



Wallingford Town Council

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

**held on  
Monday, 19 February 2024 at 7.00 pm  
in Wallingford Town Hall**

**Present**

**Members**

Cllr Mike Acreman  
Cllr Dan Beauchamp (The Mayor/Chairman)  
Cllr Ailsa Charter  
Cllr Mahmood Ebrahimjee  
Cllr Marcus Harris  
Cllr Susan Hendrie  
Cllr Stephen Holder  
Cllr Jacki Hoskins  
Cllr Mark Hoskins  
Cllr Nigel Hughes  
Town and District Cllr Katharine Keats-Rohan  
Cllr Ros Lester

**Officers:**

Michelle Taylor, Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer  
Luke Whitcomb, Meetings Officer  
Jennifer Armitage, Engagement Manager

**Others:**

District Councillor James Barlow (up to Minute 612/23)  
4 members of the public  
0 members of the press

**597/23**

**MEETING PROTOCOL**

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

**598/23**

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received and accepted from Town Councillors Claire Holford and Diana Margarido, and County Councillor Pete Sudbury.

**599/23      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**600/23      MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

The Mayor highlighted three matters: the forthcoming by-election on 22 February 2024 at which three candidates were standing for two places, the recent return of the annual Pancake Race for which he thanked Councillors Lester and J Hoskins, and the recruitment of a Wallingford-specific worker by the local charity TRAIN who supported young people at risk of educational failure, crime and exploitation. TRAIN had also begun working in Wallingford School.

**601/23      MINUTES**

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

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council held on 22 January 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

**602/23      ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Council reviewed progress on 'open' actions agreed by previous meetings of the Full Council. This was undertaken by exception rather than item-by-item.

**603/23      PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public chose to speak.

**604/23      COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS**

District Councillors Barlow and Keats-Rohan reported on South Oxfordshire's emerging new corporate plan, the consultation on the Joint Local Plan, a public enquiry on a major highways infrastructure project in Didcot and a new Community Infrastructure Levy fund. The proposed Joint Local Plan included emphases on housing that was resilient to climate change, a significant increase in affordable housing, the reduction of light pollution to increase dark sky areas and the need for 17k new housing units in the South Oxfordshire area.

County Councillor Sudbury had given his apologies due to a clash with a County Council meeting. He was intending to be present at the next meeting of the Full Council in March.

605/23

**WALLINGFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AND DRAFT LOCAL PLAN**

The Council reviewed the comments of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group on the Draft Joint Local Plan which was currently out for consultation.

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

**RESOLVED** that the comments of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group be endorsed and submitted to the Planning Authority (South Oxfordshire District Council) as the Town Council's formal response to the Draft Joint Local Plan

**Action:**

**Submit comments to the Planning Authority by closing date**

606/23

**BIODIVERSITY**

Councillor Acreman introduced the topic of biodiversity and explained new requirements conferred by the 2021 Environment Act on local councils. Biodiversity had gained particular attention since the 1980s and become synonymous with wildlife. However it also operated at genetic and ecosystem levels.

The Town Council already had an impressive record and had built regular consideration of biodiversity into the work of its Parks and Estates Team and the Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee. However more could be done, particularly on action plans. The Town Council also needed to be mindful that biodiversity included wetlands. The status of the Town Council's principal outdoor spaces as Scheduled Monuments presented challenges.

Councillor Acreman undertook to bring a more detailed paper with actionable recommendations to the next meeting when the need for a dedicated working group would be considered.

**Action:**

**Schedule as 'Future Agenda Item' for March**

607/23

**WINTERBROOK MEADOWS, ALLOTMENTS AND PLAY AREAS**

The Town Clerk reported that the District Council were pressing the Town Council to come to a final decision on whether they would formally adopt the allotments and play areas that were being developed as part of the major Winterbrook Meadows housing development.

Councillor Holder – working in partnership with Councillor Hendrie as Chair of the Planning Committee - undertook to bring a more detailed report to the next meeting when a final decision could be taken. The paper needed to include a clear understanding of the conditions.

**Action:**

**Schedule as ‘Future Agenda Item’ for March**

**608/23**

**FLOOD LEVEL MARKERS**

The Council supported in principle a proposal by Councillor Acreman for Scheduled Monument Consent to be sought for a Town Council-branded plaque on Wallingford Bridge to indicate the levels of historic flooding. However more information needed to be sought first from Historic England, including which material would be most suitable.

**Action:**

**Contact Historic England for further information**

**609/23**

**REST GARDEN, COMMEMORATIVE ART INSTALLATION**

The Council reviewed an artist’s brief for an art installation in the Rest Garden commemorating the accession of King Charles III. The brief had been considered and developed by both the Public Arts Grant Working Group and the Parks, Gardens, Allotments and Open Spaces Committee.

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

**RESOLVED** that the brief be approved subject to an extension of the deadline to provide candidates with one calendar month to respond.

**610/23**

**COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SCHEME**

Councillor M Hoskins updated the Council on the development of a community transport scheme for Wallingford. A grant of £27.6k had been received, including funding for a temporary post to develop a detailed proposal. The first step was to recruit for this role. Useful contact had been made with key specialists at Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and the operators of the Goring-based scheme. The development of a scheme for Wallingford had recently attracted media interest.

**Action:**

**The need for a temporary staff member – including the development of a job specification and recruitment campaign – to be taken for noting to the meeting of the Personnel Committee on 26 February 2024**

**611/23**

**WALLINGFORD ACCESSIBLE BOAT CLUB**

The Council reviewed a proposed agreement for a dedicated mooring space for Wallingford Accessible Boat Club (WABC). This was a three-way agreement. The District Council had also agreed an embarking/disembarking point for WABC on the Crowmarsh side of the river.

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

**RESOLVED** that the agreement be signed and the Town Council seal affixed

*District Councillor Barlow left the meeting during the course of the next meeting*

**612/23**

**SECURITY OF THE CASTLE RUINS**

The Council considered recent instances of anti-social behaviour in the Castle ruins and damage to the recently-conserved monument. Members recognised the behaviour as heritage crime. The intention was ultimately to install a security system but this was currently awaiting Scheduled Monument Consent. The conservation work had only been possible with the support of significant third party funding and the Town Council had an obligation to the funders in addition to its legal responsibilities.

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

**RESOLVED** - with regret - that temporary fencing combined with educational messaging, be installed to protect the monument pending the installation of the security system

**Action:**

**This matter to remain as rolling item on the FC agenda for at least the next three to keep the regrettable need for temporary fencing front of mind**

613/23

**ALLIANCE TO REDUCE CRIME AGAINST HERITAGE**

The Council considered a proposal for the Council to join the Alliance to Reduce Heritage Crime (ARCH), an initiative led by Historic England. ARCH was a voluntary national network that took forward initiatives to tackle heritage crime and galvanise local action.

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

**RESOLVED** that the Town Council's membership of the Alliance to Reduce Crime against Heritage be approved

**Action:**

**Complete and submit paperwork**

614/23

**HERITAGE INTERNSHIP, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD**

Councillor Keats-Rohan introduced the potential for a heritage internship with the University of Oxford.

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

**RESOLVED** that the idea of a heritage internship be supported, recognising that interns still required management time

**Action:**

**Personnel Committee to consider implications of an internship**

615/23

**CASTLE GARDENS – CONSERVATION OF BRICKWORK**

The Council reviewed quotations for the conservation of brickwork in the Castle Gardens.

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

**RESOLVED** that this work be awarded to Dunne Flint and Building Restoration

616/23

**EVENT PERMISSIONS**

The Council considered requests from external stakeholders for support and/or permission for two public events.

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

**RESOLVED** that the Council support an application by the local charity 1155 for a rolling road closure to facilitate the lighting procession for the annual fireworks event, and that 1155 be encouraged to continue to address the event parking issues that concern residents

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

**RESOLVED** that the Council supports in principle the idea of a half marathon, potentially using the Kinecroft as an ‘event village’, and invites a booking application at which stage the more detailed requirements can be assessed

**Action:**

**Council staff team to update external parties**

617/23

**NEW ‘VISIT WALLINGFORD’ WEBSITE**

The Engagement Manager updated the Council on the creation of a new ‘Visit Wallingford’ website for which a grant had been received. After a formal tender process, the contract had been awarded to a local design company.

618/23

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2024**

Members NOTED the arrangements for the 2024 Annual Town Meeting which would be held on Thursday, 7 March 2024 at the Church of St Mary-le-More in the Market Place. This event was intended as a meeting of residents facilitated by the Town Council. A similar format to last year’s successful event would be used and efforts were being made to increase the reach of the in-person event. Various subject experts and representatives for each of the six strategic themes were being invited.

**619/23**

**FINANCE**

The Council reviewed the latest bill schedule.

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

**RESOLVED** that the bill schedule for January 2024 be approved

**620/23**

**LEGAL OUTCOME**

The Mayor reported the outcome of a legal matter.

On 16 January 2023 an Extraordinary meeting of the Full Council had been held to discuss legal action that had been threatened by a then member of the Council, Mr Giles Cattermole, against the Town Council as a corporate body.

The letter from Mr Cattermole's solicitors alleged that there had been a breach of the Town Council's Standing Orders in September and October 2022 in relation to how the Town Council handled an application for clean bathing water status that was submitted to DEFRA.

The claims made were viewed by the vast majority of councillors as being a misrepresentation of fact and to run contrary to the legal record.

It had been proposed by Councillor Harris, and seconded by then Councillor Beatty, and resolved that Wallingford Town Council would take steps to defend itself from this claim.

With the support of our solicitors and barrister, a robust and detailed defence was developed and a court date ultimately booked. The Council's legal team had maintained throughout a high level of confidence that the alleged breach was groundless and that the Council would be successful.

As the Town Council was a public body and the minutes were freely available (for example on the Council's website) and therefore would put our legal strategy at risk if published, this matter had been held in confidential for the past year.

However, at the last moment before the scheduled Court hearing, Mr Cattermole had withdrawn his legal claim, and as such the Mayor indicated that he was moving the topic out of confidential.



The Town Clerk reported that £13k had been spent defending this claim.

The Mayor and other Members thanked those who had worked extensively over the past year on this matter and expressed disappointment that the action by Mr Cattermole, regarded by most as spurious from the start, had involved the public expenditure and time that it had.

**621/23**

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

The Council considered the recommendations and outputs of the Communications Strategy Working Group.

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

**RESOLVED** that the Communications Guidance document (an evolution of the earlier Style Guide) be approved

The Communications Strategy Working Group would now be wound up, but a sign-off group would be maintained.

The other documents (including several exemplars) submitted alongside the Communications Guidance document could be evolved over time.

**622/23**

### **FUTURE AGENDA MEETINGS**

The following items were identified for future meetings:

- The Regal – final decision (March 2024)
- Pedestrianisation of front area of Town Hall (Action Log)
- Community Emergency Plan (The Mayor leading)
- Community safety – the potential for a Working Group
- Policies (Town Clerk)
- Governance cycle (Cllr Charter leading)
- Temporary fencing of Castle ruins (due to anti-social behaviour)
- Biodiversity policy and next steps (Cllr Acreman) (March 2024)
- Adoption of Winterbrook Meadows allotments and play areas (Cllr Holder leading, in partnership with Cllr Hendrie) (March 2024)
- Appointments to outside bodies – Wallingford School Foundation (Cllr Lester) (March 2024)
- Council-owned property (proposal by leaseholder) (March 2024)
- Next General Election – anticipated requests from political parties for hustings and campaigning

623/23

**EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was proposed by Councillor Acreman, and seconded by Councillor Hughes,  
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 9.39 pm

Minutes of the meeting of the  
Full Council held on  
19 February 2024,  
signed as a correct record

Chairman

2024-02-19 FC minutes DRAFT PUBLIC