Council.
- Reporting is expected to be in the early Autumn and the Town Clerk will prepare a detailed report for Full Council at either its October or December meeting.

### **EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION (Agenda Item 11)**

Representatives' reports were received in relation to the following organisations:

- Wokingham Lions
- Emmbrook Village Hall
  - It was noted that the recent trustee training had been very useful for Cllrs K Malvern and R Bishop-Firth.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_



- In response to a question the Town Clerk clarified that because WTC owns Emmbrook Village Hall, part of the constitution of the management committee requires 2 Councillors to act as trustees.

**CHAIR**

CHAIRMANS INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_

