

**ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Wednesday, 17 May 2023

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

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	J Doughty
	T Ashby	D Edwards-Hughes
	R Smith	G Meadows
	D Enright	D Newcombe
	A Bailey	J Robertshaw
	R Crouch	S Simpson
	G Doughty	J Treloar
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Nigel Warner	Responsible Financial Officer
Others:	12 members of the public.	

229 **ELECTION OF MAYOR**

The retiring Mayor, L Duncan invited nominations for the position of Town Mayor for the ensuing municipal year. Cllr Collins was nominated and duly elected Mayor by the Council.

Resolved:

1. That, Cllr Owen Collins be elected Chair of Witney Town Council/Town Mayor for the ensuing municipal year.

The Town Clerk/C.E.O. advised that the Declaration of Acceptance of Office would be signed following the meeting.

230 **ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR**

The new Chair invited nominations for the position of Deputy Town Mayor for the ensuing municipal year. Cllr G Meadows was nominated and duly elected Deputy Mayor by the Council.

Resolved:

1. That, Cllr Georgia Meadows be elected Deputy Town Mayor for the ensuing municipal year.

The Town Clerk/C.E.O. advised that the Declaration of Acceptance of Office would be signed following the meeting.

231 **ELECTION OF LEADER**

The Chair invited nominations for the position of Leader of the Town Council. Cllr R Smith was nominated and elected by the Council.

Resolved:

1. That, Cllr Ruth Smith be elected as the Leader of the Town Council for the ensuing municipal year.

232 **ELECTION OF DEPUTY LEADER**

The Chair invited nominations for the position of Deputy Leader of the Town Council. Cllr J Aitman was nominated and elected by the Council.

Resolved:

1. That, Cllr Joy Aitman be elected as the Deputy Leader of the Town Council for the ensuing municipal year.

233 **DESIGNATION OF MAYOR'S CHAPLAIN**

Resolved:

That, Rev'd Toby Wright be designated as Mayor's Chaplain (and effectively Chaplain to the Town Council) for the term of this Council.

234 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Cherry and D Temple.

235 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

236 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 April 2023 were received and considered.

Resolved:

1. That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 April 2023 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

237 **ADOPTION OF MEETINGS CALENDAR 2023-24**

The Council received the proposed calendar of meetings for the ensuing municipal year.

Resolved:

1. That, the calendar of Council meetings for 2023-24 be adopted.

238 **APPOINTMENT OF ANY NEW COMMITTEES IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 30**

There were no new committees to be appointed.

239 **REVIEW (OR REQUEST THE TOWN CLERK TO REVIEW) ANY TERMS OF REFERENCE**

There were no changes to the current Terms of Reference for Committees. Members were advised each committee would also have the opportunity to review their remits at the first meetings.

240 **APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES & WORKING PARTYS AND THE ELECTION OF CHAIRS**

Members received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk and considered the appointment of standing committees, sub committees, working parties and task & finish groups.

The following appointments were proposed, seconded, and agreed unanimously:

Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee

Cllr O Collins	Cllr R Smith	Cllr J Aitman
Cllr A Bailey	Cllr G Meadows	Cllr J Robertshaw
Cllr S Simpson	Cllr D Temple	

Chair of Committee: Cllr A Bailey

Parks and Recreation Committee

Cllr O Collins	Cllr R Smith	Cllr J Aitman
Cllr T Ashby	Cllr R Crouch	Cllr D Edwards-Hughes
Cllr D Newcombe	Cllr S Simpson	

Chair of Committee: Cllr D Newcombe

Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee

Cllr O Collins	Cllr R Smith	Cllr J Aitman
Cllr R Crouch	Cllr D Edwards-Hughes	Cllr D Enright
Cllr D Newcombe	Cllr J Treloar	

Chair of Committee: Cllr R Crouch

Stronger Communities Committee

Cllr O Collins	Cllr R Smith	Cllr J Aitman
Cllr T Ashby	Cllr A Bailey	Cllr L Cherry
Cllr J Doughty	Cllr G Meadows	

Chair of Committee: Cllr L Cherry

Policy, Governance & Finance Committee

Cllr O Collins
Cllr A Bailey
Cllr J Doughty

Cllr R Smith
Cllr L Cherry
Cllr D Newcombe

Cllr J Aitman
Cllr R Crouch

Chair of Committee: Cllr J Aitman

Personnel Sub-Committee

Cllr O Collins
Cllr A Bailey
Cllr D Newcombe

Cllr R Smith
Cllr L Cherry
Cllr J Doughty

Cllr J Aitman
Cllr R Crouch

Chair of Sub-Committee: Cllr R Smith

Disciplinary & Grievance Panel

Cllr G Doughty

Cllr D Enright

Cllr G Meadows

Inclusivity & Diversity Task & Finish Group

All Committee Chairs

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted and,
2. That the membership of the standing committees, sub committees, working parties and task & finish groups and their Chairs be agreed as detailed above.

241 **APPOINTMENT TO ADVISORY COMMITTEES & EXTERNAL BODIES/OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning nominations for advisory committees and external bodies/outside organisations.

The Chair sought nominations for vacancies on outside organisations all for a four-year term of office.

Witney Traffic Advisory Committee

Cllr J Aitman
Cllr T Ashby
Cllr S Simpson
Cllr R Smith

Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
(Larger Councils)

Cllr R Smith (Leader)

West Witney Sports & Social Club

Cllr D Newcombe
Cllr R Smith

Witney Town Band	Cllr O Collins
Witney District & Twinning Association	Cllr O Collins (Mayor) Cllr R Crouch Cllr J Doughty
West Oxfordshire Museum Centre	Cllr O Collins
St Mary's Church Preservation Trust	Cllr O Collins (Mayor)
Volunteer Link Up	Cllr J Aitman
RAF Brize Norton Local Consultation Working Group	Cllr D Newcombe
Witney Allotment Association	Cllr R Crouch
Witney Youth Council Mentors	Cllr G Meadows Cllr S Simpson Cllr J Treloar
Friends of the Cemeteries	Cllr J Doughty Cllr D Enright
Home Start Champions	Cllr J Aitman Cllr L Cherry Cllr S Simpson
Lower Windrush Valley Project	Cllr R Smith
West Oxfordshire Community Transport	Cllr S Simpson
Witney Fair Trade Action Group Champion	Cllr R Crouch

Nominees Serving as Trustees

The following were proposed as town council nominees to serve on outside bodies for four-year terms of office.

Witney Town Hall Charity	Cllr O Collins Cllr S Simpson
Witney Town Charity	Cllr G Meadows
Witney Educational Foundation (On expiration of Cllr J Aitman's term in July 2023)	Cllr L Cherry
Madley Park Hall Trust	Cllr J Aitman

The Town Clerk/C.E.O. also tabled correspondence from the Oxfordshire Association of Local Council's regarding the potential to nominate a member to its Executive Committee for West Oxfordshire District. Members agreed Cllr R Crouch should be nominated for this position.

Resolved:

3. That the report be noted and,
4. That the appointments to advisory committees & external bodies/outside nominations be agreed as detailed above.

242 **REVIEW OF COUNCIL POLICIES**

The Council noted the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations of the Town Council had been reviewed and formally adopted since January 2023.

243 **REVIEW OF ANY DELEGATION ARRANGEMENTS TO COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES, STAFF, AND OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

The Council was advised there were no delegations in place other than those in Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. The Scheme of Delegation would be reviewed and updated by Officers during the municipal year.

Resolved:

That, the update on delegation be noted.

244 **ADOPTION OF THE GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the criteria required for the Council to invoke the General Power of Competence.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Witney Town Council meets the criteria for eligibility, and therefore invokes the General Power of Competence.

245 **MEMBER'S CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Council received the Witney Town Council Code of Conduct.

Each member had to sign the code as part of their acceptance to office; adoption by the Council per resolution would reinforce the importance of the standards.

Resolved:

That, the Code of Conduct as presented be adopted by this Council administration and Councillors.

246 **COUNCIL BANK MANDATE**

The Council received and considered the joint report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O & Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) regarding the bank mandate of the Council following ordinary elections.

In line with financial regulations, the Council was required to appoint Councillor signatories for all payments over £5,000. The same principle applied to transactions relating to surplus funds held in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund and the Local Authorities Property Fund.

For business continuity purposes the Council also agreed two Councillors should be jointly appointed to deal with banking matters in the absence of the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, and RFO.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Members of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee elected at this meeting, namely; Cllrs R Smith, O Collins, J Aitman, A Bailey, L Cherry, R Crouch, J Doughty and D Newcombe be appointed as cheque signatories for all payments over £5,000 until the Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2027 and,
3. That, the same above Members be appointed as signatories on funds held in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund and Local Authorities Property Fund and,
4. That, Councillors R Smith and J Doughty be given joint authority to deal with matters relating to the bank in the absence of the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and RFO.

247 **COUNCILLOR ANNUAL ATTENDANCE REGISTER**

The Council received an annual attendance register for Members of the Council for the 2022-23 municipal year.

Resolved:

1. That, the annual attendance register for 2022-23 be noted.

248 **POSITION OF TOWN CRIER**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the position of Town Crier for Witney under the auspices of the Town Council.

Members were grateful for and recognised the valuable community and business contributions provided by the current incumbent, Mrs J Postlethwaite Dixon, and agreed she should continue in the role for a further four years. It was suggested the Council could advertise for a Deputy role.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Mrs J Postlethwaite-Dixon be re-affirmed as Witney Town Crier for the term of this Council and;
3. That, the role of Deputy Town Crier be advertised through appropriate channels.

The meeting closed at: 8.15 pm

Chair