

4th April 2023

Minutes of the proceedings of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Main Hall, Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham on 4th April 2023 from 7.30pm to 8.17pm.

PRESENT:

Chairman: Cllr M Gee (Mayor)

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Katy Hughes – Town Clerk.

Nicky Harmsworth – RFO

1 Member of the public

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P Cunnington, N Fox, M Ferrai, D Hinton and P Hornsby.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

None were declared.

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

There were no questions raised.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr E Bishop and the following was

**RESOLVED
30599**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Council Meetings held on 24th January 2023 (pages 16685 to 16688) be received as a true and correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS (Agenda Item 5)

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the last meeting off this Council and thanked everyone for the enormous effort they had put into the last 4 years as Wokingham Town Councillors. Officers were also thanked and special thanks were given to David Dunham, the Mayor's attendant, who has accompanied her on numerous visits.

The Mayor noted that the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), had published its advisory recommendations and that owing to legislation it is not possible to pay

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



for Childcare costs for Cllrs when attending meetings. This was being challenged by WBC to government.

The Mayor's list of engagements dated 16th January 2023 – 25 March 2023 were received and noted.

The Mayor highlighted that:

- Attending the Feng Shui ground blessing at the new David Wilson housing development was a very different experience.
- The Lunar New Year event had been extremely popular, and whilst noting that there had been issues as so many people had attended really hoped it could be repeated.
- A variety of events had been attended to thank Bloom Volunteers, special thanks to Cllr M Malvern for her work with Bloom.
- Both herself and the Deputy Mayor had attended the EBOS concert, recognising International Women's Day which was very good.
- Smaller retailers had been visited to offer support.

STRATEGY WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 6)

The notes and any recommendations of the Strategy Working Party's held on 25th January 2023 and 22nd March 2023 were received and noted.

Cllr I Shepherd Dubey gave a brief overview of the meetings and highlighted the following discussions.

- Format of the Annual Town Council
- Matthews Green Community Facility
- Kings Coronation

Cllrs were thanked for all they had achieved for the Town Council and reminded that they were still Town Cllrs on the day of the Coronation.

- A request had been made to WTC from Wokingham Borough Council to subsidise a number of local bus routes over a three year period – the Town Clerk had written to obtain costs to extend the services to better facilitate commuter usage.
- Earth Hour had been supported by WTC

Cllr Fumagalli asked how WTC were supporting the Kings Coronation and the Town Clerk advised that owing to capacity within the officer team due to elections being held on 4th May therefore WTC were supporting other organisations including

- First Days and Barkham Hookers creating a Coronation themed post box trail around the Town with decorations around the Town with a map to follow
- Colouring competition
- Tea party at WADE
- Various events at the Bradbury Centre
- Wokingham Lions May Fayre running a Coronation Theme
- Coronation themed Archie would be appearing around the Town

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 7)

Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey noted that four remaining secure bike lockers have been installed at the Carnival Hub. She also advised that two comments had been made to Wokingham Borough Council in response to the draft ward boundaries in Wokingham.

The Lee Spring Latimer Road planning application was discussed and Cllr Lack asked about the 4 storey height, Cllr Shepherd- Dubey stated that they had objected to this but the Premier Inn building was above a 4 storey height.

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

**RESOLVED
30600**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning & Transportation Committee Meetings held on 7th February 2023 (pages 16689 to 16694) and 14th March 2023 (pages 16702 to 16705) be received.

A vote was taken on these meetings and was unanimous.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 8)

Cllr T Lack advised that

- Carry forward of funding had been requested for Park Yoga (similar to Park Run) to have use of Howard Palmer Gardens
- Metal detecting policy had been approved
- Christmas lights contract had been awarded to the current contractor following a tendering exercise

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

**RESOLVED
30601**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Amenities Committee Meeting held on 23rd February 2023 (pages 16695 to 16698) be received.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

Cllr Forbes reported that whilst it had not been possible to achieve the Garden of reflection she expressed hope that the new council would continue to support the delivery of the plan.

ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 9)

Cllr S Gurney updated members:

- Panels at Erftstadt Court had been installed and opened.
- Science in schools had been running successfully thanks to Cllr Fumagalli and if anyone has any other contacts to speak to Gemma the A&C Officer
- Successful Lunar New Year celebrations took place but significant risks were highlighted owing to the numbers of residents who came and therefore it could not happen in the same manner but it was hoped the next Council would continue with this event which would require a higher budget.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



- Successful Board gaming event was held on Sunday 19th February and had feedback that it would be good to be repeated later in the calendar year.
- Events coming up were May Fayre on 1st May, Fun Day May 29th and Party in the Park the 1st Saturday in June.

Cllr Gurney offered her thanks to everyone who has helped and supported events during the past 4 years.

It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by J Ainslie and the following was

**RESOLVED
30602**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Arts & Culture Committee Meeting held on 13th March 2023 (pages 16699 to 16701) be received.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

CIVIC COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 10)

Cllr R Bishop- Firth gave a brief overview regarding changes to criteria for the Civic Awards so that only individuals could be nominated but that the Mayor would continue to offer support and thanks to groups.

She also noted that they had supported a request for Paul Gallagher to be added to the list of proposed street names.

Cllrs were advised that the theme for the September Heritage Open Day was "creativity unwrapped"

The Committee had just had an extraordinary meeting to discuss in more detail the Mayor's chain and badge of office and advised that they had resolved to retire the existing chain and use the Consort chain with further discussions to be held when the new council is in situ in May.

It was proposed by Cllr R Bishop- Firth and seconded by Cllr J Ainslie and the following was

**RESOLVED
30603**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Civic Awards Selection Committee Meeting held on 20th March 2023 (pages 16706 to 16717) be received.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

Cllr Lee asked if any update on his request for information to appear alongside a suggested person appearing on a road name and the Town Clerk advised she had recently had a response from Highways which outlined criteria and appeared more promising.

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 11)

Cllr D Lee highlighted that

- Cllrs had requested the Town Clerk to formally write to WIN concerning the Garden of Reflection and that the response would be passed to Amenities Committee for consideration.
- Park Yoga carry forward had been approved for next financial year

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



- The Town Clerk had been asked to seek clarification from HR service provider on consistency of staff contracts.

The Mayor provided feedback on the Independent Remuneration Panel and advised that it was a recommendation of £400 if WTC were mindful to pay an allowance to Cllrs but reconfirmed that no Childcare or Carers costs could be paid. The Mayoral/Chairman allowance recommendation was lower than Wokingham Town currently pay. A paper would be taken to the first F&P meeting of the new Council for consideration.

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

**RESOLVED
30604**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting held on 21st March 2023 (pages 16709 – 16717) be received.

A vote was taken and all were in favour.

COUNCIL REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES (Agenda Item 12)

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

- Borough Parish Liaison Forum
- Communities Futures Event
- Citizens Advice Wokingham – noting that CEO and Chair of Trustees had recently left.
- WJSC – Cllr R Bishop Firth gave a verbal review including statistic that getting someone into work saves @ £5k a year in benefits.

LONG SERVICE PRESENTATION (Agenda Item 13)

Cllr Lack gave a speech reflecting on the achievements of Cllr N Campbell White over the past 12 years which was followed by a presentation of a Wokingham Town Council Plaque.

RETIREMENT PRESENTATION

The Mayor gave a speech reflecting the eight years' service of Councillor Dianne King and wished her well in her retirement.

The Mayor closed the meeting.

CHAIR

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____

