



Wallingford Town Council

**MINUTES
of a meeting of the
FULL COUNCIL**

**held on
Monday, 23 October 2023 at 7.00 pm
in Wallingford Town Hall**

Present

Members Cllr Dan Beauchamp (The Mayor/Chairman)
Cllr Ailsa Charter
Cllr Mahmood Ebrahimjee
Cllr Marcus Harris
Cllr Jacki Hoskins
Cllr Mark Hoskins
Town & District Cllr Katharine Keats-Rohan
Cllr Ros Lester

Officers: Luke Whitcomb, Meetings Officer

Others: County Councillor Pete Sudbury
District Councillor James Barlow
7 members of the public
0 members of the press

319/23 MEETING PROTOCOL

The Mayor outlined the protocols that needed to be followed in the conduct of the meeting.

320/23 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Acreman, Beatty, Gibbon, Hendrie, Holder, Holford, Hughes and Margarido, and the Town Clerk, and the reasons read out.

It was proposed by Councillor Harris, and seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan, and

RESOLVED that the apologies be accepted

321/23 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

322/23 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor reported on his recent activities, including two visits to RAF Benson and the selection of the Christmas tree for the Market Place. He also formally announced that Wallingford had won two regional awards in the most recent Britain in Bloom competition: an overall Silver award and the award for Community Involvement. This was the first time that Wallingford had entered the competition in 26 years.

323/23 **MINUTES**

It was proposed by Councillor J Hoskins, and seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan, and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 25 September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

324/23 **ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Council reviewed progress on 'open' actions agreed by previous meetings of the Full Council. The Action Log had now been 'traffic-lighted' to show where progress had stalled or been slow.

325/23 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A representative of Wild about Wallingford spoke about delivery of the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Connected Communities Fund Grant of £5k (Minute 193/23). The Fund aimed to create new connections within communities and addressed issues of sustainability. The Town Council, Wild about Wallingford and Sustainable Wallingford were acting as partners in the delivery of the grant and the community's input was being actively sought.

326/23 **COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

District Councillors Barlow and Keats-Rohan reported on their recent activities and the current priorities of South Oxfordshire District Council which included the development of a Joint Local Plan with the Vale of White Horse. The District Councillors had recently visited Wallingford Sports Park to view the solar array which was now producing electricity, some of which could be stored in on-site batteries.

County Councillor Sudbury was continuing to focus on strategic transport issues, in particular the potential impact of the Didcot bypass on traffic through and around Wallingford. More traffic was likely to be created on the A4130.

Despite the benefit of our own bypass, SatNavs continued to direct traffic through areas including Norries Drive, Blackstone Road and St George's Road. The use of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) in Oxford had been successful in creating semi-permeable barriers and this might be a good solution for Wallingford. Councillor Sudbury also recommended a reputed County expert on community emergency planning.

327/23

STRATEGY

Councillor Charter updated the Council on the development of the strategy, including the most recent public consultation on 27 September 2023. The emphasis was now to become the implementation of the strategy.

A six-month update was being developed to communicate publicly the action taken so far on the issues raised by the community at the Annual Town Meeting – and in the associated survey - in May 2023. The Council was positioning itself as a facilitator of solutions rather than the sole provider.

328/23

WALLINGFORD CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAU

Representatives of the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB), including the Chief Officer for South Oxfordshire, gave an overview of the charity's outreach work in Wallingford which had recently been re-established, with the support of a grant of £2k by the Town Council. The range of issues dealt with was broad, including debt, benefits and relationship advice. The profile of advice sought was similar to that in Abingdon, with a higher number of housing enquires in Wallingford. A high proportion of clients had long-term health conditions and fifty per cent of clients were on a negative budget. The age profile was becoming younger. CAB's work in Wallingford was presently being operated from the Baptist Church in Thames Street, but this location was being evaluated.

329/23

WALLINGFORD FOOD BANK

The Manager of Wallingford Food Bank gave an overview of the service being provided to the community and the dramatically-increasing demand, particularly from families. The Food Bank had been established in 2011 and remained independent which was unique in Oxfordshire. Around fifty organisations referred people to the service which supported households in the OX10 and RG8 post codes. By July 2023, demand had exceeded the total annual amount for 2022. The Food Bank currently operated from a room at Ridgeway Community Church but space was tight. The Town Council was asked to consider the Food Bank's need for a central space in any community space development in the future.

330/23

WIGOD WAY FAMILY CENTRE

The Co-ordinator and Chair of Trustees of the Wigod Way Family Centre presented their annual report. The last twelve months had seen a 22.75% increase in attendance which had doubled since 2018. They were now supporting ten times the number of families (600) stipulated in the original service level agreement. Over 330 sessions had been provided over the past year. There had been a significant increase in complex cases. Three part-time staff were employed and they were supported by an impressive army of volunteers. Referrals came from Primary Healthcare teams and other organisations.

The Centre's representatives thanked the Town Council for the critical annual support of £30k without which the Centre would not be viable. This grant paid for core funding which could not be provided by other forms of income generation. Even with the Council's annual support of £30k, the Centre would struggle to pay the Living Wage next year.

331/23

DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY HUBS

Councillor Keats-Rohan updated the Council on the work with local retailers to make the town more dementia-friendly, both for the sake of those living with the condition and those caring for them. Retailers were being asked to view a short video produced by the Alzheimer's Society (Alzheimer's being just one form of dementia) and then to display a sticker in their windows.

332/23

CHRISTMAS 2023

Councillor J Hoskins outlined the programme of activities planned for Christmas 2023. These centred around an event day (3 December 2023) which included stalls, choirs, a Santa Dash, dance groups, a dog show, the appearance of a Santa and sleigh, and the lighting of the Christmas tree.

Action:

The Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB), Wallingford Food Bank and Wigod Way Family Centre to be offered stalls free of charge

333/23

80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WILDING ANDREW CRASH

The Council considered the need to mark the 80th anniversary in 2024 of the crash of the Halifax Bomber which had cost the lives of Flying Officer John Wilding and Flight Sergeant John Andrew.

It was proposed by Councillor Harris, and seconded by Councillor Lester, and

RESOLVED that a memorial plaque to be laid at the International Bomber Command Memorial

Action:

This to be included in the budget meeting on 13 November 2023

The Town Council Office to progress with the staff at the Lincoln memorial

334/23

80TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

The Council considered the need to mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day in 2024.

It was proposed by Councillor J Hoskins, and seconded by Councillor Lester, and

RESOLVED that a Working Group be formed to develop the town's commemorative plans for D-Day

Action:

The Working Group's membership to be determined

335/23

MURDER MYSTERY EXTRAVAGANZA CELEBRATING AGATHA CHRISTIE 2023

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Full Council on 20 November 2023 as a key member of the Working Group was not present.

Action:

Meetings Officer to schedule

336/23

AGATHA CHRISTIE MAQUETTE

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Full Council on 20 November 2023 as a key member of the Working Group was not present.

Action:

Meetings Officer to schedule

337/23

ALLOTMENTS, NEW FENCING

The Council considered a recommendation from the Finance and Properties Committee (Minute 312/23).

It was proposed by Councillor Ebrahimjee, and seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan, and

RESOLVED that the work for the new fencing on the existing allotments be awarded to Verdec Limited, an existing supplier, based on their quotation of September 2023 for £1,040 excluding VAT.

Action:

Procurement policy to be included as an item on an agenda in the near future

338/23

REVIEW OF WORKING GROUPS

The Council reviewed the operation of Working Groups that had been established since the Annual Meeting in May 2023. The Mayor made clear that working groups would be temporarily put on hold if they were not in active mode until such a time when progress could be made.

Action:

Terms of reference to be completed by Members for all Working Groups by 20 November 2023 using the template provided

339/23

VACANCIES

The Council NOTED that two vacancies currently existed on the Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee.

340/23

PROPERTIES - CASTLE LODGE

The Council considered the current refurbishment of Castle Lodge and in particular the need for a new bathroom to be installed in order for the property to be rentable at market value.

It was proposed by Councillor Harris, and seconded by Councillor Lester, and

RESOLVED that up to £5k be authorised for a new bathroom at Castle Lodge, to be allocated from 'Earmarked Reserves Property Contingency

Action:

Inform Homebase of decision

Homebase or Accounts to maintain a list of refurbishment costs for each of the Council-owned properties

341/23

RETIRING STAFF MEMBER

The Council received the news of the forthcoming retirement of Ms Suzanne Symons, Events Manager, who had been in the employment of the Town Council for over ten years.

It was proposed by Councillor Lester, and seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan, and

RESOLVED that the Council's seal be placed on a letter of thanks to Ms Suzanne Symons for her outstanding service, in particular acknowledging her work in developing the Town Hall as a venue

Action:

Town Clerk to action the letter of thanks

342/23

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

The following items were identified for future meetings:

- Final decision on horse chestnut tree by Coach & Horses Pub on the Kinecroft (November 2023) (this has been delayed by one month as we are waiting for a report from one party; stakeholders have been informed of this delay)
- Pedestrianisation of front area of Town Hall (Action Log)
- Community Emergency Plan (included in the Action Log)
- IT server in Town Council Office – funding for replacement (budget meeting)
- Legal matter [confidential]
- Council and committee dates for the 2024-25 Municipal Year (November 2023)
- 2024 Annual Town Meeting (November 2023)
- Procurement
- Staffing budget – to cover absences (November 2023)
- Policies

- Governance cycle
- Review of the 2023 Murder Mystery Extravaganza celebrating Agatha Christie, including statue
- Agatha Christie maquette – confirmation of where this should go

343/23 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Lester, and seconded by Councillor Keats-Rohan, and

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

The meeting ended at 9.17 pm

Minutes of the meeting of the
Full Council held on
23 October 2023,
signed as a correct record

Chairman

2023-10-23 FC minutes DRAFT PUBLIC