

WALLINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

of the

Virtual TEAMS meeting of Full Council on the Monday 22nd March 2021 at 7p.m

PRESENT

The Chairman, Councillor Rob McGregor

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

Town Clerk, Paula Lopez

Responsible Finance Officer: Michelle Taylor

Senior Officer in Attendance: Barbara Atkins (Minute Taker)

Administration Officers: Tracey Collins and Jacqui Newport

Approximately 9 members of the public along with County Councillor Pete Sudbury were present

703. 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 and attendees were reminded to mute themselves when not speaking.

704. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

705. ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC

It was Proposed by Councillor Kidley, Seconded by Councillor Beatty 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:
- 21. Confidential Minutes
 - 22. Engrossment
 - 23. Aged Debtors
 - 24. 10 ST Martins Street

706. 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 McGregor declared an interest in Agenda item 24 – 10 St Martin's Street

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

i) Steve Holder – Mr Holder reported on the Grab a Bag and Wallingford for All Campaigns that was running in conjunction with the 1155 Club and that the 'grab a bag' litter picking in town and the surrounding area was going well. The bypass had now been cleared and the equivalent of a double decker bus had been filled with litter. Most of the 'tosser' posters were up apart from a few areas where permission was required. A spike in visitors to Wallingford is expected at Easter and during the holiday period and they were working with Earth Trust and the District Council regarding preparing for an increase in litter and to ensure that the riverside toilets were open. A successful press campaign had been completed with even the Daily Mail showing interest. Contact had been made with Wallingford Schools to promote awareness of 'Wallingford for All' and it is hoped that the schools will visit the Bull Croft Park to find out more about the history of the area. David Johnston, MP was showing an interest in the campaign and Mr Holder hopes to meet up with him when he visits on Friday.

Mr Holder thanked the Town Clerk on behalf of himself and residents for all she had done for Wallingford and wished her well in the future and added that with the election of a new Mayor and a new Town Clerk there would be new opportunities. Mr Holder also hoped that the virtual meetings would continue.

Councillors thanked Mr Holder, Mark Brett and the 1155 Club.

ii) A resident spoke next – She stated that she had lived centrally in Wallingford for the last 3 years which she had very much enjoyed. However she believes that the town centre needs to be a safer place particularly with changing times and government regeneration of market towns. The town would benefit from better pedestrian areas and a European piazza feel and had spoken to several retailers who supported the idea.

Councillor McGregor reported that County Councillor Pete Sudbury was looking at how Wallingford's Town Centre could be improved. However, any future visions would have to incorporate the impact on retailers. Councillor Sudbury is setting up a working party and if the resident would like his contact details we can provide them.

iii) Catherine Somerville – Miss Somerville reported that the Better Website said the Riverside facilities were closed did anyone have any information on when they would be re-opening? Mr Holder believed that a decision on reopening had yet to be made and Mrs Elkin reported that she had spoken to the Managing Director of Better and that the District Council should be making the decision in the next few days.

708. COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

The County and District Councillors had given full reports at the Annual Town Meeting on the 10th March 2021.

709. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

Councillor Hughes had to leave the meeting at 8pm therefore it was Proposed by Councillor Hughes, Seconded by Councillor Beatty and

RESOLVED: THAT Agenda Item Numbers 13, 14 and 18 are brought forward to be heard after the adoption of Minutes.

710. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Councillor McGregor reported that he had been reading Octopus Shocktopus for the users of the Wallingford Family Centre to listen to.

711. MINUTES

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

RESOLVED: THAT the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held the 22nd February 2021 on pages 282 - 292 and the Extraordinary meeting of Council held on the 1st March 2021 on pages 293 – 294 copies circulated previously to Councillors, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

712. TO ADOPT THE FOLLOWING MINUTES

To adopt the minutes of the following committee meetings held in 2020/2021, copies previously signed as a correct record and circulated to Councillors:

Personnel	15/02/2021	Pages 273 - 276
Tourism and Economic Development	14/12/2020	Pages 152 - 157
Planning	01/02/2021	Pages 259 - 266
Planning	17/02/2021	Pages 277 - 281

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

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

713. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES TO BE RESOLVED

i) Tourism and Economic Development Committee – Minute 675/03/2021

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council was committed to some boats until 31st March as these had already paid for Winter Mooring and therefore with a change in dates there could be an overlap with the proposed new fees. Councillor Lester asked if any quotations for new signs had been received, the office replied that it was waiting for the Council to resolve the above-mentioned minute first. Councillor Cattermole stated that Councillor Whelan had suggested that the edge of the moorings are marked with studs at 5 metre intervals which will assist with identify the length of the boats. A discussion took place regarding CCTV at the moorings and whether to include this on any proposed signage. The Town Clerk stated that the regulation for installing and using CCTV in the area would need to be looked into first.

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

RESOLVED: THAT the collection of moorings fees is to be during the same season as others therefore the 1st March to 31st October. The charge for small boats less than 5 metres is reduced to £6.00 for an overnight stay and for boats more than 5 metres it is increased to £12.00 per overnight stay. New signs are to be commissioned and erected before new charges can apply.

ii) To approve the amendment of the mooring policy in line with these changes if appropriate.

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

RESOLVED: THAT the Moorings Policy is amended in line with the above changes in charges and that the season will be the 1st March to 31st October.

iii) Personnel Committee – 685(iv)/03/2021 – (Policies Attached)

Councillor Cattermole stated that he was opposed to the policies and in particular the section referring to Councillors should not be involved in the day to day running of the Town Council. Councillor Cattermole further stated he and others of the Riverside Working Group had been. Councillor Beatty was also against the policy. Councillor McGregor stated that the Town Council's Policy needed to be more up to date to protect both Councillors and Staff.

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

RESOLVED: THAT the Member Officer Protocol Policy be replaced with the Drafted Dignity at Work Policy which included a discrimination section.

Councillors Beatty and Cattermole voted against the motion.

iv) Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces – Minute 525(d)/02/2020

Councillor Sinkinson declared an interest as he is an allotment holder.

Increase in allotment charges – Following the Finance and Properties meeting minute number, 478/16/12/2019, it was considered that the allotment tenants rents would be increased in 2021.

Councillor Beatty stated that he did not believe that charges should be increased as residents effectively already paid as part of the Precept. However, Councillor Hughes stated that the Precept had already been increased and that the allotment holders should take some of the burden. The Office Administrator reported that the current charges are very low and on average other parishes and towns charge £1 per week for an allotment and that the allotment holders had been given one year's notice that there would be a proposed increase in charges.

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

RESOLVED: THAT the allotment charges be increased, half plot fees to remain at £20, full plot fees to be increased to £40 per year. Effective from April 2021 (notice of this increase was sent with the 2020/21 invoices to be sent 1 April 2021).

Councillor Beatty voted against the motion.

714. TOURISM, BUSINESS & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER ROLE

The Town Clerk reported that 4 Councillors, Councillors Harris, Lester, Dolton and Kidley, had requested that due to the current financial constraints of the Council that in accordance with minute 477/12/2020 (Estimates for 2021/2022) the following resolution be overturned. (Original resolution 299/09/20 the 21st September 2020).

Following a discussion It was Proposed by Councillor Keats-Rohan, Seconded by Councillor Lester and

RESOLVE: THAT Wallingford Town Council overturns the following resolution.

(Councillors Whelan, Cattermole and Hughes voted against the motion)

RESOLVED: THAT Wallingford Town Council approves the recommendation by the Tourism and Economic Development Committee that the role of Tourism, Business & Community Development Manager should be continued for a further 12 months and that the job description should be re-evaluated and include a heritage aspect which would help to maximise tourism. The role is confirmed as reporting to the Tourism and Economic Development Committee and that this Committee agree on the final job description. The

Town Clerk confirms and agrees the recruitment process and salary with the Tourism and Economic Development Committee prior to advertising via the normal channels in an open and transparent recruitment process.

715. ELECTION OF MAYOR FOR 2021/2022 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Two Councillors had put themselves forward to be elected as Mayor for the 2021/2022 Municipal Year.

It was Proposed by Councillor Beatty, Seconded by Councillor Beauchamp that Councillor Marcus Harris be nominated as Mayor (2021/2022)

It was Proposed by Councillor Hughes, Seconded by Councillor Kidley that Councillor Katharine Keats-Rohan be nominated as Mayor (2021/2022)

Councillors sent their individual votes to 2 Officers who announced the Councillor with the most votes to Councillor McGregor.

RESOLVED: THAT Councillor Marcus Harris is elected as Mayor for the 2021/2022 Municipal Year (Proposer Councillor Beatty, Seconder Councillor Beauchamp)

Councillor McGregor stated that all should support the new Mayor in making 2021/2022 a special year.

HERE COUNCILLOR HUGHES LEFT THE MEETING

716. SUMMARY OF THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE COUNCIL (RESERVES-REGULAR ITEM)

The Responsible Finance Officer had sent her report out in advance of the meeting. Unallocated reserves amount to £77,889.25 and Councillors were asked to be mindful about agreeing any future spend.

Councillors did not have any questions but Councillor Harris stated that is was worrying how much had been spent and that Council should concentrate on putting more in the budget and rebuilding reserves.

717. TOWN CLERKS RESIGNATION

- i) **Town Clerk's Resignation** – Councillor McGregor stated it was with sadness that the Council had received The Town Clerk's resignation and thanked her for work over the last 7 years.
- ii) **Personnel Committee** – Councillor McGregor reported that the Personnel Committee would be handling the recruitment process in line with the Town Council's Terms of Reference. A Town Clerk with the relevant experience and qualifications was required and they would need to have an understanding of

properties. The job description is currently being tweaked and advertising will start this week.

718. MAY FAIR

Hatwell's May (Spring) Fair have asked to have their fair on the Kinecroft in May 2021 following the easing of restrictions on 12th April 2021.

It was reported that the May Fair organisers had sent a video of their Covid safety measures and that they would be wiping down rides and overseeing social distancing if the rides got busy.

Councillor Dolton reported that it was good that they had completed a Risk Assessment but they would not be able to control the number of people that attended as it is not a ticketed event. Some restrictions would still be in place in May 2021. Councillor Dolton wondered if the fair had spoken to the Safety Advisory Group.

Councillor Sinkinson was very concerned about young people's mental health and believed the fair would provide some light entrainment and therefore be good for them.

Several Councillors believed it was too early, other Councillors believed that we should be moving on and if the police were comfortable with the proposal and they had Covid Marshalls they should be able to attend.

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

RESOLVED: THAT the fair may go ahead provided they have Covid Marshalls in place and the police do not object.

Councillors Dolton, Beauchamp, Holford, Lester and Newcombe voted against the motion.

Councillors noted that both the Car Rally (May) and the Carnival (June) had cancelled their events.

719. CHOLSEY & WALLINGFORD RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY LEASE (Name on Lease)

Councillors discussed the points below following an amendment to the resolution of minute 643/02/2021 (see attached minute extract) and to note that the CWRPS have agreed to pay reasonable solicitors costs for the lease amendment.

Councillor Holford reported that the Food Cart had left the railway site on the 28th February and that the Coffee Cart had moved to land that was not owned by the Town Council. The plans for the canopy had been approved by the Town Council.

- i) **CWRPS asked Council to consider a 98-year extension to the lease in line with the lease from Lidl.** Councillor Holford reported that to bring the Town Council's lease in line with Lidl's Lease which was dated 10/3/2020 for 99 years (although the copy she has seen was unsigned) an additional 85 years would need to be granted rather than 25. The railway needed a longer lease in line with requirements for grant applications. The current lease is until 2034.

Councillors had a detailed discussion raising their concerns over committing the Council to such a long lease particularly if for instance a commuter line was possible.

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

RESOLVED: THAT that Wallingford Town Council will grant a 25 year extension to the current lease which expires in 2034. A break clause to be added that the land reverts to the possession of the Town Council if a commuter line is required. The CWRPS to pay reasonable solicitors costs for the lease amendment.

- ii) **Councillors considered whether the rent should be increased following any extension agreed** – Councillors discussed how current rent reviews take place and concluded that increasing the rent at the moment would not be helpful to the railway.

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

RESOLVED: THAT the current lease caters for rent increases up until 2034 following which a fresh review of the rent will take place.

720. COMMUNICATION WORKING PARTY UPDATE

Councillor Beauchamp's report is attached.

An update was given at the meeting in that Communication Working Party are reaching out to people and they will be having a Forum in March to encourage people's interest in the Town Council and hopefully prospective councillor candidates will be attracted too. There is a lot of work to be done before any real improvements in communication can be made.

Councillor McGregor stated that they would look forward to more updates.

721. ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF COUNCIL

Due to Covid restrictions no events have taken place.

722. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Additional Council meetings – Councillor Beauchamp
Impact of Didcot Garden Town has on Wallingford – Councillor Harris

Possible return to face-to-face meeting after 7th May 2021
Wallingford Preservation Trust – update
Regal Working Party
9 St Martin’s Street
River Subsidence – repair work

2055 HOURS MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WERE ASKED TO LEAVE THE MEETING.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS ON PAGE 322

CONFIDENTIAL