

21st November 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 21:22pm.

PRESENT

Chair: Cllr R Bishop-Firth (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: J Ainslie, M Ferrai, D King, T Lack, T Lloyd, K Malvern, P Lucey.

IN ATTENDANCE

Civic Officer

Katy Hughes (incoming Town Clerk)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr David Lee (Chair)

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

Cllr T Lack declared an interest regarding agenda item 9.

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

No questions were received.

CIVIC COMMITTEE MINUTES (Agenda Item 4)

It was proposed by Cllr P Lucey and seconded by Cllr J Ainslie and it was

**RESOLVED
30545**

that the Minutes of the Civic Committee meeting held on 26th September 2022 (pages 16597 to 16603), be received as a true and correct record and that they be confirmed and signed by the Vice-Chair.

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Monitoring Report dated 15th November 2022 was received and noted.

a) Museum Accreditation

As the committee were in agreement at the September civic meeting that work on this should now be progressed, this item will now be removed from the monitoring report, and updates brought to the committee, as required.

b) Jubilee Plaque

This was installed and now in place. This item will be removed from the monitoring report.

c) Church Civic Service

See agenda item 8.

COMMITTEE'S BUDGET (Agenda Item 6)

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

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



REFLECTION ON REMEMBRANCE (Agenda Item 7)

The committee discussed the Remembrance events and agreed that it was well attended and a successful event. The addition of appointing contractors to stop the traffic for both two-minute silences was positively received, and it was agreed that it should be included in future plans.

Members thanked the Civic Officer for the organisation of the event.

MAYOR'S SUNDAY CIVIC CHURCH SERVICE (Agenda Item 8)

The committee received the Civic Officer's report offering a further update following a request at the last meeting. This also offered members the opportunity to review the itinerary for the whole of the day on Mayor's Sunday.

A couple of key points to note from the report are that:

- Officers met local Church ministers to seek their views. It was 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 like to continue to support the Council with its annual service, but they also recognise they need for flexibility including making adjustments to the focus of the service, as required.
- 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. 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.

Members discussed the elements of the day at length and agreed that Council should continue to maintain its traditions and be inclusive whilst working with the incoming Mayor to balance the two.

Councillors shared mixed views about whether or not to keep the Church service on the same day as the ceremony, or to split the two parts again as it was held prior to 2017, as pros and cons were recognised for both formats. This was therefore put to a vote, but members were in full agreement about the other points below.

It was proposed by Cllr K Malvern and seconded by Cllr T Lack and it was

RESOLVED 30546

- a) To retain the Church service in the Council Calendar, and for it to be held on the same day as the Mayor Making ceremony. An 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.
- b) To cease organising a parade to Church on this occasion due to its low attendance which makes it very difficult for Council to justify the expenditure of over £2000 to close the roads to support this.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



- c) To continue to rotate Council's attendance for a Civic Church Service across Wokingham's 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.

Members were asked to note that in an election year, officers would need to plan in advance for a civic service. The Council will 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.

ACTION: Civic Officer

GIFTS FOR RETIRING COUNCILLORS (Agenda Item 9)

The committee received the Civic Officer's report requesting that they discuss and determine if they wish to take the same approach to giving gifts to retiring Councillors, as has been done in the past, as follows:

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) To present retiring Councillors who meet the criteria with a framed image of the Town Hall which has previously been commissioned by a local artist.

It was proposed by Cllr T Lloyd and seconded by Cllr J Ainslie and it was

**RESOLVED
30547**

To amend the above criteria to allow a Councillor who is retiring and has not served a minimum of eight years continuous service but has served as Mayor, to also be presented with a gift in recognition of their time they have given to the Council.

It was proposed by Cllr P Lucey and seconded by Cllr J Ainslie and it was

**RESOLVED
30548**

To accept the amended recommendation.

INFORMATION ITEMS (Agenda Item 10)

The following was noted:

- 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

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



Field for the Remembrance period and will be repositioned annually, as the soldier is in the Market Place. The Civic Officer advised that one of the soldiers had unfortunately been vandalised and it will no longer be fit for purpose. If there is budget available at the end of the financial year, a replacement will be purchased.

- d) The King's Coronation has been announced as Saturday 6 May, which offers a number of challenges including its timing just after the election period. It is not currently known what the national or local expectations are. Officers will await guidance and keep the committee updated.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 11)

There were no information items.

- a) No information was raised by members.
- b) No specific information was identified for marketing. The Civic Officer asked members to keep sharing and commenting social media posts to help the Council spread awareness of its events.

CHAIR'S SIGNATURE _____

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____

