

18th October 2022

Minutes of the proceedings of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Main Hall, Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham on 18th October 2022 from 7.30pm to 8.33pm.

PRESENT:

Chairman: Cllr M Gee (Mayor)

Cllrs: J Ainslie, R Bishop-Firth, E Bishop, N Campbell-White, P Cunnington, P Dennis, M Ferrai, L Forbes, N Fox, M Fumagalli, S Gurney, D Hinton, D Lee, T Lack, P Lucey, M Malvern, K Malvern, I Shepherd-Dubey and A Tebboth.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Jan Nowecki – Town Clerk.

Nicky Harmsworth - RFO

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs: A Box, P Hornsby, T Lloyd and A Mather.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

None were declared.

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

Cllr D Lee asked why Cllrs were still not wearing appropriate clothing to meetings and referred back to the Full Council meeting held December 2019 at which Councillors had discussed this matter and the fact that they were representatives of the residents and appropriate dress should be adopted according to the Council meeting or event. Cllr Gee responded that "appropriate" had not been defined and the interpretation of this was likely to vary. Cllr Gurney confirmed this recollection and the fact that, if members felt there were problems, these should be raised with group leaders to address with their members. The Town Clerk was asked if she had received any complaints from members of the public re dress code and advised that she had received none. The matter was discussed and the Chair asked that the minutes be checked and be revisited at a future meeting.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Cllr E Bishop joined the meeting.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

Cllr Lucey asked if there had been any update from WBC re the unsatisfactory painting of the traffic management lines on the Market Place, The Town Clerk advised that she had discussed with WBC but nothing further would be done.

It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr D Lee and the following was

RESOLVED
30519

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Council Meetings held on 26th July 2022 (pages 16578-16582) be received as a true and correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



A vote was taken and this was unanimous.

MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS (Agenda Item 5)

The Mayor's list of engagements dated 23rd July – 16 October 2022 was received and noted.

The Mayor highlighted that:

- Wokingham Town Council had won Gold in the Thames & Chiltern in Bloom competition and asked Cllr M Malvern to say a few words. Cllr Malvern said she had been delighted to celebrate the success of the whole town as it had been a great team effort.
- Her quiz night had raised £1,400 for her charity Kaleidoscopic and it had been a good evening and thanked those who attended.
- She had recently attended the Kaleidoscope AGM and it was a very useful if emotional meeting and directed Cllrs to the charity's website to see the work they do.
- The unveiling of the jubilee plaque had taken place last week outside the Town Hall and Cllrs were invited to take a look at it.
- The Mindset event at Howard Palmer Gardens was very well attended and it was great to see the park used by the community so well.
- The Mayor gave a big thank you to Officers and Cllrs who had worked so hard following the death of the Queen Elizabeth II to put all the necessary arrangements into place and organise the Proclamation at such short notice. A historic event for the community.
- King Charles III's Coronation would also be within her time as Mayor so felt very pleased she was able to be part of such events.
- The Mayor thanked her Deputy for the support she is offering.

ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 6)

Cllr Gurney updated members:

- The Committee is recognising that most events will need a 30% uplift in budget to continue delivering at the existing level and a request had been made to Finance & Personnel.
- The artist is progressing with the creation of the panels at Erftstadt Court and these are now expected to be completed in place by the end of the year.
- The book festival was held at the weekend and whilst ticket sales were down, as seen elsewhere, a good time was had by all that attended. The Mayor advised the mini Mayor had really enjoyed his visit and hoped that some of the footage would be shared to encourage more school children to attend next year

It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr A Tebboth and the following was

**RESOLVED
30520**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Arts & Culture Committee Meeting held on 12 September 2022 (pages 16590 to 16592) be received.

A vote was taken and this was unanimous.

PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 7)

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



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

- The Committee has again objected to the proposed development on the land adjacent to Blagrove Lane. A query was raised as to whether Berkeley Homes have been given Town Council 'permission' regarding access to Leslie Sears Park and Viking Field. Cllr D Lee advised that a historic request was made and this should be reported back to the P&T Officer. No further update had been received on this application. Cllr Gurney asked if the Committee were aware of another consultation in close proximity to Blagrove, though recognised it sits within another parish's boundaries. Cllr Fox would discuss with the P&T officer with a view to offering comments.
- The proposed Traffic Management scheme for Rose Street had been discussed and thought to be over complicated.
- The Committee also discussed the proposed planning at the rear of 304 London Road.
- Cllr Gee advised that a consultation is taking place on 19-21 Market Place and whilst a planning application has not been submitted suggested Cllrs attend the presentation being held before the next P&T meeting on 8th November – information requested to be sent to all Cllrs

ACTION: CLLR FOX

It was proposed by Cllr Fox and seconded by Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey and the following was

**RESOLVED
30521**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning & Transportation Committee Meetings held on 6th September 2022 (pages 16583 to 16589) and 4th October 2022 (pages 16615 to 16619) be received.

A vote was taken on these meetings and was unanimous.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 8)

Cllr T Lack advised that

- There had been an in-year request to F&P for an additional £12,000 to complete footpaths at King George V and Leslie Sears Playing Fields.
- Spending priorities were discussed and it was acknowledged that the Christmas lights uplift to £33,000 was just to keep the current provision in place. In line with our SFR's this contract would be shown on contract finder with a budget figure provided.
- S106 funding has provided further waterless toilet at another allotment site.
- Cleaning of the Market Place would be happening shortly.

It was proposed by Cllr T Lack and seconded by Cllr D Lee and the following was

**RESOLVED
30522**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Amenities Committee Meeting held on 6th September 2022 (pages 16593 to 16596) be received.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

CIVIC COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 9)

Cllr Lee advised:

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



- Two residents had joined the meeting to query why a screen was not installed in the town to allow residents to watch the Queen's funeral and also asked that Committee meetings be publicised more.
- That owing to declining memberships the Wokingham Town Twinning Association has closed
- WTC would apply for museum accreditation and would request initial funding for £10,000 to provide UV protection on the windows to protect the paintings in the Town Hall.
- Discussions would be held at a future Civic meeting on retaining a consistent approach to the tradition of a Civic service and the Mayor's inauguration.

It was proposed by Cllr D Lee and seconded by Cllr K Malvern and the following was

**RESOLVED
30523**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Civic Committee Meeting held on 26th September 2022 (pages 16597 to 16603) be received.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 10)

Cllr D Lee highlighted that:

- An additional £12,000 be taken from reserves to complete the footpath at King George V and Leslie Sears Playing Fields.
- The Standing Financial Regulations had been updated and due to the fact that the use of cheques had almost ceased, only the Town Clerk and RFO would be required to be authorised signatories on the bank accounts.
- A hardship award of £2000 had been agreed for each member of staff, pro-rated for part time employees.
- The Annual return was received and noted

It was proposed by Cllr D Lee and seconded by Cllr S Gurney and the following was

**RESOLVED
30524**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Finance & Personnel Committee Meetings held on 27th September 2022 (pages 16604 – 16614) be received.

A vote was taken and this was unanimous.

STRATEGY WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 11)

Cllr Gurney gave an overview of the meetings held on 27th July 2022 and 3rd October 2022.

- The report on the residents' survey had been discussed and had received a poor response. It had however had provided some limited but useful information, the engagement platform was available until the end of the year and could be used in other areas if anyone had any ideas smaller surveys. Cllr Fumagalli asked if the report could be distributed to all Cllrs.
- Cllr Gee to act as WTC's representative to the Independent Remuneration Panel. She would welcome views from members and will ensure these are included in discussions.
- Cllrs Gurney and Lee were now registered as ambassadors of the White Ribbon Campaign. The Town Clerk had registered the Council.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



- The Boundary Commission had been discussed and disappointment was expressed that there is no formal mechanism to register the Town Council's view in relation to the Southern SDL (Montague Park) should be treated as a single community. This is due to the fact that the southern section (south of the railway) does not meet the criteria of occupation for the review. It had been hoped that by commenting through the Boundary Review might lay weight to the same argument being made at the time of a future Community Governance Review. Cllr Gee to circulate relevant maps to members.

ACTION: Cllr GEE & ALL MEMBERS

It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr D Lee and the following was

**RESOLVED
30525**

that a letter be sent to WBC Assistant Director of Governance restating WTC's request to carry out a Community Governance Review as soon as practicable following the Boundary Review and dual-hatted Councillors to follow this through with direct discussion at WBC to press this point.

ANNUAL RETURN CONCLUSION OF AUDIT 2022 (Agenda Item 12)

The External Auditors certificate and opinion regarding the completion of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2022 was received and it had been discussed in agenda item 10. The Chair offered thanks to the RFO for the successful audit.

EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION (Agenda Item 13)

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

- Borough Parish Liaison Meeting
- Citizens Advice Bureau

STANDING ORDERS REVIEW (Agenda Item 14)

The Town Clerk's Report 07/2022 3rd October 2022 was received and noted.

The revised and updated Standing Orders were received which, in accordance with current Standing Order 38, stand adjourned without discussion until the next ordinary Full Council meeting where they will be discussed and voted upon.

Cllr Gee impressed upon members the importance of sending any comments to the Town Clerk in advance of the next Full Council Agenda being issued.

Cllrs requested a standalone copy to be sent for review with comments back to the Town Clerk by 21st November.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

CHAIR

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____

