

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Oakwood Centre on
Tuesday 3 October 2017 at 8 pm**

Present: Councillors J. Cheng (Chairman); K. Baker; S. Brindley; A. Chadwick;
C. Dixon; P. Etherington; M. Forrer; B. Franklin; K. Gilder;
R. Horskins; J. MacNaught; D. Mills; S. Rahmouni; D. Smith;
W. Soane; D. Stares; J. Trick; M. Walker

Officers present: D. Mander, Town Clerk; K. Murray, Deputy Town Clerk;
L. Matthews, Committee Officer

Also present: Peter Absolon, Professor Sophie Bowlby and Trevor Bottomley
from Readibus
Inspector John Donachy, Thames Valley Police
2 members of the public

Before the start of the meeting:

- Peter Absolon, Professor Sophie Bowlby and Trevor Bottomley gave a presentation about the service provided by Readibus, as reported in **Appendix A**.
- Inspector John Donachy, Thames Valley Police, gave a presentation about the Community Speed Watch scheme, as reported in **Appendix B**.
- A maximum of 30 minutes was set aside for members of the public to pose questions to the Council in the Town Forum. As there were no members of the public wishing to address the Council the Town Forum did not take place.

Before opening the meeting the Mayor congratulated the Friends of Woodford Park on receiving a "thriving" award in the "It's Your Neighbourhood" category of Thames and Chiltern in Bloom. Congratulations were also given to the Town Centre Manager for achieving a silver award for Woodley town centre's floral display.

33. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors T. Barker, R. Dolinski, D. Fradley, M. Green and P. Wicks.

34. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

35. **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27 JUNE 2017**

The Town Mayor presented the minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 June 2017.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 June 2017 and that they be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

36. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

36.1 **Minutes of the Planning Committee: 18 July 2017**

Councillor Walker presented the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 18 July 2017.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 18 July 2017.

36.2 **Minutes of the Planning Committee: 15 August 2017**

Councillor Walker presented the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 15 August 2017.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 15 August 2017.

36.3 **Minutes of the Leisure Services Committee: 5 September 2017**

Councillor Soane presented the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting held on 5 September 2017.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting held on 5 September 2017.

36.4 **Minutes of the Planning Committee: 12 September 2017**

Councillor Walker presented the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 12 September 2017.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 12 September 2017.

36.5 **Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee: 19 September 2017**

Councillor Baker presented the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting held on 19 September 2017.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting held on 19 September 2017.

37. **AUDIT 2016/17**

The Town Clerk presented the audited Annual Return for 2016/17 and informed Members that the Finance Officer had had a much greater involvement in the production of the Annual Return than in the past and that the format of the financial statements was now much clearer than in previous years.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the external auditor's opinion on the audit of the 2016/17 Annual Return
- ◆ To adopt the audited Annual Return for 2016/17.
- ◆ To note that the Notice of Conclusion of Audit had been displayed on public noticeboards at the Oakwood Centre and on the Council's website from 20 September 2017.

38. **LEADER'S STATEMENT**

The Leader of the Council informed Members that he had not prepared a statement to be delivered at this meeting, as he had been aware that two presentations were scheduled for the start of the meeting and he did not wish to add to the length of the meeting. However, he informed Members that the PR/Marketing Working Group was working on plans to have regular monthly performances on the Centre Stage and said that discussions were underway with Wokingham Borough Council regarding the replacement of the young children's play equipment under the sail area in the town centre. He also reported that the Town Council had made a bid for Section 106 funding for the replacement of the young children's play equipment in the area opposite the skate park in Woodford Park.

39. **WOODLEY MEMORIAL RECREATION GROUND CHARITY**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note that the 2016/17 Annual Return to the Charity Commission was submitted on 25 September 2017 on behalf of the Town Council, the charity trustee.

40. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Members noted receipt of an introductory letter from Manjeet Gill, the recently appointed interim Chief Executive at Wokingham Borough Council.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To invite the new Wokingham Borough Council Chief Executive to speak to the Town Council at a future meeting.

41. **OUTSIDE BODIES**

Members noted the written report on the Poor's Land Charity submitted by Councillor Cheng and distributed with the agenda.

The following verbal reports were made:

Councillor Gilder informed Members that the Wokingham Borough Sports Council was requesting nominations for the annual sports awards and would be pleased to receive nominations from the Town Council. The Town Clerk asked Councillor Gilder to forward the nomination information to her, as the Council had not received it, and said she would contact Councillors when the information was received.

Councillor Smith reported that he had attended a meeting of the Sonning and District Welfare and Educational Trust and that there had been no requests for help from the trust in the last six months. He asked Councillors to pass on the details of anyone who might need help from the trust.

42. **TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

- a) Councillor Cheng informed the Council of the 4 events she had attended as Town Mayor and noted that she had been unable to attend the Wokingham District Cancer Care Trust cheque presentation to the Sue Ryder charity, which was listed in the agenda.
- b) Councillor Rahmouni reported on the 3 events he had attended as Deputy Town Mayor.

43. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Councillor Baker suggested that more speakers should be invited to speak to the Council and he asked that any ideas be sent to the Town Clerk. The following suggestions were put forward at the meeting:

- Officers from Wokingham Borough Council could be invited to speak about their work.
- A visit could be arranged to the Re3 works at Smallmead.

Meeting closed at 9:25pm

APPENDIX A

The Mayor welcomed Peter Absolon, Sophie Bowlby and Trevor Bottomley to the meeting. Trevor Bottomley, Honorary Secretary of Readibus, explained that Readibus provided a very important service for those who were unable to use public transport and informed Members that Readibus was currently used by 200 Woodley residents. He thanked the Town Council for the support it had given to Readibus over many years.

Sophie Bowlby, chairman of the Readibus board of trustees, explained that the board members were all volunteers and included representatives of all the organisations that provided funding to Readibus. Sophie Bowlby explained that the board was responsible for the overall organisational strategy and the financial health of the charity and had to ensure that the aims and objectives of the charity were met.

Peter Absolon, General Manager of Readibus, explained that Readibus provided a door-to-door service for people with restricted mobility who were unable to use mainstream public transport. Providing support for those with restricted mobility was not a commercial proposition for mainstream bus companies and Readibus was therefore set up as a charity to provide transport for people requiring assistance. The Readibus drivers were also trained as carers and could provide assistance to passengers when needed. Peter Absolon informed Members that passengers were picked up from their homes and could travel to any destination within the boroughs of Reading and Wokingham, enabling them to attend hospital appointments, go shopping, attend clubs and churches or go on one-off trips. Passengers paid a fare to use Readibus, but the service was subsidised by fundraising and by the support of local councils, for which Readibus was grateful.

In response to a question, Peter Absolon informed Members that Readibus was the first scheme of its kind, and had subsequently been copied throughout the country. Woodley had been served by Readibus since its formation. Keep Mobile had been set up to run a similar service in the Wokingham and Bracknell areas and sometimes supplemented the service in Woodley to these areas.

Following a question about the fare structure, Peter Absolon explained that the fare structure was modelled on the mainstream bus service, but was slightly more as it was a door-to-door service; however, the majority of passengers had a bus pass, provided by the Borough Council, and therefore did not pay for the service. He also clarified the situation regarding carers, saying that carers were able to travel on Readibus if a passenger needed support during the journey; however, as the drivers could provide support to passengers boarding and alighting the bus, many passengers did not need a carer to travel with them. Trevor Bottomley informed Members that passengers' needs were assessed before the start of a journey as health and safety requirements were of paramount importance.

When questioned about possible expansion of the Readibus service, Peter Absolon reported that the number of journeys taken by Woodley residents had increased by 40% in the past 10 years and Readibus sought to continue this expansion in order to provide a continuously improving service. He said that Readibus had been set up to be the sole provider of this type of service within Woodley and would be able to gear up over time to provide journeys to other areas, if required by Woodley residents.

The Mayor thanked Peter Absolon, Sophie Bowlby and Trevor Bottomley for a fascinating presentation and Trevor Bottomley invited Councillors to ride on Readibus to see the service for themselves.

APPENDIX B

Inspector John Donachy, Thames Valley Police, was welcomed to the meeting to speak to Members about the Community Speed Watch scheme.

Inspector Donachy informed Members that he was not the local police inspector, but that he was leading the Community Speed Watch scheme throughout the area. He said that the scheme has been slower to become operational than he would have liked, due to restructuring of local policing within the Thames Valley area.

Inspector Donachy explained that the Community Speed Watch scheme enabled members of the local community to take part in monitoring and educating drivers. He said that until recently the technology available for roadside monitoring had been very basic, but much more data could now be extracted from the equipment provided. Within the Community Speed Watch scheme the registered keeper details for cars found to be speeding could be obtained from the police computer and educational letters sent out to encourage people to observe the speed limit. The speed data could be sent to the local council and might show where there was a specific issue, or highlight problem areas that could then be investigated by the police. Inspector Donachy stressed that the scheme therefore gave the community the power to help resolve a community problem.

Inspector Donachy informed Members that if the Council joined the Community Speed Watch scheme, volunteers would be insured by Thames Valley Police while they were at the roadside. Volunteers would need to be vetted by the police, as they would be able to enter police stations and could access information. If the Council decided to purchase its own equipment and not join the joint scheme run by Thames Valley Police, it would still receive the backroom support from the police with regard to sending out the educational letters. If the Council operated outside the joint scheme it would need to provide public liability insurance for the volunteers.

Inspector Donachy then demonstrated the equipment that could be used at the roadside and answered questions on the cost of the equipment, the range of information that could be collected by different types of equipment and the safety of volunteers at the roadside.

The Mayor thanked Inspector Donachy for coming to the meeting.