

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Oakwood Centre on
Tuesday 8 December 2015 at 8 pm**

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

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

Also present: Claire Oughton, Citizens Advice Bureau
34 members of the public
1 member of the press

Before the start of the meeting:

- The Town Mayor presented grant cheques to representatives of local community groups and other organisations, as reported in **Appendix A**.
- Claire Oughton from the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) spoke to Members about the work of the CAB in Woodley, 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 reported in **Appendix C**.

45. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors M. Green, R. Horskins and R. Lay.

46. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

47. **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2015**

The Town Mayor presented the minutes of the Council meeting held on 29 September 2015.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 29 September 2015 and that they be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

48. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

48.1 **Minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee: 29 September 2015**

Councillor Baker presented the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 29 September 2015.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 29 September 2015.

- 48.2 **Minutes of the Plans Committee: 20 October 2015**
Councillor Barker presented the Plans Committee minutes of the meeting of 20 October 2015.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Plans Committee held on 20 October 2015.

- 48.3 **Minutes of the Leisure Services Committee: 3 November 2015**
Councillor Soane presented the Leisure Services Committee minutes of the meeting of 3 November 2015.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee held on 3 November 2015.

- 48.4 **Minutes of the Community Services Committee: 10 November 2015**
Councillor Walker presented the Community Services Committee minutes of the meeting of 10 November 2015.

Minute No. 43: Just Around the Corner

Councillor Walker commented that it was very disappointing that only three Members had attended the visit to Rehoboth on 28 November as Sam Milligan had given up his time to show Members around the facilities.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Community Services Committee held on 10 November 2015.

- 48.5 **Minutes of the Plans Committee: 17 November 2015**
Councillor Barker presented the Plans Committee minutes of the meeting of 17 November 2015.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Plans Committee held on 17 November 2015.

- 48.6 **Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee: 24 November 2015**
Councillor Baker presented the Strategy and Resources Committee minutes of the meeting of 24 November 2015.

Minute No. 48: Allotment Rent Review

Councillor Baker informed Members that an amendment was required to the bullet points listing the proposed changes to the allotment rents for 2017. The second bullet point would be amended to:

“The rate for non-Woodley residents to be set at a rate of 50% above the rate for Woodley residents.”

Minute No. 49: 3G Pitch Project Update

In reply to a question Councillor Baker confirmed that planning permission had been granted for the 3G pitch, but that the contractor was awaiting approval of the additional information that had been requested by the planning authority before construction could start.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 24 November 2015.
- ◆ To approve the recommendation of the Strategy and Resources Committee that the Council opts in to the procurement of an external auditor through the Sector Led Body for audits from 2017/18.

49. **LEADER'S STATEMENT**

The Leader of the Council made the following statement:

"There is not much to report this time around.

The 3G pitch is moving forward albeit slowly. Currently we are at the planning stage where the pre-conditions need to be discharged. Once this has been achieved the actual work can start. The current expectation is that this will occur early in the New Year.

A Project Board has now been set up with representatives from the Town Council, TCMI and the Borough to move the Town Centre North End project forward. I am pleased to say that the budget has now been set at £290K which comprises of £250K from S106 contributions, £30K from the TCMI and the final £10K being the Mary Portas grant.

On the 11th November the third annual Festival of Business was held and turned out to be the most successful one yet. I believe there were over 100 attendees and stalls covered the four walls and spilled down the centre. The organisers are to be congratulated and we look forward to the next one.

The annual survey, including the questions on the "Local Loos" has now been completed and the analysis is well under way. The outcome is due the end of this month when we will know whether this project is to continue or not. Councillors will be the first to know what this is.

The Winter Extravaganza was held on Sunday and was extremely well supported despite the constant drizzle. The crowds in front of the stage were quite deep and all enjoyed the entertainment provided. Congratulations to Jacques and his team for another hugely successful event and for upping the standard again this year. We are blessed to have him in the Town Centre Manager role.

Yesterday Woodley Town Council played host to a presentation and training around the sensitive issue of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). We were the first Town or Parish Council to accept the offer from WBC for this training. CSE is a very serious subject which all councillors, whether they are Town or Borough should have a degree of awareness of. Thank you to all those who attended."

Following a comment that the previous evening's meeting on the topic of Child Sexual Exploitation had not been well attended by Members, the Town Clerk explained that the meeting had been arranged at short notice and Councillor Baker stated that the presentation would be re-run at a later date.

50. **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Town Clerk presented Report No. FC 4/15 and summarised the proposed changes to the Code of Conduct. She explained that if the new Code of Conduct was adopted all Members of Council would be required to complete a new Member's Interests form within 28 days of the date of adoption.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To adopt the proposed new Code of Conduct for Councillors with effect from 8 December 2015, in place of the code adopted in May 2013.

51. **BULMERSHE SITE OF URBAN LANDSCAPE VALUE (SULV) JOINT WORKING PARTY**

Members noted that in the joint statement in support of the protection of the Bulmershe SULV, which was approved at the Council meeting on 29 September 2015, the reference to "playing fields under the management of Bulmershe College" should be amended to "playing fields under the management of The Bulmershe School". The need for this amendment had been noted by Earley Town Council when they approved the statement.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To amend the reference to "playing fields under the management of Bulmershe College" to "playing fields under the management of The Bulmershe School" in the joint statement in support of the Bulmershe SULV approved at the Council meeting on 29 September 2015.

52. **REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

52.1 Members noted the following written reports:

- Sonning & District Welfare & Education Trust report from Councillor Smith
- ARC report from Mrs Shelagh Flower
- BALC AGM report from Councillor Barker
- Poors Land Charity report from Mrs Shelagh Flower

52.2 Members noted that a copy of the Sonning & District Welfare & Education Trust independently examined accounts for the year to 31/12/14 had been received.

52.3 Members noted that Councillor Dolinski had resigned from his position as a governor of The Bulmershe School. There were no nominations for a replacement governor.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That this item be considered at the next Council meeting on 9 February 2016. If a nomination was received in the meantime, Members would be contacted by email and if the nomination was agreed, it would be ratified at the meeting on 9 February 2016.

52.4 Members noted that Councillor Mills had resigned from his position as the Council's representative to Woodley Bowling Club, following his appointment as club chairman, and considered a replacement.

Councillor Stares was nominated by Councillor Mills and seconded by Councillor Baker.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To appoint Councillor Stares as the Council's representative to Woodley Bowling Club.

53. It was proposed by the Chairman and

RESOLVED

- ◆ That as the business was unlikely to be completed by 10pm the meeting continue in order to complete the business set out in the agenda.

54. **TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

The Town Mayor reported on the sixteen engagements he had carried out since the last meeting.

The Deputy Town Mayor reported on the two engagements she had carried out, and also informed members that she had attended the funeral of Keith Lester, a former employee of the Town Council at Bulmershe Leisure Centre, on 19 August, which had not been reported at the last meeting.

55. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No suggestions were made for future agenda items.

Meeting closed at 10:05pm

Meeting of the Town Council on 8 December 2015

Before the start of the meeting the Mayor presented grant cheques to representatives of the following local community groups and other organisations:

Berkshire Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre
Berkshire Vision
Cruse Bereavement Care
Reading Football Club Community Trust
Setanta Gaelic Football Club
The Link Visiting Scheme
Wokingham Job Support Centre
Woodley Festival of Music and Arts
Woodley Volunteer Centre
2nd Woodley Scout Group

Individuals:

William Cowan
Alexander Cowan

Meeting of the Town Council on 10 February 2015

Following the presentation of grant cheques, Claire Oughton from the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) gave a short talk to Members about the work of the CAB in Woodley.

She explained that the CAB had been present in Woodley since 1986. Ms Oughton was the advice session supervisor and was the only paid member of staff in the Woodley office, with the other 12 staff members working as volunteers. The Woodley office did not have a telephone advice line and operated on a face-to-face basis only.

Ms Oughton reported that the CAB offered advice on a wide range of issues, with the most common requests for advice in Woodley being for problems with welfare benefits (331 consultations in Woodley last year), debt problems (232 consultations in Woodley last year) and employment issues (142 consultations in Woodley last year). In addition, last year the Woodley office also gave advice to clients with housing problems, relationship issues, legal problems and consumer issues.

In addition to advising clients, Ms Oughton explained that the CAB also monitored the problems that arose and filed reports with Head Office if there was a trend towards an increase in the occurrence of specific problems. Last year the Woodley office had filed 18 reports. The information contained in the reports was used by Head Office to lobby members of parliament and seek changes in legislation.

The Town Mayor thanked Claire Oughton for coming to the meeting and for the information she had given to Members.

TOWN FORUM

8 December 2015

Residents living in Campbell Road, in the vicinity of Southlake School, attended the meeting to speak about the problem of illegal parking on the grass verges outside the school and to ask whether the Town Council could support their efforts to prevent this occurring.

The residents said that Southlake School was a popular and successful school with a large number of parents delivering and collecting their children by car, leading to difficulties with parking. The situation had been exacerbated recently by the introduction of a single yellow line on the road close to the school. Many parents now parked on the grass verges and even on the pavement and the situation had become dangerous. Local residents had difficulty getting in and out of their driveways and the view of the road was obstructed. Children had to dodge around and between the parked cars and were crossing the road without being able to see if the road was clear. The residents wished to resolve the situation before there was a serious accident.

The residents also reported that the grass verges had been damaged by the traffic and had become muddy and slippery and were unsightly.

There were signs in the area indicating that parking on the grass verges was not legal and was subject to a £50 fine, but this was not enforced. The residents had written to Wokingham Borough Council asking that the grass verges be protected against unlawful parking and had also contacted the school, the police and the local borough councillors.

Councillor Baker informed the residents that he was aware of this problem. He explained that parking on a grass verge or a pavement was not illegal, although it might be contrary to local bye-laws: the only matter that could be investigated by the police would be if the offence of obstruction had taken place, and this would need to be reported to the police by the person who had been obstructed. Councillor Baker also explained that currently only the police have the legal authority to prosecute a driver for parking on yellow lines.

Councillor Baker reported that Wokingham Borough Council had started the procedure to decriminalise parking offences, so that the legal authority to prosecute for parking offences would be given to the borough council and not the police. However it could take up to two years for this change to be made as approval must be sought from the Secretary of State and then all of the Road Traffic Orders in the borough would need to be changed to name the borough council as the prosecuting authority. Councillor Baker said that he would talk to the police about this matter in the meantime, but stressed that the police were constrained by the necessity to prioritise the use of their time.

The residents reiterated how dangerous the situation had become and asked if it would be possible for the borough council to erect bollards to prevent parking on the grass verges. Councillor Gilder said that this had been done in Nightingale Road, where there had been a similar problem, and Councillor Baker agreed to arrange for a meeting to take place between the residents and Wokingham Borough Council to discuss this idea.