

**MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 10 October 2022

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

Present:

Councillor L Duncan (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	M Jones
	L Ashbourne	A McMahon
	T Ashby	A Prosser
	D Butterfield	R Smith
	O Collins	D Temple
	H Eaglestone	P Hiles
	D Enright	D Thomas
	A D Harvey	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	None.	

514 **ONE MINUTE SILENCE FOR HM QUEEN**

Before the meeting Mayor Councillor L Duncan paid tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and led a one-minute silence.

515 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor V Gwatkin.

516 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

517 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held 1 August 2022 were approved and adopted. Councillor D Harvey thanked the Council for the granting of his dispensation.

518 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

519 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

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

The update advised that crime was at a low level, Anti-Social behaviour had resulted in 11 ASBO's being issued over the summer period. Work continued with the issue of low-level drug dealing on Madley Park. TVP were currently focusing on rural fuel theft.

In response to questions from members, Inspector Ball confirmed that TVP had a dedicated burglary team and that figures in West Oxfordshire were very low. He also advised that TVP do ask shops to be vigilant around the sale of flour and eggs to teens around the weeks leading to Halloween.

Members thanked TVP for the work they do and in particular the PCSO's who attended and supported the recent Car Free Day.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

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

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

Councillor Enright advised that OCC were seeing Inflation effect Capital Financed Projects such as the Shores Green/A40 improvements. He also spoke about the Witney High Street plans advising that these "would not be rushed" in order to allow for consultation of which Witney Town Council would be an important consultee.

Regarding the Oxfordshire Plan 2050, Councillor Enright advised that this had recently collapsed over disagreements about housing numbers. Districts were now preparing new plans and he hoped to have an update in the New Year.

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)

Councillor Aitman advised that she, along with Councillor Prosser, were heading up a programme to assist residents of the district with the rising costs of living. This consisted of offering additional financial assistance to established community groups, financing lunch clubs and assisting Foodbanks to purchase wholesale

Also, WODC were aware of an increase of shoplifting, this was acknowledged by Inspector Ball, so more evidence that people were struggling with rising costs.

Lastly, Councillor Aitman asked that all members make their wards aware of the information available from WODC. WODC intended to distribute leaflets and posters to all local parishes and towns to promote the support being provided.

Councillor Prosser advised that WODC were looking to also offer a drop-in session with advice on energy.

Resolved:

That, the verbal updates be noted.

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

Councillor Smith advised that the Lower Windrush Valley Project were working with WODC and The Wychwood Project on a grant application to improve the area between Farm Mill Lane and the Langel Area. This was to improve the overall area including the waterway banks and beds.

Councillor Aitman confirmed that Witney Educational Foundation was receiving a number of requests due to cost-of-living increase for basic items such as uniforms, and assistance with school trips.

Resolved:

That, the verbal updates be noted

522 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 5 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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

Councillor O Collins advised he was substitute for Councillor L Ashbourne and asked that the minutes be amended to reflect this.

Resolved:

1. That, the minutes be amended to reflect Councillor Collins substituted for Councillor Ashbourne and,
2. That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 5 September 2022 be received, and any recommendations therein approved.

523 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE- 26 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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 26 September 2022 be received, and any recommendations therein approved.

524 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 26 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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

468 – Councillor D Temple questioned the use of the word “Partnership” and what this would mean. Members who were present at the meeting of 26 September 2022 advised that the official memorandum of understanding which would be drafted to provide this information.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 26 September 2022 be received, and any recommendations therein approved.

525 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE- 3 OCTOBER 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 3 October 2022 be received, and any recommendations therein approved.

526 **CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE - 2 & 23 AUGUST, 27 SEPTEMBER**

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 meeting held on 2 August, 23 August and 27 September 2022 be received, and any recommendations therein approved.

527 **CONCLUSION OF AUDIT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2022**

The Council reviewed the correspondence received from the Council's External Auditor, Moore, and thanked the officers for their work in achieving the certification in a difficult year.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the certificates had been published for public view.

Resolved:

That, the outcome of the review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for year ended 31 March 2022 be noted.

528 **COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT 2022**

The Council received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk and a verbal update from the Town Clerk who advised members of the importance of Section 7 which covered the registering and declaring (of) interests. She also highlighted that sections referring to Cabinet Members did not apply to the Town Council, and she would be amending the end document to reflect what was relevant.

Members that attended the online session on 30 September 2022 run by WODC Monitoring Officer expressed how useful and informative it was. The Town Clerk confirmed that the recording of the session will be forwarded to all members when received from WODC.

Members can contact the Town Clerk or the Monitoring Officer at WODC should they have any questions. She advised that Members needed to now complete new declarations of interests and she would be handing these out at the end of the meeting.

Members voted unanimously to adopt the Code of Conduct.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the new Code of Conduct, as amended, be adopted by Witney Town Council and,
3. That, the Code is published on Witney Town Council website and,
4. That, Members complete new Register of Interest declaration forms and return to the Town Clerk by 28 October 2022

529 **CIVILITY & RESPECT PLEDGE**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk. The Town commented that this further supported the intentions of Councillor Code of Conduct and dealt with expected behaviours.

Members voted unanimously to adopt the Civility & Respect Pledge

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Council signs up to the Civility & Respect Pledge.

530 **PROJECT UPDATE**

The Council received and considered the report of the Project Officer.

Members discussed the potential audience for NT Live performances in the Corn Exchange, it was confirmed that these had been popular events when hosted in Cineworld in Witney.

Members thanked officers for the arrangement and hosting of a reception for the unveiling of the Alice Batt Blue Plaque and for all the work on bringing the Corn Exchange seating closer to being installed and complete.

Members were pleased to hear that the repairs to the cycle stand at The Leys would be carried out for free.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

531 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received the report of the Town Mayor.

Councillor Duncan also thanked Councillors and officers who helped, at very short notice, with events around Queen Elizabeth II passing and the accession of King Charles III.

Resolved:

That, the report and verbal update be noted

532 **VANDALISM AND HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Council received a verbal update in respect of Health & Safety from the Town Clerk.

Members also received details of Vandalism reported and of incidents of anti social behaviour subjected on council employees.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

533 **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update on bringing the grounds maintenance contract in house. She commented that the three members of staff had smoothly integrated with the existing team. Whilst early days, she was pleased with how the transition had gone so far. The Operations Manager had worked hard to procure the necessary equipment and materials.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

534 **A40 COUNTY COUNCIL PLANNING APPLICATION CONSULTATION R3.0151/21**

The Council considered the correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) in respect of the request for further submissions for the planning application R3.0151/21 – A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor (“HIF2 Project”)

Councillor Enright confirmed that he would not be taking part in the debate due to his position at OCC as Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy.

Members discussed and considered the original submission and agreed voted in favour of a suggestion of a link from the A40 to the A34 be built for use of private vehicles as well as buses.

Vote Result:

For 14

Against 0

Abstention 2

Resolved:

That, the Town Clerk replies to OCC with a further submission.

535 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

There were no communications to be reported.

536 **NOTICE OF DEFINITIVE MAP NOTICE OF LANDOWNER DEPOSIT**

The Council received and considered the correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) in respect of the Notice of landowner deposits under section 31(6) of the Highways Act 1980 and section 15A(1) of the Commons Act 2006.

The Town Clerk also brought Members attention to some correspondence she had received earlier that day from another Parish Council on a notice in its parish.

Members discussed the notification and considered if Witney Town Council was the correct organisation to submit an application to register the land as a town green noting that it had 12 months to respond. West Oxfordshire District Council had recently completed an arrangement on a neighbouring piece of land so they may be better placed.

Members agreed to refer to the Climate, Biodiversity and Planning committee to discuss further.

Resolved:

1. That, the correspondence is noted and,
2. That, referred to Climate, Biodiversity & Planning committee.

537 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

In Councillor Gwatkin's absence there were no questions for the Deputy Leader.

538 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents sealed.

The meeting closed at: 8.15 pm

Chair