

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD ONLINE USING ZOOM, ON MONDAY, 18 MAY 2020 AT 7.30 P.M.**

Councillors present: Councillor Major J Sibbald (Town Mayor)  
Councillors I R Cameron, A Crawford, A Dunford,  
A Duveen, A Gilhome, J Goodman, J T Hannaby,  
E L Johnson, A C Menzies, P O’Leary, I L Sheldon,  
C Walters and C H Wills-Wright.

Others present: Eleven members of the public

Clerk: W P Falkenau  
Deputy Clerk: S Sanders

**Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor O C Curley.

**Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

None.

**Statements and Questions from the Public**

The Clerk read out the following question from Mrs Maberley:

“Has the Town Council submitted any comments to the consultation on the early thinking for the new Oxfordshire Local Transport & Connectivity Plan 5?

- o If not why not?
- o If they have, when will these comments be made available to the public?”

The Clerk advised that the Town Council had only become aware of the consultation on 1 April, after the holding of meetings had been stopped due to the pandemic. The consultation had started on 4 March and the Clerk had no explanation as to why the Town Council had not received advice of this. Consideration of a response was to be referred, as an agenda item, to the Planning Committee meeting to be held on 1 June. The Clerk had asked the County Council to accept a late response from the Town Council.

- 1. To consider recent legislation changes which remove the requirement to hold an Annual Council Meeting in May and provides for existing appointments to continue in place until the next annual meeting of the council or until such time as the council may determine. It is proposed not to hold an annual council meeting, for the time being, and therefore the current Town Mayor and other appointments will remain in place until such time as the council may determine otherwise.**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Gilhome  
SECONDED BY Councillor O’Leary

IT WAS RESOLVED not to hold an annual council meeting, for the time being, and therefore the current Town Mayor and other appointments were to remain in place until such time as the council may determine otherwise.

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- 2. To note adoption of Zoom as principal software for conducting online meetings and the potential need to purchase dedicated equipment for use by councillors to facilitate their participation. To confirm that the proceedings of meetings be recorded and the recording retained.**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Walters

SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby

IT WAS RESOLVED that the adoption of Zoom as the Council's principal meeting software be accepted. Where needed, dedicated equipment be purchased and lent to councillors for their term of office to accommodate their participation in the council's online meetings, and that the online meetings be recorded. A decision concerning the retention of recordings was to be deferred and the Clerk was to seek guidance from other bodies concerning their policies and practices.

**Action: Clerk**

- 3. To confirm accuracy of record of decisions made by the Town Council by email over the period of 21 to 24 March 2020.**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Hannaby

SECONDED BY Councillor O'Leary

IT WAS RESOLVED that the record of decisions made by the Town Council by email over the period of 21 to 24 March 2020 be accepted as accurate.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Goodman

SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson

IT WAS RESOLVED that there was no longer an emergency with regard to the calling of meetings and making decisions and therefore the Emergency Consultation Panel be stood down.

- 4. To approve payment of grants for 2020/21.**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Hannaby

SECONDED BY Councillor Crawford

IT WAS RESOLVED that the following grants be paid over the coming year.

Dickensian Evening	£1,500
GROW Children's Centre	£10,500
Independent Advice Centre – general £10,000 (includes £5,000 approved for accommodation)	
Letcombe Brook Project	£9,450
Wantage Museum - general	£19,000
Wantage Museum - Visitor Information Point	£6,350
Sweatbox	£12,600
Wantage Counselling	£3,150
October Club	£3.150

- 5. To note comments to planning applications agreed by the Planning Committee by email on 30 March, 15 April and 11 May 2020.**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sibbald

SECONDED BY Councillor Sheldon

IT WAS RESOLVED that the comments agreed by the Planning Committee be adopted.

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**6. To consider proposal to waive market trader tolls for the months of April and May 2020.**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Goodman  
SECONDED BY Councillor Gilhorne

IT WAS RESOLVED that, in recognition of the contribution made by traders in continuing to provide produce during the lockdown period, market trader tolls be waived for April, May and June and that whether to extend this further be reviewed in June. The Town Mayor was to thank traders for their support. **Action: Sibbald**

**7. To consider response to the Vale of White Horse District Council call for potential development sites for inclusion in the Local Plan 2041.**

The Town Council owns two derelict areas of allotment land that might be considered for development. These are a triangle of land at the southern end of the Naldertown allotment site and a wooded area at the northern end of the Stockham Park allotment site. Development of these areas would not affect the other parts of the sites that were currently being actively cultivated as allotments.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford  
SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby

IT WAS RESOLVED that the derelict areas at Naldertown and Stockham Park allotments be referred to the District Council as potential development sites for sustainable housing or possibly other uses.

**8. Other Business.**

a) Town Mayor's Communications

The Town Mayor had published an update and this would be made available on the council's website. **Action: Clerk**

b) Letter to Councillor Hudspeth, leader of Oxfordshire County Council, from the County Councillors for Wantage and Grove dated 18 May 2020

The letter requested:

- Local Public health engagement with schools so that Governing Bodies, teachers and families have the local information and support they need to make decisions as restrictions ease.
- Convening of the Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee as soon as possible and before 25th June so that the public and local councillors have an opportunity to receive a briefing from the local public health team and ask questions.
- A local public health view of the adequacy of the number and spread of local sites that have been chosen for testing across Oxfordshire and the decision not to have a Covid 19 testing centre at the Beacon site at the centre of OX12 and surrounding areas.
- A local public health view of the decision not to use Wantage Community Hospital during the pandemic and permission for us to make public the letter sent from Stuart Bell CBE as we feel it concerns the general public.
- In this spirit of resuming openness and transparency that your response to this letter is not marked private and confidential.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sibbald  
SECONDED BY Councillor Dunford

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Town Council give its support to the requests made in the letter.

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- c) Report from the Ray Collins Charitable Trust about the activities of the Covid-19 Community Support Group

The report was noted. It was agreed that a vote of thanks be given to Mr Collins and his group of volunteers for their hard work.

The meeting closed at 8.54 pm.

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