

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE BEACON, PORTWAY, WANTAGE ON MONDAY 31 OCTOBER 2022, AT 7.30 P.M.**

Councillors present: Councillor Major J Sibbald (Town Mayor)  
Councillors I R Cameron, A Crawford, J T Hannaby,  
A C Menzies, P O’Leary, S Third and C Walters.

Others present: S Tilbury and G Rice – Vale and Downland Museum (up to item 54)  
Two members of the public (up to item 55)

Clerk: W P Falkenau  
Deputy Clerk: S Sanders

**Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Dunford, T Gilhorne, E L Johnson, A Przybysz, I L Sheldon and C H Wills-Wright.

**To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and non-registerable interests**

Councillors Cameron and Hannaby declared an other registrable interest being trustees of the Vale and Downland Museum.

**To approve the minutes of the Council meetings held on 17 October 2022**

The minutes were approved and signed.

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

None.

**54. Donation Request – to receive a briefing in support of an application from the Vale and Downland Museum**

Mrs Tilbury gave a briefing in support of the application. It had been announced that the Wessex Mill was due to close by the end of the year. This would bring to an end 900 years of milling in Wantage. The Museum sought funding to capture, in the short period before it closed, a visual and audio record of its history. There was insufficient space in the Museum to store or display many or larger items from the mill. The owners had agreed to allow access. Suitably qualified contractors had been identified to conduct the work. After answering questions, Mrs Tilbury was thanked for her briefing. She and Mr Rice left the meeting.

**55. To consider allocation of funds for tree planting scheme at Manor Road Memorial Park**

The Council had previously approved a budget of £5,500. The District Council had required changes to the scheme previously proposed. The Clerk had been unable to get an update on the funding now required.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Hannaby  
SECONDED BY Councillor Menzies

IT WAS RESOLVED to allocate a budget of £10,000 to cover the cost of the planting scheme.

The planting was to be registered with the Queen’s Canopy initiative. **Action: Clerk**

**Confidential items**

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Sibbald  
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.

**56. To note that Councillor Nunn-Price is currently unable to attend Council meetings and to consider whether to approve her absence to 30 April 2023**

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Hannaby  
SECONDED BY Councillor Menzies  
IT WAS RESOLVED to approve Councillor Nunn-Price's absence to 30 April 2023, due to her ill health.

It was noted that the term of office of Councillor Przybysz was likely to end on 16 November after him being absent from meetings for six months. As this was within six months of the next council elections, a by-election couldn't be called and the casual vacancy had to be filled by co-option.

When Councillors Przybysz and Third had been co-opted in October 2021, there had been three candidates who had all received the same number of votes in the first vote. Dr Wright came third in the second vote.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Hannaby  
SECONDED BY Councillor Menzies  
IT WAS RESOLVED to invite Dr Wright to be co-opted as a councillor to fill the vacancy.

**Action: Clerk**

**58. General Correspondence**

- a) Invitation from Zero Oxfordshire to attend, on Friday 4 November in Wantage, the posting of the open letter to David Johnston MP, in support of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill

It was noted that although the Town Council had given its support in principle to the Bill, there was still the inclusion of the holding of a 'people's assembly', which the Town Council had not supported. It was agreed that whilst the Town Council should not be formally represented, individual councillors were free to make their own decision about attending.

**57. To consider donation request from the Vale and Downland Museum (Wantage)**

Councillor Hannaby made a statement in support of the application and left the meeting for this item. Councillor Cameron also indicated his support and left the meeting.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford  
SECONDED BY Councillor Walters  
IT WAS MOVED that the sum of £5,880 be provided to fund the Mill project, with the Town Council employing the contractors itself.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Third  
SECONDED BY Councillor Menzies  
IT WAS MOVED that the sum provided be amended to £7,500.

In a vote the amendment was defeated, two in favour, three against, In a vote the original proposition was unanimously approved,

The meeting closed at 8.05 p.m.

WPF