

WALLINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

of the

Virtual TEAMS meeting of Full Council on the Monday 10th August 2020 at 7p.m

PRESENT

The Mayor, Councillor Lee Upcraft

Councillors Beauchamp, Cattermole, Dolton, Holford, Hughes, Keats-Rohan, Kidley, Lester, McGregor, Whelan and Wilder.

The Town Clerk, Mrs Paula Lopez

Officers in Attendance: Barbara Atkins (Minute Taker) and Tracey Collins

Approximately 11 members of the public and 1 guest (Richard Prunier) were at the meeting

183. THE MAYOR TO ADVISE THOSE IN ATTENDANCE OF THE PROTOCOL FOR THE MEETING

The Mayor shared the protocol for the meeting.

184. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Beatty and Sinkinson. Councillor Davies was not present.

185. ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was Proposed by the Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Lester and

RESOLVED:

THAT in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items and that the papers relating to these items remain confidential on the grounds that publicity would be

prejudicial to the public's interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted:-

Agenda item 27 – Fast Central

186. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

A Councillor with voting rights who has a disclosable pecuniary interest or another interest as set out in our Council's Standing Orders Code of Conduct (Item 13) in a matter being considered at a meeting is subject to statutory limitations or restrictions under code of conduct and his right to participate and vote on the matter (guidelines are available at the meeting and all Councillors have received a copy prior to the meeting) Information for each Member was available at the meeting.

There were no declarations of interests.

187. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – NOTIFIED AND IMPROMPTU (Total 15 Minutes)

(i) Mr Zac Etheridge spoke about the resident's group which had been set up to plant trees in Cholsey, Crowmarsh and Wallingford. The tree planting was to improve both towns/village areas and aid well-being. To date the group has raised £4,000 and they were now working to plant trees in Wallingford, 20 sites had been identified, mainly on wide grass verges and the group was also aware of plans for the Radnor Road green space. The group has already been in contact with the District and County councils. The Wallingford and Cholsey Tree Planting Group were seeking the support of the Town Council in helping with funding and also in an application to use some of the Section 106 money which is allocated to green infrastructure.

Councillor Lester asked who the group had contacted at County and District Council level. Mr Etheridge stated the tree planting officer (OCC) and Dominic Lamb (SODC) last winter. Councillor Lester expressed her disappointment that Wallingford Town Council had not been contacted in the first instance. Mr Etheridge stated that they had made contact but Covid-19 had delayed matters.

(ii) Mr Steve Holder thanked the Town Council for their time and gave an update on the litter campaign which he was involved with. The District Council were also running a campaign which is being progressed through their Communications Team and will focus on signage and education. The District Council are now collecting litter twice a day down at the riverside. Unfortunately, there have also been more bonfires in the Bull Croft Park. The Police Community Support Officers will be monitoring the areas when they have time and local radio will be highlighting the riverside problems. Mr Holder stated that he had sent his ideas regarding CCTV coverage in the Bull Croft Park to the Mayor and he was now working with the 1155 Club and Biffa to have a further litter pick to Keep Britain Tidy on either Sunday

the 20th or 27th September and he asked if Councillors would support and get involved with this.

The Mayor thanked Mr Holder and stated that he did not need Town Council approval but to let him know what support he needed.

Councillor Cattermole suggested that Mr Holder contacted himself or Councillor Whelan as they had knowledge of areas at the riverside (ownership can be complicated) that might need clearing of litter.

(iii) Mr Mark O'Hanlon – the Body Training Studio – Mr O'Hanlon reported that they had reopened their doors on the 26th July and modified the layout to allow social distancing. The studio has both front and rear access and by agreement with the Town Council they had been using the rear access for a trial period of 10 days. This had worked well as those attending classes could use the rear and the gym users could use the front entrance. Mr O'Hanlon stated that their membership had reduced and if they could boost people's confidence with their social distance measurements this would encourage users back and their clients were aged from 16 to 90! A risk assessment had been conducted and they had been in contact with their insurers with regards to public liability cover. Mr O'Hanlon assured Councillors that he would constantly review the use but would like Town Council to continue to allow the use for another 6 to 8 weeks.

Councillor Lester asked for confirmation that this was a temporary measure and Councillor Dolton stated that he had been working with Mr O'Hanlon and would clarify more in the relevant agenda item later this evening.

The Mayor thanked all the Members of the public who had spoken.

188. DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

i) District Councillor Sue Robert's report is attached to the minutes and she gave an overview of the contents at the meeting which included:

- The fire at Cobham Common
- U.K. temperatures
- Planning changes and local plan
- Wallingford struggling to accommodate rapid growth
- Farming and the Splash Pool

189. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

There was no variation in order of business.

190. MAYORS COMMUNICATIONS

- (i) Andrew and Wilding Service & (ii) Remembrance Service – the Mayor gave an overview of the tentative plans for both services- shorter services with no receptions. The RAF had been contacted. Currently numbers were restricted to less than 30. The Mayor stated when he can he will share more details as they emerge.
- iii) Cleaning of Signs – The Mayor reported that the owner of a local company, Craig Simpson had, off his own back, cleaned the local road signs and cut back the vegetation and recorded his thanks to Craig for this work.
- iv) Wallingford Splash Park – The Mayor stated that he understood that the contractor that provided the facilities had redeployed staff to other venues and as it had not been confirmed that Covid-19 was not contractible/transported through water the cleaning process was complex and would be dischargeable into the river. The District Council has confirmed that they will with the Town Council next year to seek input and support to overcome difficulties in reopening the park.
- v) Corn Exchange – The cinema is working to reopen around the 18th September and is currently creating Covid-19 safe procedures and ensuring that all its volunteers are fully trained.

191. MINUTES

(i) To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 18th May 2020 as set out on pages 1 – 13 of the Minute Book.

Councillors discussed the accuracy of the Minutes and

Councillor Beauchamp asked that the minutes be corrected to note that he had abstained from voting in the resolutions under minutes 9 and 17.

Councillor Keats-Rohan wished it be noted that the MP's surname had a 't' in it and that on page 10 the following comment to be inserted 'St Mary's St has been very successfully partially pedestrianised for some time'.

It was Proposed by The Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Lester and

RESOLVED: THAT following the above corrections the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 18th May 2020 as set out on pages 1 – 13 of the Minute Book, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

ii) To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 29th June 2020 as set out on pages 41 - 51 of the Minute Book.

It was Proposed by The Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Dolton and

RESOLVED: THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 29th June 2020 as set out on pages 41 - 51 of the Minute Book, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

192. TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING MINUTES

To adopt the minutes of the following committee meeting held in 2020, copies previously signed as a correct record and circulated to Councillors:

- Finance and Properties – 27th May 2020 pages 254 – 258.
- Planning – 15th June 2020 pages 33 – 40
- Planning – 6th July 2020 pages 52 – 59
- Personnel – 2nd March 2020 pages 254 – 258
- Parks, Gardens, Allotments & Open Spaces 20th Jan 2020, pages 213 - 217

It was Proposed by The Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan and

RESOLVED: THAT the minutes of committee meetings held in 2020 as listed above, copies previously signed as a correct record and circulated to Councillors, be adopted by Full Council.

193. TO RECEIVE A PETITION FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND CONSIDER A RESPONSE

Councillors received a petition from members of the public in advance of the meeting.

The Mayor stated that at the last council meeting both sides of the 'story' had been portrayed. The Mayor reiterated the concerns along with new ones and stated that the District Council's monitoring officer had said that there was no breach in conduct. However the Mayor stated that he needed to say that Councillor's Cattermole's behaviour was inappropriate and was harming the Council's reputation. The Mayor continued by saying that, although he realised that calling for a vote of no confidence was meaningless as Councillor Cattermole could not be removed as a councillor, and that Council had no powers to sanction him, he felt that Council should publicly state that Cllr Cattermole's behaviour is not representative of Council as a whole.

Councillor Cattermole was given the opportunity to respond but chose not to and Councillors expressed their opinions including an apology and/or that Councillor Cattermole's resignation should be forthcoming. The Town Clerk was asked if the Code of Conduct could be reviewed and submitted to Council for approval, the Town Clerk advised she would do this but that it would not change this situation.

Councillors concluded and it was Proposed by The Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan and

RESOLVED: THAT Councillors agreed on a vote of no confidence in Councillor Cattermole.

Councillor Whelan abstained

Action: Code of Conduct to be revised/updated and submitted for approval.

194. COUNCILLOR RESIGNATION

The Mayor reported on the resignation of Councillor Leslie Rennie on 29th July 2020 which took place immediately. The Mayor stated that Councillor Rennie had worked hard whilst being a Councillor. The vacancy has been published and last day for the call for an election is 18th August 2020 but if this should occur, due to Covid-19, this will not take place until May 2021 otherwise a new councillor may be co-opted. The vacancy is currently displayed on the Town Council's Website and noticeboards and has been posted on the Town Council Face Book page.

195. COMMITTEES

- i) Several vacancies exist on the following committees: Finance and Properties, Tourism and Economic Development, Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces and Personnel.

Councillors discussed the vacancies:

Finance and Properties – Councillor Holford to join

Tourism and Economic Development – Councillors Beauchamp and Keats-Rohan to join.

Personnel – Councillors Lester and Beauchamp to join

Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces - Councillor Dolton to join

Councillor Holford stated that she would like to step down from Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces, but, on being asked by the Mayor to reconsider as this would leave two vacancies, confirmed that she would remain.

- ii) To approve the new members of committees as discussed.

It was Proposed by The Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Dolton and

RESOLVED: THAT the committees would be amended as discussed.

196. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

Finance and Properties 20th July 2020 – Councillors discussed the recommendations and the following resolutions were passed:

a) Internal Audit

It was Proposed by The Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Lester and

RESOLVED: THAT the internal auditor's report dated the 17.06.2020, as reviewed by the Finance and Properties Committee that noted that the internal audit is effective, and that recommendations 1 to 7 were being actioned could be adopted by Full Council.

b) Unaudited Accounts for 2019/2020

Proposed by The Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan and

RESOLVED: THAT the unaudited 2019/2020 accounts are received and approved

(i)Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 received, approved and that the Chairman (Mayor) and The Town Clerk are authorised to sign Section 1.

(ii)Section 2 Accounting statements 2019/2020 received, approved and the Responsible Finance Officer and the Chairman (Mayor) are authorised to sign Section 2 as a correct record.

c) 2020/2021 Financial Risk Assessment and 2020/2021 Investment Policy

It was Proposed by the Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Whelan and

RECOMMENDED: THAT 2020/2021 Financial Risk Assessment and 2020/2021 Investment Policy, (following Member's review), must be amended to reflect what is a low risk investment, that no more than a certain percentage (to be determined) be invested with any one company and that both these changes are inserted prior to adoption at Full Council.

It was Proposed by The Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Dolton and **RESOLVED: THAT** 2020/2021 Financial Risk Assessment be adopted along with the Investment Policy following the agreed amendments to this but that the Investment Policy should come back to Council for review when the amendments have been made.

Councillor Whelan asked that Councillors thanks to the Responsible Finance Officer be recorded.

Action; Investment Policy to come back to Full Council for review following the amendments.

197. WALLINGFORD AND CHOLSEY TREE PLANTING GROUP

Councillors had received a letter and heard a report from a representative of the Wallingford and Cholsey Tree Planting Group.

i) Councillors were asked to consider matching or adding to the group's funds for tree planting in Wallingford. Councillors were of the opinion that they needed more information and were disappointed that they had not heard from the group before, however Covid-19 had delayed matters. They also believed that the group should submit a formal grant application to the Town Council.

ii) Councillors considered the group's application for Section 106 money, which is held by the District Council. Councillors discussed and again agreed that they required more information, it was suggested that some of the Councillors and the Park, Gardens, Allotments

and Open Spaces Committee work with the Wallingford and Cholsey Tree Planting Group. Councillors Beauchamp, Keats-Rohan and Wilder expressed an interest.

198. THE TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE – ACCESSIBILITY

Reports sent in advance to Councillors.

The Town Clerk reported that Mr Richard Prunier had worked very hard to complete this project and Councillors were asked to approve a change of website provider in order to comply with the accessibility regulations, Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Date for compliance, 23rd September 2020.

- i) The current website is overly complicated, not user friendly and not in a standard code. The site has been tested and has 124 compliance issues. The current provider will not quote for the required changes and it is therefore recommended that a new website is purchased.
- ii) For practical reasons the new website should combine both the statutory items required as a Town Council and an element of tourism. This then requires only one hosting fee.
- iii) Two options have been considered with a recommendation to use a 'templated' system (with modular properties) through companies specialising in the WCAG requirements which is much more user friendly. The cost of the new website is in the region of £1500 - £1900 depending on our required complexity.

Councillors discussed and Mr Prunier clarified a few points before it Proposed by Councillor Whelan, Seconded by Councillor Beauchamp and

RESOLVED: THAT Aubergine with their 30-years' experience and digital awards should be appointed to work with Wallingford Town Council to ensure that the new website meets accessibility regulations, Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 by the 23rd September 2020 and that going forward Aubergine works with Wallingford Town Council to maintain WCAG 2.1 compliance.

199. WALLINGFORD BROCHURE

The Town Clerk reported that Mr Prunier had completed two brochures, Wallingford Tourism Assets and Film Locations. Unfortunately some Councillors had been unable to open the links to the brochures but Councillors had a brief discussion concluding, and Mr Prunier acknowledging, that the draft photos within the brochure need to be updated and that until the new Website was live this project would have to be put on hold as the brochures contained links to the proposed website.

Action: Mr Prunier to make the necessary adjustments to the brochures.

200. COVID RECOVERY PLANS FOR THE TOWN

Councillor Dolton reported that he had been working with Mr Prunier and stated that the town appeared to be coping well with the changes. Councillor Dolton believed that we should be working towards plans in case of another spike and that both he and Mr Prunier had lots of ideas which involved going out into the community and discussing the way forward. Councillor Lester reported that she had not heard back from County Councillor Sudbury regarding the traffic calming posters that had been prepared and that Highways permission is required before the posters can go up.

Actions: Councillor Dolton and Mr Prunier to speak to public and retail owners. The Mayor to speak to County Councillor Sudbury with regards to the traffic calming posters.

201. SITE B ALLOTMENTS AND FOOTPATH WIDENING

i) The Town Clerk reported on the transfer of the allotments from the developer. The developer has advised that under the terms of the S106 agreement priority must be given to the residents of the development for allocation of the plots. The Town Clerk reported that there were currently 21 residents on our own waiting list. The S106 agreement triggers with the 100th occupant on the development and if the allotments could be handed over to the Town Council before this time the plots could be offered to our waiting list. After the 'trigger' the residents of the development will take priority.

Councillors were asked to consider whether they wish to proceed with the transfer under these conditions.

Councillors had a detailed discussion concluding that if the Town Council were to take over the allotments at Site B they should be able to manage them as they wished. If the Town Council does not accept the transfer the allotments they will go to a management company which would most likely mean that Town Council and Site B allotments would be totally separate and would not assist with our allotment provision or integrate the new development into the town.

Councillors concluded their discussion and it was Proposed by Councillor Wilder, Seconded by Councillor Cattermole and

RESOLVED: THAT Wallingford Town Council proceeds with the transfer of the allotments from the developer on the condition that this transfer is completed within the next 6 months.

ii) Councillors considered the Public Footpath and Creation agreement and plan from Oxfordshire County Council relating to the widening of Footpath 28 along the northern boundary of the allotments to the east of Fir Tree Avenue which are owned by Wallingford Town Council. Ex-Councillor Adrian Lloyd had agreed on behalf of Wallingford Town Council to dedicate the additional width to enable development

to take place at the Wallingford B Site off Calvin Thomas Way. Councillors had seen the agreement in advance of the meeting.

Councillor Kidley gave an overview stating that the new fencing along the footpath would give added security to the present site. Councillor Hughes stated that County Councillor Sudbury had been negotiating towards a cycle path rather than a footpath.

Councillors concluded and it was Proposed by the Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Kidley and

RESOLVED: THAT Wallingford Town Council accepts the Public Footpath and Creation agreement and plan from Oxfordshire County Council relating to the widening of Footpath 28 along the northern boundary of the allotments to the east of Fir Tree Avenue which are owned by this Council.

iii) Councillors were asked to approve the signing and sealing of the agreement by the Town Clerk.

Councillors discussed and it was Proposed by the Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Kidley and

RESOLVED: THAT providing that the Site B developer agrees to complete the allotments land transfer within 6 months (by 10th February 2021) that Wallingford Town Council authorises the Town Clerk to sign and seal both the allotments land transfer and footpath creation agreements.

202. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Mayor reported that the Town Council's consultation closes on the 11th August and that he circulated an appendix to the plan to Councillors. This had been brought about because the Inspector at the SODC Local Plan session on Wallingford had suggested that all Neighbourhood Plans should include a list of infrastructure requirements. Councillor Whelan also suggested adding an additional item on parking due to the failed allocation of additional public parking in St George's Road. The Mayor stated that the next stage a referendum would hopefully take place by postal votes as it is urgent that our Neighbourhood Plan is in place due to the CIL money allocation practically in relation to Site E.

203. SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN

The Mayor reported that he and Beryl Guiver had attended and spoke at the recent hearing for the SODC Local Plan session on Wallingford. The Mayor thanked the Neighbourhood Plan Steering group and in particular Beryl Guiver. The Mayor stated that the developers were pushing for reserve sites to be included in the Local Plan, but that the Inspector appears to have dismissed this.. The inspector had stipulated that fixed housing targets be replaced by a minimum of this number.. The Mayor also believed that the dubious

proposed housing density could increase houses at both sites B and E. The inspector appeared to show an interest in particular to Wallingford and to its infrastructure problems.

204. GYM AND OXFAM – USE OF THE CASTLE YARD CAR PARK

i) **Body Training Studio** - Councillor Dolton reported that a trial of 2 weeks use of the car park had taken place and he had received the risk assessment for the Body Training Studio, although the Town Council should not alter or advise on other people's risk assessments. The gym's public liability insurer's stated that they would look at an individual cases and incidents if they occurred. The owner of the gym had stated that he will review and if necessary, change any aspects of the gym's use of the Castle Yard Car Park.

ii) **Oxfam's Rear Entrance** – Councillor Dolton reported that the rear use of Oxfam had apparently been going on for years which had until recently included an Oxfam van which used to collect books from the store, however this now reverses up to the stores main entrance. During Covid-19 the Oxfam shops were having the donations delivered, by appointment, to the rear entrance so that these could be stored for 30 days before they were sorted. Councillor Dolton asked if we should be examining this use too.

Councillors discussed and agreed that they would support the above use on a temporary basis but Oxfam should conduct a risk assessment and provide their public liability insurance. In addition, going forward Wayleaves and appropriate charges should be agreed.

It was Proposed by The Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Lester and

RESOLVED: THAT Wallingford Town Council:

- i) Allows both the Body Training Studio and Oxfam to use their rear entrances on a temporary basis until the 30th September 2020 subject to public liability insurance and risk assessments.
- ii) Longer use for Oxfam to be subject to a Wayleave agreement.

205. THE REGAL

The Mayor reported that that Town Council had challenged the costs of building the new Regal and therefore work on this project had been suspended before Covid-19 lockdown. In order to move along The Mayor stated that an article needed to be inserted in The Window on Wallingford (WOW) to establish what facilities residents would wish to see available in the Regal so that a business plan could be produced.

Action: To re-issue the usage/facilities survey in the Window on Wallingford (WOW)

206. PLANNING PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

Planning permission to develop the council offices into two flats has been granted. The Mayor suggested that until the plans for Regal progressed further, the Town Council was not in a position to make a decision on this at the moment. Councillors agreed.

Action: Defer

207. HISTORIC ASSET WORKING PARTY UPDATE

Heritage at Risks Sites

Councillors Keats- Rohan and Dolton had distributed the Historic Asset Working Party report (attached to minutes) in advance of the meeting. Councillor Keats-Rohan gave a detailed overview along with the Heritage Asset Phasing of work.

Proposed Stages

- 1) St Nicholas and Moat – to be completed at the same time. Historic England grant application in respect of St Nicholas College almost finished and a second application for an emergency grant for the moat is also being completed. There is a time limit on the emergency grant, as if it is awarded, the money has to be spent by the 31st March 2021.

Restoration of the Motte – Phase one of the Landscape Management Plan.

Bull Croft and Kinecroft – Ramparts and ditches as phase two and three of the Landscape Management Plan, costs required.

- 2) Town Hall – Councillor Keats-Rohan reported that in order to be eligible for a National Heritage Lottery grant the toilets would have to be relocated and compliant, and the building would have to be fully assessable probably via a glass lift. In addition an ambitious project is required to run alongside any work and the scheme is currently not open due to Covid-19. In the meantime the working group are visiting Reading Abbey to see how their project went and hopefully, although not an ideal time, some fund-raising projects can be put in place. Councillor Keats-Rohan stated that whilst the work is taking place then it would be prudent to close the Town Hall completely, this could be for as long as 18 months, 2 years. This was agreed. The Town Clerk asked that the working party let the office know when this work was planned for as weddings are usually booked for 1 or 2 years in advance.

Further details of the Working Party's work in the attached report.

The Town Clerk reported that the Responsible Finance Officer was seeking the internal auditor's help in how it would be best to present our financial information in the grant applications.

Councillor Cattermole stated that he would oppose any work to the Grade I listed town hall with regards to toilets and a lift as he did not consider it appropriate.

Councillor Dolton thanked Councillor Keats-Rohan and Sue Hendrie for their work on this.

208. QUEENS AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE (QAVS)

Councillors considered which voluntary groups from Wallingford they wished to put forward for this award.

- i) Wallingford Assessable Boat Club (WABC) – Councillor Whelan
- ii) BunkFest – Councillor Dolton
- iii) 1155 Club – Councillor Kidley

Action: Councillors favoured nominations for ii) and iii) above and it was agreed that The Mayor would work with the councillors that had nominated the groups once the assessment criteria had been checked. Deadline 25th September 2020.

209. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

See attached table.

Plus from this meeting:

Revise the code of conduct

Investment Policy

Wallingford Brochures

Wayleaves

Town Council Offices

**Members of the Public were asked to leave the meeting as the next item was in
confidential**

Confidential Minutes on Page 101