

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ONLINE USING ZOOM, ON MONDAY 22 JUNE 2020, AT 7.30 P.M.**

Councillors present: Councillor Major J Sibbald (Town Mayor)
Councillors IR 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,
and C H Wills-Wright.

Others present: Three members of the public

Clerk: W P Falkenau.

Deputy Clerk: S Sanders

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors O C Curley and C Walters.

Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

None.

Minutes of the Council meeting held on 18 May 2020

The minutes were approved.

9. Statements and questions from the public

Alderman Hutchinson made the following statement regarding the proposal for Sweatbox to take over the running of Youth Town Council;

“I generally support the proposal by Sweatbox as it will help to engage the town youth in local politics which I believe to be a worthy objective. However, I would like to make the following points:

- This is not a Youth Town Council and if the Youth Town Council is to cease it should be formally dissolved as its current members have been elected.
- The processes for selecting the project and its leaders need clarification, for example a call for proposals with a clearly lined evaluation process against stated criteria.
- Any supplementary funding for projects coming from the town council should only be granted using the established process for Council funding of grants. It would be useful to provide a broad theme for projects in any given period so as to provide guidance for candidates wishing to make proposals”

10. Matters arising from the Council meeting held on 18 May 2020.

1. 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.

The Clerk should have referred the policy regarding the retention of meeting recordings to the last Policy Management & Finance meeting. This was not done and will be referred to the next meeting.

Action: Clerk

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

The Clerk had submitted the designated development sites to the District Council in accordance with its timetable. An acknowledgement had been received but there had been no further dialogue.

11. To note Councillor Walters has resigned as Chairman of the Promotion, Communication and Events Committee and to appoint a replacement Chairman (and possibly Vice- Chairman)

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby
IT WAS RESOLVED that Councillor Wills-Wright be appointed Chairman of the Promotion, Communications and Events Committee.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson
IT WAS RESOLVED that the appointment of a Vice-Chairman for the committee be delegated to the committee itself.

12. Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 1 June 2020.

1 c) Update on request for meeting with Oxfordshire County Council regarding S106 funds held by Oxfordshire County Council for bus services.

The Deputy Clerk was to sort out a date for the meeting with Mr Harrison of the County Council. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

2 b) P20/V1076/FUL Variation of conditions 2,3,4,10 & 11 on application P16/V3021/FUL.

The County Council's Drainage and Highways departments had both confirmed that the plans were acceptable.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Sibbald
SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson
IT WAS RESOLVED that the Council's objection to Planning application P20/V1076/FUL be withdrawn. **Action: Deputy Clerk**

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Sibbald
SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson
IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes, as amended, be adopted.

13. Minutes of the Leisure and Amenities Committee meeting held on 18 May 2020.

3 b) Repairs to the uneven areas of the cemetery approach road

The repair works had been undertaken.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Hannaby
SECONDED BY Councillor O'Leary
IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes, as amended, be adopted.

14. Minutes of the Promotion, Communication and Events Committee meeting held on 15 June 2020.

2 c) Cost of large LED display board

Councillor Gilhome was to pass details of the costings to the Clerk, for distribution to all councillors. **Action: Gilhome**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Wills-Wright
SECONDED BY Councillor Menzies
IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes, as amended, be adopted.

15. Minutes of the Policy, Management and Finance Committee meeting held on 8 and 10 June 2020.

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

The County Council were using the government grant to cut back overhanging vegetation and install cycle racks. The Clerk was due to meet the highway officers on the following Wednesday to discuss the location of the cycle racks. There was uncertainty about whether any funding would be made available by the County or District Councils for the closure of the highway at the western end of the Market Place. The Clerk confirmed that he required no further information to enable him to proceed with a TTRO application.

The issue of potholes on the road edges was raised, as these could be hazardous for cyclists. It was noted that any potholes found were to be posted on FixMyStreet, or referred to County Councillor Hannaby. **Action: All**

3 d) Future arrangements for Youth Town Council

The statement made by Alderman Hutchinson was noted. The Clerk was to advise her that her points would be taken on board. **Action: Clerk**

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

The Clerk had hoped to refer the statements to this meeting. The full review of the statements had not yet been undertaken by the internal auditor. The Clerk was to liaise with the internal auditor and ensure all necessary paperwork was provided, so that the statements could be approved at the next Council meeting. **Action: Clerk**

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

Sweatbox and The Mix had been recipients of grants.

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

There had been a delay in the District Council considering the funding request due to other priorities.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Goodman
IT WAS RESOLVED that the Town Council should proceed with the list of proposals contained in the grant submission to the District Council, irrespective of whether any grant funding was forthcoming.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Sheldon
IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes, including the confidential minutes, as amended,
be adopted.

16. To consider whether to extend the period in which market tolls are waived beyond June.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Gilhorne
SECONDED BY Councillor Wills-Wright
IT WAS MOVED that the market tolls be waived for a further three months.

This was defeated five in favour, six against.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Johnson
SECONDED BY Councillor Crawford
IT WAS RESOLVED that market tolls be waived for a further month until the end of July
and that this be reviewed again before the end of July for referral to the Council meeting
on 3 August.

17. To consider letter from Matthew Barber, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, dated 19 February 2020 regarding the funding of PCSO resource by district and parish councils.

The Council has a budget of £15,000 to fund a PCSO to undertake parking enforcement.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Menzies
SECONDED BY Councillor Crawford
IT WAS RESOLVED that £15,000 per annum be offered to Thames Valley Police to fund
a PCSO to undertake parking enforcement. **Action: Clerk**

18. District and County Councillors' reports

District Council

The District Council have been predominantly focussed on the current COVID-19 crisis, responding to various Government initiatives put in place to support the community and businesses during the crisis. The majority of staff were working from home. Discussions were taking place regarding the re-opening of play areas and leisure facilities. Business grants were being processed. The current grounds maintenance contract will expire on 31 October 2020 and discussions were to be held regarding renewal of contracts.

County Council

The County Council had set up a resilience forum to help deal with the current COVID-19 crisis and were providing support for the Track and Trace initiative. The highways contractors were carrying out repair works and had completed resurfacing and patching works within Wantage.

19. Town Mayor's Communications

The Town Mayor advised that due to the current crisis there has been no protocol or awards and that a report covering recent activities would be made available on the Town Council website.

Virtual meetings

The period in which virtual meetings can take place was due to expire in May 2021. It was felt that lobbying was needed at this early stage to extend this.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sibbald

SECONDED BY Councillor Dunford

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Clerk liaise with the OALC to seek an extension to the period in which virtual meetings can be held.

Action: Clerk

Market Place Closure options

The Council had not made any decisions concerning the wider pedestrianisation of the Market Place arising from the need to provide more space for social distancing. The Clerk had distributed a number of options. Additionally, a member of the public had suggested closing the whole of the Market Place to vehicles, every weekend. There was discussion about arrangements for consulting with the public and the establishment of a working group to progress this. It was concluded, however, that urgent action was required to respond to the re-opening of shops and businesses on 4 July 2020.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford

SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson

IT WAS MOVED that the Clerk proceed with an application to temporarily close the southern side of the Market Place, with two way traffic running on the northern side between Wallingford Street and Mill Street. This would be a very temporary measure put in place to allow for social distancing in the Town Centre whilst consultations were made with the public, businesses and other affected parties about other temporary options that might be considered.

In a vote, the proposition was approved, twelve in favour, one against. The Clerk was to progress the closure application.

Action: Clerk

Health Sub-committee meeting

A meeting was to be arranged in the following week. This would follow a HOSC meeting being held on Thursday 24 June. County Councillor Hanna was to be invited to be a member of the Health Sub-committee.

Action: Clerk

The meeting closed at 9.14 p.m.

KS