

Oakham Town Council

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MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9th AUGUST 2023 AT 6.30 P.M. IN THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllrs: S-A. Wadsworth, (Chair) C Nix (Deputy Chair) , P Buxton, P Ainsley, H. Williams, A Lowe, P Wildbore, J Hall, C Clark, J Lucas

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Evans (Clerk), Mr Alexander, Mike Shaw.

Cllr Wadsworth opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

08/2023-01

APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE: To receive and approve apologies for absences.

Cllr P Buxton due to family issues. Proposer Cllr Clerk, seconder Cllr Lucas. carried

08/2023-02

DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION:

Cllr Lowe on items 15 PA System and item 16 Oakham Town Crier

08/2023-03

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: An opportunity for members of the public to speak in accordance with Standing Orders 1 (d)- 1(i)

Mr Mike Shaw thanked OTC and in particular the Handyman for the recent work on the woods in the Centenary Field. He felt OTC needed to invest more resources for this work with training including Health and Safety for the Handyman.

08/2023-04

TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT MINUTES OF THE 12TH JULY 2023.

Cllr Ainsley proposed that two spelling mistakes were addressed regarding Cyprus and Rialtas. This was seconded by Cllr Wildbore and passed unanimously.

08/2023-05

COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS:

There were none.

08/2023-06

CLERKS REPORT:

The Town Clerk introduced himself to the Council and stated how happy he was to be here and thanked all the Councillors for volunteering to be on the Council. He stated that his door would

always be open for Councillors and he looked forward to working with them to deliver improvements in the town and the service provided by the Council.

08/2023-07

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

The Chair read out a letter of congratulations from a member of public over the weekly events and another congratulating the Council on its display of flowers and baskets. The Chair reminded Councillors that lottery items for her charity First Responders needed to be with her by August 21st.

08/2023-08

WORKING GROUPS AND OUTSIDE BODIES:

Cllr Wildbore thanked the Council for their work in the Centenary Woods. He highlighted the need for the volunteer resources to be co-ordinated by the Handyman which required careful advanced planning. Three dozen trees will be donated by RCC. They have also adopted the Centenary play area.

Cllr Lucas stated that there would be a patient participation meeting with GPs and the Practice Manager in attendance on 29th August 2023 at the Baptist Church, Melton Road.

08/2023-09

ELECTRICITY PRICE INCREASE:

Cllr Lowe said there had been a dramatic increase in the cost of supplying electricity recently, reflected in the two increased supplier quotes for Church Street/Cutts Close. He recommended staying with the present supplier for the next year since they gave a competitive price.

Cllr Lowe proposed and seconded by Cllr Wadsworth. Carried unanimously.

08/2023-10

TO CONSIDER CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

10.1 Early Bird discount for Christmas lights.

Cllr Wadsworth introduced this item, stating that the Council was already contractually obliged to make this payment. It is only a case of whether the Council wished to make an early payment of 50% now to benefit from a 5% discount.

Proposed by Cllr Wadsworth and seconded by Cllr Nix. Carried unanimously.

08/2023-11

FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES:

11.1 Payments for Approval

11.2 Bank Reconciliation as of 1 July 2023

11.3 Bank statements.

Cllr Lowe presented these items for the Council to review. Cllr Hall enquired about an item labelled BNP. Cllr Lowe stated this was the rental for the photocopiers. Cllr Hall also enquired about the Rialtas fee, and Cllr Lowe stated this was the annual licence fee. The large stationary bill was also due to a bulk purchase of photocopy paper at discount.

Proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Ainsley. Carried unanimously.

08/2023-12

SKIP HIRE:

Cllr Wadsworth stated there was still considerable foliage and branches etc. being generated by the clean up of the woods at the Centenary Playing Grounds. The Council had already hired two skips to clear the fencing and undergrowth removed by the Handyman. The question was whether to hire more or maybe hire a van to transport the material? The Town Clerk stated that unfortunately RCC would treat any waste from us as commercial and thus be prohibited. However, the Clerk has contacted Biffa who had already chipped a large amount of material from the Church grounds. The advantage would be that the wood chippings created could be used to highlight a path through the wood. Biffa will supply a quote for this work.

Cllr Ainsley proposed that the Clerk be given a budget of £2000 to cover this work and, should a satisfactory quote be obtained, the work be undertaken by Biffa. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Wadsworth and carried unanimously.

08/2023-13

ENVIRONMENT ISSUES:

13.1 Climate and Biodiversity Emergency

Cllr Williams presented the paper that was in front of all Councillors. Cllr Williams did not want to go through the entire document but would answer any questions on it. After some discussion the two recommendations enclosed in the document were put to the Council.

1. Oakham Town Council acknowledges and declares a climate emergency, recognising the urgent need to address climate change and biodiversity loss at the local level
Proposed by Cllr Williams and seconded by Cllr Hall. Eight in favour and two abstentions.
Proposal carried.

2. Cllr Ainsley proposed that an Environmental Working Group be established to urgently address this matter and the other recommendations be deleted, which was accepted and seconded by Cllr Williams. Carried unanimously. Membership to initially include Cllr Williams as Chair and Cllr Hall and Cllr Clark.

08/2023-14

TWINNING BARMSTEDT AND OAKHAM:

Cllr Lowe stated that there were no cost implications to this item and he wished to maintain OTC as a point of contact for enquiries etc. It was recommended that the Twinning Councillors be Cllr Lowe and Cllr Ainsley.

Proposed by Cllr Lowe and seconded by Cllr Clerk. Carried unanimously.

08/2023-15

PA SYSTEM REPLACEMENT:

Cllr Lowe introduced this matter and highlighted that the present equipment was heavy, needing two people to lift it and required repair. Cllr Lowe proposed that a new simple system with a one year guarantee be purchased and the existing equipment was investigated for repair.

There followed a debate as to the need for such equipment and if a repair was cost effective. Cllr Ainsley proposed that the repair of old system be investigated and that a paper be brought back to Council. This was seconded by Cllr Nix. Nine Councillors in favour and Cllr Lowe abstained therefore motion carried.

08/2023-16

OAKHAM TOWN CRIER:

Cllr Lucas proposed the reinstatement of Oakham Town Crier stating that it had no cost implications and would make a good tourist attraction for Oakham. Cllr Nix seconded the motion. Seven in favour, one against and one abstention. Motion carried.

08/2023-17

WEST END CLEAN UP:

Cllr Lucas stated that the West End was a disgrace and needed a thorough clean up. The seat outside Wilkos needed moving and the waste bin replaced. There was also graffiti on the building. The Town Clerk agreed to investigate the replacement of the bin and cleaning up of the graffiti. However, the movement of the seat had been considered but difficult to find a better site. The Council agreed that regular maintenance of the benches was required, and that the Handyman should sand and paint them annually.

Cllr Wadsworth said that it was important to provide the right tools for the Handyman including any necessary training especially in Health and Safety.

Proposed by Cllr Lucas and seconded by Cllr Lowe. Carried unanimously.

08/2023-18

ECONOMIC STRATEGY WORKING GROUP(ESWG):

Cllr Ainsley introduced this item, stating that although Barleythorpe had been contacted, there had been no response. He requested that the CIL money from Uppingham Road be ring fenced for use by ESWG and that they had five years to come forward with a proposal. However, it must be for infrastructure items such as transport or lighting. Cllr Williams enquired if the money could be reallocated should ESWG fail to deliver a project proposal in time. Cllr Ainsley indicated that would not be a problem. Cllr Ainsley proposed that the Council makes a note of the EWSFG meeting and agrees that the CIL income be ringfenced for the ESWG subject to all expenditure being ratified and approved at Full Council. This was seconded by Cllr Williams and carried unanimously.

08/2023-19

OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS AND REPRESENTATIVES

It was proposed and seconded that Cllr Ainsley and Cllr Hall join the Finance Committee, Cllr Pryer is the representative on the Citizens Advice Bureau. Both Cllr Hall and Cllr Clark are the representatives on the Oakham Memorial Institute. This was carried unanimously.

Cllr Williams stated that she unfortunately could not continue with the Skate Park Working Group.

Meeting Finished at 8.10 pm

Signed _____ Date _____