

**MEETING OF THE  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday, 1 August 2022**

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

**Present:**

Councillor L Duncan (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman T Ashby O Collins V Gwatkin A McMahon	A Prosser R Smith D Temple P Hiles
Officers:	Adam Clapton Sharon Groth Derek Mackenzie	Deputy Town Clerk Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	None.	

Before the meeting the Mayor Councillor L Duncan paid tribute to former Mayor Chris Holliday and led a one-minute silence.

**400 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Ashbourne, H Eaglestone, D Enright, D Harvey, and M Jones.

**401 REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION**

The council received and agreed to the request from Councillor D Harvey for a period of dispensation from meeting attendance.

**Resolved:**

That, the requested dispensation of at least three months be approved.

**402 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

**403 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2022 were approved and adopted.

404 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

405 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

Members received a verbal update from Inspector C Ball of Thames Valley Police.

The update indicated that crime was relatively low and a spate of anti-social behaviour reports in the Marriott's shopping area had resulted in several warnings being issued. Cycle thefts had reduced the police had launched a Summer Anti-Social behaviour incentive and were working with the Samaritans to reduce the reported instances of potential and actual suicides near the A40.

In response to questions from members it was confirmed that additional evening patrols were taking place which would take into account Town Council property. With regards to Graffiti, it was suggested that dedicated areas could be set aside for the purpose.

The Inspector advised all local policing vacancies were filled; however, they were experiencing some delay between leavers and new starters.

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal update be noted.

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

***West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)***

Councillor Aitman spoke on mental health issues, including the support being provided to Samaritans around suicide prevention, particularly amongst young men.

Councillor Aitman also advised that free entrance to leisure facilities was being provided to families in receipt of free school dinners. WODC were happy to include families with pre-school aged children as part of this scheme and members are encouraged to pass on details of any families.

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal updates be noted

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

Councillor Aitman advised the Witney Educational Foundation had put money aside to help Ukraine refugees who had been rehoused with computers.

Councillor Smith confirmed that Witney Town Band had performed at various events during the summer.

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal update be noted.

408 **CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE - 21 JUNE & 12 JULY 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 21 June and 12 July 2022 be received, and any recommendations therein approved.

409 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 27 JUNE 2022**

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

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 27 June 2022 be received, and any recommendations therein approved

410 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 4 JULY 2022**

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

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemetery & Allotments Committee meeting held on 4 July 2022 be received, and any recommendations therein approved

411 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 11 JULY 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 11 July 2022 be received, and any recommendations therein approved

412 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE - 18 JULY 2022**

The 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 18 July 2022 be received, and any recommendations therein approved

413 **EAST WITNEY WARD - POTENTIAL BY-ELECTION**

The Town Clerk/CEO advised that a by-election would be contested for the vacancy on East Ward on 25 August 2022.

Members noted that poll cards would be issued in line with previous council resolutions at cost to the Council.

**Resolved:**

That, the update of the Town Clerk./CEO be noted, and poll cards issued.

414 **STANDING ORDERS & CODE OF CONDUCT**

The council received a verbal report from the Deputy Town Clerk concerning a Standing Order review and a new Oxfordshire Code of Conduct for Members.

Due to resourcing issues the Standing Orders would now be reviewed at the next Full Council meeting in October.

A draft Councillor code of conduct, adopted by the County and District Councils had been circulated and members were encouraged to attend training on this which was being provided by the District Council's Monitoring Officer before it was officially adopted by the Town Council at the next meeting.

**Resolved:**

That, the report be noted.

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

The council received a verbal report from the Deputy Town Clerk concerning Town Council nominated Trustees on the Town Charity.

It was confirmed there were currently two vacancies with a third due in October. Members agreed that Mr J King should not continue in post following his term ending on 26th October 2022.

Interest has been received from local organisations in proposing nominees for the positions. Further information was expected so members agreed to defer a final decision subject to having additional information to enable them to make an informed decision.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, Mr J King is no longer endorsed as a Town Council Trustee following his term's expiration on 26th October 2022

3. That, final nominations are received along with accompanying documents for a final decision delegated to the Stronger Communities Committee at its meeting on 19 September 2022

416 **WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL REBRANDING**

The council considered the recommendation of the Stronger Communities committee on 11 July 2022 to adopt a new logo for administrative and livery purposes.

Members received confirmation that the project was within budget and that the new logo would be rolled out as per the implementation plan.

**Resolved:**

That, the new logo be adopted by Witney Town Council

417 **WITNEY HIGH STREET**

The council received a verbal report from the Deputy Town Clerk and were asked to consider how they could assist Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) in engaging with the town residents and stakeholders during the planning stage of this project

Members were very pleased that OCC wanted to host six workshops to hear people's views. This was a better way of engaging and would allow residents to ask questions of the planners rather than OCC asking for opinions via a postal or online consultation. A discounted rate for use of the Corn Exchange was agreed, with the actual cost being delegated to the Deputy Town Clerk. OCC should also consider using other halls across Witney to offer greater and more accessible engagement.

Members also believed that it was important for all members to encourage and advertise the consultation events via all available outlets so as to ensure that all residents and stakeholders have the opportunity to attend one of the events.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the Corn Exchange should be put forward as a location for the workshops. Arrangements and a discounted price being delegated to the Deputy Town Clerk.

418 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The report of the Town Mayor was received.

Councillor Duncan advised that June & July had been a busy period with several engagements. The Mayor had also attended the national In Bloom competition judging at Tower Hill Cemetery and Eton Close.

Councillor Duncan provided a verbal update on her meeting with St Marys Church Tower Captain regarding the church bells. They had asked for the council support in their £75,000 fundraising campaign to refurbish the tower, purchase two additional bells and make improvements to the historic church clock and carillon. Members agreed that Council should be supporting the promotion of the campaign.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report, and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the council supports the fundraising Campaign to refurbish the bell tower and bells.

419 **HEALTH, SAFETY & VANDALISM**

The council received a verbal update from the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members were advised that new signs were due imminently at Witney Lake which would support health and safety measures at the site.

The Committee also received an update on vandalism including reports at Tower Hill Cemetery and The Leys.

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal update be noted.

420 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

There were no communications to be reported.

421 **20MPH WITNEY PROPOSALS**

The council were advised by the Deputy Town Clerk that he was awaiting a reply from Oxfordshire County Council in respect of the implementation timetable for the new 20mph limits.

Members discussed at length what they would like from the implementation of the scheme in the way of signage and road marking. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the plan agreed is what would be implemented, and amendments were unlikely to be considered at this stage.

Inspector C Ball of Thames Valley Police (TVP) was asked for his comments in respect of the changes to the speed limit. He explained that enforcement would be an issue however, he encouraged the council to support the introduction of voluntary Speedwatch scheme(s) in the town as these provide data to TVP for them to target areas or repeat offenders who will then receive a visit from TVP. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that Speedwatch was a subject considered by the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC).

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal report of the Deputy Town Clerk be noted.

422 **WITNEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

The Chair provided a verbal update, summarizing a response from the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council to a letter circulated from Witney Chamber of Commerce.

**Resolved:**

That, the update from the Chair be noted.

423 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

In response to a comment, the Leader complemented the marvellous performance of the England women's football team following their victory in the Euro 2022 Final.

424 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents sealed.

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The meeting closed at: 8.10 pm

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Chair