

25th July 2023

Minutes of the proceedings of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Main Hall, Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham on 25th July 2023 from 7.30pm to 8.30pm.

PRESENT:

Chairman: Cllr S Gurney (Mayor)

Cllrs: B Alvi, A Betteridge, R Bishop-Firth, B Callender, R Comber, S Cornish, A Croy, P Cunnington, W Dixon, A Domingue, A Fraser, M Gee, A Jones, T Lack, M Lucey, K Malvern, M Malvern, A Mather, A Medhurst, N Nagella, H Richards, I Shepherd-Dubey.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Katy Hughes – Town Clerk.

Nicky Harmsworth – RFO

Helen Jeffries – Mayor's Celebrant

Thoughts of the day were given by the Mayor's Celebrant Helen Jefferies, prior to the start of the meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M Fumagalli

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)

Cllr Croy questioned why the Mayoral selection meeting was not mentioned in the meeting held on the 21st May, this was clarified that it was shown in the minutes of the meeting of the adjourned meeting held on Tuesday 23rd May 2023.

It was proposed by Cllr A Croy and seconded by Cllr A Jones and the following was

**RESOLVED
30688**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Council Meetings held on 21st and 23rd May 2023 (pages 16738 to 16754) 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)

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____

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The Mayor opened her communications by thanking Helen her celebrant for giving her thoughts of the day.

She then had the pleasure of presenting Cllr Gee with her photobook showing a few memories of her time as Mayor and thanked Nikki Payler and David Dunham for their help in producing it.

The Mayor then advised Council that it was the last Full Council meeting for Nicky Harmsworth, the RFO as she was leaving the Council at the end of August and thanked her for her work over the past 9 years and presented her with a bouquet of flowers on behalf of the Council.

The Mayor highlighted that:

- She had been to the reopening of All Saints Church and was nice to see how the grant funding they had applied for had been used.
- Lots of Town Council events had happened since she had become Mayor including the Fun Day, Party in the Park, Armed Forces Day, E Bike Event and Wokingham Pride.
- The Mayor noted that it had recently been the Local Council Clerk's Week and thanked Katy Hughes, WTC's Town Clerk for all the great work she is doing.
- A lovely afternoon was spent with the school children who had applied to become Mini- Mayor. It was a hard decision, but Leah Vas from Floreat Montague Park was chosen to fulfil this role.
- The judging for the Regional and National bloom competitions had taken place and the Mayor gave thanks to all the Bloom Volunteers and Cllr M Malvern and WTC Officer Marianna Pentek as they had spent so many hours on the project.
- The Mayor advised that both High Close School and Arts4Wokingham were looking for Trustees so if any Councillor was interested in finding out about more about these organisations to contact her or the Town Clerk.
- Councillors were reminded about upcoming events, including Theatre in the Park (5th August), Chalk about it (20th August), Heritage Day (9th September) and Book Festival (14th & 15th October). Additional help is required for Chalk About It, so if members hadn't already done so, please reply to Gemma Cumming, the Arts & Culture Officer 's request for help, to advise if they can or can't help out at this event.
- A reminder was given of the use of social media to support the council's events.

The Mayors' list of engagements since the last Council meeting was also received.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 6)

Cllr T Lack advised that

- Path at King George V had been completed
- The defibrillators which had been on the monitoring report had been installed
- A replacement trampoline at Elms Field had been installed

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**RESOLVED
30689**

- Officers, Cllrs and volunteers had been busy with Bloom

It was proposed by Cllr T Lack and seconded by Cllr M Malvern and the following was

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Amenities Committee Meetings held on 30th May 2023 (pages 16755 to 16757) and 11th July 2023 (pages 16786 to 16788) be received.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 7)

Cllr B Callender updated members on Lunar New Year, Party in the Park and Fun Day and gave thanks to Gemma Cumming the Arts & Culture Officer for the information on all the events that Wokingham Town Council put on with such a small staff team. He noted that requests for additional funding had been made to, and agreed by, the F&P Committee for Lunar New Year, Fun Day and Party in the Park. He also noted that Cllrs Gurney and Fraser had agreed to work with officers to choose the acts for next year's Party in the Park.

**RESOLVED
30690**

It was proposed by Cllr B Callender and seconded by A Domingue and the following was

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Arts & Culture Committee Meetings held on 5th June 2023 (pages 16758 to 16760) and 17th July 2023 (pages 16789 to 16792) be received.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 8)

Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey gave an overview on some of the recent planning applications including the Eastheath Avenue and Evendons Lane applications where residents had also attended the meeting to voice concerns. The Derelict Lock-Up Garage Block Land Between 7/8 and 9/10 Tanhouse Lane had also been discussed.

The secure bike lockers were still not being utilised to capacity but had been advertised.

Cllr Gee asked if there had been any resident feedback on 5 & 5a Market Place application but the response was there had not been.

It was noted that Cllr Spencer was shown as attending meetings after he had resigned, Cllr Shepherd-Dubey advised this would be corrected.

**RESOLVED
30691**

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

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Planning & Transportation Committee Meetings held on 6th June 2023 (pages 16761 to 16765) and 6th July 2023 (pages 16779 to 16785) be received.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



A vote was taken on these meetings and 1 Councillor abstained.

Councillors then raised concerns about how draft minutes were being approved at Full Council when they had not been approved by the Committees themselves. Cllr Gee noted that she had raised this during the last council as well. The Town Clerk advised that she would look into this and would clarify this matter ahead of the next meeting.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

STRATEGY WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 9)

The notes and any recommendations of the Strategy Working Party's held on 7th June 2023 were received and noted.

Cllr Gurney gave a brief overview of the meeting and advised that a meeting being held tomorrow evening would be where the vision of the council for 2023 to 2027 would be discussed.

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 10)

Cllr M Gee highlighted that:

- Additional funding had been agreed for Lunar New Year as concerns about safety had been raised.
- The Council were unsuccessful in recruiting for a groundsman role.
- Discussion on staff pay were being undertaken.
- Meetings were lengthy as Councillors were having to learn how the Council operates.

**RESOLVED
30692**

It was proposed by Cllr M Gee and seconded by Cllr H Richards and the following was

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Finance & Personnel Committee Meeting held on 13th June 2023 (pages 16766 – 16775) be received.

A vote was taken and all were in favour.

Agenda item 10b was deferred to the next meeting as minutes had only just been sent for the Chair's approval.

CIVIC COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 11)

Cllr A Mather advised that this committee was having lengthy debates with new Councillors being made aware of existing protocols and challenges being faced this year in particular with a new Council with key events happening so soon after which needed prompt planning.

**RESOLVED
30693**

It was proposed by Cllr A Mather and seconded by Cllr A Jones and the following was

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Civic Committee Meeting held on 19th June 2023 (pages 16776 to 16778) be received.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____

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COUNCIL REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES (Agenda Item 12)

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

- Wokingham District Scouts
- Emmbrook Village Hall
- Wokingham Job Support Scheme
- Wokingham Lions Club

Cllr Comber advised that the Scouts Association needed Scout leaders as they had a long waiting list and Cllr Cornish advised that WJSS were looking for new Trustees and would be reapplying for funding. Cllr Jones noted that the Lions club would also be applying for grant funding.

The Mayor noted that the grant application process was opening on Monday 31st July 2023.

The Mayor then closed the meeting.

CHAIR

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____

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