

Woodley Town Council

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Thursday 25th May 2023 at 7pm

Present: *Councillors J. Sartorel (Chairman); J. Anderson; A. Chadwick; K. Charles Bey; M. Holmes; R. Horskins; C. Jewell; M. Kennedy; V. Lewis;*

WTC Officers: *K. Murray (Deputy Town Clerk); M. Filmore (Committee Officer);*

Also present: *8 members of the public*

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baker, Bello, Edwards, Errawalla, Firmager, Nagra, Rowland, Singh, Smith and Taylor.

2. **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING – 26 MAY 2023**

Those in attendance noted the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting which was held on 26 May 2023.

3. **TOWN MAYOR WELCOME**

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the Annual Town meeting and gave a summary of the projects and achievements the Council has undertaken in the past 12 months, which included:

- Installation of a new destination play area in Woodford Park
- Replacement of timber fencing and a new pathway around the lake in Woodford Park
- Installation of a new pump in the paddling pool
- Woodford Park awarded Green Flag Award for the 5th year in a row
- Installed an additional flag pole in Woodford Park
- Complete re-wiring and conversion of lighting to LED at Woodford Park Leisure Centre
- Installation of a new irrigation system at the bowls green.
- Commenced the refurbishment of the Oakwood Centre
- Installation of new signage on buildings and in open spaces
- Holding of several civic events; Jubilee Beacon lighting and celebrations; public protocols associated with the death of the monarch; Coronation Picnic in the Park, Mayor's afternoon tea; Community Heroes Awards.

4. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

- 4.1 It was highlighted that, last year, the format of the Annual Town Meeting was different, with presentations and interesting information presented to those attending. In response to a query as to why the meeting was different this year, Councillor Anderson advised that the Officers had been unable to organise such a meeting this year due to staff shortages and the elections, but that there were plans to create a sub committee to improve the format in future.
- 4.2 In response to a suggestion that a more permanent path be installed around the northern end of Woodford Park, the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed this was on the potential project list for this year.
- 4.3 A query was raised regarding the worn path across the center of the memorial ground, and whether there were plans for a more permanent path. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that there were plans to provide ground reinforcements, rather than a permanent tarmacked surface, to improve the path.

- 4.4 The issue of high vegetation on verges was raised. It was noted that Wokingham Borough Council appeared to be undertaking the 'No Mow May' policy, although those in attendance were unaware of any official publicity about this. It was commented that, whilst wild areas were appreciated, it was expected that areas of amenity land would be kept more presentable.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that a similar issue had been raised at the Planning & Community Committee earlier in the week, specifically regarding roundabouts, and that the Town Council would pass the feedback on to Wokingham Borough Council. He also advised that the Town Council would look to find and publicise Wokingham Borough Council's grass cutting policy.

Councillor Chadwick joined the meeting.

- 4.5 A resident highlighted that there was no OAP rate for entry to Woodley Carnival. Councillor Anderson clarified that the carnival was not a Town Council run event, advising that the Town Council merely provide the land to the event. As a member of the Carnival Committee, Councillor Anderson advised that the committee was run by volunteers. She stated that the Carnival costs around £60k to put on, with money raised from the event only around £2k-£3k. She advised that the matter of OAP rates had previously been discussed extensively by the Committee, and said she would feedback the comment to them.

5. **MEETING CLOSE**

With no other questions forthcoming, the Mayor brought the meeting to a close by offering her thanks to those who had attended.

6. Following the end of the meeting, an expression of thanks was raised from a representative of the Woodley Volunteers for our Community group for the grant provided by the Town Council which helped them hire a suitable venue to celebrate their 1,000,000th item collected.

The meeting closed at 7:16 pm
