

**WALLINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES**

**of the**

**Virtual TEAMS meeting of Full Council on the Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 7p.m**

PRESENT

The Chairman, Councillor Rob McGregor

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

Responsible Finance Officer: Michelle Taylor

Senior Officer in Attendance: Barbara Atkins (Minute Taker)

Administration Officer: Tracey Collins

Approximately 12 members of the public along with County Councillor Pete Sudbury and District Councillor George Levy were present

**513. THE CHAIRMAN TO ADVISE THOSE IN ATTENDANCE OF THE PROTOCOL FOR THE MEETING**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The protocol for the meeting had been sent out in advance.

**514. APOLOGIES**

District Councillor Roberts had sent her apologies in advance of the meeting along with the Town Clerk and Councillor Beatty.

**515. ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC**

Following a discussion it was Proposed by Councillor Hughes, Seconded by Councillor Kidley and

**RESOLVED: THAT** agenda item 21 – The Boathouse will be heard in the public section of the meeting.

It was Proposed by Councillor Lester, Seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan 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 Items: 22. FAST CENTRAL LTD – CONFIDENTIAL  
23. INSURANCE CLAIM – CONFIDENTIAL  
24. 10 ST MARTINS STREET, TENANT – CONFIDENTIAL

#### **516. 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.

Councillor Harris declared an interest in Agenda Item 24 – 10 St Martin's Street as his son is interested in leasing the property and stated that he will leave before the item is discussed.

#### **517. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – NOTIFIED AND IMPROMPTU (Total 15 Minutes)**

i) **Steve Holder and Mark Brett – Wallingford Litter Pick** – Mr Brett reported that 150 people has taken part in the litter pick and that it had proved to be good for people's wellbeing particularly during the Covid-19 situation. The head teacher of Wallingford School along with pupils had also taken part. The nautical team of the 1155 Club had cleared, very successfully, rubbish from the River Thames. Media coverage had been good and 15 Grundon donated wheely bins had been filled.

Mr Holder reported, that if allowed, the next litter pick will be on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 2021 with the final decision as to whether it could go ahead being made on the 1<sup>st</sup> March. The organisers hoped to again link in with Keep Britain Tidy and with a Respect Campaign with the Earth Trust, etc, all of which helps to raise awareness.

Councillor Keats-Rohan asked if the cleaning up of the ramparts and ditches could be included and it was agreed that this would be pursued.

Councillor McGregor thanked everyone for their involvement.

ii) **Helen King – Training for Councillors** – Helen King stated that she could see that the Town Council had a training policy but she was concerned that it should have been updated. Training and the relevant skills are very important and she wondered if the Town Council kept a list of what training had been undertaken by Councillors. Helen King also wondered if The Town Council was aware if any other councils had a Mayor who had resigned and hoped that these experiences could be shared.

Councillor Keats-Rohan reported that the office did keep a check on what training Councillors had undertaken and that the training she had attended had been good and value for money. All training by OALC (Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils) is now on line. Councillor Cattermole did not believe that the OALC courses supported Councillors but that there was a slant towards Officers.

Policies are reviewed. Councillor Lester stated that the more experienced Councillors were always willing to help those with less experience.

Councillor McGregor stated that he would be suggesting that the Standing Orders are changed so that if a Chairman/Mayor resigns the Vice Chairman may automatically take over the position.

No other members of the public wished to speak.

## **518. COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS**

### **(i) County Councillor Pete Sudbury's report (full report attached) covered:**

- Covid-19 spreading rapidly into South Oxfordshire and County Councillor Sudbury is pushing for more local control of the response, because government is performing poorly.
- 20mph speed limit motion was passed unanimously and County Councillor Sudbury is concentrating on the northern part of Wallingford where speeding takes place and that lorries cutting through are a problem.
- Meeting scheduled with local MP on Thursday to discuss speeding along with requesting his support for reopening the railway to Cholsey.
- The unofficial lights on Wallingford Bridge were also discussed.
- £1000 of County Councillor Sudbury's budget has been allocated to the Wallingford Preservation Trust to help with start-up costs.

Councillor Sinkinson is currently completing an application for permissible development in respect of Christmas lights on the bridge as care needs to be taken of this Scheduled Monument.

### **(ii) District Councillor Levy reported as follows:**

- The appeal in relation to the planning application at 4 Market Place next to the Corn Exchange has been dismissed by the inspector.
- Councillor Levy is assisting the Cholsey and Wallingford Railway Society with the negotiations regarding a piece of land which they would like for expansion.

- Councillor Levy has been attending Wallingford Town Council's Planning Committee meetings and supported an objection relating to the Highcroft development and lighting by calling it in.
- Social Housing and the Right to Buy – The District Council are working on a social housing policy and Councillor Levy has been working on this project and interestingly the discount available to tenants having lived in their homes for 3 plus years differs greatly between Social Housing (Council) being an £82,000 discount whereas Housing Associations are £16,000.

Councillor Kidley asked if there was any news regarding the light enforcement issue at the Hithcroft and District Councillor Levy stated that he did not know but he would follow this up.

It was clarified that County Councillor Sudbury is chasing the New Barn Farm gravel pit issues.

Councillor McGregor thanked District County Levy for his involvement with the planning committee.

#### **519. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS**

There was no variation in order of business.

It was Proposed by Councillor McGregor, Seconded by Councillor Lester and

**RESOLVED: THAT** Agenda Item 21 – Boathouse will be heard after the adoption of Minutes.

#### **520. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**

i) Site B – Developers will be presenting at the Planning meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> February and this is a meeting where members of the public may attend.

ii) It has been suggested that our meetings are put on Youtube – this will be reviewed by the Communications working party.

iii) Newsletter will also be part of the Communications working party remit.

iv) Thank you to Tracey Collins for all the recent Facebook posts.

#### **521. MINUTES**

To sign as a correct record the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020 as set out on pages 222 – 225.

**Correction** - Councillor Whelan asked for a Correction to be made to Minute 484 on page 223 that she had asked if the Mayor's dinner deposit could be carried forward or returned.

It was Proposed by Councillor Whelan, Seconded by Councillor Cattermole and

**THAT** following the correction on page 223 the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020 as set out on pages 222 – 225 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### **522. 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:

Planning	21/11/2020	Pages 226 - 235
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It was Proposed by Councillor Whelan, Seconded by Councillor Kidley and

**RESOLVED: THAT** the minutes of planning committee meeting listed above, copies previously signed as a correct record and circulated to Councillors, be adopted by Full Council.

#### **523. THE BOATHOUSE**

The Responsible Finance Officer provided an update: £22,500 has been received from Green King which is a quarter of the amount owed and is in fact quarter two's rent. The lawyers have not received further correspondence from Green King but hopefully a further update will be received by the end of the week.

#### **524. TO CO-OPT TO THE VACANT COUNCILLOR SEAT**

Council noted, as previously advised, that the vacancy created by the resignation of Councillor Upcraft, The Mayor will be filled by an election in May 2021.

#### **Co-option of the casual vacancy created by Councillor Davies.**

Councillors had received copies of the candidates written papers and two of the candidates James Gibbs and Steve Holder gave short presentations after which Councillors asked questions.

Councillor McGregor read out George Newcombe's summary of why he wished to join the join Council as he was unable to attend the meeting but had attended on 2 previous occasions.

Councillors sent their votes by text message to The Responsible Finance Officer and Administration Officer. Councillor McGregor announced that there was a clear majority for George Newcombe.

All candidates were thanked for their interest and reminded that there was another vacancy to fill by election in May.

#### **525. FLAG AND BANNER TIMETABLES ATTACHED**

Councillors noted the timetables and it was clarified that the banners are erected by a local business, Pure Clean (cost not available at meeting) and that the flags are put up by Councillor Kidley on the flag pole on the town hall at no cost to the council.

Councillor Kidley was thanked for his help with the flags.

#### **526. TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS FOR 2021 AND 2022 ATTACHED**

Councillors noted that the dates for some meetings have changed to make them more workable for Council. Councillor Beauchamp requested that Council meetings take place on a monthly basis and Councillors thought this was a good idea however Standing Orders would need to be changed. The Responsible Finance Officer reported that a Budget meeting had been added in for the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021 in preparation for estimates. This will form part of the Finance and Properties meeting and be open as usual to the public.

It was Proposed by Councillor Lester, Seconded by Councillor Dolton and

**RESOLVED: THAT** the timetables of meetings be adopted however the standing orders would need to be checked with a view to adding in more Council meetings.

**Action: Agenda item at next Council meeting**

#### **527. OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE WALTER BIGG TRUST FOUNDATION**

Councillor Nigel Hughes stated that he was willing to stand as a Trustee for the above for a further four years.

It was Proposed by Councillor Lester, Seconded by Councillor Kidley and

**RESOLVED: THAT** Councillor Hughes will stand as a Trustee for The Walter Bigg Trust Foundation on behalf of Wallingford Town Council for a further four years.

Councillor Hughes was thanked for his commitment.

#### **528. SITE B ALLOTMENTS**

Councillors discussed and considered the terms of the transfer agreement and the position of the bridge to be provided. Councillor McGregor outlined that there are 36 half plots on Site B (to establish if these are freehold) and that it is believed that it is a condition of the planning decision that some of the allotments are held for Site B residents. The bridge to be built is required for access including that of the Town Council's tractor. Automatic gates are not required but manual gates are. Toilet block not required. Time frames are required.

5 Resolutions were passed in respect of the Site B allotments:

It was Proposed by Councillor Wilder, Seconded by Councillor Sinkinson and

**RESOLVED: THAT** Wallingford Town Council contact the developer to let them know that of the 38 plots Wallingford Town Council would like 30 to put in to general circulation and that 8 are reserved for Site B residents. Until occupied the rental and maintenance of the 8 reserved plots is to be paid for by the developer.

It was Proposed by Councillor McGregor, Seconded by Councillor Cattermole and

**RESOLVED: THAT** Wallingford Town Council will take on the maintenance of the access bridge providing it has an adequate design life such as 50 plus years.

It was Proposed by Councillor Wilder, Seconded by Councillor Whelan and

**RESOLVED: THAT** Wallingford Town Council to advise the developer that they believe the automatic gates are unnecessary and that manual gates will be adequate however the original gates to the allotment side should also be upgraded to provide better security to the whole allotment site. The developer to provide and install gates.

It was Proposed by Councillor Wilder, Seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan and

**RESOLVED: THAT** Wallingford Town Council do not require a toilet block on site as cleaning and maintenance is not financially feasible.

It was Proposed by Councillor Beauchamp, Seconded by Councillor Holford and

**RESOLVED: THAT** Wallingford Town Council request that the plot holder of number 8 be compensated by the developer due to the damage and disruption that will be caused to the plot and the allotment holder. That if the plot is not reinstated the allotment holder goes to the top of the waiting list and in addition a shed is provided as further compensation and timescales for the work and period of disruption are provided.

## **529. POLICIES**

Council to adopt the following policies (attached).

i) Pre application Protocol Policy (Recommendation from the Planning Committee)

It was Proposed by Councillor Keats-Rohan, Seconded by Councillor Beauchamp and

**RESOLVED: THAT** Wallingford Town Council adopts the Pre-application Protocol Policy.

ii) Investment Policy – Deferred as an error was reported by Councillor Hughes.

**Action – Investment Policy as future agenda item.**

**530. THE EXTERNAL AUDIT/ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY YEAR END 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2020**

Councillors noted the excellent conclusion of the final accounts (attached) and that the external auditors had no matters of concern or any recommendations that needed to be carried out.

The Responsible Finance Officer was thanked for all her hard work on this.

It was Proposed by Councillor Whelan, Seconded by Councillor Cattermole and

**RESOLVED: THAT** Wallingford Town Council formally note the excellent conclusion of the final accounts and that the external auditors had no matters of concern or any recommendations that needed to be carried out.

**531. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – REPLACEMENT CHAIR AND ADDITIONAL COUNCIL MEMBER**

Councillors discussed and agreed that since Councillor Upcraft had resigned Councillor Keats-Rohan should be Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and that any additional Members be appointed by the Steering Group. Councillors Beauchamp and Cattermole expressed an interest. The steering group members have responded to the Inspector's report and a Referendum date is now awaited. Councillor Keats-Rohan stated that all Councillors will need to promote this date and the Neighbourhood Plan.

It was Proposed by Councillor Lester, Seconded by Councillor Beauchamp and

**RESOLVED: THAT** that Councillor Keats-Rohan be the replacement Chairman for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

**532. WALLINGFORD PRESERVATION TRUST**

Councillor Keats-Rohan provided a proposal for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), registered with the Charity Commission. The purpose of the CIO is to raise money for the preservation and conservation of Wallingford's historic assets, including the Town Hall. The CIO will have no assets of its own. A draft of the Charity's objects is provided.

- i) Council approval to set up Wallingford Preservation Trust
- ii) Council approval for the expenditure to have a Charity lawyer check paperwork cost approximately £300 and cost of annual audit £400 (County Councillor start up grant will cover both of those items)

Councillor Dolton gave an overview of the money needed to repair the Town Hall and how difficult it would be to raise an amount of 3 million. The Preservation Trust would mean that as a Charity they could raise funds and apply for grants. The Town Council would decide how the money is spent.



Councillor Keats-Rohan reported that there were tax and gift aid advantages in having The Wallingford Preservation Trust and the charity criteria it fulfilled was preservation and conservation of heritage. Currently it is very difficult to get grants for the Town Hall as it has very few community assets and it does not have full disabled access.

The proposed trust would need only 4 Councillors as trustees plus a chairman and accounts support (such as the RFO). The Historic Wallingford Assets Group would continue to work in the same way as it did currently.

Councillors discussed and 2 resolutions were passed.

It was Proposed by Councillor Harris, Seconded by Councillor Dolton and

**RESOLVED: THAT** Wallingford Town Council agrees that providing ongoing advice from the Charity lawyer is sound and the administrative support is determined the Wallingford Preservation Trust may be set up.

It was Proposed by Councillor Harris, Seconded by Councillor Dolton and

**RESOLVED: THAT** Wallingford Town Council support the cost of setting up the Wallingford Preservation Trust as the estimates for a Charity lawyer and annual audit will fall within the County Council's start up grant of £1,000.

Councillor Harris reported that should the expenses fall outside the projected estimates there is a private business backer that is willing to pick up the additional costs.

Councillor Keats-Rohan was thanked for all the work she had undertaken on this project.

### **533. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Mayor's Civic Dinner/Function.

Tourism Role to Overturn the Resolution in Accordance with our Standing Orders

Standing Orders to be reviewed re increasing the number of Full Council meetings so that one is held every month.

Standing Orders to be reviewed regarding Mayor/Chairman/Vice Chairman

Investment Policy to be adopted.

Communications Working Party (rolling item)

Reserves (rolling item)

10 St Martin's street tenant – Finance and Properties Committee.

**Members of the public were asked to leave the meeting for the confidential items**

**Confidential Minutes on Page 245**