

**MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 14 February 2022

At 7.00 pm in the Main Hall, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor J Aitman (Chair)

Councillors:	L Duncan	D Enright
	L Ashbourne	V Gwatkin
	T Ashby	A McMahon
	D Butterfield	A Prosser
	O Collins	R Smith
	H Eaglestone	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Simon Wright	Democratic & Legal Services Officer
Others:	One member of the public.	

63 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bolger, Harvey, Jones, King and Temple

64 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Enright declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 15 – Correspondence by virtue of his membership of the Cabinet at Oxfordshire County Council who would be considering the Burford Experimental Traffic Order.

65 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 6 December 2021 and 5 January 2022 were approved and adopted.

66 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Council adjourned for this item.

Mr M Meadowcroft, Keep on Dancing, addressed the Council concerning arrangements for the weekly tea dance that was held in the Corn Exchange.

The Committee reconvened following this item

67 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

There was no update from Thames Valley Police.

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

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

Councillor Enright reported that OCC had agreed their budget with a 4.99% rise in the precept. Spending was proposed to be focused on Adult Social Care and Youth Services.

It was further reported that a rail feasibility study, including Witney, had been commissioned and there was also to be a consultation undertaken on travel in the county.

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)

Councillor Prosser advised that the survey regarding recreation and sports had been completed and a strategy was scheduled to be considered in March.

Councillor Aitman reported that the district council would be considering its budget at a meeting on 23 February.

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

Witney Educational Foundation (WEF)

Councillor Duncan advised that WEF had some funding available for schools to plant trees for the Platinum Jubilee. It was noted that this could be considered by the Platinum Jubilee Working Party in due course.

Witney Town Charity

Councillor Aitman reported that the charity had funding available and encouraged councillors to make organisations aware.

Councillor Smith highlighted that Fairtrade Fortnight would commence on 21 February and would be promoted at the 1863 Café bar. In addition, Councillor Smith reported on work being undertaken with young people by Witney Town Band.

70 **APPOINTMENT TO WITNEY TAC**

Consideration was given to the report of the Democratic & Legal Services Officer.

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Ashby be appointed to fill the vacancy on the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee.

There being no other nominations it was:

Resolved:

That, Councillor T Ashby be appointed to serve on the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee

71 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 17 JANUARY 2022**

The Vice-Chair of the committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

In respect of Minute No. H25 members sought clarification regarding arrangements for the tea dance following the submission under public participation. It was explained that a charge of £2.50 was made for participants as a contribution towards the costs incurred by the Town Council but this did not fully cover all expenses. It was confirmed that the person providing music was paid through the Town Council payroll.

It was proposed and agreed that a meeting be held between the organisers of the tea dance, officers and representatives of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee to look at the ongoing operation of the event.

Resolved:

1. That the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 17 January 2022 be received and any recommendations therein approved; and
2. That a meeting be arranged with the tea dance organisers to look at the future operation of the event.

72 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 10 JANUARY 2022**

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

In respect of Minute No. PR18 – Quarry Road Play Area a member, whilst acknowledging the recommendation, raised concern that the previously allocated funding for the play area had been removed and it would be a number of years before improvements were made. It was suggested that some small improvements could still be made without contradicting the Open Spaces Strategy and was likely to cost less than the previously allocated £5k.

In response it was explained that full programme of refurbishing play areas would be forthcoming in the strategy and the earlier allocation of £5k had been reallocated towards those works.

It was proposed, seconded and agreed that works at Quarry Road should be the top priority for any refurbishment scheme.

Resolved:

1. That the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 10 January 2022 be received and any recommendations therein approved; and
2. That in respect of the Open Spaces Strategy the refurbishment of Quarry Road Play Area should be the top priority.

73 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 24 JANUARY 2022**

The Chair of the committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 24 January 2022 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

74 **CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE - 25 JANUARY 2022**

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

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Advisory Committee meeting held on 25 January 2022 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

75 **POLICY GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE - 31 JANUARY 2022**

The Vice-Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

In respect of Minute No. F53 – Annual Town Meeting the Deputy Town Clerk advised that officers had looked at possible dates and it was suggested that the meeting be held on 25 April 2022. Discussion ensued regarding the proximity of the date to local elections and the impact of purdah. Alternative dates were considered together with the time needed to prepare for the meeting and the need to hold the meeting before the Annual Council Meeting.

It was proposed and seconded that the Annual Town Meeting be held on Monday 25 April 2022. On being put to the vote the proposition was carried with one abstention.

The Deputy Town Clerk updated members with regard to the Corn Exchange seating contract. It was explained that WODC Building Control had indicated that it would be necessary to lose seats for the provision of a disabled bay and the total seating capacity would therefore be 132.

Resolved:

1. That the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 31 January 2022 be received and any recommendations therein approved;
2. That, the Annual Town Meeting be held on Monday 25 April 2022; and
3. That, the revised seating numbers at the Corn Exchange be noted.

76 **20MPH SPEED LIMIT WORKING PARTY**

The minutes of the 20MPH Speed Limit Working Party were received and considered.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the 20MPH Speed Limit Working Party held on 25 January 2022 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

77 **FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL**

The Council considered whether committee meetings should be held virtually from February 2022 meaning they would revert to being advisory with delegations in place for urgent matters.

Members considered that this should be supported as it allowed members and others who could not attend 'in person' meetings to participate. It was suggested, and agreed, that the situation should be reviewed at the next Council meeting.

Resolved:

1. That, the Council's cyclical committee meetings be held virtually from February 2022 and be advisory with delegations to the Town Clerk on any other urgent matters; and
2. That, the situation regarding meetings be reviewed at the next Council meeting.

78 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The report of the Town Mayor was received.

The Mayor advised that Mrs. Amanda Ponsonby, the former High Sheriff for Oxfordshire, had recently visited Witney and seen the refurbishment works at the Corn Exchange and new allotment provision at Windrush Place.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

79 **VANDALISM**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that there had been a Fly-tipping incident at the Leys Recreation Ground. There had also been a snapped gate for the external storage of the Town Hall.

Resolved:

That the update be noted.

80 **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that work to remove a tree at Eton Close had been completed.

It was further reported that Memorial Stability Testing would be undertaken at the Town Council cemeteries in mid-March.

Resolved:

That, the Health & Safety update be noted.

81 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

There were no communications to be reported.

82 **CORRESPONDENCE**

Burford Experimental Traffic Order (ETRO)

Correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council and Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group was received. It was noted that the ETRO would be reconsidered by the Cabinet on 15 February following a 'call in' request.

Note: Councillor Enright left the meeting during discussion on the above matter.

Witney Flood Investigation Report

A report from West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) in respect of flooding at Christmas 2020 was received.

It was acknowledged that the report related to the causes of the flooding but members considered that the effectiveness of the response needed to be reviewed as well and a letter should be sent to WODC accordingly. An inter-agency meeting was also scheduled to be held regarding the flooding.

Discussion ensued regarding specific sites and problems with sandbag provision and it was agreed that the issue of sandbags be added to the letter to WODC. Finally it was noted that any flooding works relevant to Town Council land would be considered separately.

Safer Streets

It was reported that a request had been received from the Safer Streets Partnership regarding funding from the scheme for the installation of lighting in town centre bus shelters. It was noted that there was limited funding and other projects were also being considered.

Members expressed their support for lighting to be installed subject to the necessary funding being available.

83 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no questions submitted.

84 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

Resolved:

To authorise the sealing of documents arising from Council resolutions and to note the sealing of:

86 - SSE PLC - Deed of easement underground cables, land to east of Station Lane – in duplication

87 - HM Land Registry – Transfer Deed – land known as Unterhaching Park & Woodland, Woodford Way

88 - Deed of covenant between West Oxfordshire District Council, Witney Town Council & The Charities Aid Foundation relating to the Overage Clause on land known as Unterhaching Park & Woodland, Woodford Way – in triplicate

The meeting closed at: 8.20 pm

Chair