

**MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ONLINE USING ZOOM, ON MONDAY 29 MARCH 2021, AT 7.30 P.M.**

Councillors present: Councillor Major J Sibbald (Town Mayor)
Councillors I R Cameron A Crawford, A Dunford,
A Duveen (part), J T Hannaby, E L Johnson,
A C Menzies, J E Nunn-Price (part), I L Sheldon,
C Walters and C H Wills-Wright.

Dignitaries present:
(up to item 80) Mrs Amanda Ponsonby MBE, High Sheriff of Oxfordshire
Commodore David Elford OBE ADC RN, Naval Regional
Commander Eastern England
Colonel John Baynham OBE, Deputy Commander, 11 Infantry
Brigade and Headquarters South East
Air Commodore Simon Edwards RAF, Air Capability, HQ Air
Command, RAF High Wycombe
Lt K Morrison RN, HMS Queen Elizabeth, Liaison Officer to
Wantage Town Council
Kate Lole, Reed, South East Reserve Forces' & Cadets'
Association

Others present: Two member of the public

Clerk: W P Falkenau.
Deputy Clerk: S Sanders

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors O Curley, A Gilhome, J Goodman and P O'Leary.

Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests

None.

Minutes of the Council meeting held on 8 February 2021

The minutes were approved.

79. Reaffirmation of the Armed Forces Covenant.

Councillor Duveen joined the meeting.

The Town Mayor welcomed the dignitaries to the meeting. He gave a short briefing on the history of the town's association with the armed forces. He welcomed the opportunity for the Town Council to reaffirm the Armed Forces Covenant, reflecting the Council's current association with military related organisations.

Commodore Elford gave a briefing on his background with the Navy and on his current role, which involves raising the profile of the Navy within society. This includes promoting the Navy as a career, recruitment of reservists and the armed forces covenant. The covenant requires that no person or family should be disadvantaged from their participation or involvement with the armed forces.

Councillor Nunn-Price joined the meeting.

The Town Mayor proceeded to sign the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the Town Council. He thanked the dignitaries for their participation, and they left the meeting.

80. Statements and questions from the public

None.

81. Matters arising from the Council meeting held on 8 February 2021

Councillor Walters gave her apology for not being able to attend the meeting.

82. Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 8 February and 1 March 2021.

ON THE PROPOSITION of the Town Mayor
SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson
IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes be adopted.

83. Minutes of the Leisure and Amenities Committee meeting held on 22 February 2021

27 b) Communal Bench – Stockham Park site

28 b) Garden of remembrance

29 i) Market Place Update

It was noted that the following items had been ordered:

Planters – 4 x £397 = £1,588
Delivery - £49
Planting out and seasons watering - £910
Total - £2,547

Bench seats - 4 x £294 = £1,176
Delivery - £49
Plus installation - £400 (estimate)
Total – £1,625

Total planters and benches - £4,172

There was a typographical error under item 29 h) which was to be corrected.

Action: Deputy Clerk

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

84. Minutes of the Promotion, Communications and Events Committee meeting held on 22 March 2021

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Wills-Wright
SECONDED BY Councillor Walters
IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes be adopted.

85. Minutes of the Policy, Management and Finance Committee meeting held on 15 March 2021

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby
IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes be adopted.

86. To consider whether to extend waiving of market tolls beyond end of April

ON THE PROPOSITION of the Town Mayor
SECONDED by Councillor Johnson
IT WAS RESOLVED to extend the waiving of the market tolls to the end of June 2021.

87. To To consider bringing forward the Annual Council meeting from 10 May to 3 May 2021

ON THE PROPOSITION of the Town Mayor
SECONDED by Councillor Duveen
IT WAS RESOLVED to bring forward the Annual Council meeting to 3 May.

88. District and County Councillors' reports.

District Council

The District Council had signed up for the "The Meanwhile Space" project. This was a project to help fit out and convert vacant retail spaces and revitalise the high street. The Town Centre Manager had been contacted concerning this. A joint Local Plan was going to be prepared for the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts, A consultation was proceeding with local sports clubs about the use of S106 funding. Town and parish councils were to be consulted in May, after the elections. Financial support was being given to the operator of leisure centres to assist with their reopening.

County Council

Work on the County Council's budgets had been completed. A HOSC meeting was to be held on 22 April at which a report of the OX12 Task and Finish Group was to be considered. The Growth Board had received a report on transport links. The strategy now included the Grove railway station, but nothing was likely to materialise before 2028.

89. Town Mayor's communications.

The Town Mayor's communications were available to view on the Town Council's website. The High Sheriff had visited the town the previous week and this had gone well.

90. To note that Councillor Nunn-Price is currently unable to attend Council meetings and to consider whether to approve her absence to 3 August or 11 October 2021.

Councillor Nunn-Price had been able to attend this meeting and therefore there was no need to approve her absence, for the time being.

Confidential items

ON THE PROPOSITION of the Town Mayor
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.

91. To consider donation request from Grove Rugby Club.

The club had provided more up to date financial picture which provided a breakdown of the administrative expenses.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Johnson

SECONDED by Councillor Hannaby

IT WAS RESOLVED to make a donation of £5,000 towards the cost of the Rugby Club's pavilion roof repair costs.

92. Update re quotes from highway engineers for Market Place western end pedestrianisation scheme.

The Clerk had confirmed with the County Council what work was required by the consultants for it to take over responsibility for the scheme. One of the consultants had updated their quote and this was under £25,000, making it unnecessary to go to tender. A quote from a second consultant had not yet been received.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford

SECONDED by the Town Mayor

IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that, if the quote from the second consultant was not received by 7 April, the contract should be placed with the consultant that had provided the quote.

The meeting closed at 8.27 p.m.

WPF