

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE BEACON, PORTWAY, WANTAGE ON MONDAY 20 JUNE 2022, AT 7.30 P.M.**

Councillors present: Councillor Major J Sibbald (Town Mayor)  
Councillors A Crawford, A Dunford, J T Hannaby,  
E L Johnson, A C Menzies and S Third.

Others present: Mr and Mrs Cross (part – up to item 14)

Clerk: W P Falkenau.  
Deputy Clerk: S Sanders

**Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I R Cameron, T Gilhome, I L Sheldon, C Walters and C H Wills-Wright.

**Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests**

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.

**13. To approve the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 9 May 2022**

It was noted that Councillor Dunford had agreed to be a member of the Promotion, Communication and Events Committee. The minutes were amended, and approved and signed.

**14. Statements and Questions from the public**

Mr and Mrs Cross advised that they owned part of the property at 40 Market Place, a listed building. Repairs were currently being undertaken which involved scaffolding being placed across the pavement. In conducting the works, the contractor had found that the condition of the roof was in a very poor condition and this extended to the adjoining property that shared the roof but wasn't party to the works being undertaken. Mr and Mrs Cross were concerned that due to the mix of different leaseholders and freeholders for these properties that it would be difficult to get agreement to undertake the repair works required and that the scaffolding would need to be removed without the repair works being properly completed.

Mr and Mrs Cross had been advised that this was not a matter over which the Town Council had any jurisdiction or powers. They had been referred to the District Council's conservation and enforcement teams for their involvement. They had engaged with the teams but had been advised that what action could be taken was limited. Mr and Mrs Cross acknowledged that the Town Council was not in a position to assist, but felt that it should be made aware of the difficult situation.

They were thanked for their briefing and they left the meeting.

**15. Matters arising from the Annual Council meeting held on 9 May 2022**

**11.92. Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)**

Due to the Town Council already having its own parking order in force, it was not practical for the District Council to incorporate the Town Council's parking areas into its order.

**16. Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 28 March, 25 April, 9 May and 30 May 2022**

2. b) Update on suitability for mobility scooters and wheelchairs to the East Gate site, Springfield Road by the footway connecting to Charlton Road.P21/V3349/FUL

No response had been received from the District Council Planning Team. Councillor Crawford had requested that the application be called in for consideration by the District Council's Planning Committee. Councillor Crawford agreed to follow this up with the Planning Team.

**Action: Crawford**

2. c) Update on 20's Plenty for Oxfordshire

Wantage was on the County Council's list of schemes to be considered.

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

**17. Minutes of the Leisure and Amenities Committee meeting held on 23 May 2022**

2. c) Update on anti-social activity at allotment sites

Problems were still being experienced. It was agreed that details of incidents should be collated in order to collate the Community Trigger. This should cover all incidents across the town not just at the allotments. The Deputy Clerk agreed to progress this.

**Action: Deputy Clerk**

It was noted that if those responsible for anti-social behaviour resided in social housing, the housing association could take action. The police had indicated that they intended to visit the Market Place on Wednesday 22 June for a "Have Your Say" event. This hadn't been advertised. If it was to proceed, the Clerk or Deputy Clerk would attend.

**Action: Clerk/Deputy Clerk**

4. a) District Council Leisure Strategy (S106 funding) - Feedback from meeting held between Wantage Town Council and Grove Parish Council 5 May 2022

A meeting with District Council officers was to be held on the 7 July. As well as working group members, the Clerk or Deputy Clerk were also to attend.

**Action: Clerk**

4. d) iii Manor Road Memorial Park - Picnic tables/benches

A site within the Park for the positioning of the picnic table/benches had been identified. This would be within the fenced off area where the play equipment was located.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Dunford  
SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson  
IT WAS RESOLVED that subject to District Council approval, to proceed with the purchase of two standard and two disabled benches at a cost of £2,500 plus fixing.

**Action: Deputy Clerk**

3. a) Development of improvements to the cemetery extension

More information had been received from Cemetery Design Services (CDS) about the terms and conditions and payment schedule.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Hannaby  
SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson  
IT WAS RESOLVED to proceed with the next stage of the process for the RIBA Stage 1 at  
a total cost of £9,800.

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

**18. Minutes of the Promotion, Communication and Events Committee meeting held  
on 13 June 2022**

2. b) Update on provision of Changing Places Facility in town centre

It was agreed that this item be referred to the Leisure and Amenities Committee.

**Action: Deputy Clerk**

4 a) Electrical vehicle event

The installation of the electric charging points in the Portway car park had recently been  
completed. This was welcomed.

5. Newsletter

The recent newsletter had been distributed by Royal Mail to all properties in OX12. A  
number of residents from other parishes in OX12 had expressed their appreciation about  
receiving information about Wantage. Consideration was to be given to whether the  
newsletter should be distributed to the whole of OX12 in the future?

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

**19. Minutes of the Policy, Management and Finance Committee meeting held on the  
6 June 2022**

2. Donation requests

The Town Mayor was seeking assistance from the army for J-Fest and use of one of his free  
sessions at The Beacon for the Literary Festival.

4. Health Sub-committee

Representatives of the sub-committee were due to visit the Community Hospital and meet  
representatives of the Health Trust on 23 June.

The Clerk had been seeking an update regarding future GP services, but had received no  
response.. Work on extending the Health Centre had commenced. Dr Davies had announced  
that he would be leaving the Newbury Street Practice at the end of August. It was hoped  
that more information would be forthcoming over the coming days.

3. b) Future ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the Manor Road Recreation  
Ground

The Clerk had received an email of introduction from K Lister, the District Council's new  
Strategic Property Manager. She was seeking information from colleagues and would get  
back to the Clerk when she was in a position to progress this.

6. Oxfordshire Councils' Councillor Code of Conduct 2022

Adoption of the new Code of Conduct was being deferred due to queries over its application. The Monitoring Officer was arranging training for Clerks in August and for councillors in September. Adoption would be considered after this.

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

**20. To consider reports from the 2021/22 Internal Audit Review dated 14 June 2022**

The internal auditor had made three recommendations following the recent review:

1. Prior to the approval of the Accounting Statements the year end bank reconciliation to be subject to formal review and approval.
2. There are two old uncashed cheques, dating back to 2020 and 2018, on the year end bank reconciliation - There are two old uncashed cheques, dating back to 2020 and 2018, on the year end bank reconciliation,
3. In future the Council to ensure that the date set for the Period of Exercise of Public Rights is recorded in Council Minutes.

The following responses were agreed:

1. Yes.
2. This will be considered.
3. This will be recorded in the minutes of the Council meeting to be held on 20 June 2022

Mr Rose, the internal auditor, had completed and signed the Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22 and provided a letter dated 14 June 2022 giving explanation for items not covered. These were noted.

**21. To consider and approve signing of the Bank Reconciliation at 31 March 2022**

The bank reconciliation was considered and approved. The Town Mayor signed the reconciliation to verify that it had been presented to the Council.

**22. To consider and approve for signing the Balance Sheet and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022**

The Balance Sheet and Accounts were considered and approved. The Town Mayor and Clerk signed them to indicate the Council's approval.

**23. To approve the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22**

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford  
SECONDED BY Councillor Third  
IT WAS RESOLVED to approve the statement. The Statement was signed by the Town Mayor and Clerk, to indicate this.

**24. To approve the Accounting Statements 2021/22**

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford  
SECONDED BY Councillor Third  
IT WAS RESOLVED to approve the Statements. These were signed by the Town Mayor and Clerk, to indicate this.

**25. To note period for the exercise of public rights for the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022 from 27 June to 5 August 2022**

The period for the exercise of public rights was noted.

**26. District and County Councillors' reports**

County Council

The reopening of Grove railway station was under consideration, along with other railway stations. The Integrated Care System for Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire was proceeding. The splitting of the administration from Cherwell was proceeding.

District Council

The affordability of the highway connection to the A34 from the Dalton Barracks development site was under serious consideration. The cost was difficult to justify, but failure to provide it could prejudice the District Council's ability to meet the five year housing supply requirement. From the UK Shared Prosperity Fund of £3.2 billion to 33 local authorities, the Vale and South Oxfordshire have only been allocated £1 million. The payment of Government energy grants was proving a challenge, particularly where council tax was not paid by direct debit.

**27. Town Mayor's communications**

The Town Mayor's communications were available to view on the Town Council's website.

Councillors had been invited by St Modwen to a briefing on the Kingsgrove Community Hall at 1 pm on Thursday 30 June. The Town Mayor was unable to attend. Councillors Crawford, Hannaby and Menzies, and the Clerk agreed to attend.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

WPF

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