

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE POLICY MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE
COMMITTEE OF WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE BEACON, PORTWAY,
WANTAGE, ON MONDAY 10 JUNE 2024 AT 7.30PM

Committee members Present: Councillors A Crawford, E Johnson, L Todd, I Cameron, P O’Leary,
S Third, K Morris and V Wright

Others present: 6 members of the public

Clerk: J Evans

Apologies for absence: Councillors C Walters, J Hannaby, A Dunford (Mayor), A Menzies,
T Gilhome and R Fitzjohn

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

None.

1. To approve the minutes of the meeting held 11 March 2024.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor O’Leary
SECONDED BY Councillor Cameron
IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes be approved and signed

2. To approve the Terms of Reference of the PM&F Committee

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Cameron
SECONDED BY Councillor Third
IT WAS RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference of the PM&F Committee are approved

3. Statements and questions from the public.

None

4. Matters arising from the minutes:

- a) Registration of council land with HM Land Registry. **Complete. Closed.**
- b) Update re community bus service working group. Two meetings were being arranged on 3rd July in Silver Band Hall and on 10th July @ The Beacon. They were being advertised in the Newsletter, posters will be distributed, and details will go on social media.
- c) Asset of Community Value - Wantage Community Hospital and allotment sites. In progress. Hospital – EJ noted that the survey response could be used as evidence along with the report put together from the NHS about the number of people who would be supported by the hospital
- d) Review of committee arrangements. **There was ongoing discussion about the role of the TAC. It was referred to the planning committee. CLOSED.**

5. Briefings by applicants for donations and grants

- a) Wantage Guiding. Helen Birchall.

They asked for £5.5k the grant was requested for repairs to Adkin Memorial Hall. They have had a leaking roof. The work had already been completed at a cost of £2400 but they still need to make good. They did not yet know what the total cost would be as they were struggling to get quotes for the work. Some of the money for the repair had come from the covid grant. They were asked why they did not receive

any S106 funding. Ms Birchall thought it was due to lack of information. The only other group who used the hall was the Wantage wine club who paid for their usage.

b) Wilts & Berks Canal Trust.

Valerie Scatchard. The grant was for money for the refurbishment of the Sack House. This is one of the last remaining buildings associated with the canal and it is very damp and cold. It is open to the public at weekends. They were seeking funds to help with the cost of materials – volunteers will do the work. Specialist paint will be required for the inside.

c) Wantage Town Football club.

AC declared an interest. This was an additional request in order to cut down some unsafe trees by St Mary's. All of their funds had been put toward the other major projects they are working on. A tree surgeon and the tree officer from the Vale who had informed them that the trees were unsafe. The felled trees would be replaced in a difference location. Clarification on the location of the trees was requested.

e) Mental Health Natters.

The group was based in Abingdon and supported families who were struggling with mental health and school attendance. They have now opened an office in Wantage and want to offer parent wellbeing sessions here. Parents were able to directly refer rather than going through professionals. They support families rather than just the young person, so they offer slightly different support to other groups. It was noted that they are supporting 2 families from Wantage, and this would expand if a grant was awarded. The group was for Wantage and Grove, but they had not yet approached Grove Parish Council, nor had they applied elsewhere for grant funding.

Policy

6. To consider flying the Ukrainian flag in the Marketplace contrary to the Council's flag policy.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Cameron

SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Ukrainian flag fly in the market place

7. To consider signing the Civility and Respect pledge.

There were concerns about the training and about calling out bullying and harassment. It would not be easy to define. It was agreed to sign up to the pledge.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Wright

SECONDED BY Councillor O'Leary

IT WAS RESOLVED that Wantage Town Council sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge

8. Management and Finance

9. To receive the finance report.

The report had been circulated. There was a question about the museum funding. The report was received.

10. Accounts for Payment.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Cameron
SECONDED BY Councillor Wright
IT WAS RESOLVED that the accounts were paid

11. To review the Barclaycard payments for April and May.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Johnson
SECONDED BY Councillor O'Leary
IT WAS RESOLVED that the Barclaycard payments were reviewed

Confidential items

Councillor Crawford proposed to move into confidential session.

12. Grant application requests.

It was felt that some of the applications were lacking in detail. It was noted that the grant policy needed to be reviewed there was to be a requirement for a minimum amount of information to accompany applications.

- a) Wantage Guiding. Requested £5.5k. It was proposed that the cost of the roof be covered. £2400 was awarded. Funds to be taken from the CIL fund.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Johnson
SECONDED BY Councillor O'Leary
IT WAS RESOLVED that the £2400 grant be awarded

- b) Wilts & Berks Canal Trust. Requested £500. Awarded. To come from the CIL fund.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Johnson
SECONDED BY Councillor Wright
IT WAS RESOLVED that the £500 grant be awarded

- c) Additional donation from Wantage Town Football Club. AC declared interest & left the room. Requested £2950. Bank account details were to be requested before awarding a grant. There was a need to know how they spent the previous award. Clarification was required on the location of the trees and whose land they were on. Finance details to include an analysis of funds in the bank and projected outgoings. Ask for details of the condition of the trees from the Vale tree officer.

Written evidence was required that there is a safety issue with the trees. Add to next PM&F agenda. **Action: Clerk**

d) Mental Health Natters.

Requested £3460. This was reduced to £2810. Insufficient information had been provided. It needed to be made clear that any funds we gave were only for the benefit the people of Wantage. Given the issues around mental health, it was felt that they should be supported especially as they were tackling a niche that wasn't covered elsewhere. An award of £1405 was proposed, which would support one session, on the basis that they make best endeavours to ensure that the funding was going to Wantage residents. They were to make a brief report back to the Council after the sessions had been held.

Motion carried (not unanimous).

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Third
SECONDED BY Councillor Cameron
IT WAS RESOLVED that the £1405 grant be made

13. West End traffic survey and next steps.

It was noted that there had been no progress, and it might soon be necessary to carry out the survey again. A meeting was being arranged with taxi drivers and also a meeting with OCC. It was noted that there was a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce to meet the new Chair. Councillors Wright, Third and Kirby-Harris offered to attend. Councillors Morris & Johnson will also try and attend.

14. Update on plans to pedestrianise western end of Market Place.

Covered above.

The meeting closed at 9.52 pm