

**MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 20 June 2022

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

Present:

Councillor L Duncan (Chair)

Councillors:	L Ashbourne	V Gwatkin
	T Ashby	M Jones
	D Butterfield	A Prosser
	O Collins	R Smith
	H Eaglestone	P Hiles
	D Enright	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
Others:	None	

302 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Aitman and D Harvey.

303 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

304 **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING**

The minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 11 May 2022 were approved and adopted.

In relation to minute number 207, Members confirmed they were content to continue with the format of meetings as agreed.

305 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

306 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

Members were advised Inspector C Ball of Thames Valley Police had submitted apologies for the meeting, but he had provided an update which was presented by the Deputy Town Clerk.

There was little to report, crime remained low although there had been a slight increase in cycle thefts which the police were working to address. The Platinum Jubilee celebrations and Witney Pride events had gone well and without incident.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

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

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

Councillor Enright advised OCC had received a good response to its recent consultation on the Local Transport & Connectivity Plan. Further discussions were taking place, but a strong policy had emerged which although would be challenging to deliver, would benefit the County for many years.

Councillor Enright also advised that progress had been made on A40 widening and improvements, especially on the approach to Oxford from the west. Planning was well advanced on the rest of the A40 scheme between Witney and Oxford, including discussions on bus lanes and the Eynsham Park & Ride Scheme.

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)

Councillor Enright updated Members on land at Langel Common. He confirmed funds had been raised by residents, to their credit, to purchase the land. The transfer to ensure it's future as a public space, administered by WODC, would be completed shortly.

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

There were no updates from Councillors on external bodies.

309 **CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING - 19 APRIL, 10 & 31 MAY 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 Committee meetings held on 19 April, 10 May and 31 May 2022 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

310 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 16 MAY 2022**

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

Cllr Gwatkin drew attention to minute number PR228 regarding a Leys Masterplan Task and Finish Group and proposed the membership as Cllrs V Gwatkin, M Jones, and D Butterfield. This was duly agreed by members.

Resolved:

1. That the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 16 May 2022 be received and any recommendations therein approved and,
2. That, the Council membership of the Leys Masterplan Task & Finish Group be confirmed as Cllrs V Gwatkin, M Jones, and D Butterfield.

311 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 23 MAY 2022**

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

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 23 May 2022 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

311A **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 30 MAY 2022**

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

Minute number SC250. The Deputy Town Clerk advised no further communication had been received on the Happy to Chat Bench so this would now be progressed by the Council.

Minute number SC260. In response to a Member, the Deputy Town Clerk advised the recommendation had been superseded by a later one by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. The organisers of the event had liaised with the Venue & Events Officer and preparations/advertising had taken place, including at local primary schools. The event was a pilot which would help the Council decide if it wanted to proceed with future annual events with the Oxford Playhouse.

Minute number SC257. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that, after further discussion the community use of the Town Hall windows should not be open to political Organisations and the final decision on requests would be at the discretion of the Town Council.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 30 May 2022 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

312 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE - 6 JUNE 2022**

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

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 6 June 2022 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

313 **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING - 25 APRIL 2022**

The Mayor presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Annual Town meeting held on 25 April 2022 be received and be adopted as a true record.

314 **ACCOUNTS & AUDIT (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2015 - ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2021/22**

The Council received the report of the Town Clerk & Chief Executive Officer concerning the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2021/22 under its obligations of the Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2015.

In her report the Town Clerk pointed out that Members take a collective responsibility for ensuring there is a sound system of internal control and in order to agree Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement she had provided explanations on how the Council achieved this.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2022 be approved, and formally adopted by the Council and,
3. That, the Statement of Accounts at Section 2 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2022 be approved, and formally adopted by the Council and,
4. That, in light of the above the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2021/22 be formally agreed and adopted by the Council and,
5. That, the unaudited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022 be noted.

315 **APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES - WITNEY TOWN CHARITY**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members were grateful for the confirmation provided by Witney Town Charity concerning Town Council nominated Trustees. There was discussion on who may be suitable to fill the outstanding positions and as the Charity required specifically experience, it was suggested the nominations could be opened to service groups and their users.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Town Council contacts targeted local groups and organisations to see if they may be able to put forward nominees for the positions.

316 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The report of the Town Mayor was received.

Cllr Duncan advised it had been a busy start to her term, which had included several Platinum Jubilee events. The Mayor expressed her thanks to staff, and in particular the Communications & Community Engagement Officer, for managing a range of events over the weekend. She had personally received lots of good feedback.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

317 **COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members welcomed the feedback which provided an idea of how projects and issues were being perceived by residents. It was confirmed that compliments regarding staff members were passed on to those concerned.

A member also passed on thanks which had been provided to her from the organisers of the Witney Music Festival.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

318 **HEALTH & SAFETY AND VANDALISM REPORT**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer had indicated there were no health & safety or vandalism issues to report.

319 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

There were no communications to be reported.

320 **STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE - REVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT ETHICAL STANDARDS (2019)**

Under correspondence, Members received a response from Robert Courts MP on Early Day Motion 691 concerning Standards in Public Life following a request from the Council that he supported the initiative.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

321 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no questions submitted.

322 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents sealed.

323 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS & 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.

324 **NATIONAL PROTOCOL**

The Council received the confidential report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

Resolved:

That, the confidential report be noted.

The meeting closed at: 7.28 pm

Chair