

# Oakham Town Council

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## **MINUTES OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20th SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 6.30 P.M. IN THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

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

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** C Evans (Clerk) K Geraghty (Deputy Clerk) plus four members of public.

Cllr Wadsworth opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

### **11/2023-01 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE:**

Cllr S Pryer on holiday and Cllr J Lucas would be late. Cllr Nix proposed and Cllr Lowe seconded. Carried

### **11/2023-02 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION:**

Cllr A Lowe on item 10 nonpecuniary interest.

**11/2023-03 DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** An opportunity for members of the public to speak in accordance with Standing Orders 1 (d)- 1(i)

A member of the public talked about Centenary Field asking that there is no reduction in cutting frequency and asked the Council to be bold in its environmental plans for the field by enhancing and improving the wild areas around the edges, with more hedging etc. Thanks to Cllr P Wildbore and the Handyman for their efforts to date.

### **11/2023-04 RECEIVE AND ACCEPT MINUTES OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023:**

Cllr H Williams pointed out that the word "byte" should be replaced with "bite" in item 10. Proposed by Cllr S-A Wadsworth seconded by Cllr C Nix. Carried

### **11/2023-05 COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS:**

Cllr C Clark and Cllr J Hall had become Memorial Institute Members.

Cllr P Wildbore talked regards the variety of trees to be planted at the Centenary Field.

### **11/2023-06 CLERKS REPORT :**

The Town Clerk apologised over the significant amount of emails sent to members prior to the meeting, but as could be seen from the agenda , many significant contracts were due to

terminate thus requiring the council to review the existing contracts followed by a tender process.

(Cllr J Lucas joined the meeting at 18:39 )

**11/2023-07. CHAIRMANS REPORT:**

The Chair circulated papers regards a potential new candidate for co-option who is attending the meeting and asked if any member had any issues regards this matter. No one responded. It was therefore proposed by Cllr S-A Wadsworth and seconded by Cllr C Nix that Linda Chatfield join the Council. Carried unanimously.

**11/2023-08 PLANNING APPLICATIONS:**

**2023/0869/RG3 PROPOSAL:** Regulation 3 application for temporary change of use from Bus Station to a Transport Information Hub. Oakham Bus Station John Street Oakham Rutland  
Proposed: Cllr Ainsley, seconder Cllr Lowe carried.

**2023/0871/LBA PROPOSAL:** Addition of 2 no. aluminium signs (A4 Landscape sized). 56 High Street Oakham Rutland LE15 6AL  
Proposed: Cllr Wadsworth, seconder Cllr Lowe carried Cllr Williams against.

**2023/0906/PTA PROPOSAL:** Remove 1 no. Sycamore and 1 no. Horse Chestnut before they exceed their current size, approximately 4.5 metres in height, as they will soon be blocking the entrance to the parking area of the property. 8 Mount Pleasant Uppingham Road Oakham Rutland LE15 6HU  
Proposed to object: Cllr Wildbore, seconder Cllr Lucas Cllr Lowe Abstained. It was recommended that the trees be pollard instead.

**2023/0933/CAT PROPOSAL:** Cut back 20 linear metres of tree line back to the boundary (where possible, trees not to be made unsafe or unbalanced). Oakham Delivery Office Market Place Oakham Rutland LE15 6DX  
Proposed: Cllr Nix seconder Cllr Ainsley carried Cllr Williams against.

**2023/0945/FUL PROPOSAL:** Retrospective application for change of external facing materials to property. 32 Heron Road Oakham Rutland LE15 6BN  
Proposed: Cllr Ainsley seconder Cllr Nix carried.

**2023/0949/PTA PROPOSAL:** (T1) 1 no. Copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica purpurea*) - Reduce the whole canopy by 2.5 metres to reduce the tree in size. Remove all deadwood and damaged branches. Thin the canopy through by 20% to open it up. Raise the crown to 5.5 metres over the road and balance it all the way round the tree and lift it up over the neighbour's driveway. 12A Vicarage Road Oakham Rutland LE15 6EG.  
Proposed: Cllr Lucas seconder Cllr Nix carried.

**11/2023-09 TREE SURVEY:**

The town clerk had obtained a quote from the tree specialist at RCC for a Tree Survey on the trees of concern for 2023 , 2024 and a combined survey for both years. The council made it clear they considered a survey covering both years made sense.  
Proposed by Cllr A Lowe and seconded by Cllr C Nix. Carried unanimously.

**11/2023-10 REPAIR AND SAFETY CHECK OF CHRISTMAS SOCKETS:**

The Town Clerk presented a quote for the repair of the sockets required for the Christmas Lights which is an urgent requirement given the partial failure of the light display last year. The contractor can repair said sockets within the next few weeks which is acceptable to our main display

contractor. Proposed by Cllr J Lucas and seconded by Cllr C Clark. Carried with abstention from Cllr A Lowe.

**11/2023-11 DEFRIBILLATOR CASE:**

The Council is responsible for two defibrillators. The case for the one in Cutts Close was vandalised soon after installation. The Town Clerk had obtained a quote for a new case with a steel case and there are sufficient funds under the street furniture budget.

It was proposed by Cllr C Clark and seconded by Cllr J Hall. Carried unanimously.

**11/2023-12 COMMUNITY USE BANDSTAND:**

This item was withdrawn as no longer an issue.

**11/2023-13 RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL NOISE COMPLAINT:**

The Chair indicated there had been five complaints over the summer regards the musical events at Cutts Close. There had also been a complaint to RCC which had resulted in correspondence from the Environmental Office at RCC. A suggestion that the events be reduced from 15 to 12 and that the Council purchase a type 2 sound meter to monitor future events was made.

Cllr Wildbore, Clark and Williams voiced concern over the number of events held and also the type of music, many with a heavy base. Cllr Lucas agreed saying that she clearly could hear the event in Willow Crescent.

It was proposed by Cllr H Williams and seconded by Cllr C Clark that a Type 2 Sound meter be purchased. Carried unanimously.

**11/2023-14 MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE: To resolve that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the grounds that they relate to individuals and the financial affairs of persons. This information is classed as exempt under paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Schedule 12A to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972.**

Proposed by Cllr J Lucas and seconded by Cllr S-A Wadsworth. Carried unanimously

**11/2023/15 RENEWAL LEASE PRINCESS AVENUE:**

The lease is ready for signature with the addition of a six-month termination clause. Concern was raised over the EPC rating of the building and it was agreed this needed investigating It was proposed by Cllr H Williams that the contract is signed and seconded by Cllr C Clark This was carried.

**11/2023/16 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT:**

The Town Clerk apologised that a late email had been received that clearly may alter the Council's views on how to proceed. The present grounds maintenance contract terminates at the end of November and is with BIFFA. BIFFA have just informed the Council that should the Council request a new tender process they would not be able to bid due to an ongoing review of their service provision. BIFFA had suggested an extension to the existing contract until the end of March, when they should be able to bid. This short-term contract would be with the same price and services as the existing contract. Cllr A Lowe proposed, and Cllr C Nix seconded that the Town Clerk should draw up a new contract for this period. Carried unanimously.

**11/2023/17 CLEANING OF TOILET FACILITIES CHURCH STREET :**

The Town Clerk stated that this contract ended at the end of November and therefore the Council needed to decide if the contract should be advertised. Members of the Council were concerned with the level of cleanliness of the toilets and the time keeping regards the opening and closure of the toilets. It was stated that it clearly was not being checked regularly (in the contract four times a day).

The Chair requested that alternative options were investigated such as splitting the cleaning and security features. Cllr Buxton pointed out that a poor toilet would not encourage visitors to come to Oakham. There were also issues with the soap dispensers and the heating of the block. It was proposed by Cllr Ainsley and seconded by Cllr C Nix that the Town Clerk investigated these issues explore alternatives and also contact the existing contractor. Carried unanimously.

#### **11/2023-18 CUTTS CLOSE PLAY AREA:**

The Town Clerk circulated three quotations for the replacement / upgrade of the play surface at Cutts Close play area. He stated that there are basically three ways to rectify the situation with prices varying from 15K to upwards of 40K.

1. The simplest and cheapest method is simply to repair the existing surface
2. The next cheapest method is to repair the existing surface and overlay a new surface. The advantage with this is the existing surface is used to ensure the fall height safety of 1.5m is covered and a new fresh look is achieved.
3. The most expensive option is to take up the existing surface , check the existing ground conditions and improve if required and then lay a course underlay followed by a finer surface. Obviously, there is also the issue of disposal of the existing underlay which could be expensive and have an environmental impact.

The Council agreed that a more detailed review was required, which would require site visits arranged by the Town Clerk. This was proposed by Cllr S-A Wadsworth and seconded by Cllr Ainsley. Carried and Cllr Hall abstained.


#### **11/2023-19 BOWLS CLUB LEASE:**

The Town Clerk highlighted that the current Lease Contract extends until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2027, however the Bowls Club are keen to extend the lease with a new contract so that they can apply for a grant for which they will need as a minimum a ten year secured lease. There have been some negotiations already, which have led to the discovery of a separate contract for the use of the car park.

There followed some discussion on the scale of the rent considering this is a community asset. It was proposed that the Town Clerk negotiate with the Bowls Club using a similar model established in the Tennis Club contract which would include the insurance for the property being the responsibility of the Club and including the Car Park into the Lease Contract. The Town Clerk agreed that he could do this and would bring back a revised contract to the Full Council for consideration.

Cllr C Nix proposed and seconded by Cllr C Clark. Agreed unanimously.

Meeting Finish at 9:00pm

Signed  Date 24/10/23