

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE OF WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ONLINE USING ZOOM ON MONDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 7.30 P.M.**

Committee members present: Councillor A Crawford (Chairman)  
Councillors I R Cameron, A Dunford, A Duveen, T Gilhome,  
JT Hannaby, E L Johnson, A C Menzies, P M O'Leary (up to item 50),  
IL Sheldon, J Sibbald, C Walters and C H Wills-Wright.

Others present: G Williams, Wantage Choral Society (part)  
T Nicholls, Parkrun (part)  
4 members of the public (up to item 50)

Town Clerk: W P Falkenau

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors O C Curley and J Goodman. Apologies for late attendance were received from Councillor A Duveen.

**Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest**

Councillor Hannaby declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Wantage Hospital League of Friends, a Trustee of the Wantage Nursing Home Trust and a Governor of Stockham Primary School.

Councillor Walters declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Wantage Choral Society

**To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2020**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sibbald  
SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby  
IT WAS RESOLVED THAT the minutes be approved.

**41. Statements and Questions from the Public**

Mrs Maberley posed several questions regarding the Estimates worksheet. She queried why the payment to the Ray Collins Charitable Trust was not visible on the document and if any payments were planned for next year. It was also queried why expenditure for Office 365 was budgeted at the same value as the current year yet the budget for computers was significantly lower. The Clerk clarified that the payment to the Ray Collins Charitable Trust had been made in the previous financial year and the committee would decide at the meeting if any further payments were to be made in the current or next year. He advised that the expenditure for Office 365 was an annual subscription whereas the purchase of new computers was capital expenditure and would not need to reoccur next year.

Mrs Maberley also queried why the £15,000 budgeted for a PCSO was not included in next year's estimate. The Chairman explained that the Council had offered the funds to Thames Valley Police but they had declined the offer. He went on to explain that not only were the funds not included in next year's budget, the amount budgeted for the current year would also not be spent.

**42. Briefings by applicants for donations and grants**

a) Wantage Choral Society

Mr Williams from Wantage Choral Society briefed the committee on its application for funding. He explained that the Choral Society hired a professional Musical Director and Accompanist to direct and support the production of their concerts. With the current Covid-19 crisis, the society had been unable to host concerts which would usually provide an income for the two professional members of the society. Mr Williams went on to explain that the society had themselves raised £3,000 to support these members and that they would be grateful for any

further support the Council could offer. Mr Williams was thanked for his briefing and he left the meeting.

b) Parkrun

Mr Nicholls of Parkrun Grove & Wantage briefed the meeting on the plans to establish a Parkrun on the Grove Recreation Ground. He explained that Parkrun was a free weekly timed event held in many locations around the country, with local events held in Didcot and Abingdon. He hoped to establish a Parkrun for the Wantage and Grove communities by spring 2021 and was requesting a donation of £2,500 plus VAT to cover the one-off registration fee with Parkrun. He estimated that there would be 100-200 participants weekly. Mr Nicholls was thanked for his briefing and left the meeting.

Councillor Duveen joined the meeting.

43. **Matters arising from the minutes**

a) Update re CCTV

Inspector Cain had agreed to arrange for an evidence-based report to be prepared for submission to the District Council.

b) Update on opening accounts with financial institutions

The Clerk reported that banking institutions were generally not currently accepting applications for new accounts under the current pandemic crisis. He had identified two building societies that were accepting new account applications and was investigating others. It was agreed to refer to the next Council meeting approval to open accounts with the two building societies and any others identified before the that meeting. **Action: Clerk**

c) Update on plans to pedestrianise western end of the Market Place

The working group had identified two areas of highway requiring improvement. Firstly, the sight lines for vehicles exiting Alfred Street onto Mill Street and secondly, the need to widen pavements to improve access for pedestrians at the junction between Grove Street and Market Place. The pedestrianisation working group were looking to identify a holistic approach to address both concerns.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford  
SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson

IT WAS RESOLVED that the working group should proceed with developing plans for the permanent pedestrianisation of the western end of the Market Place, subject to consultation.

d) Youth Community Project

Ms Hicks of Sweatbox had provided an update on the current situation regarding the Youth Community Project. She felt that regretfully, with Covid-19 restrictions, she was unable to progress with the project at the present time.

e) Market Policies and Procedures

The Market Policies and Procedures had been prepared but would not be published on the website whilst special arrangements were having to be made for Covid-19.

f) Future ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the Manor Road Recreational Ground

The Clerk was due to engage with the property manager at the District Council regarding the Manor Road Recreational Ground in the coming weeks. **Action: Clerk**

g) Reopening the High Street Safely Fund

No feedback had been received from the District Council regarding the Reopening the High Street Safely Fund. The Clerk was to contact the District Council to request an update.

**Action: Clerk**

h) Update re Kingsgrove Community Hall

The Clerk had no further update from the previous meeting. He had contacted St Modwen and was expecting to receive a response within the next two weeks.

**POLICY**

**44. To consider whether to extend waiving of market tolls beyond end of November**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sheldon

SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson

IT WAS RESOLVED that market tolls were to be waived until the end of December.

**45. Minutes of Climate Emergency Sub-committee meeting held on 19 October 2020.**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford

SECONDED BY Councillor O'Leary

IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes be adopted

**46. Minutes of the Health Sub-committee meeting held on 15 October 2020.**

It was noted that the Mayor, alongside the Wantage Hospital League of Friends had attended the Covid-safe re-opening ceremony for Wantage Maternity Unit.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Hannaby

SECONDED BY Councillor Dunford

IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes be adopted.

**47. To receive initial report on outcome of "COVID-19 Safer Public Spaces Proposal" survey.**

The results of the survey showed that participants were 60% for and 40% against the proposed plans. There were over 800 narrative responses to the survey which were to be categorised and analysed. Feedback from the County Council was also to be considered. It was proposed that the narrative responses were to be published and that with the majority in favour, further consultation be held with the County Council and other stakeholders to discuss the issues raised by each party. It was recommended that the working group for the western end of the Market Place extend their discussions to include the central area of the Market Place.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford

SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson

IT WAS RESOLVED that the survey narrative once redacted was to be published and the pedestrianisation working group were to extend their discussions to include the central area of the Market Place.

Following on from the proposition for the working group to include the central area of the Market Place in its remit, it was felt that more members were needed within the group. It was agreed that the Town Mayor and Councillor Dunford would join the working group, with Councillors Cameron, Johnson, Menzies and Sheldon assisting on an as needed basis.

## MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

### **48. Estimates 2021/2022.**

The committee considered the estimates worksheet. It was noted that inflation should be considered when determining grant budgets for the year and it was suggested that a number of organisations have a 5% increase to their budgets for 2021/2022.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford  
SECONDED BY Councillor Dunford

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Children's Centre, the Independent Advice Centre, Letcombe Brook Project and Sweatbox budget amounts for 2021/22 be increased by 5% and the October Club budget increased to £5,000.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford  
SECONDED BY Councillor Sibbald

IT WAS RESOLVED that the budget for the permanent pedestrianisation of the western end of the Market Place be set at £75,000.

On the assumption that the Town Council would be taking ownership of the Manor Road Recreational Ground it was proposed that a budget be set for capital expenditure to allow for the purchase of picnic benches, plants and a multi-user game area, as well as a further budget for maintenance costs.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford  
SECONDED BY Councillor Wills-Wright

IT WAS RESOLVED that a budget of £30,000 for revenue expenditure and £30,000 for capital expenditure be set on the assumption that Wantage Town Council would be taking ownership of the Manor Road Recreational Ground during 2021/2022.

It was noted that although the extra land at the Chain Hill Cemetery would not need to be used for some years it would be prudent to budget for works in preparation for its use. These works were to include installing pathways and planting as well as a provision of an area for natural burials.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford  
SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby

IT WAS RESOLVED that a budget of £25,000 be set to allow for works to take place in the extra land at Chain Hill Cemetery.

It was noted that should the Council proceed with installing information signs that a budget should be set to allow for this.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford  
SECONDED BY Councillor Gilhome

IT WAS RESOLVED that a budget of £30,000 be set for the provision of information signs.

It was noted that although discussions were still taking place, a budget for administrative works regarding the temporary pedestrianisation of the central area of the Market Place should be set.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford  
SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby

IT WAS RESOLVED that a budget of £5,000 be set for the administrative costs relating to the pedestrianisation of the central area of the Market Place.

It was felt that some street name signs within the town were in need of replacement.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Hannaby  
SECONDED BY Councillor Walters

IT WAS RESOLVED that a budget of £10,000 be set for the replacement of street name signs.

**49. Accounts for Payment.**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford

SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby

IT WAS RESOLVED that the accounts for payment in the sum of £21,862.57 (attached) be approved

**50. General correspondence.**

a) Betjeman Park Trust for the Town Council S106 funding application

The District Council had requested that an official signatory be delegated to authorise the form requesting payment of S106 money for the Betjeman Park.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford

SECONDED BY Councillor Sibbald

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Clerk be authorised to sign the form.

**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.

Councillor O'Leary left the meeting.

**51. To consider donation requests:**

a) Wantage Choral Society

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Menzies

SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby

IT WAS RESOLVED that a donation of £500 be made to the Wantage Choral Society.

b) Parkrun

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sibbald

SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson

IT WAS RESOLVED to meet the cost of the Parkrun on-off registration fee of £2,500. The organisers were to be asked to feature the Town Council's logo, as a sponsor, where appropriate.

**52. To consider report from Staff Working Group.**

Notes of the working group meeting held on 2 November 2020 were considered.

a) Staff pay review recommendations

The NALC had advised that the NJC recommended scales rates had increased by 2.75% with effect from 1 April 2020. The working group had proposed that this be accepted for all staff covered by the NJC scales and that a 50p increase be added to the VC Forecourt Attendant's hourly pay rate who was not covered by the NJC rate.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford

SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby

IT WAS RESOLVED that, with effect from 1 April 2020, the pay rates for all staff who are subject to the NJC pay rate scales be increased by 2.75% and the VC Forecourt Attendant's pay rate be increased by 50p per hour.

b) Clerk's contract of employment and the Employee Handbook

A statement detailing the Clerk's current terms of employment and the Council's Employee Handbook, which covers other employment conditions, were noted and accepted.

c) Recruitment of a Parking/Market Attendant

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sheldon

SECONDED BY Councillor Sibbald

IT WAS RESOLVED that recommended actions contained in the notes of the working group meeting, under paragraph c), held on the 2 November 2020 be approved and adopted

**50. General correspondence (continued).**

The OALC had advised that it was not illegal for the Town Council to contribute to the provision of free school meals, subject to payment not being made directly to the local education authority.

The meeting closed at 9.48 pm.

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**Wantage Town Council**

**Accounts for Payment - September to November 2020**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Payee</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Powers</b>	<b>Ref</b>	<b>£</b>
01/10/2020	Abbey Properties	Market Attendant's shed rent	OA 1985	SO	100.00
01/11/2020	Abbey Properties	Market Attendant's shed rent	OA 1985	SO	100.00
14/10/2020	BNP Paribas	Copier rental	Office	DD	£ 179.19
21/10/2020	NEST	Pension contribution payments	Office	DD	382.85
21/10/2020	Staff - various	October payroll	Office/OA1985	Bacs	8,890.59
01/10/2020	VWHDC	Cemetery Rates	Burials	DD	75.00
01/10/2020	VWHDC	Rates for Market	OA1985	DD	247.00
01/10/2020	VWHDC	Rates for car park	OA1985	DD	404.00
01/11/2020	VWHDC	Cemetery Rates	Burials	DD	75.00
01/11/2020	VWHDC	Rates for Market	OA1985	DD	247.00
01/11/2020	VWHDC	Rates for car park	OA1985	DD	404.00
		<b>Total direct debits</b>			<b>11,104.63</b>
10/10/2020	Barclaycard	Mobile for TCM, Barriers, Qickbooks, Staionery	LGA72/Highways	Online	965.89
10/10/2020	White Horse Horticulture	Cemetery/play area grass cutting and mtce	Burials/open spaces	Online	1,530.00
10/10/2020	SGW Payroll	September payroll processing charges	Office/OA1985	Online	69.60
10/10/2020	Netwise	Accessibility website module	Accessibility	Online	149.00
10/10/2020	Newsquest	Delivery of newsletter	Information	Online	522.16
10/10/2020	S Breakspears	Reinstate display pole	Street furniture	Online	261.60
21/10/2020	Castle Water	Water supply cemetery	Burials/open spaces	Online	55.18
21/10/2020	Castle Water	Water - Larkhill allotments	Allotments	Online	75.40
21/10/2020	Castle Water	Water - Stockham Park allotments	Allotments	Online	78.18
21/10/2020	Charlton Env Services	Town weedkilling treatment	Highways	Online	930.00
21/10/2020	Insight	Office 365	Office	Online	2,391.58
21/10/2020	L Smith	Flags removal	Tourism	Online	325.00
21/10/2020	Peggy Ley	Newsletter design work	Information	Online	225.00
21/10/2020	Solopress	Newsletter printing	Information	Online	381.86
21/10/2020	Southern Electric	Portway shed electricity	OA1985	Online	29.89
05/11/2020	L Smith	Cleaning bus shelters and town entry signs	Street furniture	Online	178.00
05/11/2020	SGW Payroll	October payroll processing charges	Office/OA1985	Online	69.60
05/11/2020	Windowflowers Ltd	Winter floral displays	Tourism	Online	2,520.00
		<b>Total online payments</b>			<b>10,757.94</b>
		<b>Total payments September to November 2020</b>			<b>21,862.57</b>