

**WALLINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL**

**M I N U T E S**

**of the**

**Virtual TEAMS meeting of Full Council on the Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 7p.m**

**PRESENT**

The Mayor, Councillor Lee Upcraft

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

The Town Clerk, Mrs Paula Lopez

Responsible Finance Officer, Michelle Taylor

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

35 people including councillors, staff and public were at the meeting

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

The Mayor had circulated the protocol for Councillors prior to the meeting and this was shown to Councillors, staff and members of the public at the start of the meeting.

**2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Davies and Rennie

**3. ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC**

It was Proposed by Councillor Hughes, Seconded by Councillor McGregor 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 22 – Allotment Incident

Agenda item 23 – Decisions taken by the delegation panel (Includes sensitive information in respect of Council tenants).

#### **4. 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.

Councillors Beauchamp and Sinkinson declared interests in Agenda Item 17 St Mary's/St Martin's Streets Closure to support Covid-19 Recovery as they own/run businesses in this area.

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

i) SW – Climate Emergency. Ms W said that although she was a member of Extinction Rebellion she was not speaking on behalf of them and that she was very pleased by Wallingford Town Council's positive action of including Climate Emergency as an agenda item. Although Ms W has not previously been involved with the Town Council she was open minded about working together to agree and work on the positive actions connected with climate emergency. Ms W would like Wallingford to declare a Climate Emergency. In addition would it be possible to have a 'No Mow' area on the Kinecroft when there are no events taking place?

Councillor Beatty asked Ms W if she was part of Extinction Rebellion Canterbury and the response was no.

The Mayor thanked Ms W and stated that her request to have a 'No Mow' area would be discussed by the Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee.

ii) Mr OP – St Mary's/St Martin's Road Closure. Mr OP stated that he had an interest in this as his son runs the butchers in town and during the recent work on St Mary's Church and in the vicinity of the old Waitrose site the butchers shop had at times suffered a 25% loss in trading. Closing these streets would reduce footfall and this would affect the products that were stocked. The elderly and disabled are unable to carry their bags very far and drive to the shop to collect their orders. People will drive to supermarkets to buy their meat where

less British meat is stocked. The closure could affect local products, employment and be detrimental to the market town of Wallingford.

Councillor Hughes asked where the butcher's customers park. Mr OP responded that some park in the car parks but others stop on the double yellow lines to pick up their shopping. Councillor Beatty asked for clarification regarding the 25% loss of trading and Mr OP confirmed that this was the case some weeks.

The Mayor thanked Mr OP.

iii) Mrs AG - St Mary's/St Martin's Road Closure. Mrs AG reported that she ran Just Trading and that they had managed to continue trading during lockdown. She had noticed that there was a range of responses to how people social distance, some passing quite closely to one another while others are really frightened. Mrs AG walks from Crowmarsh to Wallingford most days and up until a couple of weeks ago it was very easy to social distance but this is not the case now. You need 3-metre-wide pavements to do this and by the Corn Exchange, where it is considered to be quite wide, it is 2.5 metres. Mrs AG stated that the previous closure for the building work when scaffolding was involved was quite different as the shops and areas were not visible. This time it would be different as people would be able to move around and it would be temporary.

iv) County Councillor Pete Sudbury – Climate Emergency and St Mary's/St Martin's Road Closure. Councillor Sudbury stated that the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) reports are getting grimmer and grimmer and that Margaret Thatcher first addressed the UN (United Nations) on Climate Change back in 1990. Oxfordshire needs to cut its emissions by 2030 and there is lots of research on how this may be addressed. Councillor Sudbury also stated that he supported Mrs AG in the closure of St Mary's/St Martin's Roads and that he believed it would increase footfall.

1923 Hours – Here Councillor Cattermole arrived

Councillor Beatty asked where all the information was available and Cllr Sudbury directed him to the IPCC website.

Councillor Wilder asked if Councillor Sudbury was able to submit things that were achievable and Councillor Sudbury stated he would be delighted to help.

Councillor Cattermole stated that the focus should be on the positives and Councillor Sudbury agreed.

The Mayor thanked County Councillor Sudbury.

v) District Councillor George Levy - St Mary's/St Martin's Road Closure. Councillor Levy stated that he supported the temporary measures of protecting the public by closing St Marys and St Martin's Street providing it was supported by a survey of the residents/businesses

however if it were to go into several months there may be a need for a referendum. Civil enforcement of car parking will hopefully be adopted in 2021.

vi) District Councillor Sue Roberts – Climate Change/Emergency. Councillor Roberts had distributed a copy of her report in advance of the meeting (copy attached to minutes) which covered safe distancing, community connectivity and climate and nature emergency. Councillor Roberts further reported that Covid-19 was helping with the green recovery and that traffic orders were not only for assisting businesses but could make a transformative change in our towns. Councillor Roberts stated she was pleased to see that Wallingford Town Council are considering declaring an environment and climate emergency as a declaration is a powerful tool and would enable and encourage engagement with other organisations.

Councillor McGregor asked how much research had been undertaken by the District Council on how the closure of roads would affect traders. Councillor Roberts replied that the owner of the bookshop was very positive following the closure due to the recent building works in town.

The Mayor thanked District Councillor Roberts.

## **6. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS**

There was no variation of order of business.

## **7. MAYORS COMMUNICATIONS**

i) Carnival – The Carnival has been cancelled and instead residents can enter a competition to create the best front garden/window display. The theme is now cartoons and there are prizes for the best house and best school, more details are available on the Carnival's Facebook page.

ii) V.E. Day – Pictures of the best windows can be seen on the Town Council's website. Councillors chose the winner from the best of 3. The winner was the Batchelor family and the Mayor will donate £200 to a charity of their choice.

iii) Covid-19 – Town's Response – Wallingford had responded by looking after one another. Jacqui Bradney and Heidi Kennedy had set up Wallingford 2020 as a support network to help those people who did not have any family/friends to call upon to help them. Wallingford 2020 had followed Government guidelines and 118 individuals had been helped. The Mayor and Councillor Lester had made follow up calls to all of these individuals. The Mayor stated that the community support would soon need to move towards longer term support and councillors should think about how they could support Wallingford2020 beyond this first phase of the crisis. He wished to place on record a public thank you to Jacqui Bradney and Heidi Kennedy.

## **8. ANNUAL MEETING**

**The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020** removes the requirement for an annual meeting this year. (2) 'Where an appointment would otherwise be made or require to be made at an annual meeting of a local authority, such appointment continues until the next annual meeting of the authority or until such time as that authority may determine'. Council to confirm whether they wish to hold an Annual meeting.

The Mayor stated that he was willing to remain in office until 2021 if Councillors wished.

Councillor Cattermole stated that although an Annual Meeting was not necessary it could be allowed. Councillor Cattermole Proposed THAT Wallingford Town Council should have an Annual Meeting at a later date.

Councillor McGregor stated that the role of Mayor is a ceremonial and civic one and he did not believe Councillors needed the added burden of having to vote now.

Councillor Kidley stated that there was nothing happening on the civic front at the moment and that Council may as well continue as it is until next May.

Councillor Cattermole's proposal was not seconded.

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

**RESOLVED: THAT** Councillor Upcraft remains in office as Mayor of Wallingford Town Council along with Councillor McGregor as Deputy Mayor and that such appointment continues until the next Annual Meeting of the authority or until such time as that authority may determine.

Councillor Upcraft abstained.

## **9. COMMITTEES, WORKING PARTIES AND OUTSIDE BODIES**

a) To consider whether current committee members are to remain in place or to approve changes/additions to members for each committee.

The Mayor outlined to Councillors the reasons that he believed that the Members of the Planning Committee should be changed in that Councillor Cattermole should be removed from the committee as currently he had outstanding personal business with the District Council's planning committee.

Councillors discussed in detail with input from Councillor Cattermole and it was Proposed by the Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Kidley and

**RESOLVED: THAT** Councillor Cattermole be removed from the town council's planning committee.

Councillor Beatty abstained

Councillor Keats-Rohan offered to replace Councillor Cattermole.

There is currently a vacancy on the Tourism and Economic Development Committee and Councillor Dolton volunteered.

No changes to Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces, Finance or Personnel were required.

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

**RESOLVED: THAT** Councillor Keats-Rohan replaces Councillor Cattermole on the planning committee and that Councillor Dolton joins the Tourism and Economic Development Committee and that all other committee members remain unchanged.

b) To consider whether current Working Parties are to remain in place or to approve removal or additional Working Parties.

Working parties were discussed and it was suggested that the Riverside Working Party report to the Tourism and Economic Development Committee. Following a discussion it was agreed that the Riverside Working Party should continue to feed into Full Council until the issue of proposed changes to collection of moorings fees is resolved.

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

**RESOLVED: THAT** the working parties and membership thereof remain unchanged.

c) To consider whether current Appointment to Outside Bodies are to remain in place or to approve any changes/additions.

Councillors considered and it was Proposed by The Mayor, Seconded by Councillor Dolton and

**RESOLVED: THAT** the current Appointments to Outside Bodies remain in place.

## **10. COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

To decide if committee meetings, (some or all), should take place by way of virtual meetings or whether the business of those committees be channelled through Full Council until face to face meetings can take place.

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

**RESOLVED: THAT** all committee meetings should take place by way of virtual meetings.

Councillor McGregor asked that a meeting of the Bull Croft Trust takes place as soon as possible and the Town Clerk stated that she would look for a gap in the diary.

## **11. MINUTES**

i) To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020 as set out on pages 240-250 of the Minute Book.

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

**RESOLVED: THAT** the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 17<sup>th</sup> February 2020 as set out on pages 240 - 250 of the Minute Book, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

ii) To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 as set out on pages 264-267 of the Minute Book.

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

**RESOLVED: THAT** the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of Council held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 as set out on pages 264 - 267 of the Minute Book, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

iii) To note the following minutes need to be signed as a correct record at the next meeting of the relevant committees:

- Finance and Properties – 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019,
- Personnel – 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020,
- Tourism and Economic Development – 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2019,
- Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces - 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020
- Planning – 9<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

**Noted.**

## **12. TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING MINUTES**

i) To adopt the minutes of the following committee meeting held in 2019 -2020, copies previously signed as a correct record and circulated to Councillors:

Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces	21.10.19	Pages	144-148
Personnel	15.01.20		209-212
Finance and Properties	07.08.19		76-81
Finance and Properties	06.11.19		149-153
Planning	09.12.19		183-187
Planning	13.01.20		203-208

Planning	27.01.20	224-230
Planning	10.02.20	235-239
Planning	24.02.20	251-253

Councillors considered and it was Proposed by The Mayor, Seconded by Councillor McGregor and

**RESOLVED: THAT** the minutes of committee meetings held in 2019 -2020, copies previously signed as a correct record and circulated to Councillors, listed above, be adopted by Full Council.

ii) Councillors are asked to note that there was an error in the minute numbers and page numbers for the minutes in November 2019. Therefore, please check minute numbers with the office before referring to them. The official minute book is correct.

**Noted by Councillors.**

County Councillor Pete Sudbury left the meeting 20.22hrs.

**13. TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS**

Council to approve and adopt the timetables of meetings for the 2020/2021 Municipal Year which was sent out in advance of the meeting.

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

**RESOLVED: THAT** timetables of meetings for the 2020/2021 Municipal Year which were sent out in advance of the meeting be adopted by Full Council.

**14. TOWN COUNCIL'S RESERVES**

To receive an update on the Town Council's reserves, details were sent out in advance of the meeting. The Responsible Finance Officer gave an overview of the reserve situation. The Responsible Finance Officer stated that the Town Council needed to be very mindful of its reserves as they are so low and Council should be cautious of spending money outside of the precept from the general reserves.

Councillor Beauchamp asked if the difference between income and expenditure would be met later in the financial year, the Responsible Finance Officer confirmed that a detailed analysis is currently being conducted for each quarter.

Councillor Wilder asked if the Town Council's investments had been affected by the current Covid-19 situation but this information is not yet available.



## **15. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Mayor stated that Covid-19 had affected discussions and the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan. If the planning application for Site E is passed without our Neighbourhood Plan in place the Town Council CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) will be reduced to circa £300,000 instead of in the region of one million. The Mayor has had several discussions regarding this and is now going to write to Mr David Johnson, MP stating that the current situation in planning is strongly in favour of the developers.

It is possible that the consultation process regarding the Neighbourhood Plan may commence on the 15<sup>th</sup> June and our Town Council will need to assist with the advertising in order to reach as many people as possible. The cost of publishing leaflets, etc will come out the District Council's budget. Work with the Neighbourhood Plan's Steering Committee has been suspended although hopefully by the end of June this will be able to recommence.

## **16. THE REGAL**

The Mayor reported that there were two main issues with this project:

i) The public survey consultation regarding prospective users of the Regal had not fully taken place due to Covid-19 and only 20 responses had been received. Therefore the business plan could not be formed. The Working Party will be looking at how to progress this.

ii) The latest design for the Regal was coming in at £4 million rather than £3 million and this was unaffordable. The architects would be asked to review this and bring down the cost.

Councillor Beauchamp reported that he had spoken to Councillor Wilder with the view to incorporating some rentable flats in the new Regal and this would be looked at again.

Councillor Dolton asked if the Regal could be demolished to save outgoing costs and if the space could then be used as a temporary car park. The Town Council had been advised against this course of action until planning permission had been granted for its replacement but now the Neighbourhood Plan has earmarked the site for community use this may be possible. The Mayor would discuss with SODC planning officers if the reservation of the site for community uses in the Neighbourhood was sufficient protection against alternative development if the existing building is demolished without planning permission for its replacement.

## **17. ST MARY'S/ST MARTIN'S STREETS CLOSURE TO SUPPORT COVID-19 RECOVERY**

The Mayor advised Council of an early discussion with District Councillor Sue Roberts and County Councillor Pete Sudbury regarding possible partial road closures to support town

centre traders when reopening is allowed following lockdown due to the COVID-19. The Mayor reported that access would be maintained for deliveries and that this was to assist the smaller businesses.

Councillors had a detailed discussion and raised the following concerns:

- No clear show that the businesses want this closure
- All traffic would be taken down Croft Road which causes traffic congestions.
- Closing the roads before did affect walk-in trade for some businesses.
- There is lack of evidence to support the closure.
- How will the closure be 'policed' so that traffic does not enter the closed off area and how will deliveries be allowed through.
- It should be considered to allow social distancing but how to make it work?
- Should the town council be interfering with people's livelihoods?
- A temporary scheme without measures to improve space could be difficult and there is a need to have infrastructure in place.
- A limited survey had been in favour of the scheme.
- There is the need for a proper consultation before making a decision.
- Should there be a more concerted effort to contact individual traders to see what they want?
- The Tourism, Business & Community Development Manager could be contacting businesses to see how we can help.

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

**RESOLVED: THAT** The Town Council does not support the closure of St Marys/St Martins Roads to support Covid-19 recovery but that it has more contact with traders through investigations with them to gather evidence to see how best the Town Council can support businesses.

Councillor Keats-Rohan abstained.

## **18. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS REPORT**

The Landscape Architects report has been received in respect of the Ancient Monument sites. This report is currently being reviewed by the Assets Working Party and Historic England. The Asset Working Party will report back at an appropriate future meeting.

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

**RESOLVED: THAT** the above agenda item is deferred.

**2115 Hours – Council took a 5-minute break**

County Councillor Pete Sudbury re-joined the meeting 21:28hrs.

## **19. CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

Councillor Keats-Rohan had distributed a copy of her report prior to the meeting. Councillor Keats-Rohan reported that the Neighbourhood Plan supported this as it stated that Wallingford was in favour of carbon footprint and green living plans such as walking and cycling. Air quality will be improved with a reduction in traffic and the local government plan is to be carbon neutral by 2030. Standing alongside this will mean the Town Council's voice will be heard more clearly. Councillor Keats-Rohan stated that making a declaration does not mean we have to do anything straight away it is saying that these things matter and helps us to play our part and take ownership on how things happen.

Councillors discussed and raise the following:

- This should be on a local level
- It shows intent
- Supports the practical side
- It should not be a back door into closing roads, etc.
- It appears political although Wallingford Town Council is independent.
- There are lots of parishes/councils who have declared and they are from all parties political or otherwise.
- The government document is a framework for looking at things practically for discussions and solutions.

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

**RESOLVED: THAT** Wallingford Town Council accepts that there is a national and global climate emergency. Wallingford Town Council declares that we join with South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council in seeking to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, and that we will take environmental considerations into account in all our decisions when supporting our community. We will make all reasonable and pragmatic steps to,

1. Reduce and offset the environmental impacts of the daily operations of the Council
2. Work actively and positively with local groups and organisations to protect and improve our environment, its biodiversity, and its sustainability.

District Councillor Sue Roberts left the meeting 21:38

## **20. WALLINGFORD BEACH**

Councillor Cattermole gave Council an update on this initiative in that both the District Council and Wallingford Bridge Estate Charity consider that they own this land. The Town Clerk, as the Clerk for the Wallingford Bridge Estate Charity, reported that the trustees wanted

more information before they would consider the initiative. The Mayor reported that he believed there are implications for the Town Council regarding liability as the local authority would have to remove waste and rubbish which could prove expensive. Council may remember when it looked as though we would have to pay for a derelict barge to be removed from the river fortunately the County Council took responsibility. We have no idea what the current water quality is – Council should try to understand the current quality and implications. The Mayor also pointed out cattle graze in fields on both sides of the river immediately upstream of the beach with the potential for foul run-off to be a problem.

Councillor Holford reported that in looking at the Bathing Regulations she believed the Town Council could have a huge liability risk. Management measures of the water and area rely on third parties. There is a huge burden regarding public liability in clearing rubbish, boats in the river and how far the public swim out. The ownership of the land needs to be solved and the expense of the project would outweigh the gain.

Councillor Sinkinson stated that he would like to find out about the water quality. Better management of the area could improve it as it is a beautiful part of the town and it could be improve economy.

Councillor Dolton stated that Councillor Holford had summed things up well and he was unhappy with the implications and obligations.

Councillor Wilder also believed that liability is a problem and that this project should be undertaken by the District Council if they are the landowners.

Councillor Cattermole stated that there were no liabilities the Town Council just had to put up notices but Councillor Holford stated that if the water quality was poor over the weekend before new notices were put up this was a liability.

Councillor Cattermole stated he would look at the liabilities again, do more research and gather evidence to see how popular the bathing beach would be.

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

**RESOLVED: THAT** Wallingford Town Council supports the principle of having Wallingford Beach designated as Bathing Waters providing the District Council agrees to being the responsible Local Authority as defined in the Bathing Waters Regulations.

Councillor Keats-Rohan abstained.

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

**RESOLVED: THAT** the following agenda items are deferred:

21. TRANSFER OF SITE B ALLOTMENTS
22. ALLOTMENTS INCIDENT - CONFIDENTIAL
23. DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE DELEGATION PANEL -CONFIDENTIAL

**21. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

See attached table. New requests for agenda items to be emailed to the Town Clerk.

Meeting Closed at 2150 Hours