

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY MARCH 9TH 2016 AT THE OFFICES OF OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL, VICTORIA HALL, 39, HIGH STREET, OAKHAM

PRESENT:

Cllrs Alf Dewis (Chairman), Adam Lowe, Martin Brookes, Stan Stubbs, Mrs Joyce Lucas BEM (for part of the meeting), Vince Howard, Michael Elliott, Michael Haley, Tracy Carr, Peter Ind, Sally Anne Wadsworth

ABSENT:

Cllr Jasmine Hopkins

No members of the public were present

057/16 APOLOGIES

- (i) An apology for absence had been received from Cllr Jasmine Hopkins
- (ii) It was proposed by Cllr Adam Lowe, seconded by Cllr Vince Howard and unanimously resolved to approve the absence due to ill health

058/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- (i) No Disclosable Pecuniary Interests were declared
- (ii) Cllr Michael Haley declared an interest in Item 8(ii) as the Treasurer to the Trustees of the Victoria Hall. He stated that he would not take part in any discussion or vote

Cllr Sally Anne Wadsworth declared an interest in Item 11(ii) as her daughter is a member of the Brownies. She stated she would not take part in any discussion or vote

059/16 MINUTES

It was proposed by Cllr Stan Stubbs, seconded by Cllr Vince Howard and resolved with 9 votes for and 2 abstentions that the draft minutes of the meeting of Oakham Town Council held on Wednesday February 24th 2016 be amended as follows:

- (i) That Minute Number 052/16 have the words “and unanimously resolved” inserted after the words “Cllr Stan Stubbs” in the first paragraph.
- (ii) That the spelling of Cllr Martin Brookes’ surname be amended throughout where it was spelt incorrectly.

It was then proposed by Cllr Vince Howard. Seconded by Cllr Stan Stubbs and resolved with 9 votes for and 2 abstentions that the amended minutes of the meeting of Oakham Town Council held on Wednesday February 24th 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a true record of that meeting

060/16 COUNCILLOR'S QUESTIONS

Cllr Martin Brookes had tabled the question;

“I am concerned the Cemetery Working Group is not providing reports or recommendations for the full Council to consider. When will the working group be providing full reports and recommendations relating to this major project?”

In response the Chairman gave a timeline of events and activities undertaken by the Working Group and stated that Rutland County Council were presently undertaking works and that further reports would be provided in the future at relevant points.

061/16 CHAIRMAN AND MEMBER'S REPORTS

Cllr Alf Dewis reported his attendance at the funeral of Roger Begy, OBE.

He also reminded members of the forthcoming event in aid of his chosen charity for the year

Cllr Adam Lowe reported on his attendance, with Cllr Michael Haley, at the Oakham Town Centre meeting on March 2nd.

He also stated he and his wife had attended the recent Annual General Meeting of the Oakham Home Gardens and Allotment Society in place of the Chairman.

Cllr Lowe then said that all Band Concerts had been booked and members would be updated at the next meeting on the Beacon Lighting event due to take place on April 21st 2016 and the arrangements for the event in Cutts Close to celebrate the 90th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to be held on June 12th 2016

062/16 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk reported as follows:

Meeting with Historic England

Cllr Mrs Joyce Lucas and the Clerk met with Historic England on Friday 4th March to discuss possible plans to install new fencing around Cutts Close to match that which has been installed around the Castle. During discussions it became apparent that there may be wider scope to improve the pathways, entrances and drainage in the park.

Historic England would be supportive of any plans of this nature but these will need Scheduled Monument Consent and the cost will be considerable. The main possibility is a grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Walk of Witness 25th March 2016

A copy of a letter sent to the Chairman is attached for your information

CCTV Contribution Rebate

The Clerk is currently waiting for confirmation that a rebate will be received.

Dispensations

There may be occasions when a member of the Council, under the Council's Code of Conduct, is prevented from speaking or voting on an item because of a declared or registered interest in that matter.

The Clerk has delegated authority to grant a dispensation to a member if this is the case. If a member wishes to speak or vote on a particular item then please contact the Clerk as soon as you become aware of it.

Please note that the reason why the dispensation should be granted must be clearly stated and this will be included on the dispensation form that will be signed by the member.

Each dispensation request will be considered on its merits.

Procedures for getting an item onto an agenda.

Apologies for those members who are aware of the procedure for this but it is repeated to you all and in particular for the benefit of those recently co-opted to the Council.

It is not the intention of the Clerk to obstruct members in submitting items for an agenda but there is a process that should be followed which is outlined in Standing Order 4.

If you wish something to be included in an agenda then please send in a report to the office and state which meeting you would like it to go on. There is a report template that can be supplied to you for this purpose although the office can also paste the report into this if you wish.

As you are aware agendas are usually posted out to you all on the Thursday before the meeting on the following Wednesday. Therefore it is necessary to get your report in in good time. If it is not on time then regrettably it will not be able to be included.

Members are asked to respect any decision, usually made by the Clerk, if a report is considered to have been submitted too late.

The suggested deadline is by the Monday of the week prior to the meeting at which you wish the item to be included. This then gives time for the report to be checked and corrected if necessary.

The report will be checked by the office for any issues, obvious errors, etc. and returned to you for your approval. If it is considered unlawful or improper then it will be rejected unless it is amended.

Please also include any recommendations or proposals you are making and the decision(s) that you would like the Council to consider making.

The appendix letter, agenda item number etc. will be filled in by the office.

Please note that officers will not write the report for you. It is also your responsibility to do any research and background work as you may have to justify any comments or statements made in the report to other members.

However, if the office has any documentation that you require (such as a minute from a previous meeting, previous report, etc) then it will happily pass this on to you. It will also provide any assistance in where to look or who to contact if it is able to do so.

063/16 DEPUTATIONS BY THE PUBLIC

None

064/16 WORKING GROUPS AND STEERING GROUPS STRATEGY ASSURANCE

- (i) Cllr Martin Brookes stated that he was concerned that the Working Group was discussing leases and fees when none had been agreed and was disappointed that a local club felt that they could not be accommodated. Members then noted the report from the Oakham Community Centre Working Group.
- (ii) It was proposed by Cllr Vince Howard, seconded by Cllr Stan Stubbs and resolved with 9 votes for, 1 against by Cllr Martin Brookes and Cllr Michael Haley abstaining that the Strategy Assurance document submitted by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group be approved

At 7.29pm Cllr Mrs Joyce Lucas gave her apologies to the Chairman and left the meeting due to ill health

065/16 REVIEW OF COUNCIL STRUCTURE

During considerable discussion on the subject the following points were made:

- That a “bottom up” rather than a “top down” approach was required
- Were committees, apart from the Staffing Committee, necessary?
- That Working Groups would be the operational level of the Council and that a middle tier could be cut
- How would a Planning Committee fit in with the proposed structure?
- That a Planning Committee should have delegated powers.
- That the proposed structure may increase the workload on staff
- That if objectives were smart and with clearly defined outcomes then Working Groups would do much of the work of the Council and that a better reporting structure would be in place.
- That a clear communication strategy was required to underpin the work done by Working Groups
- That a Planning and Staffing Committee were both required but the proposed Finance and General Purposes Committee would potentially mean that 4 members would not have a say in decisions made and should not be part of any structure.
- That with proper terms of reference Working Groups could alleviate the need for other meetings
- That Working Groups were usually temporary whereas Committees were more permanent.

It was then proposed by Cllr Martin Brookes, seconded by Cllr Vince Howard and resolved with 6 votes for, 2 against and 2 abstentions that the item be deferred and that a Working Group be set up to look at the restructure

066/16 FLORAL DISPLAYS

Members considered two tenders received. During discussions Cllr Tracy Carr asked whether there was any scoring system in place to aid a decision. She was informed that there currently was not. It was then proposed by Cllr Vince Howard, seconded by Cllr Michael Haley and resolved with 7 votes for and 3 abstentions that the tender from Plantscape for the supply, maintenance and watering of Oakham's summer floral displays for the period 2016 – 2018 be accepted.

067/16 GRANT APPLICATIONS

Members considered two grant applications

- (i) It was proposed by Cllr Michael Elliott, seconded by Cllr Vince Howard and resolved with 7 votes for, Cllr Martin Brookes against and 2 abstentions that £480.00 be granted to the Rutland Concert Band for pyrotechnics at the Proms in The Park event
- (ii) It was proposed by Cllr Vince Howard, seconded by Cllr Tracy Carr and resolved with 8 votes for and 2 abstentions that £1,000 be granted to the Oakham Guides Headquarters towards the cost of repairing the roof

068/16 EXTERNAL AUDIT OPT IN

The Clerk introduced the item and reiterated the advice received from the Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils. It was then proposed by Cllr Adam Lowe, seconded by Cllr Michael Haley and unanimously resolved that Oakham Town Council would remain opted in to the Sector Led Body arrangements for the procurement of External Audit from April 1st 2017

069/16 REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S SYSTEMS OF INTERNAL CONTROL

Members considered a report from the Financial Matters and Procedures Working Group. Cllr Peter Ind asked about a Financial Risk Assessment and was told that the Group had considered this at its last meeting and would be putting various recommendations to the Council in due course. The number of financial institutions that were prepared to take funds from the Parish Council sector were very few although the Public Sector Deposit Fund was an option that the Working Group were considering.

The Working Group also stated that they would like to bring the review of the Council's Systems of Internal Control to the beginning of the Financial Year so that the Council was then working to just one document.

The report highlighted a number of areas that had been improved and it was proposed by Cllr Stan Stubbs, seconded by Cllr Vince Howard and unanimously resolved that the Council had maintained an adequate system of internal control throughout 2015 – 2016 and that they had proved effective.

It was then proposed by Cllr Vince Howard, seconded by Cllr Peter Ind and unanimously resolved that the Financial Matters and Procedures Working Group review them again at the earliest opportunity and report back to Council with its recommendations

070/16 PAYMENT OF INVOICE OVER £5000

Members were informed that this was the Council's Insurance Premium that had been previously agreed by the Council but needed to be authorised as per Financial Regulations. It was then proposed by Cllr Michael Elliott, seconded by Cllr Michael Haley and unanimously resolved to authorise the payment of Invoice Number 21027527 for £5165.00 to Zurich Municipal.

071/16 SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS

Cllr Martin Brookes asked that his objection to payment number 325 for £50.00 + VAT for wine for the Chairman's Civic Reception be recorded. It was then proposed by Cllr Vince Howard, seconded by Cllr Stan Stubbs and resolved with 8 votes for and 2 abstentions that the Schedule of Payments from 1st February 2016 – 29th February 2016 be approved

072/16 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Chairman informed the meeting that the Bank Reconciliations had been verified by Cllr Michael Elliott and with no further questions it was proposed by Cllr Vince Howard, seconded by Cllr Stan Stubbs and resolved with 8 votes for and 2 abstentions that the Statement of Accounts to February 29th 2016 be approved

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.27pm

Signed: _____

**Chairman
23rd March 2016**