

# Oakham Town Council

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## **MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2023 AT 6.30 P.M. IN THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Cllrs: S-A. Wadsworth, (Chair) C Nix (Deputy Chair) , P Ainsley, C Clark, A Lowe, P Wildbore, J Hall, S Pryer, L Chatfield

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Chris Evans (Clerk), Kathy Geraghty (Deputy Clerk) and three members of public.

Cllr Wadsworth opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

### **12/2023-01**

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

Cllr P Buxton due to holiday commitment, Cllr H Williams due to a work commitment and Cllr J Lucas due to ill health. Proposer Cllr C Clark, seconder Cllr C Nix Carried unanimously.

### **12/2023-02**

**DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATION:** None declared

### **12/2023-03**

**DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC:** An opportunity for members of the public to speak in accordance with Standing Orders 1 (d)- 1(i)  
No deputations were forthcoming.

### **12/2023-04**

**UPDATE FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR:** Cllr Raymond Payne introduced himself and stated to begin with he would be in listening mode and would try to ensure a more active dialogue between the two Councils from now on.

### **12/2023-05**

**TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT MINUTES OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023.**

Cllr J Hall pointed out that his name had been omitted from those present at the meeting. The Clerk apologised.

The amended minutes were proposed to be accepted by Cllr P Wildbore and this was seconded by Cllr S Pryer and passed unanimously.

**12/2023-06**

**COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS:**

There were none.

**12/2023-07**

**CLERKS REPORT:**

The Town Clerk indicated the budget for this financial year was on track to draw down on reserves by 30K which was acceptable, but the council was still suffering from a previous significant reduction in precept.

The Lease for 2 Princess Ave was now signed and sealed and after the concern expressed by the Council at the last meeting, he was investigating environmental improvements to the property including , loft insulation, LED Lighting and Solar Panels. He committed to bring a report to the next Full Council on this matter.

Draft contracts for the Ground Maintenance and Toilets have been drawn up to extend both until March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

**12/2023-08**

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:**

The Chair reported on a meeting with the Chief Exec and Leader of the Council on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October. All parties agreed to make efforts to ensure a closer relationship. RCC requested that OTC take the lead into a review of the development of Oakham Town Centre to invigorate the centre to attract more businesses, tourism, and shopping centre. It was agreed that the Chair should meet with Cllr Ainsley and evaluate how this work programme could be integrated into the existing committee structure.

The Chair had attended court cases in the Castle and Cllr C Nix had judged in a pet show. The magic Lantern walk, and the Stamford fun run are to come to Oakham and both are welcomed by Oakham Town Council.

**12/2023-09**

**BANK STATEMENTS:**

Cllr Ainsley requested more clarity in the Accounts as to the remit for the payment. The Clerk agreed that more clarity was required and would improve them.

Cllr S-A Wadsworth proposed acceptance and seconded by Cllr J Hall. Carried.

**12/2023-10**

**EXTERNAL AUDIT:**

The Clerk presented the recent External Audit, which was a qualified pass, most if not all the comments were regards administrative errors rather than issues with procedure or finances.

Proposed acceptance by Cllr J Hall and seconded by Cllr C Clark. Carried.

**12/2023-11**

**CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON:**

Cllr S-A Wadsworth requested authorisation for a budget up to £1500 to hold a Christmas switch on in the marketplace, most of this budget would be spent on a traffic exclusion order from RCC. Cllr P Ainsley commented on the need to draw on more reserves.

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

**12/2023-12**

**CHRISTMAS CONTRACTORS:**

Cllr S-A Wadsworth introduced this agenda citing the growing concern over the budget involved. The contract terminates this year and a review to investigate other options seems to be appropriate. Purchase of the lights is an option, but this would involve storage , installation , PAC testing etc.

The report was noted, and it was agreed that a working group should be established.

**12/2023-13**

**CENTENARY FIELD SIGNAGE:**

Cllr P Wildbore introduced this agenda item which highlighted the poor and infrequent use of the signage frame on Centenary Field.

The cost for a new banner is £300 and it was agreed that there should always be a banner in this frame to promote Oakham and activities within it.

Cllr P Wildbore proposed and seconded by Cllr A Lowe . Carried.

**12/2023-14**

**FLOWER DISPLAY:**

The council agreed that this year's display had been excellent. The Town Clerk stated that the contract for the Floral Displays for next year was under review and a renewal price and contract would be brought to the next Full Council meeting.

**12/2023-15**

**WILKO SEAT:**

The Town Clerk indicated that the cost of removal of the bench would be significant as it was cemented into the pavement. Cllr A Lowe proposed instead that spikes were placed in the gutter above the seat as a bird deterrent and this was seconded by Cllr C Clark. Carried.

**12/2023-16**

**D-DAY 2024:**

Cllr A Lowe highlighted how significant this event was , with so many lives lost in a massive operation whose success marked the beginning of the end of World War II.

Cllr A Lowe agreed that the Council should

- hold the beacon lighting on the 6<sup>th</sup> June
- hold an event on the 9<sup>th</sup> June to commemorate D-Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- agree a budget of £2000 for both events coming from 2024/25 Budget for Military commemorations/events.

Cllr S-A Wadsworth proposed and seconded by Cllr J Hall. Carried

**12/2023-17**

**IMPACT ABSORBENT PLAY AREAS:**

Cllr P Wildbore was concerned over the rising costs associated with the maintenance and renewal of the play surfaces associated with Cutts Close and Royce Playing Field. The play area recently adopted by RCC at Centenary Field simply had a grass surface with perforated rubber matting in places.

The Clerk was concerned that the existing rubber matting would need to be removed in Cutts Close play area which would be expensive and there were some concerns over the exact nature of the sub soil be it concrete, rubble etc. Cllr P Wildbore suggested trial bores to establish this, but it was pointed out that any such operation would need the permission of English Heritage. Cllr P Wildbore agreed to contact the liaison officer at RCC. The following was proposed by Wildbore and seconded by Cllr J Hall and carried.

- That the Environment Group be approved to carry out a review and costings for applying a baseline standard to all Oakham Town Council play areas.
- That all decisions by Oakham Town Council are deferred until this review advises Full Council.
- That the Environment Group report to Council on 13 December 2023.

**TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 6:30pm on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

Meeting Finished at 20:10 pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_