

**MEETING OF THE  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday, 17 April 2023**

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

**Present:**

L Duncan (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	V Gwatkin
	L Ashbourne	A D Harvey
	T Ashby	M Jones
	O Collins	A Prosser
	H Eaglestone	R Smith
	D Enright	D Temple
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Nigel Warner	Responsible Financial Officer
Others:	None.	

190 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Hiles, D Thomas and D Butterfield.

191 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

192 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held 13 February 2023 were received.

A member requested clarification regarding the Witney Music Festival partnership agreement and potential liability placed on the Council, the member was not present and therefore unaware of it was approved by the Council at the meeting of 13 February 2023. It was confirmed the Memorandum of Understanding had been created to avoid any such issues occurring and had been agreed under minute item 93.

Councillor J Aitman requested that all councillors considered supporting the events being arranged by the Council to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles. Minute Item 101 related.

Councillor D Harvey advised that the water can misspelling was "Cementery" and not "Cemetery" as noted in minute item 104.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2023 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

193 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

194 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

Apologies were received from Inspector Ball that unfortunately a representative of the Witney Thames Valley Policing Team was unable to attend the meeting. No written or verbal report was provided.

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

**Oxfordshire County Council**

Councillor Enright provided an update advising that a decision regarding the Shores Green development in East Witney had been deferred to May due to the supply of information from South Leigh Parish Council.

**West Oxfordshire District Council**

Councillor Enright provided an update advising that WODC were close to securing a new tenant for the empty unit, previous occupied by Debenhams. He also expressed his delight with the umbrella decorations that added to the look for the shopping area.

Councillor Smith updated that the Audit Committee would analyse the results of the voting due to take place on 4 May 2023 in order to gather demographic information to assist with decision making. A lot of work has gone into ensuring voters were aware of the new requirements to provide Identification in order to vote.

Councillor Prosser advised members that the next stage of the Local Plan was due for decision the following week and that there has been good engagement with the consultation. The next stages were to call for sites for use as Green Space, renewable energy and housing.

Councillor Aitman asked members to provide any comments or feedback they had in respect of the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire & Berkshire West Integrated Care Partnership.

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal updates from Councillors be noted.

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

There were no reports from Councillors.

197 **CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE - 14 FEBRUARY, 7 MARCH & 28 MARCH 2023**

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 14 February, 7 March and 28 March 2023 be received, and any recommendations therein approved.

198 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 6 MARCH 2023**

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 6 March 2023 be received, and any recommendations therein approved.

199 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 13 MARCH 2023**

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 13 March 2023 be received, and any recommendations therein approved.

200 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 20 MARCH 2023**

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 20 March 2023 be received, and any recommendations therein approved.

201 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE - 27 MARCH 2023**

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 27 March 2023 be received, and any recommendations therein approved.

202 **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING - 15 MARCH 2023**

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

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Annual Town meeting held on 15 March 2023 be received and be adopted as a true record.

203 **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS REVIEW**

The Council received the amended Financial Regulations as recommended by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee per minute no. F158.

The adoption of the Financial Regulations was proposed by Councillor Ashbourne and seconded by Councillor Harvey.

Members voted and the proposal was carried unanimously.

**Resolved:**

That, the amended Financial Regulations be adopted by Witney Town Council.

204 **WORKING PARTY'S**

The council received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk in respect of the dissolution of the councils working parties along with smaller task and finish groups as their objectives had been achieved.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the council's Corn Exchange, 20mph and Platinum Jubilee Working parties be dissolved.
3. That, the smaller task and finish groups be dissolved on the completion of their objectives.

205 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received the report of the Mayor & Mayor's Secretary.

The Mayor thanked those councillors that attended the Civic Reception to celebrate the Citizen of the Year Awards which was the highlight of her term as Mayor.

**Resolved:**

That, the report be noted.

206 **TO AGREE A MAYOR ELECT**

The Council considered the election of a Mayor Elect. Members discussed at some length and merits of the election.

An agreement to elect a Mayor elect was proposed by Councillor Jones and seconded by Councillor Prosser.

Members voted. The proposal was carried, with voting as follows:

In Favour	9
Against	3
Abstentions	1

Further discussion ensued regarding the importance of ensuring that any candidates were hard-working and aware of the importance of a good social media presence. Upon completion, Councillor O Collins was proposed to be Mayor Elect by Councillor Jones and seconded by Councillor Gwatkin.

Members voted. The proposal was carried, with voting as follows:

In Favour	9
Against	3
Abstentions	1

**Resolved:**

1. That, a Mayor Elect be agreed and,
2. That, Councillor O Collins be Mayor Elect subject to a successful re-election to the Town Council on 4 May 2023.

207 **COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH SCHEME**

The council received the report and verbal update of the Deputy Town Clerk regarding a proposed speed watch scheme.

Members discussed the council providing support to establish the scheme which would include some administration and members were in favour providing it was made clear that responsibility lay with the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee (TAC).

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, administration support is provided by council staff to TAC in the establishment and administration of a Community Speedwatch Scheme..

208 **VANDALISM AND HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Council received the report and verbal update from the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members discussed the issues experienced relating to access from Ducklington Village to the Country Park either via the privately owned access road at the Allotment end or via the Scottish & Southern Electric owned access road.

Members requested that Witney schools were contacted to advise of anti-social behaviour in Tower Hill Cemetery and also the other areas of the town and to encourage their students to be more socially responsible.

Regarding Health & Safety events, Members heard that the council had completed the Fire Extinguisher assessment. A swing had been identified as unsafe in a recent inspection Which had led to the replacement of all swing chains across the Council's play areas.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, a letter is issued to Witney Schools regarding anti-social behaviour.

209 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

There was nothing to report in respect of Communications from the Leader.

210 **CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT**

The Council received correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council regarding the transfer of on-street parking enforcement that took effect on 1 April 2023.

**Resolved:**

That, the correspondence be noted.

211 **CIVILITY & RESPECT - ETHICAL STANDARDS REVIEW - STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE**

The Council received correspondence from the office of Robert Courts MP in response to his letter to Paul Scully MP concerning the Government response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Members were disappointed to see the errors in the letter and lack of further support to an Early Day Motion on the issue.

**Resolved:**

That, the correspondence be noted.

212 **THAMES VALLEY POLICE - NEW CHIEF CONSTABLE**

The Council received correspondence from Thames Valley Police advising of the appointment of Jason Hogg as the new Chief Constable.

Members asked that a letter of congratulations is sent to him along with an invitation to attend a meeting of the full council. All members were in favour.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the correspondence be noted.
2. That, a letter of congratulations is sent along with an invite to attend a meeting.

213 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no questions for the Leader.

214 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents sealed.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Mayor thanked Councillor D Harvey and Councillor H Eaglestone, for their longstanding service, along with all other councillors not standing in the upcoming elections. She also thanked all staff who guided the council through the COVID period to ensure the continued services for the town.

Councillor Gwatkin also received thanks for her support, leadership and dealing with official correspondence on behalf of the council.

Councillor Harvey reflected on his 25 years as a Councillor following his decision not to stand in the upcoming elections. He thanked the support of officers and staff during this time.

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The meeting closed at: 8.00 pm

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Chair