

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE BEACON, PORTWAY, WANTAGE ON MONDAY 27 MARCH 2023, AT 7.30 P.M.**

Councillors present: Councillor Major J Sibbald (Town Mayor)  
Councillors I R Cameron, A Crawford,  
A Dunford, T Gilhome, J T Hannaby, E L Johnson,  
P O'Leary, I L Sheldon, S Third, C Walters and V Wright.

Others present:

Clerk: W P Falkenau  
Deputy Clerk: S Sanders

**Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A C Menzies and C H Wills-Wright.

**Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and non-registrable interests.**

These were to be given as the meeting proceeded.

**To approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 13 March 2023**

The minutes were approved and signed.

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

None.

**87. Matters arising from the Council meetings held on 13 February and 13 March 2023**

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

The permanent pedestrianisation of the western end of the Market Place had been approved by the responsible County Council cabinet member. The County Council had also approved the departure from standards for Church Street and Alfred Street. This left the safety audit to be conducted.

**88. Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 13 February and 6 March 2023**

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

**89. Minutes of the Leisure and Amenities Committee meeting held on 27 February 2023**

27. To receive quotations for the removal of 37 leylandii tree from the cemetery

Subsequent to the meeting a lower quote had been received from another contractor.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Hannaby  
SECONDED BY Councillor Crawford  
IT WAS RESOLVED to accept the lower quote of £13,175.

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

**90. Minutes of the Promotion, Communication and Events Committee meeting held on the 20 March 2023**

31 a) Update on development of a Communication Strategy

The Community Strategy had been completed and published.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Sibbald  
SECONDED BY Councillor Dunford  
IT WAS RESOLVED that the Communication Strategy be adopted.

32 a) Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III

The Town Mayor reported that he intended to purchase pins, for school teachers, at his own expense.

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

**91. Minutes of the Policy, Management and Finance Committee meeting held on the 13 March 2023**

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

**92. To consider proposal to replace flag poles in the Market Place**

The existing poles had been in place for around thirty years and had never been maintained. They were now in a poor condition and damaged. Due to their age, it was proving difficult, if not impossible, to arrange repair and the cost was uncertain. Replacing the poles with new ones was regarded as the most straightforward option. Estimates in the region of £3,000 had been provided to replace, but with the possibility of some oncosts. Once replaced the two poles could be maintained on an annual contract at a cost of £250 each per annum.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Sibbald  
SECONDED BY Councillor Dunford  
IT WAS RESOLVED that the flag poles be replaced at a budget cost of £3,500.

It was agreed that a decision regarding a future maintenance contract be deferred for consideration by the Council after the election.

**93. General Correspondence**

None.

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

District Council

An issue had arisen concerning the open space management charges being levied on residents on the Kingsgrove Development. The charges did not appear to take account of the substantial \$106 contribution that the developer was obliged to pay.

County Council

The County Council was considering its response to the proposed reservoir. Election boundaries relating to the County Council were under review. The County Council was considering withdrawing school buses for some KA students travelling from the villages.

**95. Town Mayor's communications**

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

**Confidential item**

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.

**96. Town Clerk recruitment**

The Clerk had distributed a draft application pack. The document needed to be refined, in consultation with the Staffing Sub-committee, but the Clerk was seeking approval for the pay rate and working hours proposed. These were a pay rate of £22.62 per hour and 25 working hours per week.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Hannaby

SECONDED BY Councillor Sheldon

IT WAS RESOLVED to adopt the pay rate and the hours proposed in the draft application pack.

There was discussion about the need to purchase past town mayor badges for future incumbents. The Clerk was to progress the purchase. **Action: Clerk**

The Town Mayor was standing down as a town councillor and this was the last meeting before the election. He closed the meeting by thanking councillors and staff for their support to him as mayor over the past four years. The meeting thanked him for the work he had done during his term as mayor.

The meeting closed at 8.37 p.m.

WPF