

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT
THE BEACON, PORTWAY
ON MONDAY, 13 MAY 2024, AT 7.30 PM**

Council members present: Councillors A Dunford (Mayor), I Cameron, C Walters, S Third, P O’Leary, J Hannaby, T Gilhome, E Johnson, A Crawford, K Morris, V Wright

Others present: Ten members of the public

Clerk: J Evans

Apologies for Absence: Councillors P Kirby-Harris, A Menzies, L Todd and R Fitzjohn

Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and any non-registrable interests.

None

Statements and questions from the public

None

1. Election of Town Mayor

Cllr Dunford nominated.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Cameron

SECONDED BY Councillor Walters

It was RESOLVED that Councillor A Dunford be Town Mayor.

2. Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Signed by the Town Mayor.

3. Election of Deputy Town Mayor

Councillor Cameron nominated.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Hannaby

SECONDED BY Councillor Gilhome

It was RESOLVED that Councillor Cameron be Deputy Town Mayor.

4. Appointment of Town Mayor’s Cadets.

Cadet Corporal Sophie Jenks was presented with certificate to thank her for her terms as Mayor’s Army Cadet.

Cadet Sophie Richens was appointed Mayor’s Army Cadet.

Flight Sergeant Jacob Topping will continue as Mayor’s Air Cadet

5. Appointment of Standing Committees and election of Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford

SECONDED BY Councillor Walters

It was RESOLVED that Standing Committees, Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman be appointed as follows:

a. Planning Committee

Councillors I Cameron (Vice-Chair), A Crawford, T Gilhome, E Johnson (Chair), A Menzies, S Third, K Morris

b. Leisure and Amenities Committee

Councillors A Duveen, R Fitzjohn, J Hannaby (Chair), P Kirby-Harris, A Menzies, P O’Leary, S Third (Vice-Chair), L Todd, C Walters

c. Promotion, Communication and Events Committee

Councillors A Crawford, A Dunford, T Gilhome (Chair), V Wright (Vice-Chair)

d. Policy, Management and Finance Committee

All Councillors,
A Crawford (Chair), S Third (Vice-Chair)

e. Health Committee

Councillors A Crawford, A Dunford, R Fitzjohn, J Hannaby (Chair), V Wright (Vice Chair), C Walters,
Other members: R Batsone, J Leggott, J Hutchinson, J Maberley, J Parker, J Hanna (OCC), M Swain, S Thwaite, P Barrow, S Stephenson (GroW)

f. Climate Emergency Committee

Councillors A Dunford, P Kirby-Harris (Vice-Chair), E Johnson, K Morris, C Walters, V Wright (Chair)

g. Staffing sub-committee

Councillors A Crawford (Vice-Chair), A Dunford (Chair), T Gilhome, J Hannaby, E Johnson

h. Community Bus working group

Councillors I Cameron, T Gilhome, J Hannaby
Other members: P Barrow

6. It was proposed that all councillors be substitutes for all committees subject to the conditions set out in the standing orders.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Hannaby
SECONDED BY Councillor Dunford

It was RESOLVED that all Cllrs be substitutes for all committees subject to conditions.

Clerk to set out the conditions.

Action: Clerk

7. Appointment of members on joint committees:

a. Wantage and Grove Traffic Advisory Committee

Councillors S Third, I Cameron, T Gilhome, J Hannaby
Other Members S Thwaite for the mobility group.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford
SECONDED BY Councillor Cameron

It was RESOLVED the appointment of members of joint committees.

8. Appointment of representatives on other bodies:

- a. Vale and Downland Museum (Wantage) Councillor Cameron
- b. Letcombe Brook Project Councillors Fitzjohn, Gilhome and Kirby-Harris
- c. Vale Community Impact Councillor Walters
- d. Parish transport representative Councillors Cameron, Gilhome and Todd
- e. Executive Committee of Wantage, Grove and District Twinning Association Councillor Hannaby
- f. Dickensian Evening Working Party Councillors Hannaby, O’Leary and Third
- g. Friends of Sweatbox Councillors Kirby-Harris and Menzies
- h. Wantage and Grove Community Led Children’s Services Councillor Walters
- i. Trustee of Robert Stiles Almshouse Councillor Johnson

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford

SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson

It was RESOLVED the appointment of representatives on other bodies.

9. To approve and sign minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 March 2024, and consider matters arising.

Approved and signed.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford

SECONDED BY Councillor O’Leary

It was RESOLVED to sign the minutes.

10. To receive and consider the minutes of the Promotion, Communication and Events Committee meeting held on 18th March 2024.

Approved and signed.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Gilhome

SECONDED BY Councillor Dunford

It was RESOLVED to sign the minutes.

11. To approve the extended absence of Councillor A Menzies.

Approved for another 6 months.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Gilhome

SECONDED BY Councillor Cameron

It was RESOLVED to extend absence of Councillor Menzies

12. To consider financial statements and bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024.

These were reviewed and approved.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Hannaby

SECONDED BY Councillor Crawford

It was RESOLVED to approve financial statements as at 31 March 2024.

13. To receive the internal audit report for 2023/24.

It was noted that the risk assessment had not been reviewed in 2023/24.

Clerk to review and update. To be completed by end July, along with the other matters raised by the auditor.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor O’Leary

SECONDED BY Councillor Morris

It was RESOLVED to review and update the risk assessment and matters raised by the auditor.

Action: Clerk

14. To review the Asset Register.

Reviewed and approved.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford

SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby

It was RESOLVED that the Asset Register was reviewed and approved.

15. To review and approve the Annual Governance Statement.

Reviewed, approved and signed.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford

SECONDED BY Councillor Third

It was RESOLVED that the Annual Governance Statement was approved and signed.

16. To review and approve the Annual Accounting Statement.

Reviewed, approved and signed

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford

SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby

It was RESOLVED that the Annual Accounting Statement was approved and signed.

- a. Adjustment to Year-End creditors to be noted. Noted

17. To set the dates for the Notice of Public Rights.

The dates were set at 3rd June to 12th July inclusive.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford

SECONDED BY Councillor Crawford

It was RESOLVED that the dates for the Notice of Public Rights be set.

18. To consider the Financial Statements for April 2024.

Reviewed and approved.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor O’Leary

SECONDED BY Councillor Gilhome

It was RESOLVED that the Financial Statements for April 2024 are approved.

19. To approve the renewal of the Council’s Insurance policy.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford

SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby

It was RESOLVED to renew the Council's Insurance Policy

20. District and County Councillors' reports.

a. County Councillors report:

HOSC had been working hard on the hospital project. The NHS was asking the commissioners to establish what could be bought into the hospital. They are also working with the GPs to see what could go to the Health Centre.

An officer with a team was in place to look at rail services.

The 20mph scheme was now due in September because of the need for updated electrical services.

Cllrs Hannaby and Hanna were thanked for their hard work on the hospital project. Cllr Wright was thanked for her work on the stakeholder group.

b. District Councillors report:

Work was due to start on the Beacon car park soon. It was likely to be disrupted for some time.

Contracts had been signed for the decarbonisation of the leisure centre. The work yet to be scheduled. The 1st phase should be finished by September.

Five of the biggest contracts at the Vale were coming up for renewal soon. The insourcing of the Capita contract was continuing. This was likely to take a lot of officer time.

21. Town Mayor's communications.

It had been a fun year with lots to do. She had been involved in lots of different activities. The dragon at the St George's day event was very good

22. Condolences

Condolences were sent to the family of Alan Sykes who had passed away at the weekend. His contribution was recognised. Mr Sibbald suggested a posthumous Pride of Wantage for Alan Sykes. Cllr Dunford to consider this. He also noted that the national president of the RBL had passed away.

Action: Cllr Dunford

23. Civic Visit to Seesan

Members were asked to let the Mayor know if they were interested in attending. The event was to be opened up to the community. It was noted that the older scouts go over every year and suggested they were invited.

24. Confidential

Ownership of public open space at Kingsgrove. Details had been circulated to all members. The area was Approx 16 hectares and was a distinct space. There is likely to be additional work for staff costs of which could be claimed from S106. There was a question about drainage and the Council area of responsibility. The path would be a maintenance overhead as well. There was a need to understand the ongoing costs. The sums available were outlined. It was suggested that negotiations be opened with the Vale and St Modwen. It was agreed to take this forward. Cllr Crawford and the Clerk to discuss the next steps. It will require a deed of variation for S106 contributions. It was noted that ownership was on 125-year lease.

Action: Clerk & Cllr Crawford

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford
SECONDED BY Councillor Walters

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It was RESOLVED to negotiate with the Vale and St Mowden.

25. To consider establishing a Clerk's Imprest Account for the payroll payments.

This was approved with a balance of £20k.

Action: Clerk

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Gilhome
SECONDED BY Councillor Cameron

It was RESOLVED to establish a Clerk's Imprest Account for the payroll payments.

The meeting closed 20.47pm
