

WALLINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

of the

Virtual TEAMS meeting of Full Council on the Monday 26th October 2020 at 7p.m

PRESENT

The Mayor, Councillor Lee Upcraft

Councillors 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

Senior Officer in Attendance: Barbara Atkins (Minute Taker)

Approximately 14 members of the public/District and County Councillors were present

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

The Mayor shared the protocol for the meeting.

365. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies but the Town Clerk reported that Councillor Beatty declined the meeting and Councillor Davies was not present.

366. 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 19 – Confidential Minutes
Agenda 20 – The Boathouse
Agenda 21 – Lease, 10 St Martins Street
Agenda 22 – Fast Central Ltd

367. 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.

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

1. Karen Whiting – Beacon Project – Mrs Whiting introduced herself and stated that she supported 11- 18 year olds. Although it had been difficult support had continued during lockdown which even included door step visits. Now that schools were back Mrs Whiting is able to have one to one meetings with pupils although youth clubs could not be run, social media had taken their place. The intern had left for a full time paid job. Mrs Whiting stated that the Beacon Project was grateful for the Town Council's continued support and welcomed their direct contact. The Mayor asked Mrs Whiting what the biggest issue was and she stated that she was very worried about mental health. Councillor McGregor stated that if the Town Council could help in any way to please get in touch.

2. Vicky Baker – Wallingford and Cholsey Friends of Green Spaces – Mrs Baker stated that they had registered as a charity in June. The aim of the charity was to give structure and support to communities with green spaces and assist with climate change. Even small actions can make a big difference and the Wilding Road open space is currently being reviewed with regard to whether food products could be grown and that it could be a place to meet people and get to know your neighbours. A meeting with the County's Deputy Chief Executive had taken place regarding their tree planting policy and places for new trees had been identified. Mrs Baker asked if the Town Council had any projects that they could be involved with. To date the group had been in contact with the Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee. Councillor Keats-Rohan reported that the Climate Challenge Working Group had been in contact with the charity with regards biodiversity and grass verges.

3. Maureen Norton – Wigod Way Wallingford Family Centre – The Family’s Centre’s ‘Report to Wallingford Town Council (WTC) by Wigod Way Wallingford Family Centre (WWWFC) Full Council Meeting: October 2020’ had been sent out in advance of the meeting (copy attached). Mrs Norton summarised this report for Councillors and stated that their biggest challenge had been trying to support families during Covid-19 and they had set up Zoom story times. The Wallingford Medical Centre had asked for a safe space for pregnant women to attend appointments with their midwife during lockdown, which the Centre had been able to provide. The centre was now up and running again, providing 3 sessions weekly plus a zoom story time and a telephone helpline. The Family Centre will be having an AGM on Monday 9th November via zoom and would welcome Councillor attending - please contact the office for details. We would also value a Councillor becoming a member of our Board as a representative of the Town Council now Councillor Rennie has resigned. Our Trustee Board would like to thank the Town Council for its continuing support.

4. Wallingford 2020 (Covid) Support Group – The group had been very active during lockdown and they thanked The Mayor and Councillors Beauchamp and Lester for their support during the first wave. The group was suspended for now but 35% of the original volunteers were able to help again in the future if the support group needed to be brought back in to action. It was stated that they wanted to work hand in hand with Wallingford Town Council and asked what plans to provide a safe place for residents. Wallingford 2020 wanted to put on record its thanks to all the volunteers.

Councillor Dolton suggested that one or two councillors work with the group so that a plan was in place as and when needed. Councillor Whelan asked if there is a framework in place. It was stated that the group was dormant and would take 24 – 48 hours to be up and running again. The Mayor suggested that Councillor Dolton liaises with the group and that there was no need to come back to Full Council unless anything further was required.

The Mayor thanked all the members of the public.

Prospective Candidates for co-option

One candidate (Mr Tucker could not be present)

i) Nick Sandall – Mr Sandall stated that he was excited to have an opportunity to help and that he had lived in the district for many years. He stated that he had a passion to help and a pride in Wallingford’s history. He was not sure how he could best help but he was an accountant and facilitator along with having experience in branding and signage. Mr Sandall is experienced in bringing groups together. Councillors Beauchamp and McGregor asked what Mr Sandall would like to see changed and how he could help with the big projects such as the Regal? Mr Sandall stated he would like to see more made of the bridge, street fairs and that he had lots of experience and was used to being accountable.

ii) Tony Stead – Mr Stead stated that he had ideas for Wallingford to bring more visitors to Wallingford as our historical and cultural facilities are under used. Mr Stead also

added that we need to use the facilities more to earn money, the Young Traders Market had been a success. More support for businesses was needed. Councillor McGregor asked how and what assets could be turned around? Mr Stead responded that a coach park and tour package was required. Councillor Keats-Rohan agreed that it was difficult for coaches to park but the museum has coach parties arrive and they are taking bookings for next year. Mr Stead stated that the railway received 6,000 visitors but these were not included with other attractions and their murder mystery tours had been successful. Councillor Cattermole stated he believed that that the Town Hall, Agatha Christie and the bridge should be utilised more.

iii) George Newcombe – Mr Newcombe gave an overview of his family and his work which has involved acting on behalf of parish councils, strategic growth and sustainability. Mr Newcombe stated that he would bring enthusiasm to the Town Council, a love of village/town life and a wish to preserve and evolve Wallingford. Councillor McGregor asked Mr Newcombe what he believed the Town Council could do better. Mr Newcombe responded that at this critical moment support for retail, community engagement and encourage public support and involvement with the town. Councillor Keats-Rohan asked how he would build community engagement. Mr Newcombe replied that he visited America frequently and they had a pride in where they lived and encouraged engagement from a young age therefore he believed engaging with schools would assist.

iv) Marcus Harris – Mr Harris has lived in the area for over 50 years and has taken part in events such as BunkFest, Car Rally and Fireworks on the Kinecroft. He has previously been a Town and District Councillor. Mr Harris said that Wallingford's history is its value, the Town Hall needs lots of work, the Regal, the Bull Croft and river frontage. Mr Harris has spent 10 years in the local community and has run several businesses. Wallingford needed better car parking facilities and a swimming pool. Councillor McGregor asked how we could engage the District and County Council to assist Wallingford. Mr Harris stated that he has been out of local politics for 8 years but that communication was the key to building friendships and partnerships and also protecting sites such as Site A.

The Mayor thanked all the candidates.

369. COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

(i) County Councillor Pete Sudbury's report is attached to the minutes, the report included the following topics:

- Speed Surveys
- Wallingford and Cholsey Friends of Green Spaces – engagement to find places to plant trees as these help to improve the climate.
- Active Transport and Cycling – Cycle racks have been installed
- Bypass Issues – pursuing the possibility of a pedestrian crossing

- 20mph limit in Wallingford – checking relevant surveys although none appear to cover Wallingford.
- Wallingford-Cholsey Railway Re-opening of the line - positive support from the County Council and our MP is required.
- Covid-19 – to engage in local groups and improve signage and highways
- Hospitality – Take out incentives

Councillor Lester stated that she had been in contact with County Councillor Sudbury to gain his support for signage for highways but had not had a response. Councillor Sudbury apologised he had a lot of pressure at home. Councillor McGregor asked if the Covid levels would be wider. Councillor Sudbury responded that it had increased at rate of 4 times to what it was 4 weeks ago, it starts in young people and is now spreading to 50 year olds and that we are a couple of weeks behind Oxford City itself. Councillor Cattermole asked about the tree cover at Site B, bike racks and foot path at Brightwell. Councillor Sudbury is pursuing this at the moment, bike racks and footpaths has already been covered above. Councillor Kidley asked about the proposed crossing at Lidl and Councillor Sudbury responded that he would find out.

(ii) District Councillor Roberts had sent her report in advance of the meeting (attached) and Councillor Levy had sent his apologies.

District Councillor Roberts report covered:

- Tree Policy Meeting – She asked Ms Baker (minute 368.2 above) to register to speak.
- Free School Meals Vouchers for Half Term – District Councillor Roberts had tried to contact local schools to pay for these out of her budget but had only managed to contact Fir Tree School, can anyone assist with contacts please?
- Self-Isolating Grants – Available for those on a low income.
- SODC Grants Awarded – 25.5 million awarded
- Planning Applications – To reduce back log there are less call-ins to Committee but the District Councillors can escalate if the town council requests.
- Climate Change
- River Thames and Safe Bathing
- District Council Staff – 2/3 thirds are working from home and like it. Therefore the site close to Didcot Station is better than Crowmarsh. Crowmarsh is a blank site now and the prospect is exciting.
- Two climate lead personnel will be starting over the next couple of months at District, Andy Egan and Elizabeth Kingdom
- Netflix – 2 programmes recommended.

Councillor Cattermole asked about the River Thames water quality in that he had written to SODC's Champion but had no response, District Councillor Roberts said she would chase. Councillor Whelan stated that the toilets at the riverside park had been well used over the summer months by visitors and people mooring their boats and could they stay open in winter? District Councillor Roberts said she would find out.

The Mayor thanked the County and District Councillors.

370. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

There was no variation in order of business.

371. MAYORS COMMUNICATIONS

i) **Remembrance Sunday** – The Mayor reported that all being well there would be a limited Service with no parade. It would be live streamed by Wallingford Radio and members of the public would be encouraged to watch on line to prevent crowds gathering.

ii) RAF New Station Commander - Group Captain N J Paton DFC to take up his role in November.

372. MINUTES

To sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 21st September 2020 as set out on pages 129-139 of the Minute Book.

Councillor Whelan asked for Minute 291 to be corrected to Riverside Working Party.

RESOLUTION REQUIRED.

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

RESOLVED: THAT following the above correction the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 21st September 2020 as set out on pages 129 - 139 of the Minute Book, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

Councillor Lester abstained

373. 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:

Personnel	04.08.20	Pages 82 - 87
Tourism and Economic Development	24.08.20	111 - 116

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

374. TO CO-OPT TO THE VACANT COUNCILLOR SEAT

Councillors had received the candidates' resumes and listened to those who had attended.

Councillors sent their votes in by text to the Town Clerk and the Responsible Finance Officer.

Following an interval The Mayor announced that there was a clear majority of 7 votes to Mr Marcus Harris.

Both Mr Newcombe and Mr Sandall obtained 3 votes each.

The Mayor congratulated Mr Harris and asked him to arrange a meeting with the Town Clerk to sign his declaration of Acceptance of Office and complete his Register of Interests.

375. SUMMARY OF THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE COUNCIL

The Chairman of the Finance and Properties Committee explained that this was on the agenda in order for Council to monitor the Town Council's finances more closely, as advised previously the general reserves were very low and that for now it would be included at each Full Council meeting.

The Responsible Finance Officer stated that all Councillors had received a copy of the income and expenditure report which covered the first 2 quarters, (attached to the minutes). There is an outstanding debt of £67,500 which obviously affects income which will eat into the general reserves, both/all Precept payments have been received. Demolition of the Rec Rooms in the Bull Croft Park will cost £32,000, more than estimated.

2036 Hours – Here Councillor Holford left the meeting

Councillor Cattermole stated that the demolition figure was up by 60% and should this not be rebid, the Town Clerk advised that the figure in the estimates had been arbitrary, the exact cost not being known at the time of the estimates. The figure had also increased due to complying with Historic England and the District Council's requirements. Quotes had been received one of which was approved by the Bull Croft Trust Charity. Councillor Whelan asked if the Bull Croft Trust would be in a position to reimburse the amount. Both The Mayor and Town Clerk stated not at the moment and the Mayor reiterated the need to be prudent with spending.

376. UPDATE FROM THE CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING PARTY

Councillor Keats-Rohan's report is attached to the minutes. Councillor Keats-Rohan advised that the members of the working party were herself as Chairman along with Councillors Beauchamp, Dolton, Sinkinson; District Councillor Levy; County Councillor Sudbury and eight electors representing different environmental groups in the town.

The core aims of the party are to establish a Wallingford specific baseline from which to formulate and enact plans to mitigate our local carbon footprints, so as to assist higher local councils in meeting net zero targets for 2030 and ensuring that national government promotes the same agenda in line with the Climate Acts. Councillor Keats-Rohan's report covers:

- Reducing emissions
- Solar streets
- Solar energy
- Meeting with David Johnston, MP
- Biodiverse verges
- Proposal to hold virtual public consultation

2045 Hours – Here Councillor Wilder left the meeting

377. UPDATE FROM THE REGAL WORKING PARTY

The Mayor reported that the Regal Working Party had not met for some time as he had been focused on the Neighbourhood Plan but he hoped to pick this up next week. The Regal survey would be resurrected in the Window on Wallingford and this would form the basis for the business plan.

Councillor Keats-Rohan asked if following Covid-19 and the status of the town and the centre changing now the Town Council should reflect on the status. All the groups that met in the Regal have relocated. The Mayor stated that there was large public expectation to build a new Regal and that it has been allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillors' proposed different options: commercial possibilities; residential units above and perhaps a developer would be interested.

The Mayor suggested that the proposed cost were tidied up and then it comes back to Full Council for further discussion.

378. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Mayor have sent an email to Councillors in advance of the meeting and he updated Councillors on the plan process in relation to Covid-19 restrictions and the Steering Group's responses to the Examiners "Points of Clarification". Councillors thanked The Mayor and the Steering Group for all their hard work. The Mayor advised that the Neighbourhood Plan cannot at the moment be adopted due to Covid-19 and therefore the Town Council are not automatically entitled to the full 25% of CIL, however David Johnston, MP had recommended to the District Council that they should transfer the full 25% CIL.

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

RESOLVED: THAT Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's responses should be submitted to the examiner.

379. SODC LOCAL PLAN

The consultation on amendments to the SODC Local Plan in response to the recent Inspection closes on 2nd November. The Mayor updated Councillors on the views of the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group regarding housing targets in that Wallingford has in fact exceeded these but that the Local Plan now states a minimum of 1,000 houses. The District Council have used an incorrect map for Wallingford's shopping area and this has therefore not been properly recognised. Councillors agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group respond to the consultation on behalf of the Town Council.

380. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ON THE BRIDGE

Councillor Sinkinson apologised for not attending many meeting lately as he has been on paternity leave. Councillor Sinkinson proposed ideas for increasing Christmas spirit in the town when normal activities were unable to take place and asked if the Town Council could purchase Christmas lights for the bridge. Councillor Sinkinson had sent an email with examples of the lighting in advance of the meeting. Councillor Sinkinson believed that the proposals would need permitted development, Oxfordshire County Council and Historic England permissions. Councillors discussed in detail and raised the following points:

- The lights would not be seen from the road
- The cost is £5,000 for 3 years
- What about the arches of the bridge? (Specialist people would be required and it could be a problem if the river was running high and fast to install these).
- Electricity supply? (From Street lights or maybe boathouse).
- Projecting could be an option and cheaper.

- Proposals are limited as can only been seen from the river and would not be accessible to all residents.
- Permitted development could change to planning permission as the bridge is in a conservation area and subject to Article 4 Direction.

Councillors concluded that Councillor Sinkinson could put in a permitted development application and that proposals could be put in the budget for next year.

381. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

i) Personnel Committee Meeting of the 4th August 2020 Minute 180/08/2020 refers.

RECOMMENDED: THAT the Town Clerk is paid full time with agreement that she would not attend the office on Fridays therefore working from home.

The Town Clerk asked for this item to be deferred.

ii) Personnel Committee Meeting of the 19th October 2020 Minute 358/10/2020 refers -

RECOMMENDED: THAT the Town Council adopts the Complaints Policy.

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

RESOLVED: THAT the Town Council adopts the Complaints Policy.

2130 Hours – Here Councillor Sinkinson left the meeting

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

Confidential Minutes on Page 181