



Wallingford Town Council

WALLINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

of the

**Meeting of Full Council on Monday, the 15th November 2021 at
Wallingford Town Hall at 7.00pm**

Those Present: The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Beauchamp
Councillors Beatty, Cattermole, Holford, Hughes, Keats-Rohan, Kidley,
Lester, McGregor and Whelan

In Attendance: The Town Clerk/RFO, Miss Michelle Taylor
The Estates Officer, Mr Robert Workman
The Administration Officer/ Minute Taker, Miss Emilie Perry
The Local Government Officer, Mrs Jacqueline Coker

Public Attendance: There were 14 members of the public present

The meeting commenced at 7.02PM

352/21.THE CHAIRMAN TO ADVISE THOSE IN ATTENDANCE OF THE PROTOCOL FOR THE MEETING

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Beauchamp, chaired this meeting in the absence of the Mayor, and advised attendees of standard meeting protocol

353/21.APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Mayor, Councillor Harris, and Councillors Holder, Newcombe and Sinkinson

Councillor Gibbon was not in attendance

354/21.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 and all Councillors have received a copy prior to the meeting)

Councillor Whelan declared an interest in item 23: Wallingford Accessible Boat Club

355/21.MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor to communicate any news to Council:

- Councillor Beauchamp reported on behalf of the Mayor that the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils was now represented at the National Association of Local Councils by Councillor Keats- Rohan
- The Mayor's thanks were passed to all Councillors and Staff who attended the Remembrance Sunday parade the previous day

356/21.MINUTES

To resolve that the minutes from the meeting of Full Council on the 11th October 2021 as set out on pages 97-106 are a true and accurate record of that meeting, and authorise the Chairman to sign them (previously circulated to Councillors):

It was proposed by Councillor Kidley, seconded by Councillor Whelan and **RESOLVED THAT** the minutes from the meeting of Full Council on the 11th October 2021 as set out on pages 97-106 are a true and accurate record of that meeting, and the Chairman is authorised to sign them

357/21.PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

From Wallingford Town Council's Standing Orders:

E) Members of the public may make representations, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda.

F) The period of time designated for public participation at a meeting in accordance with standing order 3(E) above shall not exceed 15 minutes unless directed by the chairman of the meeting.

G) Subject to standing order 3(F) above, a member of the public shall not speak for more than 10 minutes.

Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting please email the Senior Administrator at senioradmin@wallingfordtowncouncil.gov.uk

- **Councillor Deborah Whelan read out a report on behalf of John Jenkins, Chairman of the Wallingford Accessible Boat Club (WABC):**

The report stated that the last three months of the season had been a success for the WABC, achieving their objective of "getting disabled and immobile people out on the river" and having conducted 15 outings and carrying around 60 passengers, enabling one or more disabled persons (of all ages) to enjoy a trip on the river. The WABC have had great feedback from their users and have a facility being made available by South Oxfordshire District Council in 2022, but are struggling to find a mooring location for their wheelie-boat, despite efforts at Howbery Park and Oxford University Boat Club- so the WABC is approaching Wallingford Town Council with a request to grant them a license to moor at the Upstream end of the Boathouse Forecourt.

- **Representatives from the Wigod Family Centre:**

Ex-Councillor Mrs Maureen Norton introduced herself and the Family Centre team, and requested that the funding from the Town Council be increased; although there have been some lottery monies applied for to aid the running of the Family Centre, the pandemic has made it very difficult to effectively fundraise over the last two years. Mrs Norton introduced a ballpark figure of £33,000 which would cover the costs of adequately running the Family Centre as it is, however the Family Centre only receives £20,000 and is left with a £13,000 deficit annually.

Ms Sonya Godfrey then addressed Council, outlining her background in cognitive behavioural therapy and youth work, and advocated for how much a Family Centre like the Wigod benefits countless families both present and future- to build healthy and strong relationships within families now, and share knowledge that will help to impart these healthy and functional relationships to future generations.

Ms Kelsey Proctor reported to Members that the Wigod Staff and Trustees worked tirelessly throughout the COVID pandemic; she reported that the Centre sees over 100 members of the community per week, through various initiatives such as baby and toddler classes, monthly sessions to provide varied support and advice to families, the food bank, and more. She added that Community Midwives have been and are currently operating out of a room in the Wigod Centre, and have seen over 3000 families since they have been there. Ms Proctor noted that the Wigod Family Centre was in a delicate position, draining reserves in an attempt to uphold the volunteer services provided.

Councillor Lester enquired whether the Wigod Team had asked the Wallingford Municipal Charities for financial help: Mrs Norton confirmed they had, but the Municipal Charities could not provide the substantial amount of money needed annually.

Councillor Whelan thanked the Wigod Team for all that they do for the Wallingford Community.

Councillor Cattermole countered the conversation by questioning why the Town Council is supporting the Wigod Centre as it is; he stated that if free childcare is given, then the demand for free childcare will rise and thus cost more money. Councillor Cattermole objected very strongly to the idea of increasing funding to the Wigod Family Centre, and regarded it a waste of public money when so much more of the healthcare system is under so much strain.

Mrs Norton corrected Councillor Cattermole, and reported that the Wigod Centre did not provide free childcare; they provide sessions to families to aid the building of healthy relationships and habits to carry throughout development and growth and into adult life. Mrs Norton requested that the Wigod Family Centre is discussed as an agenda item at the next Finance meeting on the 29th November.

- **Candidates regarding co-option:**

Councillor Beauchamp first read aloud personal statements from the two candidates who were unable to attend: Miss Amanda Absolom and Mr Christopher Green, for Members' consideration in the co-option.

Sue Hendrie addressed Members; she has worked collaboratively with the Council on the now adopted Neighbourhood Plan and the Historic Assets Working Group, as well as working on grant funding for the St. Nicholas' College ruins project. Ms Hendrie reported that she is keen on nurturing the vitality of Wallingford Town alongside implementing more of the Neighbourhood Plan in Wallingford Town Council's everyday operations.

Craig Simpson spoke on growing up in and around Wallingford, raising his own family in the Town, the varying volunteer work he has carried out with 1155 as well as his own business, his passion for making Wallingford streets feel safer again and keenness to give back to the community.

Susan Tabor reported that she had known and loved Wallingford as far back as 1976, and has lived in many of the surrounding villages. Mrs Tabor moved back to Wallingford onto Thames Street earlier this year, and had a Civil Partnership ceremony in the Town Hall this summer. She proposed to bring varied expertise to the Council across legal and financial backgrounds and offered to be an enabler with regards to organisation, stating she likes to keep her "ducks in a row".

Here Councillor Hughes highlighted that as Mrs Tabor had not had 12 consecutive months' residency in Wallingford, she was in fact not eligible for co-option.

358/21.COUNCILLOR VACANCY

Members to vote on appointing a new Member of Council by co-option:

Councillor Beauchamp explained the process of voting by co-option as is stated in the Standing Orders. The Administration Officer collected the ballot papers from Members and handed them to the Local Government Officer for counting; Mrs Coker handed the ballot results to the Town Clerk/RFO who passed them to Councillor Beauchamp to announce who Members had voted in.

It was **RESOLVED THAT** Mrs Sue Hendrie is co-opted as a Town Councillor.

Councillor Beauchamp thanked Mrs Coker for attending the meeting to help with the co-option.

Here the Local Government Officer, Mrs Coker, left the meeting

359/21.REPORTS FROM DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Councillors to note the reports from County Councillor Peter Sudbury, and District Councillors George Levy and Sue Roberts:

Noted by Members

360/21.ESTATES OPERATIONS REVIEW

Estates Officer to provide an update:

The Estates Officer, Mr Workman reported that he was currently trying to work out a way forward regarding progress across the board; he detailed issues regarding health and safety, adequate staff training and the property portfolio itself. Mr Workman estimated that he would need 2-3 months in order to review everything the Town Council does within the Estates division, and bring the various processes up to an acceptable and sustainable standard.

Councillor McGregor queried whether the Estates Officer felt the portfolio was too big; Mr Workman expressed a reluctance to dispose of properties without due consideration.

Councillor Whelan questioned the status of the Parks Team's machinery and whether it was up and running; Mr Workman explained that the machinery had not been regularly serviced meaning that servicing it all now would cost in the region of £7,000. He advised Councillor Whelan and Members that he was looking to review the inventory with regards to cost saving and efficiency, for example keeping only one tractor of the two that the Council currently has.

Councillor Cattermole interjected here and demanded to know who was responsible for this bad practice and neglect, leaving Council with bills amounting to £7,000, and asked that they be held accountable to their actions. The Town Clerk/RFO informed Councillor Cattermole that the array of issues we are seeing here today have been inherited by this generation of Council, and that there was no definitive answer.

361/21.RENAMING AND RESHUFFLE OF COMMITTEES

Members to resolve that the Finance and Properties Committee becomes Finance and General Purposes Committee to allow the Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee to amalgamate Properties to become the Estates Committee; The Mayor, Councillor Harris to give an update:

Councillor Beauchamp summarised this item by relaying the Mayor's communication regarding the importance of having a Committee to support the Estates Officer in his role; Councillors Lester and Holford both expressed explicitly their unease surrounding this and indicated that this item should be deferred for at least six months- and definitely in the absence of the Mayor, Councillor Harris. Members requested to know what each Committee would be doing, and see Standing Orders and Terms of Reference drafted for these Committees. Councillor McGregor asked

the opinion of the Estates Officer and Mr Workman suggested that it may be sensible to wait for six months. He reported that he had set up a meeting with the Clerks and Estates Managers/Officers from Henley and Thame Town Councils in December to discuss how they structure their Estates division and noted that Henley have a Finance and Strategy Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Holford, seconded by Councillor Lester and **RESOLVED THAT** this item is deferred, and Standing Orders for the Proposed Finance and General Purposes and Estates Committees are drafted for approval at a future Council meeting

Action: the Town Clerk/RFO to write up standing orders and terms of reference for the proposed Finance and General Purposes and Estates Committees

362/21.VOLUNTEER GROUP

Councillor Beauchamp to report on a potential volunteer event; members to decide whether to proceed with this as a Council event:

Councillor Beauchamp gave an overview of the work done by the Wallingford Volunteer Group and recommended that the Town Council facilitate an event where volunteer organisations can hold information stalls.

Councillor Lester suggested that Centre 70 is used for this event as the Town Hall is not accessible to the disabled, and Councillor Kidley as a Director of Centre 70 offered use of the building free of charge.

It was proposed by Councillor Beauchamp, seconded by Councillor Lester and **RESOLVED THAT** Wallingford Town Council will begin organising a stall-holding event for volunteer groups in Wallingford under the Council's name

Action: Councillor Beauchamp to begin organising this event with volunteer groups and Centre 70

363/21.PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD

- (i) The Estates Officer and Locum Clerk to report:
- (ii) Members to resolve to seek the Secretary of State's approval for the proposed borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board:

The Town Clerk/RFO advised that this item needed more work before it could be discussed; this item is deferred

364/21.BAND CONCERTS

Members to discuss the type of music appropriate for concerts in the Castle Gardens:

This agenda item, previously requested by Members, has been deferred until such a time when Members may have prepared for this discussion

365/21.NOMINATIVE TRUSTEE FOR WALLINGFORD MUNICIPAL CHARITIES

To resolve that Mrs. E. Unsworth continue her role as the Nominative Trustee for the Wallingford Municipal Charities:

It was proposed by Councillor Lester, seconded by Councillor Kidley and **RESOLVED THAT** Wallingford Town Council appoints Mrs. E. Unsworth to continue her role as the Nominative Trustee for the Wallingford Municipal Charities.

Councillor Lester here noted that seven of the thirteen Trustees of the Municipal Charities must in fact be appointed by the Town Council

Action: The Administration Officer to liaise with Mr Andrew Rogers regarding the other Trustees who require appointment by Council

366/21.CIVIL WAR RE-ENACTMENT

- (i) Members to receive and note an update from the Town Clerk/RFO:
- (ii) Members to discuss the first draft of the event contract:

The Town Clerk/RFO updated Members on a meeting that is scheduled with the Earth Trust and South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) to discuss use of the Meadows; the management is changing within SODC and the suitability of the event from SODC's position will be discussed. The Earth Trust are suggesting that the event takes place later than the proposed June dates due to flowering plants. Councillor Hughes expressed that the case may be helped if the press reported on the Earth Trust blockading the Jubilee event. This item is deferred until Full Council on the 13th December

367/21.SITE B ALLOTMENTS

The Town Clerk/RFO and Estates Officer to give an update:

The Town Clerk/RFO and Estates Officer reported that the Town Council will need to sign two legal agreements regarding Site B: one regarding the handover of the Allotment site, and the other regarding the access path which will need to be widened.

Councillor Hughes explained that Site B had presented to the Planning Committee the previous week and laid out the necessary steps to widen the access footpath in order to have the footpath adopted by Oxfordshire County Council. He added that the Site B developers had removed the Section 106 condition pertaining to the obligation of offering allotments to Site B residents before the other residents of Wallingford.

Action: the Estates Officer and Town Clerk/RFO are to begin negotiations

368/21.COUNCILLOR INDUCTION GUIDE

As requested by Councillor Holder, Members to adopt and sign off on the Councillor Induction Guide previously circulated to Members:

Various Members raised issue with this document, such as:

- Inconsistencies with links to the OALC and NALC websites, and more
- The document was written in a way that is more relevant to Officers, not Members of Council
- There was lack of clarity over the 'mentor' idea – who would be mentoring, what does it entail, etc

The Administration Officer offered to amend the document to ensure more clarity, and relevance to Members of Council as opposed to Officers.

This item is deferred until the document is amended as above and brought back to Council for approval

Action: The Administrative Officer to amend the document as above and bring back to the next Full Council meeting

369/21. OXFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE CONSULTATION

Members to discuss the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's Community Risk Management Plan and decide on a response to submit to the consultation; previously circulated:

Members commented on the detail of the Community Risk Management Plan. Councillor McGregor suggested there could be more within the document with regards to pushing and recruiting for volunteers

Action: The Administration Officer to submit the Council's comments to the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

370/21. REINSTATEMENT COST ASSESSMENTS FOR BUILDING INSURANCE PURPOSES

Documents previously circulated:

The Estates Officer reported that neither the gas monument pillar in the Bull Croft nor the Castle Ruins are currently insured, and both will need a valuation before insuring - the Castle Ruins at the very least must be insured as a legal obligation under the Historic England grant contract. Councillor Cattermole branded the restoration of the ruins "woke" and expressed the strongly that the Town Council should not be spending out on insuring ruins that have stood for 500+ years as it does not seem necessary.

It was proposed by Councillor Keats- Rohan, seconded by Councillor Kidley and **RESOLVED THAT** under legal obligation to maintain and contractual obligation to insure the ruins at the least, the Estates Officer is to spend up to £5650+VAT on valuations to insure the Town Council's properties including the Castle Ruins

371/21.CONSTRUCTION DESIGN MANAGEMENT (CDM) REGULATIONS 2015: CONSULTANT REQUIRED FOR ST. NICHOLAS COLLEGE PROJECT

Members to note the urgent Health and Safety costs to engage a CDM Consultant for the project to progress; Estates Officer to update Members:

The Estates Officer reported that as a matter of compliance, Construction Design Management duties for the St. Nicholas' College Ruins project fall to the Town Council before appointing a contractor; the Town Clerk recommended that Council spends no more than £2,000 to take the project forward. She advised that there is money earmarked in the Professional Fees budget that remains unallocated, and that this is a case of simply approving the allocation of the funds.

Councillor Cattermole interjected, once again hailing the works and legislations around the ruins as “woke” and demanded to see an Act of Parliament that contained the statutes pertaining to who in fact is legally responsible for all of this spending, before reiterating his strong objection to spending money on the ruins.

It was proposed by Councillor Lester, seconded by Councillor Keats- Rohan and **RESOLVED THAT** the allocation of £2,000 to a CDM Consultant for the St. Nicholas College project is approved.

Councillors Beatty and Cattermole abstained

372/21.WAR MEMORIAL RAILINGS

Members to note the Estates Officer's report (previously circulated)

The Estates Officer gave a brief overview of his report and ascertained that the whole Memorial structure is listed and scheduled, making it unlikely for Conservation to support such a planning application. Members detailed on the progress with the project: the competition winner from the group of Wallingford School A-Level art students was a Miss E Sutherland, who has since left the school.

It was **RECOMMENDED THAT** Councillors Holford and Kidley work closely with the Estates Officer to acquire pre-application advice from South Oxfordshire District Council

373/21.CLIMATE EMERGENCY UPDATE

Climate Challenge Working Group report previously circulated; Members to note:

Councillor Beatty congratulated Members for their efforts in the climate crisis; following this he read out some figures about Octopus Energy and explained why they may not be the best option for the Council's energy supplier.

Councillor Cattermole objected very strongly to the entire report, claiming that the actions reported as taken by Wallingford Town Council were unlawful by breach of procedure.

Councillor Keats- Rohan reminded fellow Members that there was no political agenda attached to the report; the report was from the Climate Challenge Working Party, not from Council.

It was **RECOMMENDED THAT** the change in energy supplier to Octopus Energy be reviewed at the next Finance and Properties Committee meeting

374/21. WALLINGFORD ACCESSIBLE BOAT CLUB

Councillor Whelan on behalf of the Wallingford Accessible Boat Club (WABC) has requested that the Town Council moves to support the WABC in their application to moor their wheelchair-accessible boat at the upstream end of the Boat House forecourt from April-October inclusive in 2022 onwards:

Here Councillor Whelan left the room

Here the Town Clerk/RFO clarified that the space requested is at the upstream end of the Boathouse forecourt, by the subsidence.

Councillor Cattermole voiced his support for this endeavour. The Town Clerk/RFO here explained that the space in question is in fact available since PureBoating do not have it anymore as part of their ongoing lease agreement, but any decision made here must go back to Greene King for approval.

It was proposed by Councillor McGregor, seconded by Councillor Cattermole and **RESOLVED THAT** Wallingford Town Council will propose a rental figure to the Wallingford Accessible Boat Club, to be returned annually as a grant after a small fee is charged; this proposal will go to Greene King for approval and agreement before implementing

Here Councillor Whelan re-joined Members in the Main Chamber

375/21. LOCUM TOWN CLERK CONTRACT

Following the recommendation from the Personnel Committee meeting on the 8th November 2021, minuted at 332/21 on page 117: "Members to resolve that the Locum Town Clerk contract will not be extended after the 30th November 2021. Members thanked The Locum Clerk for all the support given to both the Town Clerk and Councillors over the past six months":

It was proposed by Councillor Kidley, seconded by Councillor Keats- Rohan and **RESOLVED THAT** the Locum Clerk's contract will not be extended after the 30th November 2021

376/21.STAFF ORGANISATIONAL CHART

To adopt the newly amended staff organisational chart to include the Estates Officer in the capacity of the Parks Staff Line Manager, and the Finance Assistant:

This item is deferred until the next meeting as the organisational chart was not available to view at the time of the meeting

377/21.FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Public Loan borrowing
- CCTV upgrade update
- Estates portfolio review
- Civil War re-enactment
- Councillor induction guide
- Staff organisational chart
- Wigod Centre update
- Wallingford Accessible Boat Club update
- Agatha Christie bench statue update
- Music in the Castle Gardens
- May 2022: Renaming and reshuffling of Committees to establish the Estates Committee

Members thanked Councillor Beauchamp for chairing the meeting in the absence of the Mayor.

The meeting ended at 9.00pm

2021-11-15 – Council EP

Chairman