

**FULL COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 7 December 2020

At 7.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor J Aitman (Chair)

Councillors:	L Duncan	V Gwatkin
	L Ashbourne	A D Harvey
	T Ashby	M Jones
	R Bolger	J King
	D Butterfield	A McMahon
	O Collins	A Prosser
	H Eaglestone	R Smith
	D Enright	D Temple
Officers:	Nicky Cayley	Democratic Services Officer
	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
Others:	No members of the public.	

432 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

433 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

434 **MINUTES**

Members received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2020. There were no matters arising.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair

435 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present for this item.

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

Cllr Duncan Enright – West Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr Enright provided an update on the District Council's budget setting process. The Council was beginning some difficult budgetary years as the mid-term plan indicated that there were shortfalls in funding. Most of the savings made by the restructuring process had now been achieved and the pandemic had also impacted the budget.

Cllr Rosa Bolger – West Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr Bolger advised that a new Covid-19 test centre was under construction at the Woodford Way car park in town. Officers had been working hard. Residents had expressed concern at the loss of parking and so members had pushed hard for extra signage to signpost the top two levels of Marriott's Walk Car Park. Cllr Bolger also reported that a close eye would be kept on the surrounding residential roads to ensure that people did not park their cars there instead.

RESOLVED: that the updates be noted.

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

Members did not have anything to report for this item.

438 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

- a) CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING MINUTES - 13 OCTOBER, 3 NOVEMBER AND 24 NOVEMBER 2020.

The Chair presented the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity and Planning Committees held on 13 October, 3 November and 24 November 2020 and moved their acceptance. It was noted that for the minutes of 24 November, the response for the Proposed East Witney Development was delegated to officers to complete.

It was also requested that Cllr Enright be added as attending the meetings of the 3 and 24 November 2020.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity and Planning Committee of 13 October, 3 November and 24 November 2020 be received and any recommendations therein approved, with Cllr Enright being added to the list of meeting attendees on the 3 and 24 November.

- b) SPORT & PLAY COMMITTEE - 2 NOVEMBER 2020.

The Chair presented the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2020 and moved their acceptance.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2020 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

c) HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 9 NOVEMBER 2020.

The Chair presented the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2020 and moved their acceptance.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2020 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

d) STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 16 NOVEMBER 2020.

The Chair presented the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2020 and moved their acceptance.

Matters Arising

The Leader referred to minute SC391 – Christmas Lights - and asked if members would be happy to run a best dressed house competition. Councillors should submit their favourites in their wards to the Communications and Events Officer and a winner would then be chosen from each ward. All agreed that this was a good idea.

RESOLVED:

1. that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2020 be received and any recommendations therein approved;
2. that Councillors facilitate a best dressed Christmas house competition, with a winner to be chosen in each ward.

e) POLICY, GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE - 23 NOVEMBER 2020.

The Chair presented the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2020 and moved their acceptance.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2020 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

439 CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Council received and considered the report of the Mayor's engagements, circulated before the meeting,

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

440 MOTIONS TO COUNCIL

The Council received and considered two motions. The Leader informed the Council that it had come to her attention that as a member of Government, the Rt Hon. Robert Courts could not support private members bills, such as those to be presented to Council. This was confirmed by Cllr Harvey.

The motions were presented as follows:-

1. County Lines and Child Exploitation

Witney Town Council notes that:

- *We are only too aware of the issues in Oxfordshire of the County Lines and Child Criminal Exploitation, through our partnerships with WODC, TVP and other key organisations.*
- *We are equally aware of the damage that this criminal behaviour can wreak in communities like ours, and the potentially lifelong consequences it can have for vulnerable young people.*
- *We also note that County Lines and Child Criminal Exploitation is the subject of a current Early Day Motion in the House of Commons, which has been supported by MPs from across the political spectrum.*

Therefore this council resolves to:

- *Write to Robert Courts MP, asking him to add his signature to the motion, and to encourage as many of his Parliamentary colleagues to do the same.*

Proposed by Cllr Ashbourne, seconded by Cllr Collins.

2. Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill

Witney Town Council declared a Climate Emergency at the Council meeting on 26th June 2019 and followed up with a Public Meeting in July 2019 enabling everyone to share ideas and visions for change. These included engagement with Central Government, West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, relevant stake holders and other organisations to initiate local action on climate change.

On September 20th 2020, an Early Day Motion entitled the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill was tabled in the House of Commons. The Government's recent Ten Point Plan goes a long way towards tackling the UK's carbon emissions, but this Bill recognises that our carbon footprint extends beyond the UK's borders. The Bill calls for:

- *the UK to make and enact a serious plan to combat climate change. This means dealing with our real fair share of emissions so that we don't go over critical global rises in temperature*
- *our entire carbon footprint be taken into account (in the UK and overseas)*
- *the protection and conservation of nature here and overseas along supply chains, recognising the damage we cause through the goods we consume*
- *those in power not to depend on technology to save the day, which is used as an excuse to carry on polluting as usual*
- *people to have a real say on the way forward in a citizens' assembly with bite*

This Council agrees with the principles of this Bill and supports Oxfordshire residents in their efforts to see it come into law. We ask the Leader of this Council to write to our MP, asking them to support their constituents by voting for this Bill when it comes to the House of Commons.

Proposed by Cllr Prosser, seconded by Cllr Smith.

Due to the Leader's update, amendments were proposed as detailed below.

Motion 1 - votes for the amendment: 16 for, 1 abstention; votes for the motion : 16 for, 1 abstention.

Motion 2 – votes for the amendment: 12 for, 5 abstentions; votes for the motion: 11 for, 6 abstentions.

Both motions were therefore carried with the proposed amendments.

RESOLVED: that both motions as presented are passed with the following amendments:

Motion 1 - County Lines and Child Exploitation

Final paragraph to read:

Write to Robert Courts MP asking him to support this motion shall it come to parliament and to reply to Witney Town Council informing what steps both the Government and he himself will be taking to safeguard vulnerable young people affected by county lines, both nationally and locally.

Motion 2 - Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill

Final sentence to read:

We ask the Leader of this Council to write to our MP, asking, that whilst we understand as a member of the Government he is unable to support this private members bill, he replies to Witney Town Council in the light of this with what policies he thinks need to be brought in to address climate change on a scale sooner than 2050, and how to improve on things like the recent Environment Bill to address climate and ecological emergency and engages with his constituents on this bill.

441 **COMMUNITY SUPPORT INITIATIVE - ONLINE PANTOMIME GRANT REQUEST**

The Leader gave an update on the online pantomime. Since the original discussions with the promoters, it had become clear that the Council would not be able to pay for the tickets within the timescale subsequently requested, due to the Council's financial regulations. As the Council was no longer able to support the initiative, it was hoped that an alternative could be found in the new year.

RESOLVED: to delegate to Officers, the Mayor, the Leader and Cllr Duncan to try to arrange something similar in the New Year.

442 **CONCLUSION OF AUDIT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2020**

The Council received and considered the external audit report and certificate 2019/20. The Town Clerk referred to the notes and advised that she was confident that the outstanding items would be done next year. She also advised that the Code of Conduct was not within the control of the Town Council as members signed up to the District Council Code, and therefore there would be no change unless the District changed it or there was a national change. She would take this up with the auditor.

RESOLVED: that the conclusion of audit for the year ending 31 March 2020 be noted.

443 **VANDALISM**

The Committee received and considered an updated schedule of vandalism, prepared by the Operations and Estates Officer.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

444 **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The Town Clerk read an update on behalf of the Compliance and Environment Officer, covering Covid safety in the offices and public halls.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted and thanks expressed to Officers who have worked hard to keep the Council Covid safe.

445 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

There was no communication from the Leader.

446 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Council received and considered a letter from Robert Courts MP in relation to minute number 339 from the Council meeting on 12 October 2020, and a letter from Witney Oxford Transport, asking for the Mayor's support for its submission to the government's Beeching Reversal fund for a feasibility study. The Mayor alone could not support this but the Council agreed that as a body it would send a letter of support.

RESOLVED: that the correspondence be noted and that Witney Town Council supports Witney Oxford Transport's submission to the government's Beeching Reversal fund for a feasibility study.

447 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no questions to the Leader of the Council.

448 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

The Town Clerk advised that a lease had now been signed for West Oxfordshire District Council to take on the Langdale Hall car park in order to enforce the parking regulations.

RESOLVED: that the seal of the Council be affixed to the document.

The meeting closed at: 7.45 pm

Chair