

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

**Held on Wednesday, 13 May 2020**

**At 7.00 pm Virtually via Zoom**

**Present:**

Councillor D Enright (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	V Gwatkin
	L Ashbourne	A D Harvey
	T Ashby	M Jones
	R Bolger	J King
	D Butterfield	A McMahon
	O Collins	A Prosser
	L Duncan	R Smith
	H Eaglestone	D Temple
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	Nicky Cayley	Democratic Services Officer
	Polly Inness	Communications & Events Officer
Others:	39 members of the public.	

**113 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR FOR 2020/21**

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

**RESOLVED:**

that Cllr Joy Aitman be elected Town Mayor for the ensuing municipal year.

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

**114 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2020/21**

Cllr Aitman, as Mayor took over the Chair of the meeting. She invited nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor for the ensuing municipal year. Cllr Duncan was nominated and elected by the Council.

**RESOLVED:**

that Cllr Liz Duncan be elected Deputy Town Mayor for the ensuing municipal year.

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

115 **ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FOR 2020/21**

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

**RESOLVED:**

that Cllr Luci Ashbourne be elected as the Leader of the Town Council for the ensuing municipal year.

116 **ELECTION OF DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FOR 2020/21**

The Chair invited nominations for the Deputy Leader of the Council. Cllr Gwatkin was nominated and duly elected as Deputy Leader by the Council.

**RESOLVED:**

that Cllr Vicky Gwatkin be elected as Deputy Leader of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

117 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & TO AGREE A BLANKET DISPENSATION ON ATTENDANCE FOR ALL COUNCILLORS**

There were no apologies for absence. All members were present virtually via Zoom, as permitted by law, due to the Covid -19 pandemic.

The Council received and considered the option to pass a dispensation due to the current pandemic to ensure that no member was penalised for not attending meetings virtually – or in person once it was safe to restart meetings in person. All members agreed that this was a good idea, and all were in favour.

**RESOLVED:**

that in light of the current situation brought about by the COVID-19 Pandemic, a blanket dispensation be approved to cover members' absences for the foreseeable future – this will cover those shielding and when/if holding virtual meetings members are unable to participate due to technical issues.

118 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declaration of interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

119 **TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE PROPOSED REVISED COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk as circulated with the agenda explaining a proposed revised committee structure for the new municipal year.

The proposed committees were:

- Sport and Play
- Amenities
- Stronger Communities
- Policy, Governance and Finance
- Planning and Environment Committee.

These would encompass all sub committees and working parties apart from the Corn Exchange Working Party, which would continue.

Members debated the name of the Planning and Environment Committee as some members were unhappy with it and the fact that the Climate and Biodiversity Sub Committee had been absorbed. It was agreed to change the name to “Climate, Biodiversity and Planning Committee”

Member also discussed the name of the “Amenities” Committee as there were concerns that it lacked clarity. It was agreed to discuss alternative names at the next meeting of the Council.

**RESOLVED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Committee structure as presented be agreed with the following amendments:
  - The Amenities Committee to be renamed at the next Council meeting;
  - The Planning and Environment Committee to be renamed “Climate, Biodiversity and Planning Committee”. The first of these meetings in the cycle would be given over to Climate and Biodiversity.

120 **UPDATE FROM THE TOWN CLERK**

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk, which detailed the delegated decisions she had taken so far during the pandemic.

She paid tribute to her staff who, like many people, had all coped with significant changes in the way they had to adapt to working. Particularly, the Works Team, who had recently seen an influx in burials – and four of the team were relatively new so had been thrown in at the deep end with some challenging conditions. Members agreed and thanked the staff and Works Team for all their hard work.

Her report also covered vacant positions on three outside bodies, and asked for nominations.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the following nominations to the outside bodies are agreed:
  - a) Witney Town Charity – Cllr Melanie Jones and Cllr Luci Ashbourne until June 2024;
  - b) Witney Educational Foundation – Mr Rob Barton to continue for a further four year term and Cllr Joy Aitman until June 2023 replacing Cllr Rosa Bolger;
  - c) Cogges Welfare Trust -Cllr Duncan Enright and Cllr Joy Aitman.

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The meeting closed at: 7.50 pm

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Chair