

**MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 7 October 2019

At 7.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor D Enright (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	V Gwatkin
	L Ashbourne	A D Harvey
	T Ashby	M Jones
	R Bolger	J King
	D Butterfield	A McMahon
	O Collins	A Prosser
	L Duncan	R Smith
	H Eaglestone	D Temple
Officers:	Nicky Cayley	Democratic Services Officer
	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
Others:	no members of the public.	

393 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

394 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

395 **MINUTES**

The Council received and considered the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 29 July 2019.

- a) **RESOLVED:** to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2019 with the amendment on page 2, minute 371 b) to state that the Chair of Halls and Green Spaces was in attendance.
- b) **MATTERS ARISING:** there were no matters arising from the minutes to be discussed at the meeting.

396 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present for this item.

397 **PRESENTATION FROM HOME START**

The Chair welcomed Katherine Barber who gave a presentation on the work of Home Start. She explained that the organisation was very keen to have a Home Start Champion as an ambassador from the Town Council, and it was hoped that the Town Council may be able to help with funding directly and also indirectly by putting the organisation in touch with other available funding in the district.

Members thanked Ms Barber for a very informative presentation.

RESOLVED: that the presentation from Home Start be noted and that Cllrs Aitman and Smith share the role of "Home Start Champion". Financial assistance could be considered at a future meeting.

Katherine Barber left the meeting at this point.

398 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

The Town Clerk advised that PC Cochrane had now been relocated and it had not been possible to arrange for another member of the force to attend the meeting.

399 **AN UPDATE FROM WITNEY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

Cllr Jane Doughty – Vice Chair of West Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr Doughty gave an update of her work on the District Council. Of particular note was the tarmac resurfacing at the Burwell shops. The County Council had sorted the wall out and now WODC had renewed the tarmac. The white lining would be done soon and the pathways would be the next thing to be addressed. Disappointing news was that the Burwell Community garden apple tree had been completely stripped of fruit.

Cllr Doughty stated that residents were asking for a bus shelter where one had been removed. The Town Clerk advised that two would be put in – one at Abbey Road and one by the shops, but Officers were currently trying to source an anti-vandal option, as the one at the shops had been removed due to constant vandalism.

Cllr David Harvey – West Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr Harvey reported that he had been appointed Climate Change Portfolio holder for West Oxfordshire. Work had already started and the Council was committed to reducing carbon emissions both now and in the future. The Council had been interviewing for a Climate Change Manager who would work directly for it rather than Publica or Ubico, and should be appointed in the next few days.

There had already been an initial meeting with another to follow in which they would be looking at Zero Carbon Estates. WODC would be holding a second Water Day for multi agencies and the public.

Cllr Rosa Bolger- West Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr Bolger reported that she had been looking at moving finances away from investments connected with fossil fuels. She had also been speaking to the Town Clerk to ensure that the Town Council's investments were ethical.

Cllr Joy Aitman – West Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr Aitman reported that she had attended meetings about children with special needs.

Cllr Luci Ashbourne – West Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr Ashbourne reported that a paper had been presented to members on how the Council was preparing for a "No Deal" Brexit. A risk assessment had been sent to councillors.

The Town Clerk advised that she had received apologies from Cllr Laura Price from Oxfordshire County Council, who was unable to attend the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the verbal updates be noted.

400 **REPORT BACK FROM COUNCILLORS ON WORK WITH EXTERNAL BODIES WHERE THEY SERVE AS THE TOWN COUNCIL'S NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVE**

Cllr Bolger reported that she had been to an Oxfordshire Association of Local Council's (OALC) meeting.

RESOLVED: that the update from Cllr Bolger be noted.

401 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

a) PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – 13 AUGUST, 3 SEPTEMBER, 24 SEPTEMBER 2019

The Chair of the Committee presented these minutes to the Council and moved their acceptance.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Planning and Development Committee of 13 August, 3 September and 24 September 2019 be received and any recommendations therein be approved.

b) HALLS AND GREEN SPACES COMMITTEE – 9 SEPTEMBER 2019

The Chair presented these minutes to the Council and moved their acceptance. A member queried if a budget had been set for the Corn Exchange Working Party. The Town Clerk explained that this had been approved via the Policy, Governance and Resources Committee and had been minuted.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Halls and Green Spaces Committee of 9 September 2019 be received and any recommendations therein be approved.

c) STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 16 SEPTEMBER 2019

The Chair of the Committee presented these minutes to Council and moved their acceptance. A member queried resolution 2 under minute number C371 and stated that they had thought that a draft policy on pesticide use had been requested. The Town Clerk advised that due to the crossover in the nature of this issue, it had also been dealt with by the Halls and Green Spaces Committee. STRI had been commissioned to write a report which would encompass this and would go back to that Committee.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee of 16 September 2019 be received and the recommendations therein be approved.

d) POLICY, GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE – 22 SEPTEMBER 2019

The Chair of the Committee presented these minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee of 22 September 2019 be received and the recommendations therein be approved.

e) CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING PARTY – 11 SEPTEMBER 2019

The Chair of the Working Party presented these minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Members thought that a recommendation had been made to write to WODC about improving the carbon footprint of their existing housing stock, but could not see this reflected in the minutes of the meeting.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Climate Change Working Party held on 11 September 2019 be received and any recommendations therein be approved, and that the Council writes to WODC about the existing housing stock in terms of carbon footprint.

402 COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND MEMBERSHIP

The Council received and considered the report of the DSO.

RESOLVED:

1. that the recommendation of the Climate Working Party: *to combine the Climate and Nature and Wildlife Working Parties into the "Climate and Biodiversity Sub Committee"* be agreed;
2. that the membership of the Climate and Biodiversity Sub Committee be as follows:

J Aitman	R Bolger	D Enright	L Duncan
A D Harvey	A Prosser	R Smith	D Temple
3. that Cllr Collins replaces Mr License for the Stronger Communities Committee and Cllr Gwatkin replaces Mr License for the Planning and Development Committee;

4. that Cllr Butterfield replaces Mr License on the Disciplinary and Grievance Sub Committee;
5. that Cllr Ashbourne replaces Mr License on the Traffic Advisory Committee;
6. that Cllr Aitman be appointed the representative for West Oxfordshire Community Transport.

403 **MOTIONS**

The Council received and considered two motions as follows:

1. Start Times of Meetings

In line with Standing Order 23, we the undersigned request that the resolution arising from minute no. 181 of the Annual Council meeting held on 15 May 2019 be overturned *“that the timetable of meetings as circulated be approved subject to the start times of meetings being changed to 7pm.”*

And that the following **Special Motion** be accepted:

This Council notes:

- a) That since May 2019, committee and sub-committee meetings have been moved from their previous start time of 6pm to their new time of 7pm.
- b) That this change has had a considerable detriment on the officers and staff of the Council, negatively affecting both their work-life balance and, as a result, their ability to carry out their duties to maximum efficiency (as per reports at the last Policy, Governance and Finance Committee and Personnel Sub-Committee).

This Council resolves:

- a) That staff welfare and wellbeing should be of paramount priority when setting the times for meetings of committees, sub-committees, and working parties.
- b) That therefore, with immediate effect for the next cycle of meetings, timings shall be moved from 7pm back to their original start time of 6pm (with the exceptions of Full Council and Policy, Governance and Finance Committee.)

Proposed: Cllr O Collins

Seconded: Cllrs L Ashbourne, M. Jones, D. Enright

2. Flag Flying

This Council notes that:

- a) With Brexit at the top of the political agenda, dominating the headlines and with the government in disarray after years of trying to negotiate a deal with the European Union, our political system is leaving many to feel powerless and excluded from the key decisions that affect them;
- b) There is a real possibility that the UK may crash out of the EU without a deal on the 31st October 2019, or on a date soon after, this council recognises that this uncertainty is damaging to our economy both locally and nationally;

c) The relationships with our European twin towns, Unterhaching and Le Touquet are ones we are proud of and we value their continued comradeship

d) Our town of Witney and our residents will be hugely affected by whatever deal or no deal is reached and as the town council our moral obligation is to do everything in our power to bring unity and a sense of being to our community;

In light of the above, this Council therefore resolves to:

1. Commit to continuing our proud, strong and comradesly relationships with our European twin towns, Unterhaching and Le Touquet
2. As a show of solidarity to our twin towns, fly the flags of Unterhaching and Le Touquet from the Witney Town Hall on 31st October 2019, or whatever day the UK leaves in European Union
3. Invite our residents to celebrate the relationship we all have with our twin towns at this time of uncertainty

Proposed: Cllr R Bolger

Seconded: Cllr J Aitman

RESOLVED:

1. that motion one, as presented by Cllr Collins, be passed with 16 members in favour and one against;
2. that the second motion, as presented by Cllr Bolger, be passed with the following amendments:
 - "Government" in a) is changed to parliament
 - "Witney" is inserted between Unterhaching and Le Touquet in c)
 - "at this time of uncertainty" is removed from the final sentence.

404 **CONSULTATIONS**

The Council received and considered the Oxfordshire Growth Board Survey and the National Highways and Transport (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey.

RESOLVED: that the Oxfordshire Growth Board Survey be completed personally by members and that Cllr Smith responds to the National Highways and Transport (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey in conjunction with the Town Clerk on behalf of the Council.

405 **CONCLUSION OF AUDIT FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2019**

The Committee received and considered the notice of the conclusion of audit for the year ended 31 March 2019.

RESOLVED: that the Council notes that the Council's External Auditor – Moore Stephens – has completed the review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability

Return for year ended 31 March 2019, and in their opinion the information is in accordance with the Proper Practices (external Audit Report and Certificate 2018/19).

406 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received and considered the report by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor added that the In-Bloom results had come in and Witney had achieved a silver award for the Town and a gold for The Leys. She commended the work of Officers and also the contractors.

RESOLVED: that the Civic Announcements be noted.

407 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

There was no communication from the Leader.

408 **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence for consideration.

409 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Cllr Prosser asked what had happened to the mission statement as he thought it was being considered that evening. The Town Clerk advised that she had not been passed the strategic plan by the Council's Leadership, but it would be put on a suitable agenda as soon as she received it.

410 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: that in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

411 **PROPERTY MATTERS**

The Town Clerk gave a confidential verbal update on some property matters.

RESOLVED: that the confidential verbal update from the Town Clerk be noted.

412 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

The Mayor reported that he had with the Town Clerk, sealed a new lease of the Cemetery Lodge to Kenmar Estates that morning.

RESOLVED: that the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to the lease of the Cemetery Lodge to Kenmar Estates.

The meeting closed at: 8.35 pm

Chair