

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Oakwood Centre on
Tuesday 21 June 2022 at 8 pm**

Present: *Councillors K. Gilder (Chairman); N. Al-Sanjari; J. Anderson;
K. Baker; D. Bragg; J. Cheng; M. Doyle; M. Forrer; A. Heap;
R. Horskins; C. Jewell; V. Lewis; M. Nagra; B. Rowland; R.
Skegg; B. Soane; A. Swaddle; P. Wicks*

Officers present: *K. Murray, Deputy Town Clerk; M. Filmore, Committee Officer;
A. Basra, Finance Officer;*

Also present: *3 members of the public*

*Before the start of the meeting 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 A**.*

21. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors S. Brindley, M. Green, S. Rahmouni and J. Sartorel. Councillor Al-Sanjari sent apologies that she would be late for the meeting.

22. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor R. Skegg – Personal interest: Agenda Item 10: Free use of the Oakwood Centre, as Councillor Skegg has a personal involvement with the charity.

Councillor Skegg took no part in the discussion or the decision regarding agenda item 10.

23. **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2022**

The Deputy Town Mayor presented the amended minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8 February 2022.

Minute 77.3: Minutes of the Strategy & Resources Committee: 25 January 2022

In reference to the Deputy Town Clerk's note which had been added to the minutes to confirm that the Standing Orders do require recommendations made by Standing Committees to be proposed and seconded, the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that this would not need to happen retrospectively regarding historic resolutions but would need to happen moving forward.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 8 February 2022 and that they be signed by the Deputy Town Mayor as a correct record.

Voting: For: 14 Against: 0 Abstentions: 2 No Vote Recorded: 1

24. **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10 MAY 2022**

The Deputy Town Mayor presented the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 10 May 2022.

Councillor Al-Sanjari entered the meeting.

Councillor Nagra queried whether the minutes should include a note to highlight that, at the Full Council meeting held on the 8 February, at one point Councillor Baker had interrupted Councillor Nagra. Councillor Nagra stated that this was a violation of Standing Orders 3.2 a) and b), which relate to Members being required to raise their hand or indicate to the Chairman that they wish to speak, and to only speak when invited to do so by the Chairman.

Following a vote it was:

RESOLVED

- ◆ To approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 10 May 2022 and that they be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

Voting: For: 14 Against: 0 Abstentions: 3 No Vote Recorded: 1

25. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

25.1 **Minutes of the Planning and Community Committee: 17 May 2022**

Councillor Wicks presented the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 17 May 2022.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 17 May 2022.

Voting: For: 14 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1 No Vote Registered: 0

25.2 **Minutes of the Leisure Services Committee: 31 May 2022**

Councillor Bragg presented the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting held on 31 May 2022.

Councillor Bragg noted that the minutes were incorrectly dated as 12 April 2022, and it was agreed the draft minutes would be corrected.

In response to a query regarding complaints received about the new play area in Woodford Park, the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that there had been an issue with the tensioning of the Zip Wire. It was believed this was occurring naturally due to a high volume of use and the fact the equipment was new, and the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the wire had been re-tensioned to improve this.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed to Members that the play equipment had passed a full ROSPA safety inspection prior to the play area being opened.

Minute 9: Future Agenda Items

In response to a query regarding whether the Council had now invested in a Union Flag, it was confirmed that it had not. Members noted that the provision of flags was due to be discussed as one of the first items of business when the PR & Marketing Sub Committee next meet, with the Sub Committee due to consider which flags should be purchased and to recommend a budget.

Minute 6: Woodford Park Leisure Centre, Sports Development and Activities

Following a query, it was agreed that the draft minutes should include reference to the fact that, at the meeting, it was confirmed that Woodford Park Leisure Centre would need to be closed for a period of time to allow for the electrical works.

Minute 7: Parks and Buildings

Councillor Bragg confirmed that the first meeting of the Youth Services Working Party had now taken place and it was confirmed that a report of the meeting would be presented to the next Strategy & Resources Committee meeting. Councillor Bragg updated Members to confirm that only one expression of interest had been received from a provider, Just Around the Corner (JAC), but that the Working Party had resolved to allow another month to make additional efforts to contact and encourage other providers to submit expressions of interest.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting held on 31 May 2022.

Voting: For: 16 Against: 0 Abstentions: 2 No Vote Registered: 0

25.3 **Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee: 7 June 2022**

Councillor Baker presented the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting held on 7 June 2022.

Councillor Baker advised Members that the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations Sub Committee had met recently to and recommended considerable changes to the Standing Orders. This is due to be considered and ratified at the next Strategy & Resources Committee meeting.

Councillor Doyle highlighted that it was the intention of the Labour & Independent Group that he would be the group's representative on the Committee. It was noted that the group had deferred their appointment to the group at the Annual Meeting of the Council, held on the 10 May 2022.

It was noted that Standing Order 9.5 b) currently states that groups can only change their appointments to Standing Committees at a meeting of Full Council, with groups required to submit details of the change to the Town Clerk at least three days prior to the meeting. Members noted that this was one of the Standing Orders which had been recommended to be changed by the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations Sub Committee.

Councillor Horskins proposed, seconded by Councillor Baker, and following a vote it was:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To suspend Standing Order 9.5 b) for this meeting to allow the Labour & Independent group to appoint a member to the Strategy & Resources Committee.
- ◆ To note that the Labour & Independent group have appointed Councillor Doyle to the Strategy & Resources Committee for the 2022/23 municipal year.

Minute 13: Town Council responsibilities in the event of war

Following a comment regarding the need for the Council to know in advance what the expectations of the Town Council would be in the event of war, the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that Wokingham Borough Council's Emergency Planning Officer would be attending the next meeting of Full Council to discuss this and emergency planning in general.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Strategy & Resources Committee meeting held on 7 June 2022.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 3 No Vote Registered: 0

25.4 **Minutes of the Planning and Community Committee: 14 June 2022**

Councillor Wicks presented the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 14 June 2022.

Minute 25: Sandford Park Bailey Bridge

Councillor Heap stated that he felt it was very important for there to be joined up working between the Council and Twyford and Charvil Parish Councils with regards to the provision of a cycle route from Woodley to Twyford Station. Councillor Wicks confirmed that contact had been made with Wokingham Borough Council regarding this.

Minute 27: Community Speedwatch

In response to a query, it was confirmed that it was intended to use the Council's Data Logger to identify on which roads and at which specific times of day there were speeding problems to help indicate where and when Speedwatch activities would take place. Councillor Bragg confirmed that he has been in regular contact with PC Turnham, the Thames Valley Police Officer heading up the Community Speedwatch scheme. He also advised Members that when speeding data is uploaded it is automatically sent to the Police database for action.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 14 June 2022.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 3 No Vote Registered: 0

26. **2021/22 YEAR END**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented the 2021/22 year end figures, in summary and by committee.

It was pointed out that, with regards to the expenditure attributed to Woodford Park under the Leisure Services Budget, the total spend at 31 March 2022 reported to the Leisure Services Committee in a previous budgetary control report differed by approximately £63k to the actual spend recorded in the year end figures. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the additional expenditure related to the play area and was paid during the 2021/22 year, although did not appear in the budgetary control figures.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the 2020/21 year end figures.

27. **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2021/22**

27.1 **Financial Statements 2021/22**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented the Financial Statements for 2021/22.

In response to a query regarding why Service Level Agreement expenditure is grouped together with Grant expenditure within the Financial Statements, the Deputy Town Clerk agreed to seek advice from the Internal Auditor as to the reason for this.

It was proposed by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Anderson, and following a vote Members:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the Financial Statements for 2021/22 and that they be signed by the Mayor and the Town Clerk.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 3 No Vote Registered: 0

27.2 **Annual Internal Audit Report for 2021/22**

Members received the annual internal audit report as set out in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2021/22.

27.3 **Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22**

The Deputy Town Mayor explained that it was the responsibility of Members to ensure that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for preparation of the Accounting Statements. She went on to explain that Members had a responsibility to consider each of the Annual Governance Statements and vote as to whether, to the best of their knowledge and belief, they agreed with the statements.

It was proposed by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Wicks, and following a vote it was:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To vote on the nine statements within the Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22 as a whole, rather than individually.

Voting: For: 16 Against: 0 Abstentions: 2 No Vote Registered: 0

The Deputy Town Mayor read each of the nine individual statements in turn. Following a vote it was:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 3 No Vote Registered: 0

It was proposed by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Bragg, and following a vote Members:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the signing of the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 by the Mayor and the Town Clerk.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 3 No Vote Registered: 0

27.4 **Accounting Statements for 2021/22**

Members considered the Accounting Statements for 2021/22.

Members noted that changes to the Accounting Statements from 2020/21 onwards had been made which required that funds relating to the Woodley Memorial Recreation Ground Charity be separated from a Council's accounts. Accordingly, for the 2020/21 year, the figures previously submitted on the Accounting Statements had been restated so that the transaction totals for the charity's trust fund were removed and separated from the financial statements and accounts of the Town Council.

Members noted that the Woodley Memorial Recreation Ground Charity trust fund income and expenditure transactions for 2021/22 were now completely separated from the Town Council accounts, as required in the Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities guidance.

It was proposed by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Bragg, and following a vote Members:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the Accounting Statements for 2021/22, and approve the signing of the Accounting Statements 2020/21 by the Mayor.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 3 No Vote Registered: 0

28. **LEADER'S STATEMENT**

Councillor Baker provided a statement, highlighting what a great couple of months it had been for the residents of Woodley.

Councillor Baker highlighted several events, including the Jubilee Beacon lighting, the Jubilee Lunch, and the Woodley Carnival, noting that these were very well attended by Woodley residents.

Councillor Baker also highlighted the recent efforts of Ronnie Goodberry who had been instrumental in arranging the collection and delivery of items donated by residents of Woodley to refugees of the Ukraine conflict. Ronnie had even driven to Poland twice with a number of other drivers to personally deliver the items, with a third trip planned.

29. **CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented Report No. FC 4/22 regarding the proposed Capital Programme for 2022/23.

He advised Members that the costs which had been stated against each proposed project were upper estimates, with Officers still needing to seek competitive quotes. If there was any material change to the cost of a project following the receipt of quotes, then the project would come back to Members for consideration.

The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that it was believed all proposed projects could be achieved within the year and within the allocated budget. Following a query, he advised that the priority given to each proposed project had been assigned following an Officer discussion with the heads of service. He confirmed these were a judgement, and so were subjective, but the intention was to give additional information and context for Members about why certain projects were being proposed.

Whilst the new format for the report was generally felt to be good, Members noted that for each of the environmental and equality impacts listed against the proposed projects, the report had stated 'none'. Members highlighted a number of examples of positive environmental and equality impacts for some of the projects listed, and requested that greater detail should be provided about these in the report, including how each project would impact individuals with protected characteristics.

It was noted that this was a high level report, with greater detail to be provided when each project was brought to the Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Soane, and:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the contents of Report No. FC 4/22
- ◆ To approve funding from the Capital Programme and Building and Facilities Fund, to fund the capital projects as set out in Report No. FC 4/22.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 3 No Vote Registered: 0

30. **FREE USE OF THE OAKWOOD CENTRE**

Members considered the request made for Me2 Club to have free use the Oakwood Centre rooms for their charitable event being held on the evening of Friday 7 October 2022.

Whilst Members acknowledged the good work undertaken by the Me2 Club, a number of Members noted a concern that agreeing to this request would set a precedent with regards to providing free hire of the Oakwood Centre to charities.

Councillor Doyle suggested that Me2 Club might be a charity who could apply for the Youth Service tender, and requested that they be contacted and invited to do so.

Members noted the connection between Me2 Club and Matt Allwright, who had voluntarily presented the Town Council's Citizens' Awards ceremony earlier in the year and had indicated that he would be willing to do so again in future, although the Committee Officer confirmed that no formal agreement was in place to do so.

Members requested that, at the next meeting of the Strategy & Resources Committee, Members consider more broadly how requests for free hire of the Council's venue from charities are handled moving forward.

It was proposed by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Al-Sanjari, and following a vote Members:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the free use of the Oakwood Centre rooms by the Me2 Club on 7 October 2022 for their charitable event.

Voting: For: 12 Against: 0 Abstentions: 5 No Vote Registered: 1

31. **OUTSIDE BODIES**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the Poor's Land Charity report, provided by Councillor Cheng and included with the agenda

32. **TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

Members noted that, in addition to the events listed as being undertaken by the Town Mayor in the agenda, the Town Mayor had also opened the new play area in Woodford Park on Thursday 16 June 2022.

33. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no suggestions for future agenda items.

34. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

It was requested that a greater effort be made to publicise the fact that meetings are now streamed live on YouTube.

Meeting closed at 9:55 pm

TOWN FORUM

21 June 2022

Three members of the public attended the Town Forum.

Mr Provins, member of the Friends of Woodford Park, highlighted that the Town Council had removed a number of plaques from the Garden of Remembrance. It was understood that individuals had originally paid to have the plaques installed for a period of 10 years, and that they may have been removed following the end of this period, however members of the Friends of Woodford Park had received complaints from residents about their removal.

Councillors discussed this matter and consensus was that the plaques should not have been removed. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed he would look into the matter and provide an update to all Councillors and Mr Provins.