



# Wokingham Town Council

Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1AS  
Tel: 0118 978 3185 [www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk)  
Town Clerk: Mrs J. Nowecki

**This Council Meeting is open to the Public and Press  
Please notify the Officer or Chairman if you wish to record the meeting**

15<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the **Civic Committee** to be held in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham** at **7.30pm** on **Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022** for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the subjects and matters set out in the agenda below.

Yours sincerely

**J Nowecki**  
Town Clerk

**Contact Officer** Nikki Payler, Civic Officer  
Direct line: 0118 974 0882 Email: [civic@wokingham-tc.gov.uk](mailto:civic@wokingham-tc.gov.uk)

## AGENDA

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

### 2 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive any declaration of interests from Members on the business about to be transacted.

### 3 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC

The Chair to answer questions raised by members of the Council or public.

*This is an opportunity for the people of Wokingham to ask questions of, and make comments to, the Town Council. Members of the public are requested to restrict their questions and comments to three minutes. Questions which are not answered at this meeting will be answered in writing to the person asking the question. To ensure an informed response, please send your questions to the Town Clerk at least three working days prior to the meeting.*

### 4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

To receive and resolve the Minutes of the proceedings at the meeting of this Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022 (pages 16597 to 16603), copy attached, as a true and correct record.

## **5 MONITORING REPORT**

To receive and consider the Monitoring Report dated 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022 (copy attached).

## **6 COMMITTEE'S BUDGET**

To receive a report on the Committee's budget as of 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022(copy attached).

## **7 REFLECTION ON REMEMBRANCE**

To capture any feedback and comments, to note for planning for next year's event.

## **8 MAYOR'S SUNDAY CIVIC SERVICE**

To receive, consider and resolve the Civic Officer's report 04/2022-23 dated 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

## **9 RETIRING COUNCILLOR GIFTS**

To receive, consider and resolve the Civic Officer's report 05/2022-23 dated 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

## **10 INFORMATION ITEMS**

- a) The Mayor's chain of office is currently with regalia specialists for a repair and further repairs are required to the badge in due course.
- b) The Open day in October's half term was very successful with good attendance. It was gratefully received by many families.
- c) Two new soldiers silhouettes were purchased for Remembrance and sponsored by the Wokingham Society. These were placed in Elms Field for the Remembrance period and will be repositioned annually, as the soldier is in the Market Place.
- d) The King's Coronation has been announced as Saturday 6 May. It is not currently known what the national or local expectations are. Officers will await guidance and keep the committee updated.

## **11 COMMITTEE INFORMATION**

- a) To receive information items raised by Members
- b) Identify any specific items for marketing purposes

**Civic Committee:** Cllrs Jane Ainslie, Rachel Bishop-Firth (Vice-Chair), Mariangela Ferrai, Dianne King, Tony lack, David Lee (Chair), Tim Lloyd, Keith Malvern and Peter Lucey.

*In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, all persons attending this meeting are hereby notified that this meeting will be recorded. The purpose of recording proceedings is that it acts as an aide-memoir in assisting the clerk of the meeting in the compilation of minutes. The recordings are held in a secure location and deleted once it has been resolved that the minutes are a true and correct record.*

*In accordance with The Openness of Local Government Bodies regulations 2014, persons attending this meeting may make their own recordings of the proceedings subject to the Council's Policy on Filming, Recording & Reporting on Council and Committee Meetings (copy available on request).*

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

Minutes of the proceedings of the **CIVIC COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in **the Main Hall, Town Hall, Wokingham** from 19:30 to 21:00pm.

### **PRESENT**

Chair: Cllr David Lee  
 Councillors: J Ainslie, R Bishop-Firth (Vice-Chair), M Ferrai, D King, T Lloyd,  
 K Malvern, P Lucey.

### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Civic Officer  
 Mr Glen Kopanski (resident)  
 Mrs Kopanski (resident)

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

Apologies were received from Cllr T Lack.

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

Cllr Malvern asked for it to be noted that he is a member of the Wokingham Society.

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

The Chair invited Mr Kopanski and his Mother Mrs Kopanski to join the table as they indicated they wished to express their views on a couple of matters.

#### Screen for late Queen's funeral

Mr Kopanski expressed his dissatisfaction that Wokingham Town Council had not put in place a screen for residents to watch the late Queen's funeral. He believed it was unacceptable as people would have liked to have sat with other people to watch the funeral, rather than sit at home.

The Chair responded to Mr Kopanski and his Mother and explained that plans were in place behind the scenes that had been made ahead of the announcement and there were protocols that needed to be followed.

The Chair stated that he totally understood. He advised that a book of condolence was set up and an area was set up for flowers to be laid but, with hindsight WTC could have done a lot better and apologised that the Council didn't come up with something better than we did. The Chair advised that WTC would consider putting in place screens for future occasions.

#### Grass turf at Remembrance

Mr Kopanski advised that he is a member of the Royal British legion, and the piece of turf that is put out on the Market Place in the Remembrance period is not acceptable.

The Chair explained the following:

CHAIR'S INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_



- that this Committee has explored putting other things in place (consulting with the Wokingham Society and RBL) in order to take a different approach, e.g. commissioning for a plaque to be made and placed on the wall outside, but these concepts have been constrained by the Conservation Officer at Wokingham Borough Council who was not in support.
- in the past, residents have asked whether something more formal, e.g., a new memorial, could be placed in the town. However, a War memorial is already situated inside the Town Hall building which was paid for by the people of Wokingham who chose for it to be placed there. WTC are custodians of this for the town and do not think it is within its gift for a new memorial to be created and that we should respect their wishes.

The Civic Officer added that for the last two years, we have put out a different structure for residents to place their crosses into, following feedback from residents, and the turf is no longer used. WTC believes this is now more favourably accepted.

The Chair reiterated to the residents that WTC is very keen to uphold the traditions of the town and every Cllr who has joined the town understands that they are trustees of this, Remembrance certainly being one of the main ones.

Mr Kopanski and his Mother said they appreciated having the opportunity to talk to the committee about their issues and they acknowledged that they had been listened to, which was very important to them.

Awareness of meetings

As an aside, Mr Kopanski advised that he was not aware of the meetings that were held at the Town Hall until Cllr Gee had advised him, and he felt that these should be publicised in more places than WTC's website to allow residents who do not have access to learn about these.

The Chair acknowledged this, and suggestions were made for this to be looked into, including WTC's annual newsletter.

**ACTION: Civic Officer**

**CIVIC COMMITTEE MINUTES (Agenda Item 4)**

It was proposed by Cllr P Lucey and seconded by Cllr R Bishop-Firth and it was

**RESOLVED  
30505**

that the Minutes of the Civic Committee meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022 (pages 16503 to 16506), be received as a true and correct record and that they be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)**

The Monitoring Report dated 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022 was received and noted.

**a) Museum Accreditation**

See agenda item 8.

CHAIR'S INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_



**b) Jubilee Plaque**

The Civic Officer updated the committee to advise that since the last meeting, the plaque had been purchased and received, and is now waiting for it to be installed by Volker Highways.

**c) Armed Forces Day**

The Civic Officer updated the committee to advise that arrangements were made for Saint Sebastian Wokingham Band to play in Peach Place in June this year. The Deputy Mayor, Cllr S Gurney welcomed and thanked the band and also spoke to residents on the day. Cllr Gurney informed the Civic Officer that the band received a good response and was really welcomed by residents. It therefore seems appropriate for the band to continue to perform in Peach Place each year.

**d) Bench dedication**

The Civic Officer advised that an offer was made to the family of Chris Pape for a plaque to be engraved and placed on a bench in Elms Field in her memory.

The family were most appreciative of the offer and very gratefully accepted. The plaque is now in position.

**COMMITTEE'S BUDGET (Agenda Item 6)**

A report on the Committee's budget expenditure to 31 August 2022 was received and noted.

**TOWN TWINNING (Agenda Item 7)**

The committee received and accepted the Civic Officer's report which informed members that the Wokingham Town Twinning Association has closed.

The association had declined in popularity over recent years for several reasons; their membership has gradually declined, as they have not attracted new members. In addition, travel is now much easier and often cheaper than it has been in the past and, of course, the covid pandemic also did not help.

The report advised the following:

1. Wokingham remains 'twinned' with Ertstadt and Viry-Chatillon, but the Wokingham Town Twinning Organisation no longer exists, and they will no longer be organising social trips or social activities.
2. The charters remain in place, between the towns
3. WTTA have archived their minutes, newsletters and photographs with the Berkshire Records Office.
4. Ertstadt and Viry-Chatillon have been advised accordingly. Their 'twinning' organisations are also experiencing similar difficulties and it is questionable if they will also continue.
5. The WTTA website is now closed, but information about our twinned towns is present on WTC's website
6. Some local schools and organisations continue to make their own visits to our twinned towns.

CHAIR'S INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_



Cllr Lloyd added that the Arts and Culture committee have commissioned an artist to paint some pictures which will be printed on aluminum and installed in Erftstadt Court. One of these will be a scene of lakes in Erftstadt and will include the German word 'Heimat' meaning homeland.

**MUSEUM ACCREDITATION (Agenda Item 8)**

The committee members received the Civic Officer's report offering an update to the committee following an independent inspection of WTC's physical collection which in turn provided the Council with a Collection Care report for consideration.

The report noted key observations and highlighted that the main risk to its historical collection is from light, as it can cause permanent and irreversible damage to objects by fading etc.

*Some initial work had begun to explore applying for museum accreditation in 2019 and the Civic Officer's report explained that covid lockdowns meant that this work was paused. However, the commissioning of this latest independent report and the receipt of its findings has now better informed WTC and has offered some helpful guidance.*

The Civic Committee were all in agreement that work should be progressed, and members agreed with the following Civic Officer's recommendations:

- 1) For WTC to take the first step to apply for museum accreditation with a view to then becoming eligible to be 'working towards eligibility'. Once applied for and confirmed as an 'eligible' museum, WTC would have 3 years with 'Working towards Accreditation' status to submit a full application. Engagement would begin again with the museum volunteer.
- 2) It is hoped that officers can then begin to identify in more detail what is required to bridge the gap for WTC to be able to better store, care for and preserve our historic collection for future generations. It should be noted that the 3 areas of weaknesses currently are:
  - Care and conservation of its core historical collection
  - Improved user engagement
  - Insufficient resources
- 3) It seems sensible to request some initial funding to support the cost of addressing the UV light on WTC's windows. It is worth noting, that if WTC does apply for museum accreditation, it is likely that grant opportunities might be possible and such requests are often met more favourably if the organisation making the request is also taking steps to meet these costs. One initial quote received has indicated that it would cost £9,700 to apply UV protection to WTC's windows and possibly blinds to reduce light in the main hall. Members agreed £10,000 should be requested to F&P for this.

Cllr Lucey remarked that this was a good report and thanked the Civic Officer. He also recognised that it is important for WTC to take its time to prioritise what is most important and to even consider any student involvement if there is interest.

CHAIR'S INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_



The Chair also stated that it might be beneficial for Officers to have some support from Civic Committee members to help identify items that might be of most interest to the public and to help consider how best to exhibit these including thinking about some changing displays to display our history. Cllr Tim Lloyd advised the committee that he was happy to assist, along with Cllr Lee.

Mr Kopanski shared that he had a copy of a disc that had been recorded by Mr Ken Goatley talking about lots of Wokingham's history which may be of interest. He will deliver a copy of this to the Town Hall.

**ACTION: Civic Officer**

**HERITAGE OPEN DAY (Agenda Item 9)**

The Civic Officer informed the committee that as this event was unfortunately cancelled due to the passing of our late Queen, it would not be possible to reschedule this at another weekend.

The Civic Officer advised that Heritage Open Days are part of a trademarked festival throughout the country, and any events that run outside the festival dates cannot be considered part of Heritage Open Days.

So that WTC can utilise some of the items that were purchased for children's activities, the Civic Officer suggested that an Open Day could be planned for a day in October half term and be marketed to families to visit and enjoy. A proposed date was Tuesday 25 October.

The members were in support of this idea.

**ACTION: Civic Officer**

*Mr Kopanski and his Mother Mrs Kopanski left the meeting.*

**MAYOR'S SUNDAY CIVIC SERVICE (Agenda Item 10)**

The committee received the Civic Officer's report which asked members to discuss the church service element of the Mayor's Sunday event.

Through discussion with the Town Clerk and Civic Officer, the current Mayor in office requested not to include a church service as part of Mayor's Sunday in May 2022 due to personal preferences. The Town Clerk and Civic Officer took the decision to respect the Mayor's preferences, but the intention was for this not to be a permanent change. However, the Civic Chair has asked if this was the right response and has requested that this be brought to the Civic committee for discussion.

Members recognised that some of the sensitivity around this civic service is about the Mayor being expected to play a part in it and the reference that it is taking place in a church which is at the choice of the Mayor.

Members shared the view that perhaps WTC should change the focus of the service to be for the Council as a whole and for guidance to be offered for the forthcoming year for the Council and the community and town it supports, and not for the Mayor. It was felt that the Mayor should only take part, and be personally

CHAIR'S INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_



blessed and offer a reading, if they wish to. An alternative approach in how WTC shares details of this service might be to say that the Mayor is attending a civic service, rather than it being the 'Mayor's civic service'.

It was also recognised that having a chaplain may be difficult for some Mayors who are not religious and WTC could make this optional with the idea of a Mayor choosing to have a celebrant, if desired. It was noted that moments of reflection at the start of Council are welcomed by a number of our Councillors.

Members agreed that Council should not make any changes this year, but WTC should look at a consistent approach to retain the tradition of a civic service for 2023 and thereafter, to celebrate the coming council year and not the Mayor. The Civic Officer was asked to look at the following so that this may be discussed further at a future civic meeting:

- a) Share with the committee the previous report where a decision was made to combine the Mayor's Inauguration Ceremony with a Civic service, to re-consider if this should be split back into two separate events
- b) Consider making the civic service a more formal inclusive event for the community, in a similar way to how the church service was presented on the evening of the late Queen's funeral
- c) To explore bringing in representatives from different faiths to the service (up-to-date census data soon to be published may help to inform WTC with this) although it is recognised that Wokingham is not as diverse as other areas.
- d) Consider where WTC would hold services, as in the past it has tried to rotate and attend different Churches in Wokingham
- e) Speak to the Chair of Churches Together in Wokingham to gain his views and input

**ACTION: Civic Officer**

**BUDGET REQUEST FOR 2023-2024 (Agenda Item 11)**

The Committee considered if there is any expenditure that might be required over and above the normal annual budget settings for the next financial year.

The following items were discussed, and all members agreed that the following should be requested to F&P for 2023-2024:

- a) To increase the budget for the Christmas Music event from £150 to £1000 to allow the event to be expanded and to be able to pay the performers.
- b) £10,000 to support the cost of reducing UV and light from our windows to protect and preserve WTC's historical collection. See agenda item 8 for further detail.
- c) The Committee would also like to highlight to F&P that the Coronation of King Charles III is likely to fall in the next financial year which it may like to consider. However, details of any required costs for this are currently unknown, as no guidance has been received.

**ACTION: Civic Officer**

CHAIR'S INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_





**WTC RESPONSE TO THE PASSING OF THE LATE QUEEN (Agenda Item 12)**

The Civic Officer asked if there were any comments members wished to make about WTC's response to the passing of the late Queen in preparation of a debrief meeting later this week.

Cllr Bishop-Firth said that the proclamation went very well and recognised that this was a very big piece of work and WTC wouldn't have had much more resource to do anything else.

The comments expressed by Mr Kopanski and his Mother Mrs Kopanski, in agenda item 3, will be taken to the debrief meeting. However, it was recognised that as WTC is a Parish Council with limited resources, it would have been difficult to do this.

Committee members shared ideas about possible venues where screenings could be placed for future occasions for people to sit down and watch events, including the inside of the Town Hall, WADE and the new Carnival Hub.

**ACTION: Civic Officer**

**INFORMATION ITEMS (Agenda Item 13)**

There were no information items.

**COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 11)**

- a) The Chair asked for a member to join the Chair, Vice-Chair and the Mayor at the Civic Award Selection meeting taking place on Wednesday 7 December at 10am. Cllr D King volunteered to join this meeting provided that she is able to attend.
- b) Cllr Bishop-Firth shared that at the Woosehill Community Centre, there was a framed print with a note attached stating it was on loan. The Civic Officer was asked to look into this.
- c) No information was identified for marketing.

**ACTION: Civic Officer**

**CHAIR'S SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_

CHAIR'S INITIALS \_\_\_\_\_





## WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Monitoring Report: Civic

Date: 15 November 2022

Date Action Agreed	Item for Action (to include any resolution number)	Person Actioning	Proposed Completion Date	Progress
23.09.19	Museum Accreditation	Civic Officer A&C Officer Museum Volunteer	None set	The Civic Committee were all in agreement at the Sept 2022 meeting that work on this should be progressed and the Council should re-engage with the Museum Volunteer. <b>This item will now be removed from the Monitoring report and updates brought to the committee, as required.</b>
21.03.22	Jubilee Plaque	Wokingham Society/WBC Highways	ASAP	Platinum Jubilee Plaque to be purchased and installed. <b>This was installed and now complete. This item will be removed from the monitoring report.</b>
26.09.22	Church Civic Service	Civic	None set	To discuss and agree its preference for the Mayor's Sunday itinerary <b>See agenda item 8.</b>

**WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

**Monitoring Report: Civic**

**Date: 15 November 2022**

**Wokingham Town Council Principles**



The Council's principles are noted here as a useful reference for members in discussions at Council meetings as they should always be considered.

The key principles for Civic will be distinctiveness and inclusivity but these will of course not be exclusive, and the committee will take all of these into consideration when making decisions.

02/11/2022

## Wokingham Town Council

Page 1

13:40

## Detailed Income &amp; Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/10/2022

Month No: 7

## Cost Centre Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available
<u>302 Civic</u>						
1256 Misc. Income	800	0	0	0		
Civic :- Income	<b>800</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		
4333 Newsletter	4,032	4,477	4,400	(77)		(77)
4335 Operation Bridge Costs	0	1,927	0	(1,927)	71	(1,998)
4360 Twinning Official Entertaining	0	0	100	100		100
4362 Civic Receptions	165	121	800	679		679
4365 Heritage Day	2,794	2,940	3,500	560	117	443
4369 Remembrance Day	2,700	(2,121)	1,390	3,511	5,181	(1,670)
4370 Christmas Music	31	0	150	150		150
4371 Honoraria	1,600	0	1,600	1,600		1,600
4372 Chairman Allowance	3,500	1,750	3,500	1,750		1,750
4373 Civic Transport	0	0	100	100		100
4374 Official Gifts	57	307	500	193		193
4375 Christmas Cards	262	0	250	250		250
4376 Insignia & Dress	4,659	2,386	3,000	614	589	25
4377 Civic Awards	1,703	156	1,500	1,344	155	1,189
4378 Silver Talks	0	0	50	50		50
4399 Mayor's Sunday	419	2,587	3,600	1,013		1,013
4523 Museum Accreditation	800	0	2,000	2,000		2,000
Civic :- Indirect Expenditure	<b>22,722</b>	<b>14,531</b>	<b>26,440</b>	<b>11,909</b>	<b>6,112</b>	<b>5,797</b>
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>(21,922)</b>	<b>(14,531)</b>	<b>(26,440)</b>	<b>(11,909)</b>		
Grand Totals:- Income	<b>800</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		
Expenditure	<b>22,722</b>	<b>14,531</b>	<b>26,440</b>	<b>11,909</b>	<b>6,112</b>	<b>5,797</b>
<b>Net Income over Expenditure</b>	<b>(21,922)</b>	<b>(14,531)</b>	<b>(26,440)</b>	<b>(11,909)</b>		
<b>Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve</b>	<b>(21,922)</b>	<b>(14,531)</b>				





# Wokingham Town Council

## Civic Officer's Report 04/2022-23

---

To: Civic Committee  
 Date: 15 November 2022  
 Subject: Civic Church Service

---

### 1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To further discuss the church service element of the Mayor's Sunday event (see copy of Civic Officer's Report 03/2022-23 and relevant attached information).
- 1.2 At September's civic meeting, the Civic Officer was asked to look at the following:
  - a) Share with the committee the previous report where a decision was made to combine the Mayor's Inauguration Ceremony with a Civic service, to re-consider if this should be split back into two separate events.
  - b) Consider making the civic service a more formal inclusive event for the community, in a similar way to how the church service was presented on the evening of the late Queen's funeral.
  - c) To explore bringing in representatives from different faiths to the service (up-to-date census data soon to be published may help to inform WTC with this) although it is recognised that Wokingham is not as diverse as other areas.
  - d) Consider where WTC would hold services, as in the past it has tried to rotate and attend different Churches in Wokingham.
  - e) Speak to the Chair of Churches Together in Wokingham to gain their views and input

### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The decision was taken to amalgamate the Annual Council Meeting (Mayor's Sunday ceremony) in the Town Hall with the Civic Church Service from May 2017 (see copy of Civic Officer's Report 3/2016-17 for more information about this). Reasons to do this included:
  - a) Although a longer event, combining them meant only one day in the Council calendar instead of two.
    - The Mayor's invited guests would be present for both. Typically, they attend the Mayor Making ceremony but not always the Civic Sunday.
    - Dignitaries were invited to both events so combining them meant sending just one invitation.
    - Officers would be working one day instead of two.
  - b) It made it easier for Councillors, dignitaries and members of the public to attend as the Annual Council Meeting (ceremony) was previously held on a Tuesday lunchtime.
  - c) The combined format allowed time after the ceremony (whilst guests went to Church) for staff/caterers to re-arrange the main hall and present the refreshments more professionally and in greater comfort for guests.

### 3 CONSIDERATIONS - GENERAL

- 3.1 WTC offers distinctiveness through its contribution to civic life within the town. Its traditions are therefore important to uphold but it is also important for WTC to recognise change and to be inclusive to all.

## Agenda item 8

- 3.2 From the limited feedback we had through the residents' survey it was clear that those responding very much valued our history, heritage and traditions.

3.2.1 A prime example of this is Remembrance. There is a level of expectation from our residents around this time that the Council marks this occasion suitably. In the past, open invitations were offered to all to attend. However, this is no longer possible as numbers interested in attending exceed the capacity we can allow. In addition, our residents fed back to the Council that they wanted to see us lead a two-minute silence on Remembrance Sunday as well as Armistice Day and so we have put this in place. Residents also told us that they wanted us to arrange for the traffic to be stopped during this time. This year, we made arrangements for contractors to do this for us.

- 3.3 Churches are as embedded in our community, as the Council is. It is important to recognise this and just how much they support our residents. Currently, they are offering their venues as 'warm spaces' and reaching out to people who are challenged in the difficult financial climate we are all facing. They know our community very well.

### 4 FEEDBACK FROM LOCAL CHURCHES

- 4.1 The Civic Officer, Town Clerk and incoming Town Clerk, met with ministers from 3 local Churches (The Methodist, St. Pauls and The Baptist) to discuss this topic with them. They very much welcomed the meeting and offered their following thoughts based on their collective, vast amount of experience:

4.1.1 They would like to continue supporting the Council with its annual service, to mark this change in time, and they recognise the strong links that the Council has with the Church and the traditions it represents.

4.1.2 They welcome the opportunity to bless the Council for its forthcoming year ahead. They acknowledge that not everyone has a Christian faith, but all guests are welcome in their Churches. Indeed, a Muslim prayer group regularly meet in St. Paul's Parish rooms thus demonstrating different faiths working together in the community.

4.1.3 It is hoped that in any service, it allows people attending to 'pause and reflect' and to use that time as they wish. The ministers recognise this does not always mean in prayer.

4.1.4 We shared with the Ministers the suggestion that Cllrs made at the last civic meeting, to adjust the focus of the service each year to offer guidance for the forthcoming year to the Council as a whole. If a Mayor wished to be 'personally blessed' this could be included in the service as it has been done in the past, but this should not be assumed. The Ministers all agreed they would be very happy to work with the Council to achieve this and adjust accordingly each year.

4.1.5 In principle, the ministers all advised they would welcome other faiths taking part in their services but we must be mindful that they are all constrained by their own rules and national guidance. For example all services or events held in a Church of England church are subject to canon law. As quoted in some of their guidance, a couple of points are:

- "If representatives of other religions are invited to read during the service from their scriptures, it is of the upmost important that the texts to be used should be agreed beforehand with the parish priest."
- "It is not appropriate for a member of another religion at a civic service in a Church of England church to lead the congregation in prayer."

- 4.2 The Church of England guidance also sets out rules for multi-faith events in secular (non-religious) venues. Some of the points in this include the following:

- "Clergy or other official representatives of the Church of England should ensure that their participation in multi-faith events is such as to allow them to express the integrity of their Christian faith."
- "Christian contributions to multi-faith events should be such as to affirm what all present hold in common, without glossing over differences. It is not appropriate to offer material which would cause offence or unnecessary difficulties for people of other religions, but



a clearly Christian perspective should be expressed. Particular care should be taken when selecting scriptural readings, to avoid causing upset to Jewish participants.”

- “If it is suggested that common acts of prayer, or joint affirmations, be made by all present, great care should be taken to ensure that these are neither syncretistic nor platitudinous. It is imperative that those taking part in such events should see texts in advance, and they should be satisfied that they can take part in them with integrity. They should also reflect, and if necessary, seek advice, on how such common acts will be perceived within the wider church and community. Shared silence may be more effective than any verbal formulae in expressing a sense of being together as people of different religions. It may be good to explain to organisers that it is not necessary for a representative of every religious group known in the community to be invited to make a contribution.”

## 5 SUMMARY

Some important points to note are:

- 5.1 It may be more of an enjoyable day for the incoming Mayor and guests to focus on a ceremony only, which is not followed by a Church Service. This could be a case for splitting the two elements again and holding the Church civic service on a different day. In this way, it could be positioned more to the community and its residents to attend, in addition to VIPS and of course the Mayor’s guests.
- 5.2 Offering a separate Church service on a different day, could attract different members of the public, if marketed in the right way as the Council starts its year ahead.
- 5.3 Catering for Mayor’s Sunday would be easier to co-ordinate if only the ceremony was held on this day, and not followed by a Church service.
- 5.4 Not all guests attending the ceremony in the Town Hall wish to go to the Church service.
- 5.5 It should be recognised that amongst Councillors and in the wider community, there are individuals who are Christians and who really value the tradition of the Church Service, at this time in the civic calendar. It is important that the Council does not exclude these individuals or their views.
- 5.6 A parade for this occasion does not attract the same level of interest as other occasions so it is questionable if a parade should be arranged and therefore a significant cost saving could be made.
- 5.7 Arranging a civic service in a secular venue could be very challenging. As noted above in 4.2, all Christian churches have restrictions. It is expected that representatives from other faiths would have their own guidance too for any such services or events in a secular venue or attendance at a Christian Church. The representatives from Churches Together, whilst wanting to remain open to involvement, made it clear that they felt this would be a significant task. The Town Clerk is concerned about the capacity to deliver such an ecumenical event. This would not only involve the current level of practical coordination but an enormous amount of additional liaison with those involved to both agree a model and framework ensuring a sensitive approach is achieved, which does not appear to be tokenistic.
- 5.8 The time that was spent talking to our local Ministers and gaining their input has proved very useful for the Council to understand. At this point in time, it has raised our awareness to reference material available, as required, if Council has a Mayor and or members who have different faiths. However, if any such addition or change is made in the future, it is critical that close communication with all would be required and that ample time is allowed for such planning.

## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Civic Committee should further discuss and agree on its preference for the Mayor's Sunday itinerary.

6.1.1 To resolve whether to retain the Church service on the same day as the ceremony or to separate the parts into two events again? Whichever is decided, allowance should be made to enable the Mayor the flexibility to respect their own personal views and beliefs, whilst still acting as First Citizen of the town and meeting the expectations of the broadest community they are representing.

6.1.2 To resolve whether or not a parade is still required on this occasion (albeit on the same day as the ceremony or on a separate day). It is not well attended by uniformed organisations and therefore it seems very difficult to justify the expenditure of over £2000 to close the roads to support this.

6.1.3 To resolve on the continued rotation across Wokingham churches. This would reflect the clear wish for Churches Together in Wokingham to remain involved and would demonstrate the value the Council places on the community support they offer.

6.1.4 The Committee to note that in an election year, officers would need to plan in advance for a civic service. The Council will need to continue to book the use of one of the local Churches and once the incoming Mayor and their faith, if any, is known, discussions can be held about its focus, e.g. whether or not to include any personal blessing.

Nikki Payler  
Civic Officer



# Wokingham Town Council

## Civic Officer's Report 03/2022-23

---

To: Civic Committee  
Date: 20 September 2022  
Subject: Civic Church Service

---

### 1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To discuss the church service element of the Mayor's Sunday event
- 1.2 Through discussion with the Town Clerk and Civic Officer, the current Mayor in office requested not to include a church service as part of Mayor's Sunday in May 2022 due to personal preferences.
- 1.3 The Town Clerk and Civic Officer took the decision to respect the Mayor's preferences, but the intention is for this not to be a permanent change. However, the Civic Chair has asked if this was the right response and has requested that this should be brought to the Civic committee for discussion.
  - 1.3.1 As references are made in the attached supporting information to a Mayor's Chaplain, it may be useful to note that the current Mayor has not appointed a chaplain this year.
- 1.4 WTC offers distinctiveness through its contribution to civic life within the town. Its traditions are therefore important to uphold but it is also important for WTC to recognise change and to be inclusive to all.

### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A church service has traditionally always been held at Wokingham Town Council following the election of the new Mayor each year. In the past this was held on a separate day to the Annual Council meeting (Mayor's Sunday ceremony) in the Town Hall, a few weeks later. However, in 2017, a step-change was made to join these together to make one event as they are so closely linked. See attached timetable for the proceedings in 2019 as an example.
- 2.2 WTC has rotated its attendance at different Wokingham Churches for its service, where possible. WTC has also taken guidance from each Mayor Elect, if known, as to where they would like the Church service therefore demonstrating there has often been a personal preference. This has sometimes proved challenging as WTC has not always been as inclusive with rotating to different Churches as it would like to be.
- 2.3 The Mayor at the time, has given a reading at previous services held.
- 2.4 In 2020, no church service was held, and was cancelled along with many other events due to Covid
- 2.5 In 2021, no ceremony was held in the Town Hall due to Covid, but a small church service was held at St. Paul's Church

## Agenda item 8

- 2.6 For reference, attached is some supporting information taken from Civic Ceremonial, 5th Edition by Paul Millward (an online copy of the book can be viewed here: [cc.naco.uk.com/index.html#page=1](http://cc.naco.uk.com/index.html#page=1)) about the following:
- 2.6.1 Church Services
  - 2.6.2 The effect on personal and religious beliefs
  - 2.6.3 Mayor's Chaplain (included for context as references are made in the above information to a Mayor's Chaplain)

### 3 CHALLENGES WTC CURRENTLY HAS

- 3.1 In its current format, guests attending the Annual Council Meeting (Mayor's Sunday ceremony) in the Town Hall are invited afterwards to join a parade to the Church, along with other invited groups. However, parade numbers are low:
- 3.1.1 It is noticeable that many guests, leave after the ceremony, and do not join the parade to go to the church service
  - 3.1.2 Whilst WTC invites the same groups of people which are invited to the Remembrance parade, it does not attract the same level of interest
  - 3.1.3 The Parade Marshal has recognised how low the attendance is at this parade and has fed this back to WTC
- 3.2 Catering for the Mayor's Sunday event is a challenge, when the ceremony at the Town Hall is followed by a Church Service:
- 3.2.1 With the ceremony held at 12 noon and the church service following that, WTC has arranged for a caterer to offer some light refreshments in between as it recognises it is lunchtime and it may be too long a gap to only offer refreshments after the Church Service. However, this does mean that no toast with any alcohol can be made until the later refreshments, and those guests who have already left will not be present to join a toast.
  - 3.2.2 In contrast this year, as no Church service was held, refreshments were offered straight after the ceremony and the Mayor could circulate when all the guests were present.
- 3.3 When planning a church service, the Civic Officer has to plan ahead and book its use and ask if the relevant Minister can conduct the service, ideally several months beforehand.
- 3.3.1 Without knowing who the incoming Mayor will be in an election year, WTC does not have the insight of whether the Mayor will have any personal religious beliefs or non-beliefs.
  - 3.3.2 For example, in 2019, the 'proposed' Mayor lost their seat and so the incoming Mayor had to accept the choice of Church that had already been made. This would be the case for 2023 and any future election years. Whilst the Council is likely to select an incoming Mayor in the background, there is no guarantee of who the Mayor will be until the elections have been held and seats have been confirmed.

### 4 CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 As noted in the 'Church Services' information attached, it says 'the vast majority of local authorities organise an official church service for the Mayor each year. It does not say that this must take place. However, WTC is a traditional Council, and this has always historically taken place.
- 4.2 As noted in the 'Church Services' information attached, the Second Citizen (the Town Clerk) could read a lesson or reading in place of the Mayor at the Church, if the Mayor is not religious. Alternatively, WTC could ask the High Steward.
- 4.3 It is interesting to note from the attached information about 'Church services' that some authorities are exploring marking the multicultural aspect of their town or city into their proceedings.
- 4.3.1 As an inclusive Town Council, it is important to recognise those with all religious and non-religious belief, but it is also key to remember that Wokingham does not have such a diverse population as those in other parts of the UK.

- 4.3.2 WTC does need take into consideration how the Wokingham ministers may feel if a significant change is requested in their Church.
- 4.4 If a church service is not held, could it be perceived that WTC is excluding those who are in favour and support, including some Councillors? Are we diluting a civic tradition?
  - 4.4.1 If not held, could 'Thoughts of the Day' be offered at the Town Hall ceremony to the council for the forthcoming year by someone neutral, perhaps the High Steward?
- 4.5 To address the challenge noted in 3.2 if WTC continues to hold a Church service, WTC could explore the possibility of holding the time of the Annual Council meeting (Mayor's Sunday ceremony) in the Town Hall earlier in the day so that one set of refreshments could be offered afterwards? However, it is important to note that Churches may not be able to accommodate an earlier service due to other services they already hold.

## **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The key costs for this event are as follows:
  - 5.1.1 Catering (approx. £1500 – this is higher if refreshments are served at two different times in the day.
  - 5.1.2 Road closures for the parade (approx. £2000)
  - 5.1.3 Photographer and videographer (approx. £300 and £200)
  - 5.1.4 Musical accompaniment (approx. £300)

## **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 No changes should be made in the current Mayoral year. However, consideration should be given for 2023-2024 and onwards, to allow for forward planning.
- 6.2 In particular, a new Council will be elected in May 2023 and it would be helpful if some decisions are made in preparation for this.
- 6.3 The Civic Committee should discuss and agree on its preference for the Mayor's Sunday itinerary.

Nikki Payler  
Civic Officer

## Agenda item 8

## **Church Services**

*Information taken from Civic Ceremonial, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition by Paul Millward (pages 132-134)*

The vast majority of local authorities organise an official church service for the Mayor each year. Such a service is usually held on the Sunday following the election of the Mayor (or as near to that date as possible).

Of course, it should be remembered by all that the church service is a traditional way of asking for God's guidance on the Mayor for the forthcoming year and also to mark the strong historic links between Council and Church. The personal belief of the incumbent is of much lesser importance than the symbolism of the service.

Some authorities, however, have quite rightly sought to mark the multicultural aspect of their town or city and included, a strong non-Christian element into the proceedings. In Nottingham, the Lord Mayor's Inter-Faith Chaplaincy Team helped to organise a joint Lord Mayor's Installation and Service in the 'neutral' surroundings of the City's Council House.

The church where the service is held is generally selected by the Mayor and the councillors and officers of the authority should support him/her, whatever their own beliefs. However, some authorities maintain the tradition of an official service in the parish or cathedral church each year with a further, more personal, service in the place of worship of the Mayor's choosing. Whatever format is chosen, it is important that the Mayor's Chaplain (or adviser) plays a part in arranging or conducting the service. Similarly, it is usual for the 'First' and 'Second' Citizens (the Mayor and Town Clerk) to read the lessons or play a prominent public role in the proceedings.

## Agenda item 8

### **The effect on personal and religious beliefs**

*Information taken from Civic Ceremonial, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition by Paul Millward (pages 62-63)*

As Mayor, a councillor represents all sections of the Council, not merely those who support a particular political, social or religious view. The Council will, no doubt, have policies on a whole host of matters and it is, of course the role of the Mayor to promote these policies. It is also the role of the Mayor to acknowledge, celebrate and support diversity in the area. A Mayor cannot deliberately avoid invitations to particular places, merely because he/she is politically opposed to such institutions.

A Mayor with a specific religious belief should support and attend other services as should a Mayor who is an atheist. These views are sometimes contested by Mayors but it is interesting to reflect that the office of Mayor belongs to the public not the individual who occupies it or the officers who advise it. None of the above is, of course, applicable in circumstances where groups or individuals promote racial, religious or social disharmony.



### **Mayor's/Chairman's Chaplain**

*Information taken from Civic Ceremonial, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition by Paul Millward (pages 165-166)*

As with the office of Mayoress, the Mayor's Chaplain (or other similar title) has no legal status but is often appointed. The traditional role of the Chaplain is to offer spiritual guidance to the Mayor but the Chaplain is now more often the person who helps to organise the civic service, says grace at civic dinners and prayers at Council meetings.

Some Mayors have refused to appoint Chaplains on the basis that they are non-believers in any God. Whilst this is a thorny subject, there is a counter argument at the office of Mayor relates to the citizen of the District and not the individual filling the post. Irrespective of the Mayor's personal beliefs, it is undoubtedly worthwhile for a 'Chaplain' to act as a focal point for religious groups in the area and to advise the Mayor on religious matters.

Whilst a Mayor will be aware that the people of his/her area are not all of the same belief as him/ herself this should not inhibit the Mayor visiting other religious events if invited and a knowledgeable Chaplain can explain with his/her appropriate counterpart, the differences and similarities of belief and practice.

Attending a religious service of another faith is the Mayor's outward show that he/she is Mayor of all the people and of the right to worship freely.

The choice of a Chaplain is often solely the decision of the Mayor, although some clerical posts still retain an *ex officio* claim on the job. As such, it is usual usually the Mayor who decides to which event the Chaplain should be invited. 'Chaplains' do not have to be Christian and, indeed, there is a small but growing trend towards multi faith or multi-denominational chaplaincies. In Nottingham, one Lord Mayor decided to reflect the diversity of the city by appointing a multi faith Chaplaincy which included Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, Buddhist and Brahma Kumaris members. A blessing for each of these faiths was given at the Lord Mayor's service. In Manchester, the city's first Asian Lord Mayor in 2005 introduced the concept of different religions being asked to lead prayers before Council meetings on a rota basis. Other Council's 'Chaplains' offer 'thoughts for the day' rather than prayers at the beginning of Council meetings.

Whatever religion or religions the 'Chaplain' comes from, what is important is that the support that their post gives to the Mayor helps the Mayor to understand and lead all sections of the community.

## Agenda item 8



# Wokingham Town Council

## Civic Officer's Report 3/2016-17

---

To: Civic Committee  
Date: 10<sup>th</sup> August 2016  
Subject: Mayor Making and Civic Sunday

---

### 1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To consider combining Wokingham Town Council's Mayor Making and Civic Sunday Events into a one-day event as a result of feedback received from retiring Councillors at a debrief meeting in 2015 together with more recent comments from current Councillors.

### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Traditionally, the two events have always been held in their current stand-alone format: Mayor Making being the public annual council meeting where Mayor receives his/her declaration of office and Civic Sunday where the Mayor receives God's blessing from the Church for his/her year ahead.
- 2.2 Whilst Mayor Making includes the legal meeting required to take place (according to the Local Government Act 1972), both events are a public celebration of the new Mayor.
- 2.3 The events take place just over three weeks apart from one another and they delivered as separate events.
- 2.4 WTC invites some of the same people (dignitaries) to both events.
- 2.5 Not all Councillors are able to attend Mayor Making due to work commitments as the event takes place on a weekday lunchtime.
- 2.6 Serving refreshments after the Mayor Making ceremony can be difficult for caterers and staff as there is very little room.
- 2.7 The adjourned evening part of the meeting where the leader and committee membership is agreed can be a challenge for the Mayor as his/her first meeting to chair on an already eventful day.

### 3 FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 To consider combining Mayor Making and Civic Sunday into one event taking place on the same Sunday, in May as follows:
  - 3.1.1 Mayor Making ceremony to take place in Town Hall immediately followed by a parade to Church for the Civic Service and then a parade back to the Town Hall for

## Agenda item 8

refreshments. Although this would become a longer event, it would be only one day in the Council calendar instead of two.

- 3.1.2 It may make it easier for Councillors, dignitaries and members of the public to attend.
  - 3.1.3 This combined format would allow time after the ceremony for staff/caterers to rearrange the main hall and present the refreshments more professionally and in greater comfort for guests.
  - 3.1.4 For the Mayor Making ceremony itself consideration could be given to the main hall being arranged differently to allow a better use of space, e.g. less tables or no tables for Councillors to allow them to be in a better position. Currently, some of them have their backs to the dignitaries, the choir and the Mayor's guests.
  - 3.1.5 **The Mayor's invited guests would be present for both. Typically they attend the Mayor Making ceremony but not always the Civic Sunday.**
  - 3.1.6 The Mini-Mayor and family would be able to attend more easily. As Mayor Making currently takes place on a school day and often falls on important SATS test week, the Mini-Mayor has not always been able to attend previously.
  - 3.1.7 School choirs performing on a Sunday may be more difficult but other options could be explored with the secondary schools and or Church choirs. An option could also be to ask the supporting school where the Mini-Mayor attends for a choir to be provided.
  - 3.1.8 Consideration could be given to the Mayor making a statement/announcement from the balcony before the parade leaves.
- 3.2 To consider moving the adjourned evening part of the meeting to the following Tuesday evening.

### 4 ASSUMPTIONS

- 4.1 No changes would be made to the procedure that is followed during the actual Mayor Making ceremony.
- 4.2 A top table would still be positioned for the Mayor, Town Clerk and Chaplain.
- 4.3 Silverware would still be on display
- 4.4 Invitations would be sent to the same groups of people, e.g. Mayor's guests, dignitaries, Past Mayors, chairman of key organisations, representatives from local community, sponsors, Civic Award winners
- 4.5 Timing of the Civic Church ceremony at 3pm is unlikely to change greatly with the Mayor Making ceremony taking place beforehand.
- 4.6 The Church Service would continue to take place at various Churches in Wokingham, where possible.
- 4.7 Saint Sebastian Band would be available to support the event in the May instead of the June.

### 5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There would be less admin and staff costs as one event would be worked on together and take place on the same day.

**6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 To recommend to Full Council that Mayor Making and Civic Sunday events are combined in the Council calendar with effect from May 2017 to include the following:
- 6.1.1 A revised layout of the main hall.
  - 6.1.2 A suggestion of what refreshments are required, e.g. selection of canapes as we cater now or an afternoon tea with sandwiches and cakes.
  - 6.1.3 The adjourned evening part of the meeting to be held on the following Tuesday evening.

Nikki Payler  
Civic Officer





# Wokingham Town Council

## Civic Officer's Report 05/2022-23

---

To: Civic Committee  
Date: 15 November 2022  
Subject: Retiring Gifts for Councillors

---

### 1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 As Council approaches the Town Council elections next year, it should be mindful of recognising Councillors of the service they have given and be thanked accordingly.
- 1.2 To discuss and agree if members wish to take the same approach as was taken in the past.

### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following has been agreed previously:
  - 2.1.1 Councillors who are retiring from being a Councillor should receive a retiring gift provided that they have served a minimum of eight years continuous service (two terms) at WTC. Gifts should be presented to these Councillors at the April Full Council meeting, prior to the election.
  - 2.1.2 Councillors who are choosing not to retire but do not get re-elected should also receive a retiring gift provided that they have served a minimum of eight years continuous service (two terms) at WTC. Gifts to these Councillors will not be formally presented at a Full Council meeting but will be presented to them privately.
- 2.2 Prior to the last election in 2019, WTC commissioned a local artist to paint an image of the Town Hall that could be framed and presented to these Councillors.
  - 2.2.1 In 2019, WTC invested in purchasing 25 of these images so that there would be some in stock for future years. After presentations that year, WTC still have 5 of these framed images available, and also 10 prints which could be framed for this purpose.

### 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To discuss and resolve if members would like to continue with presenting gifts to Councillors, using the same criteria.
- 3.2 To discuss and resolve if members would like to present the same framed image of the Town Hall that was presented in 2019. It should be noted that these were well received and appreciated by recipients.

Nikki Payler  
Civic Officer