

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE BEACON, PORTWAY, WANTAGE ON MONDAY 4 DECEMBER 2023, AT 7.30 P.M.

Councillors present: Councillor A Dunford (Town Mayor)
Councillors I Cameron, A Crawford, A Duveen, R Fitzjohn,
T Gilhome, J Hannaby, E Johnson, P Kirby-Harris, S Third,
L Todd, C Walters and V Wright

Others present: One member of the public

Clerk: J Evans

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Morris, and A C Menzies.

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

None.

49. To approve the extended absence of Cllr Menzies.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Dunford
SECONDED BY Councillor Walters
IT WAS RESOLVED that a further 6 months leave of absence be approved.

Clerk to inform Cllr Menzies and send best wishes.

Action: Clerk

50. To approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 October 2023

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

The minutes were signed. Cllr Kirby Harris to be added to the list of attendees.

Action: Clerk

51. Statements and Questions from the public

None.

52. Matters arising from the Council meeting held on 16 October 2023

- a) Consultation on Boundary Changes. A draft response had been circulated and revised divisions suggested. It was noted that the proposals did not affect the Town Council, only the polling areas. Cllr Cameron was thanked for his work on this matter.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Todd
IT WAS RESOLVED that the response be submitted making it clear that it was both a submission and a proposal.

Action: Clerk

53. Endorsement of the S106 application for a Community Bus Service.

The application had been circulated. The funds were required for both capital and ongoing running costs. A meeting was to be arranged with the S106 officer at the Vale.

Action: Clerk

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford

SECONDED BY Councillor Dunford

IT WAS RESOLVED to support the application for the release of S106 funds for a Community Bus Service.

54. Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 6 November 2023

The minutes were received. It was noted that officers were talking to Waitrose about CCTV cameras. Thomas Gill at the Vale had agreed to produce an additional map for the Neighbourhood Plan.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Johnson

SECONDED BY Councillor Cameron

IT WAS RESOLVED that Bluestone Planning be appointed to prepare the Basic Conditions Statement and Consultation Statement for the Neighbourhood plan.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Dunford

SECONDED BY Councillor Cameron

IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes be adopted.

Membership of the Planning Committee

Cllr Wright had asked to leave the committee. She agreed to be a named substitute. Cllr Hannaby volunteered to be a named substitute. Clerk to ask Cllr Morris if would also be prepared to be a substitute.

Action: Clerk

55. Minutes of the Leisure and Amenities Committee meeting held on 18 September 2023

A date for the Stockham Park site visit was to be arranged. Cllr Hannaby to circulate the date.

Action: Hannaby

Tree planting required permission from the landowner before work could commence. The allotment holders meeting had been very positive. The issue with the pump was not resolved as the drain clearing company could not get access to the site with their equipment. The bench and water butts at Stockham had been repaired.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Hannaby

SECONDED BY Councillor Fitzjohn

IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes be adopted.

56. Minutes of the Promotion, Communication and Events Committee meeting held on 20 November 2023.

Consideration was being given to extending the newsletter. A meeting with the Chamber of Commerce was to be arranged. The number of events to take place next year had been reduced. The Big Thank You in the Church had not been listed and was to be added to the next agenda. Higher quality flags were to be trialled. It was noted that the Dickensian evening was excellent.

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

57. Minutes of the Policy, Management and Finance Committee meeting held on the 13 November 2023

A survey that was to go out to the in the businesses in the west end pedestrianised area had been drafted. There were ongoing issues with the taxi drivers. Clerk to write to them to get a better understanding of their needs and to seek confirmation that they were in favour of pedestrianisation. Clerk to arrange a meeting with Lee Turner (Oxfordshire County Council). **Action: Clerk**

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby.
IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes be adopted subject to Cllr Walters' apologies being included.

58. Financial Statements to November 2023.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Dunford
SECONDED BY Councillor Crawford
IT WAS RESOLVED that the payments totalling £56,916 be approved.

59. Lease for Lark Hill Allotments

Clerk to check that the increase was in accordance with the lease. **Action: Clerk**

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson
IT WAS RESOLVED that the new lease be signed.

60. Town Mayor's allowance.

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Cameron
IT WAS RESOLVED that the Town Mayor's Allowance for 2024/25 be approved.

61. 2024/25 Budget and Precept.

The budget estimates were reviewed in detail. Clerk to provide a detailed understanding of the reserves before the next financial year. **Action: Clerk**

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Fitzjohn
SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby
IT WAS RESOLVED that the precept be increased by 4.5%.

62. General Correspondence

A member of the public had telephoned with a complaint about the cancellation of bus services due to flooding on the A417 at East Challow. People had experienced difficulties getting to work in the Faringdon area. It was noted that the new 68 bus provides an alternative route to the Faringdon area.

63. District and County Councillors' reports

Both the District and County Councils had been working on the 2024/25 budgets.

64. Town Mayor's communications

The Town Mayor reported on events and activities that she had attended: Trafalgar Night, AlfredFest which needed to be better advertised next year, the Lord Lieutenant's awards at Blenheim Palace and the Remembrance Parade. She had also attended The Snowman and a bingo event at East Hendred. She noted that the Mayor's carol service was coming up soon.

CONFIDENTIAL SESSION

65. Recommendations from the Staffing Committee meeting held on 28 November 2023.

The recommendations were reviewed. It was noted that two new posts were to be created for a parking/market attendant and a handyman, Clerk to draft job descriptions.

Action: Clerk

ON THE PROPOSITION of Councillor Dunford

SECONDED BY Councillor Crawford

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Staffing Committee recommendations be approved.

The meeting closed at 9.06 p.m.

JE