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Oakham Town Council

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MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8th NOVEMBER 2023 AT 6.30 P.M. IN THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllrs: S-A. Wadsworth, (Chair), P Ainsley, C Clark, A Lowe, P Wildbore, S Pryer, L Chatfield. H Williams, J Lucas

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

Cllr Wadsworth opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

13/2023-01

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

Cllr P Buxton due to ill health, Cllr J Hall due to a holiday and Cllr C Nix late due to a work commitment. Proposer Cllr C Clark, seconder Cllr L Chatfield. Carried unanimously.

ABSENCE

13/2023-02

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

13/2023-03

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

Cllr R Ross (RCC) requested that Oakham Town Council consider developing a Community Emergency Response Plan which Rutland County Council are already initiating. The Chair agreed that this was an important item and delegated the Town Clerk to place on the next Full Council's agenda.

12/2023-04

UPDATE FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR:

Cllr Raymond Payne welcomed Oakham Town Councils work on the Christmas Lights and Armistice day. He pointed out that the Local Plan Consultation by Rutland County Council ends at the end of this month. A new contract for road maintenance for a period of ten years was nearly in place and hopefully RCC will save money.

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12/2023-05

TO RECEIVE AND ACCEPT MINUTES OF THE 11TH OCTOBER 2023:

The minutes were proposed to be accepted by Cllr P Wildbore and this was seconded by Cllr C Clark and passed with three abstentions by members who were not present at the meeting.

13/2023-06

COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS:

Cllr J Lucas spoke regards the Parks School meeting on the 1st November at the Wisteria Hotel held by RCC. Members of the public are very concerned that its closure would result in long journeys out of County plus the lack of local contact of the attending students. Cllr R Payne highlighted the fact that there are at present only two attendees at present with the School having a capacity of eight. Cllr C Clark was concerned if this was a genuine consultation?

Cllr P Wildbore attended a Tree Champion meeting organised by Stuart Kidd. The effectiveness of TPOs were questioned and concluded a strong Neighbourhood Plan is more effective protection. Fix My Street should be used where trees are causing issues with pavements.

Cllr P Ainsley asked the Town Clerk regards progress on changing bank to Unity. The Clerk stated that forms were being filled and a system whereby one of the Clerk / Deputy Clerk are the instigators of a payment and one of two Councillors (A Lowe and P Ainsley) are counter signatories had been cleared by LRALC.

Cllr A Lowe enquired about the hedge on Princess Avenue. The Town Clerk stated that Biffa had accepted that this matter came within our present contract and will trim the hedge this financial year. Cllr A Lowe requested that the Town Clerk informed the concerned resident.

13/2023-07

CLERKS REPORT:

The Town Clerk indicated the predicted outturn for this financial year was on track to draw down on reserves by 30K which was acceptable and predicted.

The extension of the contracts until March 31st, 2024 for both the Toilet and Grounds maintenance were now signed.

13/2023-08

CHAIRMANS REPORT:

The Chair reported that a new hairdresser was opened on the High Street and she attended the opening.

13/2023-09

BANK STATEMENTS:

Cllr H Williams welcomed that there was now more clarity in the Accounts. Cllr S Pryer requested a larger font on these statements.

Cllr P Ainsley proposed acceptance and seconded by Cllr C Clark. Carried.

12/2023-10 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS FOR 2024:

Cllr P Ainsley highlighted the fact that this year's budget had far exceeded that predicted at the start of the financial year. Cllr A Lowe agreed but considered it was too late to renegotiate at this stage and therefore proposed that for next year the budget be set at 20k. Also, although there were options to rent or purchase outright, the savings would be difficult to achieve, as the onus would be on the Council to cover safety issues such as PAC testing, anchor tests and also possible storage costs.

A request also was made to ensure that next year enquiries were undertaken to obtain a real tree.

Cllr A Lowe proposed that a new tender exercise take place with suitable firms with photographic evidence of the existing light show.

Proposed by Cllr P Ainsley and seconded by Cllr P Wildbore. Carried.

13/2023-11 SOLAR WATER HEATING SYSTEM (TOILETS):

The Town Clerk had found the original installer of the underfloor heating system in the toilets, and he had supplied quotes to try to re-establish the system, which was not working.

Cllr P Ainsley stated that although he welcomed this agenda item, he requested it be deferred to be considered under the next agenda item.

Deferral proposed by Cllr P Ainsley and seconded by Cllr C Clark. Carried

13/2023-12 CHURCH STREET TOILETS:

Cllr P Ainsley was concerned over the state of these toilets and requested that a quote be obtained to refurbish the sink and toilet units as they were beginning to show signs of aging, and this could also include consideration to the solar heating system being investigated.

Proposed by Cllr P Ainsley and seconded by Cllr H Williams. Carried with abstention by Cllr A Lowe.

13/2023-13 FLOWER DISPLAY:

The Council considered the two quotes before them, the initial one with increased costs but the same display as this year's and the alternative one presented by Cllr A Lowe with a reduced flower display and thus a reduced cost.

Cllr J Lucas stated that this year's display had been magnificent, and Council should think carefully before any reduction.

It was proposed by Cllr H Williams to be deferred and seconded by Cllr P Ainsley. Carried. Cllr J Lucas voted against.

13/2023-14 TREE INSPECTION 2023:

Cllr P Wildbore presented his summary of the tree report by RCC and highlighted the fact that significant work was required for the trees in Cutts Close. After a lengthy debate it was agreed and proposed by Cllr A Lowe that the Town Clerk obtain an itemised quote for each of the Priorities 2, 3 and 4 from three contractors as soon as possible. This was seconded by Cllr J Lucas. Carried

13/2023-15 FLOWER BULBS:

Cllr P Wildbore introduced this agenda item and stated there had been some bluebells before in the woods at Centenary Field. Cllr H Williams stated that any new bulbs must be English Bluebells.

Cllr P Ainsley proposed all five items and agreed with the suggestion by Cllr J Lucas that the budget should be changed to 250 pounds. This was seconded by Cllr C Clark and carried.

13/2023-16 SIGNS IN OAKHAM:

Cllr S-A Wadsworth introduced this agenda item. There was some debate over if the number of signs needing refurbishment was two or three. However it was agreed that this was a great idea to improve the look and feel of the Town Centre and Cllr J Lucas pointed out this had been recently undertaken in Stamford.

Proposed by Cllr P Ainsley and seconded by Cllr A Lowe. Carried

13/2023-17 MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE:

Cllr A Lowe felt that the next item does not need to be in a private session. Cllr P Ainsley proposed it was and seconded by Cllr H Williams, and the motion was not carried.

13/2023-18 MAKING BEST USE OF OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL ASSETS:

Cllr P Ainsley , Cllr S-A Wadsworth and several County Cllrs walked around the town centre and discussed the future development of Oakham Town Centre. One of the ideas that came out of this was the development of the marketplace as a pedestrian present with continental type street scene.

The improvement in signs also came out of this discussion, as well as the view that Oakham Town Council needs to generate an economic strategic view of its assets. Cllr P Ainsley proposed that the Council engages a consultant to review our assets with a view to place development etc. Cllr A Lowe stated that CIL money could be used for this . Cllr H Williams concerned that environmental factors should be included in the proposal which Cllr P Ainsley agreed to. Cllr C Clark wanted the brief to the consultant to be agreed by Council which Cllr P Ainsley agreed to also.

The revised proposal was therefore proposed by Cllr P Ainsley and seconded by Cllr J Lucas . Carried.

TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 6:30pm on 13th December 2023

Meeting Finished at 20:55 pm

Signed _____ Date _____