

MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE POLICY, MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE OF WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD ONLINE USING ZOOM ON MONDAY, 25 JANUARY 2021 AT 7.30 P.M.

Committee members present: Councillor A Crawford (Chairman)
Councillors I R Cameron, A Dunford, A Duveen, T Gilhome (part),
JT Hannaby, E L Johnson, A C Menzies, P M O’Leary,
IL Sheldon, J Sibbald, C Walters (part) and C H Wills-Wright.

Others present: A Richards – Maymessy CIC (up to item 54)
2 members of the public (up to item 74)

Town Clerk: W P Falkenau

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Goodman. Apologies were received from Councillor Walters for late arrival.

Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

Councillor Hannaby declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Wantage Hospital League of Friends, a trustee of the Wantage Nursing Home Trust, a trustee of the Wantage Independent Advice Centre and a Governor of Stockham Primary School.

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2020

Councillor Walters joined the meeting.

The minutes were amended on page 4, item 4 Estimates 2021/2022.

“.....in the extra land at Chain Hill Cemetery.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby
IT WAS RESOLVED that the budget for the Climate Emergency Sub-committee for 2021/22 be increased from £10,000 to £20,000”

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Sheldon
IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes, as amended, be approved.

53. Statements and Questions from the Public

None.

54. Briefings by applicants for donations and grants

a) Maymessy CIC

Ms Richards gave a briefing on her request for a donation towards the cost of providing cookery classes to support disadvantaged people gain greater life skills and improved well-being. The classes involved groups of four or five attending a session on one day a week over ten weeks. The cost of supporting two groups would be £4,850. Ms Richards answered a number of questions. She was thanked for her briefing and she left the meeting.

55. Matters arising from the minutes

a) Update on plans to pedestrianise western end of the Market Place

The highway consultants had prepared plans of a scheme that would improve the sight lines at the Alfred Street/Mill Street junction and extended the pavement at the junction between Mill Street and Market Place. The Clerk had instructed the consultants to engage with the County Council to confirm that the proposed highway changes would be acceptable. The Clerk agreed to pass copies of the plans to councillors. He was to call a meeting of the working group as soon as possible.

Action: Clerk

b) Future ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the Manor Road Recreational Ground

The Clerk had not yet engaged with the property manager at the District Council. He hoped to do so within the coming weeks.

Action: Clerk

POLICY

56. Update re request for CCTV camera in Wallingford Street and consideration of email from the District Council dated 16 December 2020 regarding a financial contribution to annual operating costs.

The District Council email advised that the cameras in Wantage were due to be upgraded in the near future and suggesting that the Town Council might consider making a contribution to the cost of £7,120 in 2021/22. The Clerk advised that no provision for a payment had been made in the 2021/22 budgets. It was noted that no further progress had been made regarding the installation of a camera in Wallingford Street. The Clerk was to press the police for a response.

Action: Clerk

Councillor Crawford stood down as Chairman for this item due to his role as the District Council's cabinet member with responsibility for finance. Councillor Sheldon took over as chairman of the meeting. Councillor Hannaby also indicated she would not participate in the discussion due to her role as a district councillor and being a resident of Wallingford Street.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Gilhome

SECONDED BY Councillor Walters

IT WAS RESOLVED that a sum of £7,500 be included the 2021/22 budgets for the purposes of an annual contribution to the District Council's CCTV operational costs.

Councillor Crawford returned as chairman of the meeting.

57. To consider whether to make contributions to the Ray Collins Charitable Trust and Helping Hands to provide support for purchase of laptops and other community needs arising from the pandemic.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Hannaby

SECONDED BY Councillor Duveen

IT WAS RESOLVED that a donation of £10,000 be made to the Ray Collins Charitable Trust for its work in responding to community needs arising from the pandemic, subject to the trust submitting a completed donation request form.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford

SECONDED BY Councillor Sheldon

IT WAS RESOLVED that a donation of £2,500 be made to Helping Hands for its work in responding to community needs arising from the pandemic, subject to it submitting a completed donation request form.

It was noted that the above donations were being made under S137 powers.

58. To consider making a further contribution to Wantage Independent Advice Centre (WIAC).

Councillor Hannaby declared a non-pecuniary interest as a trustee of the WIAC.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Cameron
SECONDED BY Councillor Dunford

IT WAS RESOLVED that a donation of £2,500 be given to WIAC in recognition of the extra work arising from the pandemic, and subject to it submitting a completed donation request form.

59. To consider contributing to The Mix towards the additional administration costs arising from organising of the repair and refurbishment of laptops and pcs by its Repair Café.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Sheldon

IT WAS RESOLVED that a donation of £2,500 be given to the Sustainable Wantage (The Mix) for its work in responding to community needs arising from the pandemic, subject to it submitting a completed donation request form.

60. To consider making a contribution to local schools to meet the cost of free school meals over the February half-term

Councillor Hannaby declared a non-pecuniary interest as a governor of Stockham School. Councillor Walters declared a non-pecuniary interest as an employee of Charlton School. It was noted that the government was not intending to provide free school meals over the February half-term.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sibbald
SECONDED BY Councillor Wills-Wright

IT WAS RESOLVED that that an amount in the region of £4,750 be approved to provide vouchers for food for students who would normally be entitled to free school meals, attending schools in Wantage, to cover the February half term holiday period.

It was noted that the expenditure was being made under S137 powers.

61. To consider policy concerning the “20 is Plenty” campaign.

There was a campaign to introduce 20 mph speed limits be more widely in Oxfordshire. The roads to be put forward would be determined by the Planning Committee.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sibbald
SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Town Council should become a signatory to the campaign.

62. Minutes of Climate Emergency Sub-committee meeting held on 4 January 2021.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford
SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson
IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes be adopted

63. Minutes of the Health Sub-committee meeting held on 7 December 2020.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Hannaby
SECONDED BY Councillor Sibbald
IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes be adopted.

64. To receive final report on outcome of "COVID-19 Safer Public Spaces Proposal" survey.

Councillor Johnson had prepared the final report.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Johnson
SECONDED BY Councillor Wills-Wright

IT WAS RESOLVED that the report be published and that a press release be issued to announce this.

Councillor Johnson was thanked for his work in preparing the report. Councillor Will-Wright agreed to write the press release. **Action: Wiils-Wright**

It was agreed, with regret, that the raw narrative data should not be published. The data included information that could identify or mentioned individuals and should not be published under GDPR. Work in redacting the data would be significant. The data would be retained for future reference.

65. To consider proposed meeting schedule for 2021/22.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sibbald
SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby

IT WAS RESOLVED that the meeting schedule for 2021/22 be accepted.

66. To consider report from interim internal audit review conducted in January 2021.

The report was considered and the responses detailed below.

The threshold for seeking tenders in the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations was currently £50,000 which was inconsistent with the NALC models that set this at £25,000.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sibbald
SECONDED BY Councillor Crawford

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations be changed to set the threshold for seeking tenders at £25,000.

It was noted that the Town Clerk does not have the CILCA qualification. This was a qualification that clerks were being encouraged to pursue. It was suggested that the Deputy Clerk might wish to seek this qualification. The Clerk was refer this to her. **Action: Clerk**

The Financial Regulations do not currently specify a credit limit for the credit card. It was agreed that this be set at £3,000 and the regulations be updated to reflect this. **Action: Clerk**

Prior to the pandemic, all council payments were effected by cheque with three signatories. Since the start of the pandemic it has been necessary to make payments online. Currently the Clerk makes payments without the bank system requiring a second person to authorise. The bank systems can be set up to require a second person to authorise, but this has not been pursued due to difficulties in engaging with banks, due to the pandemic, and to avoid the risk of losing the facility to make online payments altogether. The current situation was unsatisfactory, but the internal auditor had accepted that any change should be made in a staged way to avoid loss of service. The internal auditor had suggested that an account be opened with Unity Trust to assist with the staged process. It was agreed not to proceed with this for the time being.

It was noted that all invoices were presented to signatories before payment. Also, direct debits and standing orders were reported regularly on the "Accounts For Payment" schedule.

The annual review of the risk assessment had not been done at the time of the internal audit. It was due to be reviewed later in the meeting. For the future, the Clerk intended to bring forward items requiring annual review, so that these were done prior to the interim internal audit. The annual review of fees and charges was to be referred to the next meeting. **Action: Clerk**

It was noted that it had not been practical to provide the internal auditor with support documentation relating to burials, parking or allotments. The nature of the documentation meant that it was

necessary to have access to the council offices and its facilities to provide these. Currently access to the offices was too restricted to accommodate this.

The Town Council does not currently maintain a debtors ledger. With the migration of the council's accounts to an online system, it was intended to establish a debtor ledger when market tolls were reintroduced.

The Clerk intended to discontinue the use of petty cash.

Although the Clerk was regularly presenting to the Council bank statements and individual reconciliations, the internal auditor proposed that a summary bank reconciliation be produced during the year in the same form as done for the year-end accounts. The Clerk advised that he intended to do this.

67. Annual review of Council's Risk Assessment.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sibbald
SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson
IT WAS RESOLVED that the risk assessment be adopted unchanged.

68. Review of Treasury and Investment Policy.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Sibbald
SECONDED BY Councillor Crawford
IT WAS RESOLVED that the Treasury and Investment Policy be adopted unchanged.

69. Review of Code of Conduct.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Sibbald
IT WAS RESOLVED that Code of Conduct be approved unchanged.

70. Review of Standing Orders.

The Standing Orders were to be modified, as agreed under item 46.

71. Review of Financial Regulations.

The Financial Regulations were to be modified, as agreed under item 46.

There was a need for agenda items 67 to 71 to be referred to the full Council meeting for adoption. These would be included on the agenda for the meeting to be held on 8 February 2021.

Action: Clerk

72. To consider whether to proceed with the Town Electorate meeting scheduled for 12 April 2021.

It was agreed to proceed with an online Town Electorate meeting, but reports from committee chairmen were to be published in a newsletter in advance of the meeting and the meeting publicised through the newsletter.

Action: Clerk

Elections were due to proceed in May. Purdah would commence in late March. There was a need to avoid any content of the newsletter being regarded as party political lobbying. The Clerk and the Chairman were to determine which community organisations were to be invited to give a briefing at the meeting.

Action: Clerk/Chairman

MANAGEMENT AND FINANCE

73. Accounts for Payment.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Hannaby
SECONDED BY Councillor Wills-Wright
IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the accounts for payment in the sum of £90,207.92
(attached) be approved

74. General correspondence.

None.

Confidential items

ON THE PROPOSITION of the Chairman
IT WAS RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it
was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded.

Councillor Gilhome left the meeting.

75. To consider donation requests:

a) Maymessy CIC

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Wills-Wright
SECONDED BY Councillor Hannaby
IT WAS MOVED that a donation of £2,425 be made to Maymessy CIC, to cover the cost of one
cookery school group of at least five participants, subject to the participants being Wantage
residents. Councillor Crawford was to consult with the Ray Collins Charitable Trust and The Mix
with regard to whether Maymessy should be supported and, if so, who should be invited to
participate. **Action: Crawford**

This was approved eight in favour, none against.

76. Staffing update.

The Clerk reported that the Mayor's PA/Clerk's Assistant had resigned from her role and would
leave the Council's employment on 17 February. The role was principally related to duties in the
Council's office. With the office closed, there was not an immediate need to recruit a replacement.
Recruitment would proceed when a date for re-opening the office was known.

Recruitment of a market/parking attendant had not yet proceeded.

The meeting closed at 10.07 pm.

Wantage Town Council

Accounts for Payment - November 2020 to January 2021

Date	Payee	Description	Powers	Ref	£
01/12/2020	Abbey Properties	Market Attendant's shed rent	OA 1985	SO	100.00
01/01/2021	Abbey Properties	Market Attendant's shed rent	OA 1985	SO	100.00
07/12/2020	Barclays	Bank charges	LGA72	DD	11.00
05/01/2021	Coop	Bank charges	LGA72	DD	30.00
07/01/2021	Barclays	Bank charges	LGA72	DD	8.90
14/01/2021	BNP Paribas	Copier rental	Office	DD	£ 179.19
21/11/2020	NEST	Pension contribution payments	Office	DD	391.25
21/11/2020	Staff - various	November payroll	Office/OA1985	Bacs	9,017.11
21/12/2020	NEST	Pension contribution payments	Office	DD	507.72
21/12/2020	Staff - various	December payroll	Office/OA1985	Bacs	11,626.17
21/01/2021	NEST	Pension contribution payments	Office	DD	376.39
21/01/2021	Staff - various	January payroll	Office/OA1985	Bacs	8,353.23
01/12/2020	VWHDC	Cemetery Rates	Burials	DD	75.00
01/12/2020	VWHDC	Rates for Market	OA1985	DD	247.00
01/12/2020	VWHDC	Rates for car park	OA1985	DD	404.00
01/01/2021	VWHDC	Cemetery Rates	Burials	DD	75.00
01/01/2021	VWHDC	Rates for Market	OA1985	DD	247.00
01/01/2021	VWHDC	Rates for car park	OA1985	DD	404.00
		Total direct debits			32,152.96
19/11/2020	Barclaycard	Laptops for Clerk and Mayor's PA, postage, Quickbooks, Stationery, foldable seats	LGA72/ Entertainment	Online	998.96
19/11/2020	BT	Internet services	LGA 72	Online	305.20
19/11/2020	Natural Stone Craft	Statue repair	LGA 72	Online	96.00
19/11/2020	Peggy Ley	Design for artisan market leaflet	OA1985	Online	127.50
19/11/2020	Royal British Legion	Donation re Remembrance Day wreaths	S137	Online	210.00
19/11/2020	SGW Payroll	November payroll processing charges	Office/OA1985	Online	69.60
19/11/2020	Solopress	Artisan market leaflet printing	OA1985	Online	47.90
11/12/2020	Barclaycard	Laptop for Cllr, Survey Monkey sub, Quickbooks, stackable seats, allotment gravel	LGA72/ Entertainment/ allotments	Online	1,269.54
11/12/2020	BT	Telephone services	Office	Online	90.27
11/12/2020	CD Associates	Banners to surround Christmas trees	Tourism	Online	1,092.00
11/12/2020	CDC Electrical	Instal Christmas lighting	Tourism	Online	9,458.40
11/12/2020	Moore	Audit fee 2019/20	LGA72	Online	1,200.00
11/12/2020	D K Rance	Allotment bond repayment	Allotments	Online	25.00
11/12/2020	Wantage Choral Soc	Donation	Entertainment	Online	500.00
11/12/2020	Solopress	Newsletter printing	Information	Online	477.60
11/12/2020	Greenfield Partnership	Christmas trees	Tourism	Online	1,722.00
11/12/2020	HCI Data	Council website url renewal	Information	Online	102.00

Wantage Town Council

Accounts for Payment - November 2020 to January 2021

Date	Payee	Description	Powers	Ref	£
16/12/2020	Stockham School	Donation re free school meals	S137	Online	780.00
16/12/2020	Fitzwaryn School	Donation re free school meals	S137	Online	1,020.00
16/12/2020	Vale Academy Trust	Donation re free school meals	S137	Online	7,560.00
16/12/2020	GEMS Trust	Donation re free school meals	S137	Online	30.00
21/12/2020	White Horse Horticulture	Cemetery/play area grass cutting and mtce	Burials/open spaces	Online	1,245.00
21/12/2020	KA Scouts	Donation re building roof	Entertainment	Online	10,000.00
23/12/2020	SGW Payroll	Payroll processing	Office/OA1985	Online	69.60
23/12/2020	Peggy Ley	Newsletter design	Information	Online	225.00
23/12/2020	Barclaycard	Christmas dec items, Quickbooks, allotment gravel, newsletter stands	Tourism, LGA72, Information	Online	1,338.05
23/12/2020	Sweatbox	2nd half grant	Entertainment	Online	5,800.00
23/12/2020	HMRC	3rd qtr PAYE	Office/OA1985	Online	6,750.43
24/12/2020	Sustainable Wantage	Donation 2nd instalment	S137	Online	2,025.00
24/12/2020	Parkrun	Donation	Leisure	Online	3,000.00
13/01/2021	Southern Electric	Shed electric	Office/OA1985	Online	50.31
13/01/2021	SGW Payroll	Payroll processing	Office/OA1985	Online	69.60
13/01/2021	Howard Hill	Artisan markets live music	Entertainment	Online	300.00
Total online payments					58,054.96
Total payments November 2020 to January 2021					90,207.92