

Oakham Town Council

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**An ORDINARY MEETING of the TOWN COUNCIL was held on Wednesday 17th June 2026
at 6.30pm at the Council Offices and was attended by the following:**

Chairman: Cllr M. Brookes

Town Councillors: Cllr D. Romney, Cllr SA Wadsworth, Cllr B. Callaghan, Cllr P. Ainsley, Cllr J. Nicholls

In Attendance: 8 members of the public

Locum Clerk/Minutes: Samantha Haywood

ITEM	MINUTE	VOTE / ACTION
26052.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
	Cllr C. Clark and Cllr J. Harris - personal. IT WAS RESOLVED that Council accept the apologies. Cllr A. Padmore and Cllr C. Nix - business. IT WAS RESOLVED that Council accept the apologies.	Proposed:BC Seconded:JN 3 for. 3 against. Chairman’s casting vote - for. Proposed:BC Seconded:MB All in favour
26053.	DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS	
	Cllr Romney, agenda item 18, Grant application – due to being an acquaintance of the applicant.	
26054.	DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC - OPEN MEETING	
i.	Questions put to police Sergeant Palmer	
	Q – What are the intentions of the police with regards to raids on mini markets, barber shops etc? A - The police are aware of concerns but specific details cannot be given out. Work is ongoing, and with partners such as Trading Standards. Q - A resident reported there are 18 barber shops, mini markets etc on the High Street and the police have not addressed a concern she had raised and had to resort to legal advice. A - The police have no powers to dictate what shops can open but they are aware of concerns and liaising with Peterborough City Council. Sergeant Palmer is happy to speak about specific concerns outside of this meeting.	

	Q – What action is being taken to address shoplifting and drugs? A – This is a high priority for the police and they are working with RCC and other partners to share information. The Safer Streets team regularly patrol the streets and have had some good results. There are a lot of ongoing investigations. Q – Drug dealing is taking place in car parks, particularly Station Car Park after 10pm, and senior residents are concerned. What action is being taken to address this? A – Please share any information with the police.	
26055.	POLICE REPORT	
	Sargeant Liam Palmer reported: • He is based in Rutland. • Thanked the Council for allowing him the opportunity to have a presence at these meetings. • Asked people to inform him of what information they would like reported at Council meetings. Q – What is being done about the abandoned car that has been on Stanford Road for the past 3 months? A – The car is not obstructing the highway. I have spoken to Highways who will look to remove it. There has to be a statutory notice period which will expire in a few days. Q – What is being done about anti-social driving and excessively loud vehicles? I reported a vehicle to the police but they said they needed a video. A – One vehicle owner has been spoken to and a s59 warning issued. We do have the power to seize vehicles. Q – What about adapted cars? The police can check whether a car has been adapted. A – If a car has been illegally adapted then we can take action. Excessive noise from vehicles needs to be reported to Environmental Health, not the police. The Chairman thanked Sargeant Palmer for attending the meeting.	
26056.	RUTLAND COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT	
	County Cllr Raymond Payne reported: • More information is needed concerning devolution. • The tarmacing of Braunston Road has been scheduled and there are plans to do works to Cold Overton Road and Melton Road. Highways are trying to time it so that utility companies do not have to come out which will result in the new surface being dug up. If anyone wishes to suggest a road that needs resurfacing, please let him know. • There is a new version of Fix My Street which everyone was encouraged to use to report issues.	
26057.	APPROVAL OF MINUTES	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that the minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 21.05.26 are a true and accurate record of the meeting and as such were signed by the Chairman.	Proposed:DR Seconded:MB 4 for 2 abstentions Clerk
26058.	COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS AND QUESTIONS	
	Cllr Ainsley reported: • The Victoria Hall public consultation was very well received with 50+ residents attending.	

	- The majority were in favour. - It was disappointing that only two councillors were in attendance, along with the Chair of the Victoria Hall trustees. The Chairman thanked Cllr Ainsley for arranging the consultation.	
26059.	CHAIRMAN'S REPORT	
	The Chairman reported: He had attended the RCC town centre improvements workshop along with Cllr Ainsley. It was pretty much the same as previous workshops.	
26060.	CLERK'S REPORT	
	Additional comments to the written report: - There is an awful lot to do which will not happen overnight. - It is acknowledged that the office needs to be open but staff safety has to be priority. Options are being explored which will be reported to Council for consideration.	Clerk
26061.	COMMITTEE / WORKING GROUP REPORTS	
i.	Town of Culture	
	Cllr Nicholls reported that the results were expected in spring but this has been delayed and are now expected in July.	
ii	Events	
	Cllr Wadsworth reported that Sunday saw the start of the bank concerts in Cutts Close. 11 dates are planned for Music in the Park, all of which are free for the public to attend. If anyone can help with set up it would be much appreciated.	All
26062.	CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED	
	'Request from a resident to use Cutts Close on 06.06.26 for a picnic to be held for around 30 people to celebrate local diversity and different cultures.' The Clerk reported that the date should be 06.09.26, not 06.06.26.	
26063.	2025/26 YEAR END / AUDIT	
i.	Internal Auditor Report	
	The report, along with responses from the Locum Clerk, had been circulated to all Members and published on the website. The Chairman reported: - He is concerned that it is the worse audit report ever received with a 57% failure and if a full audit had been carried out the percentage could be higher. - Actions from previous years have not been carried out. - He has confidence that the Locum Clerk will address all matters and this has already started with more information being published on the website. Cllr Ainsley acknowledged that there was good and bad in the report but it was good to see the report confirming that appropriate accounting records had been kept over the past year. IT WAS RESOLVED that Council approve the internal auditor report along with the responses from the Locum Clerk.	Clerk Proposed:MB Seconded:BC All in favour

ii.	2025/26 Year End Financial Statements	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that Council note the 2025/26 year end financial accounting statements, including the balance sheet, trial balance, income & expenditure, explanation of variances, asset register, reserves, and bank reconciliations.	Proposed:MB Seconded:DR All in favour
iii.	Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 of the Annual Governance and Accountability 2025/26 Part 2	
	The Chairman wished it to be minuted that he was not willing to approve the AGAR due to fraud issues being raised but would sign it if Council approved it. The Clerk advised that the internal auditor had not picked up on any fraud, was happy with the accounting records for 2025/26, and that a report will be drafted concerning a fraud audit which will be presented to Council for consideration at a later date when time allows. IT WAS RESOLVED that Council approve Section1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 of the Annual Governance and Accountability 2025/26 Part 2 and that is be signed by the Chairman.	Proposed:SAW Seconded:DR 5 for, 1 against Clerk
iv.	Section 2 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 of the Annual Governance and Accountability 2025/26 Part 3	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that Council approve Section 2 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 of the Annual Governance and Accountability 2025/26 Part 2 and that is be signed by the Chairman.	Proposed:BC Seconded:SAW 5 for, 1 against Clerk
26064.	STAFF WELFARE AND SAFE WORKING PROTOCOLS	
i.	Sending all emails via the Clerk	
	Council were asked to consider and decide upon all councillor emails to be sent to the Clerk's email address to ensure transparency, reduce pressure on individual Officers, support consistent handling of enquiries, and prevent excessive or duplicated contact. Centralising communication also enables workload management and provides an auditable record of requests. The Chairman asked that the document be retracted and liaison takes place with the Locum Clerk to revisit the document to ensure it is legal. Cllr Ainsley thanked the Locum Clerk for her comments on the report and confirmed acceptance of them, including that all work requests and emails are to be sent to the Clerk. There was no seconder for the proposal so a vote did not take place.	
ii.	Councillor Office Visits - Pre-approved	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that Council approve all councillor visits to the office to be pre-approved by the office, unless agreed in advance with an Officer, to ensure staff are available, avoid unplanned interruptions, and maintain a safe and manageable working environment.	Proposed:PA Seconded:MB All in favour All
iii.	Councillor Office Visits	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that Council approve that no councillor is to be alone with any Officer, unless agreed in advance with an Officer, in the office to protect both staff and councillors by ensuring transparency, safeguarding, wellbeing, and preventing situations that may cause discomfort or lead to misunderstandings. This is consistent with good practice in staff safety and employer duty of care.	Proposed:PA Seconded:MB 5 for, 1 against All
iv.	Legal Duty of Care	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that Council reaffirm its legal duty of care and confirm that the measures in the three motions above are necessary to protect staff welfare and ensure a safe, professional working environment.	Proposed:PA Seconded:DR All in favour

v.	Implementation and Monitoring	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that Council note that the implementation and monitoring of the four motions above will rest with the Clerk as the line manager of all Officers.	Proposed:PA Seconded:DR All in favour Clerk
26065.	MANAGING OF VEXATIOUS OR UNREASONABLE COUNCILLOR CORRESPONDENCE POLICY	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that the motions be deferred in order for the legalities of the policy to be checked with the Locum Clerk.	Proposed:MB Seconded:BC 4 for, 2 against Clerk / PA
26066.	COMMUNICATIONS POLICY	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that the motions be deferred in order for the legalities of the policy to be checked with the Locum Clerk.	Proposed:MB Seconded:BC 3 for, 1 against, 2 abstentions Clerk / PA
26067.	BLOG DESIGN AND BUILD	
i.	Blog design and build	
	A discussion took place which included: - Who would be responsible for producing the blog as it would take a lot of work, the Clerk is currently too busy, and it needs a dedicated approach. - A blog is a good form of communication but there is not sufficient capacity at this time. - Other people could write articles for the blog but it would still need the Clerk to approve all submissions. IT WAS RESOLVED that Council do not approve the proposed blog design for the Council website as presented in the attached agenda supporting information, or approve Welland Creative to proceed with the build phase at a cost of £700.	Proposed:PA Seconded:DR 3 for, 3 against, Chairman's casting vote – against PA
ii.	Oversight of blog	
	A discussion took place concerning delegating to the Clerk and Communications Working Group the responsibility for overseeing implementation and preparing insight and oversight for launch which included: - Council have a good Facebook presence and the blog would need to be read. How would we ensure an audience? Links on Facebook to the blog was suggested. - Blogs are old hat and social media is the way forward. Improving our social media may be a better focus. - The website averages 50 visits per month so a link to the blog could be placed on the site. - Focus should be on improving the website. - Blogs are extremely time consuming and there is no Officer capacity. IT WAS RESOLVED that Council do not approve oversight of a blog and that a report be brought to a future Council meeting detailing improvements to the website, social media, and the possibility of a blog.	Proposed:MB Seconded:DR All in favour Clerk

26068.	VICTORIA HALL
	A discussion took place on the motions which included: • Motion 2 – the expenditure has been pre-approved. The legal work has fixed costs which have been approved. • The project should be placed on hold as the Charity Commission have not yet confirmed that the Council can become sole trustee. It was confirmed that if the Charity Commission do agree, Council is not committed, • It was unclear if a scheme of work has been agreed. • There will be extra costs for an asbestos survey and if asbestos is found, it was proposed the project be scrapped due to the extensive cost of asbestos removal. • The Council would be the lease holder and the trustees would be a separate entity. A separate charity would run the Hall. The solicitors are looking into this. • There was concern what the surveys might uncover. • As a listed building, it is likely there will be many restrictions and additional costs. • Council have already spent £33k on the project and there was concern that it may not proceed so no more money should be spent. • Council need to see a detailed business plan with the full details and costs of the project in its entirety. • The public consultation should have taken place before the project commenced. • As a tenant of the building, we would need to pay rent. • Who will be responsible for all the running costs – business rates, insurance, utilities etc. as these are likely to cost a lot of money. • Council could lease the land. A robust legal framework would be needed. Part of the lease could be that what Council have already spent is taken into account.
i.	Specialist Surveys
	Council were asked to consider and approve specialist survey costs and drawdown, inclusive of a drone survey, from CIL - measured building survey – Greenthatch £3,950 + VAT, asbestos Survey – RILMAC £1,950 + VAT, damp and timber survey – Timberwise £295 + VAT. IT WAS RESOLVED that the motion be deferred until a response has been received from the solicitor and the Charity Commission.
ii.	Drawdown payments
	IT WAS RESOLVED that Council approve the release of funds, subject to confirmation of satisfactory progress, for the following drawdown payments to Kingsmead: 17 Jul 2026 – Stages 1a to 1c: £8,000, 01 Aug 2026 – Stages 1d to 1e: £12,000, 01 Sep 2026 – Stages 2a to 2d: £4,000, all + VAT.
iii.	Upcoming drawdown
	Upcoming Drawdown - Kingsmead, subject to confirmation of satisfactory progress: 01 Oct 2026 – Stages 4a to 4b: £5,500, 01 Nov 2026 – Stages 4c to 4d: £5,500. IT WAS RESOLVED that the motion be deferred until a response has been received from the solicitor and the Charity Commission.
iv.	Disbursement budget
	IT WAS RESOLVED that the £1,500 disbursement budget expenditure to be reimbursed at actual cost with evidence.

26069.	GRANT APPLICATION	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that Council approve a £500 grant to the RAF in Rutland memorial bench initiative. The grant not to be paid until confirmation of any license has been approved and the RAF to give Council proposed bench locations for consideration. The RAF to be responsible for the bench maintenance.	Proposed:MB Seconded:SAW All in favour Clerk
26070.	CHRISTMAS EVENT OVERSPEND	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that Council approve the overspend of £4,514 associated with the 2025 Christmas Lights Switch-On event be met from General Reserves, thereby regularising the financial position for the 2025/26 financial year.	Proposed:MB Seconded:DR All in favour
26071.	STANDING ORDER SUSPENSION	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that Council approve suspending Standing Orders 3x. to allow the meeting to continue past 2 hours.	Proposed:MB Seconded:DR 5 for, 1 against
26072.	TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE	
	A Member requested that the meeting go into exempt session to discuss the proposed office relocation costs. The motion failed due to no seconder. IT WAS RESOLVED that Council do not approve relocating the Council offices to the Oakham Baptist Church due to accessibility and costs. The Baptist Church to be informed and thanked for their kind offer.	Proposed:SAW Seconded:PA 5 for, 1 against Clerk
26073.	EVENT SAFEGUARDING	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that Council approve the retrospective approval of event safeguarding/first aid provision at a cost of £2,904 + VAT with Light Medical which was agreed out of meeting due to timelines.	Proposed:DR Seconded:PA All in favour
26074.	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that Council note the date of the next meeting as 8th July 2026 at 6.30pm.	Clerk / All
26075.	EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that Council approve, that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following two agenda items on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature and commercial sensitivity of the business to be transacted, as per Standing Order 3d, and that all recording devices are turned off. The meeting was adjourned for 5 minutes from 8.41pm for a comfort break.	Proposed:DR Seconded:SAW All in favour
26076.	STAFFING	
	The Locum Clerk gave a confidential update on staffing issues which she would now be overseeing in place of Cllr Clark. IT WAS RESOLVED that the Clerk be given delegated powers to spend on advertising the Administration Assistant vacancies.	Proposed:DR Seconded:SAW All in favour

	<i>Cllr Ainsley and Cllr Nicholls left the meeting.</i>	Clerk
26077.	2 PRINCESS AVENUE	
	IT WAS RESOLVED that an invoice be sent for outstanding monies and the cost of changing the locks, and legal action to be considered if necessary to recover any unpaid invoices.	Proposed:MB Seconded:BC All in favour Clerk

The meeting closed at 9.04 pm.

Chairman Date: