

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND
FINANCE COMMITTEE OF WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ONLINE USING
ZOOM ON MONDAY, 8 JUNE 2020 AT 7.30P.M. AND RECONVENED AT 7.30 P.M. ON
WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE 2020**

Present on 8 June

Committee members: Councillor A Crawford (Chairman)
Councillors I R Cameron, A Dunford, A. Duveen, T Gilhome, J Goodman,
JT Hannaby, E L Johnson, A C Menzies, P M O'Leary, I L Sheldon,
J Sibbald, C Walters and C H Wills-Wright.

Others: J Mitchell – Wantage Arts Hub
F Golding-King – Home Start Southern (up to item 2 b))

Two members of the public

Town Clerk: W P Falkenau

Deputy Town Clerk: S Sanders

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor O.C. Curley

Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

None.

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2020

The minutes were approved.

1. Statements and Questions from the Public

None

2. Briefings by applicants for donations and grants

a) Wantage Arts Hub

Councillor Hannaby declared interests as a committee member for Opera Unmasked and Wantage Summer Festival.

Mr Mitchell briefed the meeting on his proposal to establish a database from which community arts events would be promoted using Mailchimp. He was seeking a donation of £1,000 towards the costs. Mr Mitchell was thanked for his briefing.

b) Home-start Southern

Ms Golding-King gave an update on the work of the charity. It continued to give support during the pandemic lockdown but there was no face to face engagement. It currently supported nine families in Wantage and had five volunteer supporters. Ms Golding-King was thanked for her briefing and she left the meeting.

3. **Matters arising from the minutes**

a) Update re CCTV

Councillor Hannaby declared an interest as District Council cabinet member with responsibility for CCTV and a resident of Wallingford Street. Councillors Crawford, Duveen and O'Leary also declared interests as District Council members. They all left the meeting for this item. Councillor Sheldon took over as the meeting chairman for this item.

The District Council had advised that the £6k annual contribution being sought represented one third of the operating cost of the CCTV service, after deducting the contribution from Thames Valley Police, divided by the number of cameras being served. In Wantage there were six cameras. This represented the proportion of cost being contributed by other towns.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Will-Wright
SECONDED Councillor Johnson

IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that an annual contribution to the District Council of £6k be approved subject to there being a definite plan to upgrade cameras to sufficient quality to provide images of an evidential nature.

The criteria for installing a new camera in Wallingford Street was a need evidenced by the police and a formal request from them.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Johnson
SECONDED Councillor Sibbald

IT WAS RESOLVED to advise the police that the Town Council wants a CCTV camera in Wallingford Street and to ask them, that unless they don't want it, to make a formal request for this to the District Council. The Town Council would be willing to meet the estimated costs involved of in the region of £7k. **Action: Clerk**

b) Update on opening accounts with financial institutions

The Clerk had not yet progressed the opening of accounts. The lockdown made it difficult to get the sign offs required.

c) Update on plans for part pedestrianisation of the Market Place

The Clerk reported that Mr Mitchell was continuing to work on the longer term scheme to pedestrianise the area at the western end of the Market Place. A short term temporary scheme had been proposed to the County Council by County Councillors Hanna and Hannaby as an initiative to create more public space for social distancing. The Clerk advised that the temporary scheme would be useful to help iron out any issues for the long term scheme.

Some businesses in the western end area had expressed concerns about access for vehicles for delivery and collection. It was felt that arrangements could be made to overcome these concerns.

It was noted that the working group was currently concerned with the pedestrianisation of the western area. It was agreed that the working group should, in due course, consider ideas for next stages of wider pedestrianisation within the Market Place and making it more friendly and attractive for cyclists.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Cameron
SECONDED Councillor Gilhome

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Town Council should initiate the temporary closing order for the western area of the Market Place at a cost in the region of £3.1k.

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The Clerk was to send out to councillors recently published documents relating to the temporary and long term proposals for the western end scheme. **Action: Clerk**

d) Future arrangements for Youth Town Council

Email correspondence with Ms Hicks of Sweatbox was noted. She gave an overview on what she felt the Youth Town Council should evolve into. The idea was to create a new project which becomes a youth community project. The project will be overseen by a youth support worker who will also have back up from an administrator. The project team will meet once a half term (6-7 weeks). The overall cost involved was in the region of £1k per annum.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford

SECONDED Councillor Hannaby

IT WAS RESOLVED that the proposal put forward by Ms Hicks be adopted.

e) Climate Emergency Sub-committee

A report from Sustainable Wantage had been passed to councillors giving an update on the projects that were being supported by the Town Council's grant. There had been some delay due to the Covid-19 crisis.

f) Health Sub-committee

The county councillors had written to the Oxford Health Trust proposing that the Wantage Community Hospital beds be reopened to provide additional capacity to deal with the Covid-19 crisis. A letter had been received from the Oxford Health Trust rejecting the proposal.

A request to locate a Covid-19 testing station in OX12 had also been rejected.

It was agreed that a Health Sub-committee meeting should be called at the earliest opportunity. **Action: Hannaby**

POLICY

4. To consider Market policies and procedures

Draft market policies and procedures had been distributed. The possibility of traders paying by bank transfer or cheque, rather than in cash was being investigated. This would require the documents to be updated. It was agreed the documents should be placed on the Council's website and made easily accessible by interested traders. **Action: Clerk**

5. To consider future ownership and maintenance responsibilities for Manor Road Recreation Ground

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford

SECONDED Councillor Goodman

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Clerk engage with officers of the District Council to discuss the possibility of the Town Council taking over responsibility for the Manor Road Recreation Ground. He was to ascertain what capital contribution the District Council might offer towards future maintenance costs. **Action: Clerk**

There was discussion about what other District Council assets that the Town Council might take over, such as the public toilets in Portway. It was agreed to set up a working group to consider this. **Action: Crawford**

6. Use of Zoom to assist community organisations

The Zoom meeting service, purchased by the Town Council, includes a webinar feature that could be useful to other community organisations who do not have access to software with this sophistication. It was agreed that the service be offered to community organisations, subject to a council officer or councillor being available to act as host. Details were to be posted on the Council's website. **Action: Clerk**

MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

7. Annual Governance and Accounting Statements to be referred to the Council meeting on 22 June 2020.

Draft statements were considered. Copies of bank statements had been included to enable councillors to verify the cash balances held by the Council. The Clerk explained the link between the Income and Expenditure Report, the Balance Sheet, the Trial Balance, the Fixed Asset schedule and the Accounting Statements. The Council would be expected to approve the Accounting Statements at its meeting on 22 June.

There was a surplus of £110k for the year, versus a budgeted deficit of £9k. This arose due to lower than expected expenditure in a number of areas eg elections, events grants/donations, youth town council etc. Income was also boosted by receipts of CIL money and the grant for the Town Centre Manager.

The internal auditor had not yet conducted his year-end review. The Clerk hoped this could be done before 22 June.

The Annual Governance Statement was also noted. This required the Council to confirm that it had adequate systems and controls. Councillors were asked to refer to the Clerk any questions or queries prior to the meeting on 22 June so that the statement could be signed off at that meeting.

8. Accounts for Payment

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Goodman
SECONDED BY Councillor Walters
IT WAS RESOLVED that accounts for payment in the sum of £58,954.88 (attached) be approved.

9. General correspondence

a) Kingsgrove, Wantage - Doing The Right Thing: St. Modwen COVID-19 Community

St Modwen was offering grants to bodies that were giving support to the community arising from the Covid-19 crisis. The deadline for application was the 12 June. Councillors were asked to refer this to any organisations that might be eligible. **Action: Councillors**

b) Reopening the High Street Safely Fund - request for initiatives and project ideas

The Vale of White Horse District Council had been awarded a one-off grant of £121,938.00. The funding could be used for four types of activity:

1. Develop an action plan for how the local authority may begin to safely reopen the local economy.
2. Communications and marketing activity for residents to ensure the safe and successful reopening of the local economy.
3. Communications and marketing activity for businesses to ensure the safe and successful reopening of the local economy.

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4. Temporary public realm changes to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely.

Proposals on how the grant should be used were to be referred to the District Council by the 12 June. It was agreed that the committee should reconvene at 7.30 pm on 10 June to consider a response.

- c) Open letter from leaders of Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire District Councils thanking community organisations and volunteers for their efforts in assisting others during the Covid-19 crisis

The letter was noted.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Walters
SECONDED BY Councillor Wills-Wright
IT WAS RESOLVED that the letter be placed on the Council's website and that the Town Mayor should also write a letter expressing the Town Council's thanks to all those that had responded positively and exceptionally during the Covid-19 crisis.

Action: Clerk/Sibbald

Confidential items

ON THE PROPOSITION of the Chairman
IT WAS RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded.

10. To consider donation requests

- a) Wantage Arts Hub

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Sibbald
IT WAS RESOLVED that a donation of £1,000 be made towards the cost of setting up and operating the Wantage Arts Hub.

- b) Home-start Southern

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Walters
IT WAS RESOLVED that a donation of £2,000 be given to Home Start Southern.

11. Staffing matters

This item related to a member of staff. The Clerk was to prepare a confidential note detailing the matters discussed and the decisions made. The note will be signed by the Chairman as confirmation that it is a true record. The note will not be available to the public.

The meeting came out of the Confidential session. The meeting adjourned at 9.47 pm and reconvened at 7.30 pm on 10 June.

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Committee members: Councillor A Crawford (Chairman)
Councillors A Dunford (part), A Duveen, JT Hannaby, A C Menzies,
P M O'Leary, J Sibbald and C H Wills-Wright.

Others: Two members of the public

Town Clerk: W P Falkenau

Deputy Town Clerk: S Sanders

Town Centre Manager: A Yates

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cameron, Curley, Goodman, Johnson, Sheldon and Walters.

9 General Correspondence (continued)

b) Reopening the High Street Safely Fund - request for initiatives and project ideas

In discussion the followings ideas came forward:

- A leaflet drop to every household and to local businesses (may need to liaise with Grove Parish Council).
- Bill boards and banners to be displayed at town entry signs and elsewhere in town.
- Websites and social media were also to be channels for distributing information and messages
- Pedestrian one way system on town centre pavements (not supported).
- Reminder signage to be placed on floral display poles and other street furniture.
- Two way traffic system on northern side of Market Place with southern side completely pedestrianised (closure that was applied for fair attendances up to 2015). Ways of retaining parking spaces were to be explored. Clerk to put forward options.
- Cutting back overhanging vegetation to remove obstructions on pathways for pedestrians and cyclists.
- A postcard to be produced to ask property owners to cut back vegetation and distributed by councillors and council officers.
- Ask residents to cut back vegetation in the leaflet and through social media

Councillor Dunford left the meeting

- Barriers on roadway on north side of Mill Street to widen walkway from Angel Walk through to Alfred Street.
- Thirty hand sanitisers distributed around the town centre.
- Video promotions for businesses
- Advertisements in local newspapers
- Business directory

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford

SECONDED BY Councillor Sibbald

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Clerk prepare a costed submission to the District Council based upon the proposals above. He was to circulate this to all councillors for consideration. A sign off of the final bid document was to be given by the chairmen of the committees. **Action: Clerk/Committee Chairmen**

The reconvened meeting closed at 8.45 pm on 10 June 2020.

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Wantage Town Council

Accounts for Payment - March to June 2020

Date	Payee	Description	Powers	Ref	£	£
01/04/2020	Abbey Properties	Market Attendant's shed rent	OA 1985	SO	£	100.00
01/05/2020	Abbey Properties	Market Attendant's shed rent	OA 1985	SO	£	100.00
01/06/2020	Abbey Properties	Market Attendant's shed rent	OA 1985	SO	£	100.00
21/03/2020	NEST	Pension contribution payments	Office	DD	£	367.45
21/04/2020	NEST	Pension contribution payments	Office	DD	£	382.85
21/05/2020	NEST	Pension contribution payments	Office	DD	£	382.15
21/03/2020	Staff - various	March payroll	Office/OA1985	Bacs	£	8,714.64
21/04/2020	Staff - various	April payroll	Office/OA1985	Bacs	£	8,877.92
21/05/2020	Staff - various	May payroll	Office/OA1985	Bacs	£	8,870.92
06/04/2020	Barclays	Bank charges	LGA 72	DD	£	18.61
06/05/2020	Barclays	Bank charges	LGA 72	DD	£	15.81
06/06/2020	Barclays	Bank charges	LGA 72	DD	£	18.17
01/04/2020	VWHDC	Cemetery Rates	Burials	DD	£	79.63
01/04/2020	VWHDC	Rates for Market	OA1985	DD	£	247.05
01/04/2020	VWHDC	Rates for car park	OA1985	DD	£	405.90
01/05/2020	VWHDC	Cemetery Rates	Burials	DD	£	75.00
01/05/2020	VWHDC	Rates for Market	OA1985	DD	£	247.00
01/05/2020	VWHDC	Rates for car park	OA1985	DD	£	404.00
01/06/2020	VWHDC	Cemetery Rates	Burials	DD	£	75.00
01/06/2020	VWHDC	Rates for Market	OA1985	DD	£	247.00
01/06/2020	VWHDC	Rates for car park	OA1985	DD	£	404.00
03/04/2020	Co-op Bank	Bank charges	LGA 72	DD	£	30.00
14/04/2020	BNP Paribas	Copier rental	Office	DD	£	179.19
		Total direct debits				<u>£ 30,342.29</u>
09/03/2020	VWHDC	Refreshments - Volunteers Reception	S137	306602	£	344.32
09/03/2020	J Mitchell	Promotional items for Freedom event	LGA 72 S249(5)	306603	£	192.30
-	-	-	-	306604	£	-
09/03/2020	T Thomas	Case for freedom scroll	LGA 72 S249(5)	306605	£	190.00
16/03/2020	SGW payroll	Payroll processing February	Office/OA1985	306606	£	73.08
16/03/2020	Castle Water	Water supply to Statue area	OA 1985	306607	£	2.02
16/03/2020	Castle Water	Water supply Stockham allotments	Allotments	306608	£	1.11
16/03/2020	Castle Water	Water supply Larkhill allotments	Allotments	306609	£	27.50
16/03/2020	Castle Water	Water supply Chain Hill cemetery	Burials	306610	£	61.44
		Total cheques				<u>£ 891.77</u>

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Date	Payee	Description	Powers	Ref	£
31/03/2020	White Horse Horticulture	Grass cuts and maintenance at Cemetery, allotments and Alfred's Well	Burials, allotments and open spaces	Online	£ 1,845.00
31/03/2020	Externiture	Bus shelters - Charlton Road	Highways	Online	£ 9,312.00
31/03/2020	Red Corner Docmt Solns	Photocopying charges Feb/Mar	Office	Online	£ 28.66
13/04/2020	HMRC	PAYE 4th quarter	Office/OA1985	Online	£ 4,708.20
13/04/2020	Barclaycard	Flags, printer cartridges and TEN fees	LGA 72	Online	£ 590.01
04/05/2020	Barclaycard	Quickbooks subscription	Office	Online	£ 36.00
04/05/2020	BT	Telephone service	Office	Online	£ 132.60
04/05/2020	Castle Water	Water supply at Stockham Park allotments	Allotments	Online	£ 75.76
04/05/2020	Castle Water	Water supply at Larkhill allotments	Allotments	Online	£ 206.55
04/05/2020	Castle Water	Water supply at cemetery	Burials	Online	£132.89
04/05/2020	Charlton Envmt	Town weedkilling treatment	Highways	Online	£ 930.00
04/05/2020	OALC	Annual subscription	LGA 72	Online	£ 2,398.44
04/05/2020	VWHDC	Market Place licence	Entertainment	Online	£ 70.00
04/05/2020	WH Darby	Freedom scroll	LGA 72	Online	£ 908.64
04/05/2020	White Horse Horticulture	Cemetery/play area grass cutting and mtce	Burials/open spaces	Online	£ 1,535.00
04/05/2020	Zurich Insurance	Insurance premium 2020/21	LGA 72	Online	£ 3,417.15
04/06/2020	Netwise	Hosting/mtce Council website	LGA 72	Online	£ 300.00
04/06/2020	SGW Payroll	April payroll processing charges	Office/OA1985	Online	£ 153.12
04/06/2020	Zoom	Online meeting services	Police Act 2020	Online	£ 940.80
Total online payments					£ 27,720.82
Total payments March to June 2020					£ 58,954.88