

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE  
COMMITTEE OF WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE BEACON, PORWAY,  
WANTAGE ON MONDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 7.30 P.M.**

Committee members present: Councillor A Crawford (Chairman)  
Councillors I R Cameron, A Dunford, JT Hannaby, A C Menzies,  
P M O'Leary, I L Sheldon, J Sibbald and C H Wills-Wright.

Others present: Two members of the public (up to item 13)

Town Clerk: W P Falkenau

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Duveen, A Gilhome, E L Johnson, J E Nunn-Price and C Walters.

**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, a trustee of the Vale Community Impact and a Governor of Stockham Primary School.

**To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2021**

The minutes were approved and signed.

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

None.

**2. Matters arising from the minutes**

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

The Clerk had received an update from the consultant. He had advised that the issue of sight lines at the junction by the museum could be resolved through the use of road markings and would not involve construction works. He intended to now refer this to the County Council officers for their agreement.

It remained unlikely that arrangements for the permanent scheme could be concluded by January when the temporary order ended. The Clerk was to seek a virtual meeting with Paul Fermer of the County Council to see what could be done to extend the closure beyond this. The County Council cabinet member for highways was also to be contacted concerning this. **Action: Clerk**

It was reported that the conversion to flats above Marmalade and 30 Something was due to proceed in October. This would involve the placing of a skip in front of and between these businesses. The works were scheduled to last fourteen months.

There were concerns about the detrimental effect these works could have on the closed area. The Clerk was to request that the skip be in place for as little time as possible. **Action: Clerk**

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

The District Council was to form an Asset Management Group, comprised of two councillors and officers, to consider the future for all its properties. Councillor Crawford was to be a member of this. This may require him to withdraw from future town council meetings where the ownership of the recreation ground was to be discussed. It was unlikely that the future of the recreation ground would be given immediate attention in front of others.

The above did not preclude the Town Council engaging with the District Council concerning the maintenance of the recreation ground. This was a matter to be pursued through the Leisure and Amenities Committee.

c) Request for CCTV camera in Wallingford Street

Purchase of the new equipment had been approved by the District Council's Cabinet. This had now been referred to its procurement team to purchase.

d) Replacement of street signs

This had not progressed due to the reluctance of the responsible district council officer to accept the inclusion of QR codes. She was concerned about the work involved in maintaining the information to which the QR code would refer.

The Committee was reluctant to accept this. The Clerk was to enquire about what would be involved if the Town Council took full responsibility for controlling and updating the information?

**Action: Clerk**

e) Legal advice concerning the temporary closure of Wantage Community Hospital

Advice was being sought from a barrister. This was due to be provided over the coming week.

## **POLICY**

### **3. Health Sub-committee – update and consideration of further actions.**

The maternity unit at the Community Hospital had been temporary closed due to staff shortages. A HOSC meeting had been held on the previous Thursday. A meeting of the Health Sub-committee was to be called to follow up on these matters.

**Action: Clerk**

### **4. To consider adoption of the Climate Emergency Action Plan.**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford  
SECONDED BY Councillor Wills-Wright  
IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Climate Emergency Action Plan be adopted and displayed on the Town Council's website.

Councillor Sibbald agreed to introduce version control information on the document and to upload it to the website.

**Action: Sibbald**

### **5. To consider adoption of Mission Statement.**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Wills-Wright  
SECONDED BY Councillor Menzies  
IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the Mission Statement be adopted and displayed on the Town Council's website.

Councillor Sibbald agreed to introduce version control information on the document and to upload it to the website.

**Action: Sibbald**

### **6. Review of schedule of charges.**

The schedule of charges was noted. It was agreed that the charges should remain unchanged for this year.

## **7. Review of Treasury and Investment Policy.**

The policy was noted. It had previously been reviewed in February 2021. The annual review was being brought forward to fit in with the timing for the internal audit review that was due to proceed in November. The Clerk was in the process of opening accounts and placing funds with institutions to fit in with the policy.

No changes to the policy were suggested. The Clerk was to refer it to the Council meeting for approval.

**Action: Clerk**

## **8. Review of Code of Conduct**

The policy was noted. It had previously been reviewed in February 2021. The annual review was being brought forward to fit in with the timing for the internal audit review that was due to proceed in November. The policy was in a standard form adopted across the whole of Oxfordshire. A new model was being developed at a national level.

No changes to the policy were suggested. The Clerk was to refer it to the Council meeting for approval.

**Action: Clerk**

## **9. To consider room arrangements for the holding of physical council and committee meetings and the policy, and possible arrangements, for allowing observation online.**

This meeting was being held in the Lockinge room, which had become available due to a booking cancellation. Normally council meetings were scheduled to be held in the smaller Hanney or Challow rooms. The committee did not regard these rooms as currently suitable for meetings, given the need to socially distance and have adequate ventilation. The Clerk had sought to identify larger meeting rooms elsewhere, but had failed to find any available. It was felt that only the Lockinge room or the Ridgeway main hall were suitable for council meetings.

The Clerk advised that The Beacon management team were reluctant to allocate these rooms to the Council because they were their high charging rooms. Although the Ridgeway was only infrequently booked, they did not wish to miss the opportunity of being able to book it out. The Town Council was entitled to use meeting rooms on a free of charge basis. It was agreed that the Clerk should request the use of the Lockinge or Ridgeway rooms on the basis that the Town Council would meet the difference in charge between these and the Hanney/Challow rooms.

**Action: Clerk**

## **MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE**

### **10. To consider proposal to open an online bank account with the Unity Trust Bank**

The Council's existing bank accounts were currently not set up to require payments to be processed/authorised by more than one person. The Clerk was not confident that changes could be made to require authorisation by more than one person, in accordance with the financial regulations, without risking losing online bank services all together for a time. Unity Trust offered online accounts where dual authorisation was required. The opening of an account with Unity Trust would avoid the risk of losing online accounts all together when the mandates for the other banks were updated.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sibbald  
SECONDED BY Councillor Sheldon

IT WAS RESOLVED to recommend the opening of an online bank account with Unity Trust Bank.

**11. To receive the External Auditor Report and Certificate 2020/21 and Notice of Conclusion of Annual Audit.**

The report from Moore, the external auditor, was noted. It advised:

“The date the Notice of Public Rights Commenced was the same as the date the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was approved by the Council. The announcement of the public rights period should commence at least 1 day after the approval of the return to satisfy Regulation 12(3) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and proper practices.

It was noted in our prior year audit report that the Council had not reviewed its Code of Conduct in the 2019/20 year. When this report was put to the Council it was considered not necessary to review the Code of Conduct on the basis a new model Code had not been published since the currently adopted one in 2012. Although a new model Code has not been published, the Council is still required to review this periodically as despite being a model document, the Code may nonetheless cease to be appropriate due to changes in the Council's circumstances or similar. The Council should therefore review all formal policies on a regular basis to ensure they remain appropriate regardless of whether updated templates have been issued.

Box 11 of Section 2 of the AGAR has been answered N/A by the Council. This question relates to whether the Council acts as a Sole Trustee or not and so should be answered 'Yes' or 'No' as indicated. The answers to the Annual Internal Audit Report and Section 1 of the AGAR suggest this question should have been answered 'No'.”

It was noted that the Code of Conduct had been reviewed in 2020/21 but Moore had not sought to check this before preparing its report. It was proposed that a letter of concern be sent to the NALC regarding Moore's failure to check with the Council before making its comment.

**12. Accounts for Payment.**

A payment for newsletter distribution was queried. The newsletter had not yet been received at the homes of councillors. The Clerk advised that the distribution was only due to proceed over the coming days.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sheldon  
SECONDED BY Councillor Sibbald

IT WAS RESOLVED that the accounts for payment in the sum of £38,107.04 (attached) be approved.

**13. General correspondence.**

None.

**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.

**14. Staffing update.**

The Clerk had not yet proceeded with the recruitment of the Mayor's PA/Clerk's Assistant, or the Market/Parking Attendant. He hoped to proceed with this over the coming days. **Action: Clerk**

The meeting closed at 9.18 pm.

-----

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE OF WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD AT THE BEACON, PORWAY, WANTAGE ON MONDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2021 AT 7.30 P.M.**

Wantage Town Council		Accounts for Payment - August to September 2021			
Date	Payee	Description	Powers	Ref	£
01/08/2021	Abbey Properties	Market Attendant's shed rent	OA 1985	SO	100.00
01/09/2021	Abbey Properties	Market Attendant's shed rent	OA 1985	SO	100.00
01/08/2021	VWHDC	Cemetery Rates	Burials	DD	87.00
01/08/2021	VWHDC	Rates for Market	OA1985	DD	247.00
01/08/2021	VWHDC	Rates for car park	OA1985	DD	404.00
01/09/2021	VWHDC	Cemetery Rates	Burials	DD	87.00
01/09/2021	VWHDC	Rates for Market	OA1985	DD	247.00
01/09/2021	VWHDC	Rates for car park	OA1985	DD	404.00
13/08/2021	BNP Paribas	Photocopier lease	Office	DD	179.19
07/08/2021	Barclays	Bank charges	LGA 72	DD	8.90
07/09/2021	Barclays	Bank charges	LGA 72	DD	8.90
21/08/2021	NEST	Pension contribution payments	Office	DD	417.98
21/08/2021	Staff - various	August payroll	Office/OA1985	Bacs	8,071.37
21/09/2021	NEST	Pension contribution payments	Office	DD	382.49
21/09/2021	Staff - various	September payroll	Office/OA1985	Bacs	7,957.08
		Total direct debits			<u>18,701.91</u>
06/08/2021	BT	Internet services	Office	Online	138.36
06/08/2021	Discount Displays	Taxi signs for MP western area	Highways	Online	368.34
06/08/2021	Barclaycard	Quickbooks/adobe subs, shed keys, No parking signs, Love Wantage roundels, computer mouse	Office, OA1985, Tourism	Online	744.05
06/08/2021	HMRC	PAYE July	Office/OA1985	Online	1,760.29
16/08/2021	White Horse Horticulture	Cemetery/play area grass cutting and mtce July - instal of street furniture	Burials/open spaces/highways	Online	1,325.00
16/08/2021	Glanville Consultants	Advisor re pedestrianisation scheme	Highways	Online	1,500.00
16/08/2021	SGW Payroll	Payroll processing	Office/OA1985	Online	62.64
16/08/2021	Aasvogel	Cemetery skips	Burials	Online	691.94
27/08/2021	Calber Facilities	Remove graffiti - VC Forecourt	LGA 72	Online	59.40
27/08/2021	SGW Payroll	Payroll processing	Office/OA1985	Online	62.64
27/08/2021	A Elsley	Entertainment - Artisan market	Entertainment	Online	100.00
27/08/2021	Aasvogel	Cemetery skip	Burials	Online	172.06
27/08/2021	N Haval	Love Wantage website	Tourism	Online	432.00
27/08/2021	Natural Bag Co	Love Wantage bags	Tourism	Online	789.00
27/08/2021	HMRC	PAYE August	Office/OA1985	Online	2,052.06
31/08/2021	VWHDC	Re Rec Ground use for Wantage FC	Recreation	Online	500.00
31/08/2021	K Dickinson	Donation re J Fest re toilets	Entertainment	Online	1,508.60
31/08/2021	VWHDC	CCTV contribution	Crime prevention	Online	2,135.98
07/09/2021	Red Corner	Photocopying charges	Office	Online	29.34
07/09/2021	Community Heartbeat	Defibrillator pads	Office	Online	55.20
07/09/2021	Barclaycard	Quickbooks/adobe subs, traffic signs	Office/OA 1985	Online	216.71
07/09/2021	Communicorp	Freedom scrolls	LGA 72	Online	605.52
07/09/2021	White Horse Horticulture	Cemetery/play area grass cutting August	Burials/open spaces/highways	Online	1,860.00
15/09/2021	Aasvogel	Cemetery skip	Burials	Online	288.00
15/09/2021	Photogenic	Framing of Freedom scrolls	LGA 72	Online	394.00
15/09/2021	Umami	Refreshments Freedom event	LGA 72	Online	648.00
23/09/2021	Marketize	Newsletter distribution	Information	Online	906.00
		Total cheque/online payments			<u>19,405.13</u>
		<b>Total payments August to September 2021</b>			<b>38,107.04</b>