

Minutes of the meeting of the Oakham Town Council held on the 8th February, 2017 in the offices of the Town Council, Main Street, Oakham, Rutland County

Present	Cllr Martin Brookes	
	Cllr Michael Haley	
	Cllr Richard Haynes	(Arriving later from another meeting)
	Cllr Peter Ind	
	Cllr Adam Lowe	Chairman of the Council
	Cllr Mrs Joyce Lucas. BEM	
	Cllr Stan Stubbs	
	Cllr Miss Sally Ann Wadsworth	
	Mr Malcolm Plumb . F. Inst. LCM	Acting Town Clerk
	Ms Allison Greaves	Deputy Town Clerk

Also present One member of the public

314/17 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Vince Howard. Apologies for late arrival were received from Cllr Richard Haynes.

315/17 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made by attending Councillors in respect of items specified on the agenda notice.

316/17 Minutes. Extra ordinary meeting of the Town Council held on the 25th January, 2017

(Note). The confidential (exempt item) page, containing Town Council minute no 313/17 was handed round to all Councillors at the start of this item of business. This was in order to preserve the confidential nature of the business concerned.

After discussion and subject to the following amendment, the minutes of the extra ordinary Town Council meeting held on the 25th January, 2017 were adopted as a true and accurate record and were signed by Chairman of the Council.

- Minute no 308/17, 2nd paragraph. Insert after “The meeting” – “by a vote of 7 for and 1 abstention”

The confidential page was then recovered from Councillors in order to prevent outside publication. A copy of this page is retained in the Councils official minutes records.

317/17 Chairman’s and Members reports

Cllr Peter Ind reported that he and the Town Council Chairman had attended the recent meeting of the Parish/Town Councils Forum (Rutland County Council). Amongst the items discussed were the following.

- The need for even more severe reductions in the County Councils budget for 2017/18.

- Consideration of possible changes to the County Ward boundaries for the Oakham Area.
- Preparation work of a “Talk back” facility.

The report was received and noted by the meeting.

318/17 Acting Town Clerks Report

The acting Town Clerk reported the following items for noting by the meeting.

- Rutland County Council. Roadside grass cutting contract. The Town Council response had been communicated to the County Council.
- Request for legal advice concerning the Town Councils Public liabilities. Under the provisions of the Town Council Financial Regulations, The Acting Town Clerk reminded the meeting that he is empowered to spend up to £500, without the prior authority of the Council, where he believes urgent action needs to be transacted. A question has arisen which justifies him taking that action in order to protect the interests of the Town Council. He will be seeking an interim legal opinion and advice upon whether the Town Council, as a Corporate Body, could be liable for damages arising from libellous, slanderous or offensive statements made by any Member of the Town Council against other persons. In order to avoid any misrepresentation of his report, the Acting Town Clerk issued to all Councillors a prepared statement clearly defining these circumstances.
- Offensive falsehood made against the Acting Town Clerk. The Acting Town Clerk reported that within an e mail sent to him, to Town Councillors, and “others”, from Cllr Martin Brookes, was a serious and wholly untrue allegation regarding a previous “Locum” appointment he had served with a Parish Council in Nottinghamshire. The Acting Town Clerk assured Councillors that this allegation was completely false and he was in communication with the Parish Council concerned to obtain confirmation of this. When this is received, he will then consider what further action to take to protect his professional reputation.

319/17 Deputations by members of the Public.

(Note. At this point, Cllr Martin Brookes, moved away from the Council meeting table to identify himself, temporarily, as member of the public).

Mr Martin Brookes, speaking as a member of the public, addressed the meeting. He expressed opposition to the Acting Town Clerks intention to use public funds for obtaining legal advice. He then expressed his views upon agenda item no 19 (Oakham Town Partnership) and the proposals/requests made by the partnership. The Council noted Mr Brooke’s statements.

Mr Martin Brookes then returned to the Town Council meeting table and resumed his position as Town Councillor.

320/17 Working Groups and Steering Groups Strategy Assurance

Cllr M Haley and the Assistant Town Clerk Ms Alison Greaves presented written reports upon the following.

- OCC Building. Update report upon the current position. (To be reviewed later during this meeting.)
- Neighbourhood Plan. Report Noted.
- Cemetery Group. Report noted. (To be reviewed later during this meeting).
- Promotion and publicity Working Group. The meeting noted and approved the proposals and costs for leaflets (£550), Bunting (£400), erection/removal of bunting (£450) and purchase of flags (£50)
- Finance Working Group. Report noted and approved.

321/17 Town Council Deposit Accounts.

The meeting received and considered a report from Cllrs Michael Haley and Peter Ind (No. TC 00117) relating to the management and security of the Councils deposited public funds.

After discussion, the meeting adopted the recommendations contained in the report. Acting Town Clerk to research suitable accounts and report findings to the March 2017 meeting of the Town Council for consideration and resolution.

322/17 Conduct Statement

Councillors agreed to consider this item of business at the end of this meeting as an exempt, confidential item for Town Councillors information only.

323/17 Statement of Accounts.

The meeting received and considered detailed statements of accounts for the Council as at the 31st January, 2017. The accounts as at this date showed a total cash and bank balance of £230,364.70p and included reconciled bank statements and receipts/payment schedules

After discussion and by a vote of 6 votes for and 1 abstention, the meeting noted and approved these statements of accounts.

324/17 Working group's structure.

After discussion, the meeting agreed the following Working groups membership.

Promotion/Publicity. Cllrs M Haley, J Lucas, S A Wadsworth and V Howard
Policies and procedures Working Group. Cllrs M Haley, R Haynes, P Ind and S Stubbs.

Assistant Clerk to send current membership appointments to all Councillors

325/17 Requests to use Cutts Close

After discussion, the meeting resolved to approve the following requests

Circus Tyanna. Approved by 7 votes for and one against
RCC. Lighting of Beacon. 1st April, 2017. Unanimously approved
RCC. Lighting of Beacon. 11th November, 2017. Unanimously approved

326/17 Business plan for OCC Building

Cllr M Haley, Deputy Chairman, circulated a report (No TC 003170 to all Councillors reporting upon recent actions and negotiations with the potential tenants (the Ark Association) and the Town Councils Lawyers (Setfords). The report provided information upon the position as at the time of circulation of the agenda papers. Cllr Haley reported that during the last few days, the Ark Association had decided to withdraw their interest in using this building. Work was now commencing upon closing down this project/proposal. Work will now commence by the Working Group to recommend a new business plan for this property. (NOTE: Working Group membership requires review)

The meeting noted this report.

327/17 Royce's Recreation Ground. Removal and replacement of tree

Cllr Joyce Lucas BEM circulated a report (No TC 00417) requesting the Town Councils approval to remove a dying tree and to grind out the associated tree stump on this recreation ground. Following this work, a new replacement tree would be planted.

After discussion, the meeting approved the proposal.

328/17 Ear marked reserves.

Cllrs M Haley and P Ind circulated a detailed report (no TC 00517) concerning the Town Councils need to review its policy upon the extent and purpose of its reserve funds. Taking into account the recommendations of CIPFO concerning (a) the level of general reserves to help cushion the impact of uneven (unexpected) cash flows and unexpected events or emergencies and (b) the retention of funds to meet known or predicted (specified) liabilities (EMR), the Finance Working Group proposed the following general policy which identified current assets requiring annual budgeting for EMR funds (ie. currently known assets as specified in the report paper). The recommended policy is that the Town Council reviews the need for EMR funds annually at the time of setting the Town Council annual budget.

The recommendations contained in the papers were put to the meeting and adopted unanimously.

329/17 Annual Contracts.

The Acting Town Clerk had reviewed the current list of maintenance, servicing and contracted services and submitted a schedule to the meeting with recommendations for renewal, cancellation of for further consideration/negotiation. After a full discussion, the meeting agreed the following actions.

<u>Contract Company</u>	<u>Details</u>	<u>Action approved</u>
Danwood	Copier Charges	Continue up to 5 yrs
Phs	Sanity bins	Continue to 2019
Wallgate	Hand dryer servicing	Re tender
Millenium	Office computer maint. Off site data backup Anti-virus software Phone/internet.	Assistant Clerk to review alternative suppliers
101 Web	OTC domain name	Review alternative suppliers
Plantscape	Floral displays Watering displays	Continue to 2018
Zurich Insurance	Annual insurance premium	Continue 3 year contract
E on Southern Electricity	Electricity. Bandstand Electricity. Toilets	Continue for time being but review <u>all</u> electricity Contracts. (unify under one Contract ?)
Opus	Electricity Princess Av.	
Severn Trent Water	Water supply. Toilets	Continue
Severn Trent Water	Sewerage. Princess Av.	Continue
Anglican Water	Water supply. Princess Av.	Continue
Cory Environmental	Grounds maintenance	Re tender
AA Cleaning	Church St. Toilets	Re tender
Pitney Bowes	Franking machine	Discontinue
Wicksteed Leisure	Play equipment Inspects	Re tender

330/17 Barrowden Parish Council. County Conservation Officer.

Circulated with the agenda papers was a copy of a letter received from the above Parish Council asking the Town Council to support a County wide campaign to press the County Council to ensure that adequate funds are available to pay for a full time County Conservation Officer. During the ensuing discussion, Cllr P Ind, whilst supporting the aim of the request, emphasised the County Councils unavoidable need to reduce public expenditure.

After a full debate, the Town Council agreed to support the claim that one day each week was wholly inadequate to carry on this vital work, and therefore agreed to support the Parish Councils proposal by a vote of 6 for and 2 abstentions.

331/17 Rutland County Council. Draft housing and homeless strategy.

The meeting received and considered a consultation received from the County Council giving details of their draft strategy which included four main aims.

- Preventing homelessness and promoting housing options
- Providing targeted support for venerable households
- Sustainable growth in all local plan sectors
- Ensuing existing homes are fit for purpose

After discussion, the meeting unanimously noted the proposed strategy and Councillors will monitor developments of the above aims during the period 2017-2022.

332/17 Oakham Town Partnership. Claim for funding

The Chairman, Cllr A Lowe and the Deputy Chairman Cllr M Haley, circulated a report (no. TC00617) concerning a request received from the Oakham Town Partnership, for a 50% contribution from the £62,586.50 received by the Town Council in 2016 from the Rutland County Council in relation to the Hawksmead Housing development (Larkfield Group). This contribution would be used to fund the costs of a Town Centre Manager appointed by the Partnership in July 2016. The Partnership claimed that an agreement was reached between RCC, OTC and the Partnership which provided for the requested contribution.

Councillors expressed the view that no such agreement was made and that the supplementary agreement (now in the Town possession) confirmed that, with agreement with Rutland County Council, it was up to the Town Council to determine how the fund was to be disbursed.

After a full discussion, it was unanimously resolved as follows.

The invoice received from the OTP for a 50% contribution towards the cost of funding a Town Centre Manager is rejected. The Acting Town Clerk is instructed to write to OTP advising them of this decision, giving the above reasons

The OTC Finance Working Group review options for specific events/projects that would benefit the Residents of Barleythorpe and Oakham Town and refer back to the Town Council for consideration by a future meeting as to the disbursement of the whole fund.

333/17 Exempt (confidential) agenda items. Exclusion of the Public and Press.

The meeting resolved to exclude the public and press for the remaining two items of business, in accordance with the provisions of the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960. The matters concerned, relate to a code of conduct statement and a contractual matter.

A record of these two items of business is given in a confidential minute's record page retained in the Councils official records which is for Town Councillors information only and is NOT for outside publication.

Chairman
8th March 2017

