

09th April 2024

Minutes of the proceedings of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Main Hall, Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham on 09th April 2024 from 7.30pm to 9.05pm.

PRESENT:

Chair: Cllr S Gurney (Mayor)

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

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lisa Davison - RFO

Katy Hughes – Town Clerk.

Helen Jefferies – Mayor’s Celebrant

2 members of the public

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 were received from Cllrs B Alvi and M Gee.

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 R Comber and seconded by Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey and the following was

**RESOLVED
30802**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Council Meeting held on 30th January 2024 (pages 16911 to 16915) be received as a true and correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

A vote was taken and was approved. One member abstained from voting.

CASUAL VACANCY (Agenda item 5)

Members received a speech from two applicants for the Town Councillor vacancy for the Norreys East ward. Applicants were asked questions in turn by the Chair, Cllr S Gurney, after which the item was moved to a vote.

Following a vote by show of hands, it was

**RESOLVED
30803**

CHAIR INITIALS _____



That Mrs Chetna Jamthe be co-opted to Wokingham Town Council to fill the vacancy for the Norreys East Ward.

Mrs Jamthe was invited to join councillors at the table and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Town Clerk.

MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS (Agenda Item 6)

The Mayor reported on her attendance at a number of engagements since the last council meeting, and thanked councillors for their support at the Lunar New Year and Tabletop Takeover council events.

The Mayor encouraged members who liaise with local community groups to consider inviting the Mayor to their events to help raise the profile of the events.

The Mayor welcomed Councillor C Jamthe to the town council.

The Mayor extended best wishes to those councillors standing for positions at the upcoming borough council elections.

The Mayor reminded Councillors of the upcoming May Fayre event run in the town centre by Wokingham Lions and encouraged them to attend.

The Mayor welcomed Lisa Davison, the council's newly appointed RFO

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

Cllr R Comber, Mayor-Elect 2024-25, announced his choice of candidate for the role of Deputy Mayor for the 2024-25 civic year as Councillor L Timlin. Following discussion, the Town Clerk reminded members that in accordance with the council's Standing Orders, both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor role will be formally elected at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on Sunday 12th May.

ARTS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 7)

Cllr B Callender reported on discussions regarding the alignment of committee events with the council's adopted strategy and with plans to encourage uptake of participation from older children at this year's Children's Book Festival held at the meeting of the Arts and Culture Committee on 15th January 2024.

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

**RESOLVED
30804**

that the approved minutes of the proceedings of the Arts and Culture Committee meeting held on 15th January 2024 (pages 16899 to 16901) be adopted

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

CHAIR INITIALS _____



A copy of the draft minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 11th March 2024 (pages 16923 to 16925) was received by members.

Cllr B Callender drew members' attention to further discussions held on the Council Strategy and the extent to which committee events support the council's adopted strategy. He extended thanks to Cllr A Domingue for leading this aspect of the committee discussion.

Cllr B Callender reported on committee discussions regarding requests for additional commercial stalls at the council's Fun Day event due to be held on 25th May 2024.

Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey asked about discussions on a Human Library project and Cllr M Fumagalli gave a brief explanation. Further information will be circulated to councillors regarding an upcoming Human Library event due to be held in London later this month.

Cllr B Callender extended his thanks to the Arts & Culture Officer for her support of the committee.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 8)

A copy of the approved minutes of the committee meeting held on 7th November 2023 was received by members.

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

**RESOLVED
30805**

that the approved minutes of the proceedings of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 7th November 2023 (pages 16858 to 16860) be adopted.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 12th March 2024 (pages 16926 to 16928) we received by members.

Cllr T Lack reported that the committee had awarded a new 5-year contract for grounds maintenance at an annual cost of £32,000, increasing annually by RPI.

Cllr T Lack reported that the committee had received and considered a request for the installation of a new bench near Meadow Way in Woosehill and had sent out consultation letters to local residents. He reported that feedback from the consultation will be brought to the May committee meeting for further consideration.

Cllr A Betteridge enquired regarding the extent of the consultation, and it was noted that this matter will also be discussed at the next committee meeting.

Cllr T Lack reported that Cllr A Croy and Cllr B Callender had recently undertaken training to enable them to volunteer as graffiti cleaners, and thanked them for their work in cleaning up the town area.

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Cllr T Lack reported that the Annual E-bike event was being moved to later in the year, and the event will be extended, working with the WBC My Journey Team.

Cllr R Comber asked about reference to cultivars at Gypsy Lane Allotments and references in the recent meeting minutes to a pump track.

CIVIC COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 9)

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

**RESOLVED
30806**

that the approved minutes of the proceedings of the Civic Award Select Committee meeting held on 6th December 2023, (pages 16889 to 16890) be adopted.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

A copy of the draft minutes of the meeting of the Civic Committee held on 18th March 2024 (pages 16933 to 16941) was received by members.

Cllr A Mather highlighted the number of significant topics discussed at the meeting and the reports written by the Civic Officer. He noted discussions on the topic of the war memorial, and reported that the committee had agreed to establish a working party, to include Cllr A Mather, Cllr A Betteridge, Cllr A Jones and Mr D Dunham (Mace Bearer) and Mr J Chappell (Parade Marshall) to consider options of how the town council's Remembrance events could be extended to involve more public participation.

Cllr A Croy expressed a wish to be involved in the working party, and following discussions it was confirmed by the Town Clerk in accordance with the council's adopted Standing Orders (25(b)) that all Councillors are entitled to attend working party meetings.

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 10)

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

**RESOLVED
30807**

that the approved minutes of the proceedings of the Planning and Transportation Committee meeting held on 6th February 2024 (pages 16916 to 16922) be adopted

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

A copy of the draft minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 19th March 2024 (pages 16942 to 16947) was received by members.

Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey reported on committee discussions regarding the locations of the secure cycle storage, repair to a bus shelter window and an in-year funding

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request to go the Finance and Personnel Committee for funding for speed watch and welcome signage.

Cllr I Shepherd- Dubey reported that an extensive response was submitted to the borough council on the A329 Active Travel consultation and thanked Cllr A Betteridge for his input into this.

MAYORAL SELECTION COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 11)

It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr R Comber and the following was

**RESOLVED
30808**

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Mayoral Selection Committee held on 18th March 2024 (page 16929) be received and approved.

A vote was taken and the minutes were approved. Two members abstained.

STRATEGY WORKING PARTY (Agenda item 12)

Cllr S Gurney reported that the Strategy Working Party had met on 31st January 2024 and again on 20th March 2024. At the meetings, the working party had discussed suggestions for the WBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee, use requests for Elms Field and the Matthews Green and Montague Park Community Facilities.

Cllr S Gurney reported that discussions had been held with a provider looking to run the Matthews Green Community Facility and that a proposal for financial support from the town council may come to a future meeting. Further information has been requested from the borough council regarding the Montague Park facility.

Cllr A Croy reported that town centre vibrancy (as raised to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee) was currently being considered by the borough council.

Cllr A Domingue reported that she had attended the Borough Parish Liaison Forum meeting where borough and parish communication, a borough-wide vision and litter bins were discussed.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WORKING PARTY (Agenda item 13)

Cllr S Gurney reported on a meeting of the ATM working party held on 5th March 2024 which had been chaired by Cllr M Gee.

Cllr S Gurney reported that the date has been confirmed as Saturday 18th May, with a market stall between 10am and 2pm, and the formal opening of the meeting in the Reme Room at 11am.

Cllr S Gurney noted that the event will be an opportunity to engage with residents, talk about what the town council does and seek input from residents.

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The Town Clerk reported that as the date coincides with International Museum Day, there is a plan to also have a small museum open day event in the Diamond Jubilee Room.

The Town Clerk will email members to create a rota for the day.

Cllr A Croy raised a query regarding one aspect of the Annual Town Meeting.

EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION (Agenda Item 14)

There were no meeting reports

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL CHARITABLE TRUSTS (Agenda Item 15)

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

**RESOLVED
30809**

To appoint the Town Clerk as Secretary and the RFO as Treasurer for the King George V Playing Fields Trust and the Leslie Sears Playing Field Trust, for which the town council is the sole trustee.

It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr R Comber and the following was

**RESOLVED
30810**

To approve the opening of new bank accounts in the trust's names, to manage trust transactions, in accordance with guidance issued in the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners Guide 2023, section 5.110

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9:05pm.

CHAIR

CHAIR INITIALS _____

