

Oakham Town Council

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MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 10th April 2024 AT 6.30 P.M. IN THE TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllrs: S-A. Wadsworth, P Buxton, P Ainsley, H. Williams, C. Nix, A Lowe, C Clark, , L Chatfield, J Lucas. J Hall

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: C. Evans (Clerk) , K. Geraghty (Deputy Clerk) Members of the public, one.

Cllr Wadsworth opened the meeting and welcomed all present.

03/25-01 APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCES:

Cllr S Pryer and Cllr P Wildbore have medical reasons for not attending. Proposed by Cllr A. Lowe to accept seconder Cllr C Clark. Carried.

03/25-02 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS AND APPLICATIONS FOR

DISPENSATION: Reminder to Members to disclose either a Pecuniary Interest or Other Interest in any item on the agenda. The clerk cannot advise members on this. Members are personally responsible for declaring an interest. Members are respectfully advised to read the Code of Conduct for more information. Councillors are also responsible for ensuring that their Registers of Interests are up to date (within 28 days of any changes)

None

03/25-03 DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: An opportunity for members of the public to speak in accordance with Standing Orders 1 (d)- 1(i).

None

03/25-04 UPDATE FROM COUNTY COUNCILLOR:

No County Councillors present.

03/25-05 MINUTES: To confirm the accuracy of the minutes from the meeting held on 13th March 2024.

Cllr A Lowe proposed, seconded by Cllr C Clark. Carried.

03/25-06 COUNCILLOR'S QUESTIONS:

Cllr J Hall stated that he was now a member of the RCC Countryside Access Forum.

Cllr J Lucas congratulated all involved in the 50th Anniversary Party, with special thanks to the Mayor and partner, Deputy Clerk, Cllr A Lowe and wife and the Clerk who helped in the kitchen.

Cllr H Williams indicated that the Banking Hub would open on Friday 12th April at 11 am with a quote from Oakham Town Council on this subject submitted to the press.

Cllr A Lowe pointed out that this agenda item should really be dedicated to questions submitted by Councillors earlier to the Council

03/25-07 CHAIRMANS/CLERKS REPORT:

Cllr S-A Wadsworth and Cllr C Clark attended a meeting with the Mayor of Dodgeville (USA) whom Oakham are twinned with.

Cllr S-A Wadsworth will also tomorrow attend the appointment of the new High Sheriff Richard Cole.

The Town Clerk stated that staff reviews have been carried out for the Deputy Clerk and Handyperson.

The pay award for the last financial year has been implemented and paid from last year's finances.

Rialtas end of year review has been completed with only minor issues.

Financially Oakham Town Council took £45K from the General Reserves due to the overspend on Flower Display (9k), Christmas Lights (12k), Electricity Street Lights (15K) and Tree Works (10K).

Both the Toilet and Grounds maintenance contracts have been agreed.

The Electricity Contract for the Church Street Toilets is of concern, in that the previously agreed solution to honour the contract signed by the previous clerk could no longer be offered by Green Energy. Instead, they offered another supplier. There is growing concern over the conduct of this company, with for example terms like no cooling period and insufficient reassurance over future tariffs.

It was proposed by Cllr A Lowe and seconded by Cllr P Ainsley that we take up the offer from LRALC to provide the details of the negotiation to their solicitors, so they could provide advice to Council. Carried.

03/25-08 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED:

Letter from resident regards poor lighting on footpath near Cutts Close.

It was agreed that the Clerk write to RCC regards this issue.

There is also an email regards the state of the Cutts Close play area which needs a deep clean. This will be covered in a later agenda item.

03/25-09 BANK STATEMENTS: To consider and approve the bank statements for March 2024.

9.1 Rialtas bank reconciliation

9.2 HSBC Current account

9.3 HSBC Deposit account

Cllr S-A Wadsworth regards the entry for G Greggs which the clerk admitted was an error and indeed was for George Walker instead for tree works

Cllr H Williams asked questions regards the top items in the Rialtas report which the Clerk stated were a correction from much earlier in the financial year where the wrong payee had been entered and there were two such corrections.

Cllr P Ainsley enquired about the issue of the Mayors Charity account which was now mixed in with the Councils other financial entries. It was agreed that the Mayor should set up a separate account next financial year and this would be placed before Council at next month's meeting.

Proposed by Cllr C Clark that the accounts are accepted and seconded by Cllr J Hall.
Carried.

03/25-10 OAKHAM TOWN EMERGENCY PLAN:

Cllr A Lowe introduced this item which would address a growing concern on what residents should do in an emergency. He had distributed some examples , a particularly good one being from Hungerford. The Council agreed that this was an excellent idea and Cllr J Lucas highlighted the plastic bottle in the fridge solution, which contains all the emergency information required by responder.

Cllr L Chatfield proposed and seconded by Cllr A Lowe . Carried

03/25-11 CUTTS CLOSE PLAY SURFACE:

The Clerk introduced this agenda item and highlighted that residents were expecting some action on the surface and state of the equipment in the Play Area. It is well used especially by toddlers. The issue is that any renovation would need to account for the heritage of the site. Hence the proposal was to repair and overlay the existing surface and seek to repair faulty equipment, with three quotes for next month's meeting to consider.

This was proposed by Cllr S-A Wadsworth and seconded by C Clark. A recorded vote was requested.

For Cllr S-A Wadsworth, C Nix, H Williams, C Clark, L Chatfield, J Lucas, and A Lowe.

Against Cllr P Ainsley

Abstain Cllr J Hall and P Buxton.

The motion was therefore carried.

03/25-12 PROMOTION WORKING GROUP:

Cllr J Lucas proposed that a new Promotion Working Group be established. Cllr P Ainsley enquired regards the events and media working group which had no met at all for over a year. The Council agreed that all the committees and working groups be formalised and tables requesting membership be sent round councillors to populate. The new group was proposed by Cllr C Nix and seconded by Cllr A Lowe. Carried.

03/25-14 OAKHAM IN BLOOM SUPPORT:

The Town Clerk introduced this item which involved a grant of £ 250 for Oakham in Bloom for the provision of Flowers and Compost and also time from the Handyman to help with lifting and cleaning of the tubs used by Oakham in Bloom.

Cllr P Buxton knew that any help for Oakham in Bloom would be gratefully received as the volunteers were not getting any younger.

Proposal to accept by Cllr P Ainsley and seconded by Cllr J Lucas. Carried.

03/25-15 LRALC MEMBERSHIP FEE:

The Town Clerk had placed this item before Council as there had been a significant increase in the Annual Fee from LRALC, although he considered the membership to be extremely good value for money. Cllr A Lowe was disappointed in this significant cost increase but research with neighbouring counties demonstrated that LRALC were still cost effective compared to such counties as Lincolnshire.

Cllr P Ainsley supported this as he considered LRALC excellent value.

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

03/25-17 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 S-A Wadsworth and seconded by Cllr A Lowe. Carried.

Meeting suspended from 20:05 to 20:15 for comfort break.

03/25-18 ESWG RECOMMENDATION:

Cllr P Ainsley introduced this item which concerns investigating the future of the Fitness Suite and derelict buildings on Princess Avenue. A consultant has been already appointed on recommendation by RCC and three options had been considered. One of these options has already been rejected by the Working Group.

The first stage would be to investigate the drainage pipes in the area with Anglian Water. Once these possible limitations had been established a scheme would be developed to enhance the facilities.

Cllr P Ainsley requested that the Council authorise the following

1. Agree in principle that any development on Princess Avenue should consider two options A and B
2. Agreement in principle that any development should include the following facilities:
 - Council Chamber / Community Space
 - Council Office(s)
 - Cafeteria / Coffee shop
 - Recreation ground changing facilities / toilets
 - Car Parking
3. Authorise initial expenditure of £14,500 CIL money for the following:
 - Stage 1: Pre-emptive and ad-hoc surveys, such as with Anglian Water.
 - Stage 2: Feasibility Study
 - Stage 3: Pre-application report for RCC planners
 - Stage 4: Canvas public opinion by advertising / meeting room hire, flyers etc.

4. Agree that the quotations from Placemake does not require to go to tender as Placemake are a trusted RCC supplier and the cost is well below the £30K allowed maximum.

The Town Clerk stated at this point that although LRALC agreed that this expenditure is acceptable, they still recommended multiple tenders.

Although this advice was noted, Cllr P Ainsley proposed the agenda item and this was seconded by Cllr A Lowe. Carried.

MEETING CLOSED 8.30PM

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS: 7th May 2024 (6pm Annual Town Meeting) ,
8th May (6:30pm Annual Meeting of the Town Council)**

Signed  Date 10/4/24

DRAFT