



Wallingford Town Council

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

**held on
Monday, 22 January 2024 at 7.00 pm
in Wallingford Town Hall**

Present

Members

Cllr Mike Acreman
Cllr Dan Beauchamp (The Mayor/Chairman)
Cllr Mahmood Ebrahimjee
Cllr Marcus Harris (from Minute 530/23 onwards)
Cllr Susan Hendrie
Cllr Stephen Holder (up to Minute 543/23)
Cllr Claire Holford (The Deputy Mayor)
Cllr Jacki Hoskins
Cllr Mark Hoskins
Cllr Nigel Hughes
Cllr Katharine Keats-Rohan
Cllr Ros Lester
Cllr Diana Margarido

Officers:

Michelle Taylor, Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Luke Whitcomb, Meetings Officer
Fiona Pringle, Events Manager

Others:

County Councillor Pete Sudbury (up to Minute 541/23)
District Councillor James Barlow (up to Minute 537/23)
A representative of District Enforcement (see Minute 535/23)
4 members of the public
0 members of the press

527/23

MEETING PROTOCOL

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

528/23

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Charter.

529/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

530/23 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor asked for volunteers for a fundraising quiz event being run by South Oxfordshire District Council in Chalgrove to benefit two local charities.

531/23 MINUTES

It was proposed by Councillor Hendrie, and seconded by Councillor Acreman, and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 20 December 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

532/23 ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Council reviewed progress on 'open' actions agreed by previous meetings of the Full Council.

533/23 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A local resident spoke about their long campaign to create a one-way, north-south traffic system in Goldsmith's Lane and the increasing amount of hostility between some drivers caused by the current two-way system. They had recently carried out a survey of affected households that had attracted a high response rate.

The resident had been in discussion with County Councillor Sudbury who contributed to the discussion at the meeting. Councillor Sudbury reported that he had arranged for a senior expert officer from Oxfordshire County Council to visit Wallingford in the near future to discuss this and other traffic flow issues.

See also Minute 541/23.

534/23 COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

In his report, County Councillor Sudbury covered a number of highways issues, including the increase of 20 mph speed limits in the town, traffic surveys by developers, moving the bus stop in the High Street near the Agatha Christie bench, art on the bypass river bridge, pot holes and the shortfall in road maintenance budgets. He encouraged the Town Council to explore achieving a Fix My Street Super User status; this would enable works to be directly scheduled.

District Councillors Barlow and Keats-Rohan emphasised the importance of engaging with consultation exercises, which were meaningful, especially those on the proposed Joint Local Plan and playing fields and leisure facilities. They congratulated the Wallingford Neighbourhood Plan Team on their work and reported that the Town Council's Planning Committee were well considered by the District. The Revised Neighbourhood Plan – blended with the new Joint Local Plan - would help protect Wallingford from unsuitable and unwelcome speculative development proposals. Councillor Keats-Rohan also spoke about primary care services in Wallingford and the lack of space to meet increasing demand. Again, this was an area where engagement with consultation was important.

Action:

Explore a Fix My Street Super User status for a member of staff

535/23

MOORING FEE COLLECTIONS

At the request of the Full Council, the Contracts Manager of the national company District Enforcement presented how they could work with the Town Council to collect mooring fees on both sides of the river. Among District Enforcement's present clients were Henley Town Council and Reading Borough Council. The representative emphasised that they were not just about simply turning up and issuing tickets; they engaged with and were well-known by the boating community, including support at major events such as Reading Festival and Henley Regatta. They had also carried out partnership work with the Canal and River Trust.

It was proposed by Councillor Hughes, and seconded by Councillor Holford, and

RESOLVED approval be given to the development of a contract with District Enforcement for the collection of mooring fees on both sides of the river, the Crowmarsh side being on behalf of the District Council

Action:

Town Clerk to pursue a contract with District Enforcement

536/23

ALLOTMENTS POLICY

Councillor Holder presented proposed revised and new policies for the Fir Tree and Highcroft sites.

Councillor Holder was thanked for his work on this.

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

RESOLVED that the new allotments policies for Fir Tree and Highcroft be approved, subject to amendments proposed by Councillor Holder relating to pesticides

537/23

PEDESTRIANISATION OF FRONT AREA OF THE TOWN HALL

The Town Clerk reported that the Council Office Team was now actively progressing this consultation.

The Council reaffirmed its intention and commitment to pedestrianise this area for multiple reasons, including health and safety, traffic flow and aesthetics

Action:

The Mayor to have an informal discussion with the operator of the Goring-based community transport scheme, the discussion to be facilitated by Councillor Mark Hoskins

District Councillor Barlow left the meeting

538/23

CCTV

The Council considered the half-yearly report of the CCTV monitoring of Wallingford by South Oxfordshire District Council in partnership with Thames Valley Police. The system had been significantly upgraded using digital technology enabling high resolution images. A few of the Councillors had recently visited the facility.

It was recognised that Street Pastors had useful knowledge of the trouble spots in the town.

Action:

Town Clerk to write a letter of thanks to the staff monitoring the cameras

539/23

TENNIS COURTS, BULL CROFT

The Council reviewed the final licensing and funding agreements with the Lawn Tennis Association and the National Tennis Association for the resurfacing of the tennis courts in the Bull Croft and the introduction of new operating model.

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

RESOLVED that the licensing and funding agreements be approved

540/23

ARTSWEEK

The Council considered a request to set up a Working Group to organise Council activity as part of Oxfordshire Artsweek. Whilst Members thought there was an opportunity for achieving improved coherence for what was happening in the town during Artsweek, they did not want to commit resource on this occasion due to existing workload.

541/23

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MODEL

The Council considered at the request of Councillor Mark Hoskins, the recent survey of local households regarding the traffic flow in Goldsmith's Lane as a case study of how consultation should be undertaken. This had been organised by one of the residents and had attracted a high response rate. See Minute 533/23.

The Mayor congratulated the resident on their work.

Action:

The Communications Working Group to consider a consultation approach that could easily be applied by members of staff and others to different issues

County Councillor Sudbury left the meeting

542/23

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION EVENT

The Council considered whether to continue with a community recognition event that had been traditionally known as the 'Civic Dinner'

This had evolved over time, especially as a result of changes made by Councillor Lester when she was Mayor.

Some Members asked that there should be greater transparency of who was invited, although all thought that this should ultimately be determined by The Mayor of the time.

The Council expressed support for the continuance of an annual event to thank individuals and community groups who had made an outstanding contribution to the life and well-being of the town during the previous year. This event could in future take on different forms.

The Mayor stated for the public record that councillors paid for their own expenses at this event.

Action:

A community recognition event hosted by The Mayor to be organised for 2024, to take the form this year of the traditional 'Civic Dinner', especially given the short notice, and The Mayor to determine the invitation list

543/23

ELECTIONS

The Council NOTED the timeline to the elections to fill two vacancies on the Town Council. The closing date for nominations was 26 January 2024 and it would be known by 29 January 2024 whether the election would be contested. If contested, the election would be held on 22 February 2024. Members were organising events to encourage residents to stand and support them with the paperwork which could initially appear daunting.

Councillor Holder left the meeting

544/23

BILL SCHEDULES

The Council reviewed two bill schedules.

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

RESOLVED that the bill schedules for November and December 2023 be approved

545/23

GRANT APPLICATION

The Council expressed their support for the work of The Abingdon Bridge Trust who supported young people with mental health issues, including residents of Wallingford.

Because the grant budget for 2023-24 had already been spent, The Mayor announced that a grant of £500 would be funded from the Mayor's budget, especially as he was placing an emphasis on young people during his tenure

Action:

Grant of £500 to The Abingdon Bridge Trust

546/23

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS AND STRUCTURE

Councillors Mark Hoskins and Ros Lester offered to serve on the Tourism and Economic Development Committee for the remainder of the 2023-24 Municipal Year and this was welcomed. The Committee presently had two vacancies.

The Mayor explained that the present committee structure would be reviewed around the time of the Annual Meeting in May 2024.

Action:

Committee membership lists to be updated;

Members to send their thoughts on the existing committee structure to The Mayor in time for the Annual Meeting

547/23

FLAGS AND BANNERS

The Council reviewed the flag and banner schedules for 2024.

The Pride flag would be flown on the first three days of June, rather than the whole of the month. Oxford Pride was being held on 8 June 2024 but this clashed with another flag.

Remembrance would be marked on Armistice Day, Remembrance Sunday and Armed Forces Day, as is typical for most councils and government departments, and not for the whole of November as had happened in 2023.

Concern was expressed at the condition of several of the flags and banners.

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

RESOLVED that the flag and banner schedules for 2024 be approved

Action:

Flags and banners that are in poor condition to be replaced and provision be made going forward for the regular replacement of flags and banners

Costs of replacement to be brought back to Full Council if necessary

548/23

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

The Council NOTED that the Annual Meeting (Mayor Making) would now be held on Wednesday, 8 May 2024 and that the Full Council preliminary budget discussion would be on Wednesday, 13 November 2024.

Action:

Meetings Officer to move as many of the Planning Committee to Mondays;

Meetings Officer to update Members' calendars;

Meetings Officer to inform other staff members of these changes, especially the Events Team

549/23

FUTURE AGENDA MEETINGS

The following items were identified for future meetings:

- Pedestrianisation of front area of Town Hall (Action Log)
- Community Emergency Plan (The Mayor leading)
- Legal matter [confidential] (potentially rolling item)
- Policies (Town Clerk)
- Governance cycle (Cllr Charter leading)
- Alliance for the Reduction of Heritage Crime (Cllr Keats-Rohan leading)
- Community safety – the potential for a Working Group
- Communication strategy documents (Cllr Charter)
- HR policies (Town Clerk and Cllrs Harris and Charter)
- Costs of replacing flags and banners (if necessary)
- Heritage internship, University of Oxford (Cllr Keats-Rohan leading)

550/23

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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

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

The meeting ended at 9.51 pm

Minutes of the meeting of the
Full Council held on
22 January 2024,
signed as a correct record

Chairman

