

Oakham Town Council

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MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6th SEPTEMBER 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, S Pryer, J Lucas

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Evans (Clerk), and four members of public.

Cllr Wadsworth opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

10/2023-01

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

Cllr C Clerk due to holiday commitment. Proposer Cllr A Lowe, seconder Cllr S-A Wadsworth. Carried unanimously.

10/2023-02

DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND APPLICATIONS FOR

DISPENSATION: Cllr Lowe on item 17 declared a non-pecuniary interest due to a potential legal action.

10/2023-03

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 for their work on Centenary Playing Field and presented a paper discussing the way forward for members to take on board .

10/2023-04

TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT MINUTES OF THE 16TH AUGUST 2023.

Cllr J Lucas proposed the minutes were accepted and this was seconded by Cllr S-A Wadsworth and passed with two abstentions. Cllr A Lowe requested that his abstention be recorded.

10/2023-05

COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS:

There were none.

10/2023-06

CLERKS REPORT:

The Town Clerk indicated that an important Lease was due for renewal and two significant Contracts for Grounds Maintenance and Toilet Cleaning would need to be advertised shortly. It was important therefore that Councillors examine these soon to decide of any changes they would like to suggest. Two further contracts for the Christmas Lights and the Flower Displays would also need to be reviewed early next year.

10/2023-07

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

The Chair highlighted a few complaints regards the music events in Cutts Close this summer. Set against this was the enjoyment these events proved to large numbers of residents, as portrayed in an article in the Rutland Times. The Chair thanked the Deputy Clerk and Cllr Lowe and his wife plus Cllr J Hall for their help at these events, but next year more volunteers are required.

The Chair also commented on the helpful work by Cllr Lucas by simply sitting and listening to the public.

Also, the Chair commended the hard and dedicated work by Cllr A Lowe in stepping temporarily into the Clerk role, ensuring that the Council could continue to function over the last six months.

10/2023-08

PROPER OFFICER AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER:

It was proposed by Cllr S-A Wadsworth and seconded by Cllr P Buxton that the present Town Clerk becomes the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer for Oakham Town Council.

This was passed unanimously.

10/2023-09

RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL PLAY AREA AND BELLWAY PON ADJACENT:

Rutland County Council (RCC) have recently adopted the play area adjacent to Centenary Field.

This has maintenance gates that can be open as much as 3 meters that are frequently left unsecured. There is currently no signage for the play area, which should only be accessible from Ellingworth Close and within meters of the play area there is a detention pond for surface water storage and a flood protection to downstream areas of Oakham.

The following was proposed by Cllr P Wildbore and seconded by Cllr H Williams

1. For the Town Clerk to contact Rutland County Council to see what measures they are proposing to secure their adopted play area asset and their timeframe for delivery.

If a solution is the locking of the maintenance gate should RCC/OTC consider having a new access gate directly from Centenary Field that doesn't face the pond. This would make it more accessible to wider Oakham residents using Centenary Field.

2. This area of 'Centenary Field' has CCTV coverage and would also apply to the autumn 2023 tree planting.

Could the Town Clerk raise in his discussions signage for the existence of this CCTV and consider installing signage at the play area (RCC) and around the Barleythorpe Road fencing (OTC) to act as a general deterrent.

3. Could the Town Clerk check on the current CCTV usage and monitoring, especially now that much improvement works have been achieved in the area of mature trees on the western fringe of Centenary Field, and check if RCC are planning/implementing any improvements to coverage for their camera near LIDL.
4. Could the Town Clerk check with RCC (Harry Ayton) on the RCC grounds maintenance frequency and specifications for the play area.

This was passed with one abstention.

10/2023-10

CLIMATE ACTION PLAN FOR OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL:

Cllr H Williams presented a Climate Action Plan which outlines the strategies, goals, and actions that will guide our efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, improve biodiversity and to create a more sustainable and resilient Oakham.

This Action Plan contained top level, short- and long-term actions as highlighted below:

Top level objectives

1. Reduce carbon footprint and improve resilience by reducing reliance on fossil fuels.
2. Assess and develop habitats to increase biodiversity.

Short term actions

1. Plan for Oakham Town Council to be net carbon neutral by 2030.
2. Estimate the current carbon output of Oakham Town Council (OTC) and Oakham town as a whole.
3. Commission a comprehensive assessment to understand the sources and magnitude of emissions within OTC.
4. Ensure that OTC uses local suppliers, wherever possible, for the supply of goods and services and considering the potential carbon emissions not just price when awarding contracts.
5. Consider the environmental implications of all council decisions.
6. Research carbon literacy training for the whole OTC team.
7. Engage with and learn from other Town and Parish Councils, Rutland County Council and national government and share expertise, experience, and knowledge in the preparation of policies and procedures.
8. Provide regular reports to OTC on progress towards achievement of this Action Plan.

Longer term actions

These are subject to change, both in scope and priority following our assessment of our current state.

1. Aim for Oakham to be carbon neutral by 2045.
2. Conduct a comprehensive assessment to understand the sources and magnitude of emissions within Oakham.
3. Identify vulnerable areas and assess potential climate change impacts on local infrastructure, ecosystems, and public health.
4. Seek to improve energy efficiency by investigating renewable energy sources and moving towards being carbon neutral.
5. Promote sustainable transportation and active travel.
6. Work to reduce waste and increase recycling.
7. Protect and enhance biodiversity.
8. Investigate and implement water conservation.
9. Develop collaborative partnerships with others.

After considerable discussion it was decided that although Councillors agreed with the principles of the Action Plans it was essential to do it byte sized rather than all at once, with minimal financial impact.

Cllr H Williams proposed the top-level objectives, Cllr P Ainsley seconded, and this was carried unanimously.

It was proposed by Cllr H Williams that the Short-term objectives points 4 and 5 be adopted and this was seconded by Cllr S-A Wandsworth and carried unanimously.

10/2023-11

ERECT STATUE AND PLINTH WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING:

Cllr J Lucas voiced her concern over the historic apple tree in the proposed location which was agreed with by other councillors.

Cllr S-A Wadsworth proposed that this comment be forwarded to the planning authority which was seconded by Cllr P Ainsley. Carried with one objection from Cllr S Pryer

10/2023-12

LITTER BINS AND PUBLIC SEATS:

Cllr J Lucas introduced a paper on the state of the litter bins and public seats in Oakham and it was highlighted that many were in a poor state of repair.

Cllr J Lucas proposed that the litter bins at Church passage and the Main Level Crossing be replaced, and this was seconded by Cllr P Ainsley. This motion was carried unanimously.

10/2023-13

AUTUMN TREE PLANTING IN CENTENARY FIELD:

Cllr P Wildbore stated that Rutland County Council (RCC) confirmed their gift to provide 12-18 substantive saplings in Centenary Field. The preferred location is around the perimeter facing LIDL and inset approximately 3 meters inside the post and rail perimeter fence. Planting would be scheduled for November 2023, members indicated they would like confirmation of the type of trees.

Cllr P Wildbore proposed tha RCC be approached to implement this tree planting program, and this was seconded by Cllr H Williams. Carried unanimously.

10/2023-14

PROPOSED EXTENSION ON THE WILLOWBROOK BY RUTLAND HOUSE TRUST:

Cllr A Lowe stated that he was supportive of this proposal and that the Council should accept this application in principle.

This was proposed by Cllr S-A Wandsworth and seconded Cllr C Nix. Carried unanimously.

10/2023-15

BANK STATEMENTS:

The Council were given a total list of the income and expenditure by a Bank Statement. Cllr P Ainsley enquired about cheque 403521 for £805.00, and the Town Clerk agreed to get back to the Council with further information.

10/2023-16

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE:

Cllr Nix proposed and Cllr P Ainsley seconded. Carried with one abstention by Cllr A Lowe.

10/2023-17

TENNIS CLUB CONTRACT RENEWAL:

The Council discussed at length the recent renewal of the Tennis Club contract. It was decided by Council that no further action was required.

Meeting Finished at 21:30 pm

Signed _____ Date _____