

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WANTAGE TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT THE
BEACON, PORTWAY
ON MONDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2024, AT 7.30 PM**

Council members present: Councillors: A Dunford (Chair), I Cameron, A Crawford, T Gilhorne,
E Johnson, P Kirby-Harris, A Menzies, K Morris, P O'Leary, S Third,
C Walters

Others present: 5 members of the public

Clerk: J Evans

Apologies for Absence: Councillors: J Hannaby, L Todd, V Wright

Declaration of disclosable pecuniary interests, other registrable interests and any non-registrable interests.

None

55. To introduce the new Mayor's Cadet

The new cadet Devon Farrant was welcomed and thanked for volunteering. Sophie Richens was thanked for her service and congratulated on her new appointment as Lord Lieutenant's cadet.

56. Statements and questions from the public

None

57. Report from Letcombe Brook Project Officer

Judith Verdon, the new Project Officer, introduced herself. She reported that flooding was an issue at the moment. She had been speaking to a resident of The Old Mill about the flooding. She felt that an active flood group, similar to that in Hanney, was a good model to follow. Cllr Hannaby was to raise this issue with OCC Highways and Thames Water.

Cllr Johnson had been expecting OCC to jet the drains to clear them. Regarding 'No Fishing' signage, Ms Verdon noted that there was new signage at The Old Mill. She reported that she had found a lot of fishing tackle along the brook and agreed that further signage was required. It was noted that much of the evidence pointed to children fishing. It was suggested that an item could be included in the next Newsletter. She asked for ideas for new signs and asked who would pay. The Council felt that Mark Bradfield had organised this before he left. She agreed to investigate. When asked about planning application Ms Verdon reported that she was notified and responded as appropriate. The discussion moved to drainage which was a complicated matter. She was concerned that road run off would be polluted. She was also investigating rumours of sewage overflow. She was to be working closely with Thames Water on water sampling and mapping.

58. To approve and sign the minutes of the Council meeting held n 29 July 2024, the extraordinary meeting held on 19 August and consider matters arising.

The minutes were approved and signed.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford
SECONDED BY Councillor Cameron
It was RESOLVED that minutes were approved and signed.

59. To receive the minutes of the following committees

- a) Climate Emergency – 9 September – nothing raised.
- b) Leisure and Amenities – 16 September – nothing raised.
- c) Planning Committee – 23 September.

It was noted that the TAC was to be just for Wantage. An update was available for the Neighbourhood Plan. Flooding was being discussed.

- d) Policy Management & Finance – 30 September – nothing raised.
- e) Promotion, Communication & Events 22 July

TG requested a virement of £575 from the Alfred Fest budget to the Christmas market budget. This was approved.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Gilhome
SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson
It was RESOLVED that a virement of £575 from Alfred Fest budget to the Christmas market budget.

60. To consider the Financial Statements for September 2024.

It was pointed out that the grant budget had been spent. It was felt that the new grant policy would help to reduce overspend in future. AD suggested increasing miscellaneous grants budget in future. This was agreed; the amount to be decided.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Crawford
SECONDED BY Councillor Walters
it was RESOLVED that to increase the miscellaneous grants budget in future.

61. To receive the External Audit Report for 2023/24

No issues raised; report noted.

62. To review the bank Standing Orders and Direct Debits

No issues raised; report noted.

63. To receive a quote from CDS for the cemetery extension project.

A quote of £35k - £65k had been received. In addition, £2k was required for a planning pre-app and £4k for the boreholes. The staff did not have the expertise to carry out the project and it was proposed that a contractor be appointed to manage it. It was agreed that contractors should be appointed. Officers were given the authority to proceed with the project using contractors. **Action Clerk**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Johnson
SECONDED BY Councillor Walters
It was RESOLVED that CDS be appointed to carry out the project.

64. To consider the meeting dates for 2025/26

It was noted that last year's dates took account of elections. When questioned about the meeting cycle for Council and committees it was expected that they would meet every six weeks. Thursday meetings were to be moved to vacant Mondays where possible. Two meetings should only be held on one evening if there was an overlap of members. It was accepted that Planning and Full Council or Planning and PM&F could be held on the same evening. It was noted that 1st September 2025 was still school holidays – meeting to be removed from this date. The Clerk was given authority to confirm the meeting dates in conjunction with the Deputy Clerk. **Action: Clerk**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford
SECONDED BY Councillor Kirby-Harris
It was RESOLVED that the Clerk be given authority to confirm the meeting dates in conjunction with the Deputy Clerk.

65. To consider amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Committees.

An amendment to the Terms of Reference for PC&E was approved: add to 5.4a (events organised by the town Council) - "all activities approved authorised or funded via the council to be referred to PC&E for approval regarding dates and suitability.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Gilhorne
SECONDED BY Councillor Third

It was RESOLVED that all activities approved authorised or funded via the council to be referred to PC&E for approval regarding dates and suitability.

Health and Climate & Environment Terms of reference were to be amended to state Committee rather than sub-committee.

The Climate & Environment committee requested delegated authority to award grants for climate activities. Terms of Reference to be updated and the budgets to be better defined.

Action: Climate & Emergency Committee

66. To consider the appointment of a Town Crier.

It was reported that minutes showed that the Council paid for the uniform and bell for the Town Crier. Clerk to contact the previous Town Crier and ask if he'd like to make a donation of the uniform and the bell to the next town crier. It was agreed to post an advert on Indeed. The audition will be held at the Dickensian Evening. Councillors to decide on the script and the judges.

Action: Clerk

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford
SECONDED BY Councillor O'Leary

It was RESOLVED that the Town Council advertise for a Town Crier and hold auditions on Dickensian evening.

67. To consider the request for additional 20mph signage in the Market Place.

The Council disagreed with the proposal as it would be too cluttered. It was suggested that speed limits were painted on the road on each entrance to the market place.

Action: Clerk

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford
SECONDED BY Councillor Jonson

It was RESOLVED that speed limits be painted on the road on each entrance to the market place.

68. District and County Councillors' reports.

The Joint Local plan was going to consultation. No additional strategic sites had been proposed except for Abingdon. Oxford City's local plan was to be reworked. The Leisure centre was about to get some new gym equipment. Detail were given about the reasons for flooding in Palmers. Trading Standards issues had been discussed.

69. Town Mayor's Communications.

The Mayor had attended the Lord Lieutenants awards, had given out pasties on Sunday and attended a Wantage Silver band concert.

70. To receive an update on the Civic Visit to Seesen.

A Shield had been presented which was to be mounted on the wooden shield.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

71. To agree the recommendations of the Staffing Committee.

- a) Recruitment – agreed.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford
SECONDED BY Councillor Johnson
It was RESOLVED that recruitment was agreed.

- b) All other matters were agreed.

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Cameron
SECONDED BY Councillor Kirby-Harris
It was RESOLVED that all other matters were agreed.

72. To agree the commemoration of the long service of the previous Town Clerk.

The Freedom of Wantage was to be presented at the Volunteers Reception. L Wignall to
arrange a scroll in a frame. **Action: L Wignall**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford
SECONDED BY Councillor Kirby-Harris
It was RESOLVED that The Freedom of Wantage be presented to the previous Clerk
at the Volunteers Reception.

73. Update on plans to pedestrianise the western end of the Market Place.

An email from OCC had been circulated. Clerk to arrange a meeting. **Action: Clerk**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford
SECONDED BY Councillor Cameron
It was RESOLVED that a meeting be arranged with OCC.

74. To consider the letter from the Vale of White Horse District Council regarding the Beacon.

It was agreed that the Clerk should contest certain aspects on the invoices Clerk to arrange a
meeting to discuss the future. **Action: Clerk**

ON THE PROPOSITION OF Councillor Dunford
SECONDED BY Councillor Guilhome
It was RESOLVED that the Clerk contest aspects of the invoices and arrange a
meeting to discuss the future.

The meeting closed at 21:28
