

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Oakwood Centre on  
Tuesday 22 June 2021 at 8 pm**

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**Present:** *Councillors J. Sartorel (Chairman); K. Baker; D. Bragg;  
J. Cheng; M. Forrer; K. Gilder; M. Green; C. Jewell; R. Skegg;  
D. Smith; B. Soane; A. Swaddle; P. Wicks*

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

**Also present:** *1 members of the public*

*A maximum of 30 minutes was set aside before the start of the meeting 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.*

21. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors N. Al-Sanjari, J. Anderson, S. Brindley, M. Doyle, A. Heap, M. Nagra, S. Rahmouni and B. Rowland.

Following a question the Town Clerk agreed to find out and circulate details of any impact there might be on the 6 month rule for non-attendance in light of the pandemic stopping certain Members from attending this, and potentially future meetings.

22. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

23. **ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note that Councillor Robert Hoskins has been duly elected to the Town Council and has signed the declaration of acceptance of office as required by law.

24. **COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note that Councillor Doyle has resigned from the Liberal Democrat Group and is now an independent councillor.
- ◆ To note the current composition of the Council is as follows:  
16 Conservative Members, 5 Liberal Democrat Members, 2 Labour Members, 1 independent.
- ◆ To note the new composition of the Council does not change the current division of places between political parties on standing committees, working parties and sub committees.

25. **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4 MAY 2021**

The Town Mayor presented the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 4 May 2021.

Following Councillor Bakers appointment as Mayor of Wokingham Borough for the 2021/22 municipal year, Councillor Jewell asked Councillor Baker how he, as the Leader of Woodley Town Council, could maintain the "neutrality of the Mayor", as promised in his Wokingham Borough Council acceptance speech, whilst in the political position of leading the Conservatives on the Town Council. She asked whether he believed there is a conflict of interest in view of the working relationship between these councils. Councillor Baker replied no.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 4 May 2021 and that they be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

Voting: For: 12 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

26. **MEMBERSHIP OF THE PLANNING & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE**

Councillor Baker confirmed the Conservative party would not be making an appointment to the vacant Planning and Community Committee position at this time.

27. **MEMBERSHIP OF WORKING PARTIES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

Councillor Baker confirmed the Conservative party would not be making appointments to the vacant positions on the Risk Management Working Party, the Standing Orders & Financial Regulations Working Party, nor the 3G Pitch Steering Group at this time.

28. **2020/21 YEAR END**

The Town Clerk presented the 2020/21 year end figures, in summary and by committee.

Members enquired as to how the Tier 4 LRSO Lockdown Grant was calculated. The Finance Officer confirmed that details were provided to Wokingham Borough Council of the rateable value of the buildings owned by Woodley Town Council which were forced to close due to lockdown restrictions from 20 December; this included the Oakwood Centre, Coronation Hall, Chapel Hall, and Woodford Park Leisure Centre. Wokingham Borough Council calculated the grant entitlement based on these figures and paid a set sum to the Council. The Finance Officer confirmed that the grant did not take into account any actual loss of income.

**RESOLVED:**

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

29. **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2020/21**

a) **Financial Statements 2020/21**

The Town Clerk presented the Financial Statements for 2020/21.

In response to a question as to why the last review date for the Financial Regulations is listed as 2015 when the Regulations require a review every 3 years, the Town Clerk confirmed that a review hadn't progressed due to the pandemic. The Town Clerk confirmed she had personally reviewed the Regulations since Brexit to ensure they continued to comply with legislation, but acknowledged there was work to do for the working party when they meet again.

In response to a query as to why the tractor shed / modular shower and toilet had been valued at £26,578 in 2020 but increased to £71,658 in 2021, the Town Clerk stated this was likely because the modular shower unit and toilet was new and had been built during 2020. The Town Clerk agreed to look into this and confirm this was the case.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To approve the Financial Statements for 2020/21 and that they be signed by the Mayor and the Town Clerk.

Voting: For: 11 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1

b) **Annual Internal Audit Report for 2020/21**

Members considered 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 2020/21.

c) **Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21**

The Mayor explained that it was the responsibility of Members to consider the Annual Governance Statement, as set out on page 4 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

Each of the nine individual statements were read in turn, followed by a vote on each, and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/21.

Voting (identical for each individual statement): For: 12 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

- ◆ To approve the signing of the Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 by the Mayor and the Town Clerk.

Voting: For: 12 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

d) **Accounting Statements for 2020/21**

Members considered the Accounting Statements for 2020/21 and

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To approve the Accounting Statements for 2020/21.

Voting: For: 12 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

- ◆ To approve the signing of the Accounting Statements 2020/21 by the Mayor.

Voting: For: 12 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

30. **LEADER'S STATEMENT**

Councillor Baker informed Members that he had been in touch with an NHS First Responder looking to provide training on the use of AEDs (Defibrillators) and CPR to Woodley residents. Over 30 residents had signed up, and the facilitator had enquired as to the possibility of using the Oakwood Centre free of charge to deliver the training, in return for which they could offer training to all Councillors and Council staff for free. Councillor Baker acknowledged that the request would need to go through the appropriate approval process but stated that, if approved, he hoped everyone would engage in such beneficial training, even those who have undertaken this training previously. The training would obviously also be subject to Covid restrictions.

31. **OUTSIDE BODIES**

- 31.1 No nominations were received for appointment to the vacant outside body positions on the Poor's Land Charity (1 place) and Woodley Bowling Club Management Committee (1 place).

Councillor Jewell stated that she had assumed these positions would be taken up by Conservative Members as had been the case previously with these outside bodies. However Councillor Baker indicated that he viewed these positions as non-political, and so it was agreed to bring this item back to the Full Council meeting in September to give other parties the opportunity to consider nominations.

31.2 **RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note that Wokingham United Charities no longer have appointed representatives.

- 31.3 Councillor Bragg informed Members that he did not have an update from the Citizen's Advice Bureau as they were not due to meet until the following day. However he directed Members to the presentation on the Citizen's Advice Bureau's activities provided at the Town Electors' Meeting in May by Jake Morrison, thanking Jake for his contribution and stating that this provided a better update than we could ever provide.

32. **TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

- 32.1 The Mayor provided an update on the one event she had attended since the last meeting; Arrhythmia Alliance Lilly-May Page at the Shepherd's House pub on 22 May 2021. The event was set up by Claire Page in memory of her daughter, Lilly-May Page, who died 5 years ago, and raised a good sum of money to support the provision of AEDs (defibrillators) in as many locations as possible.

- 32.2 Members noted that the Deputy Mayor had not attended any events since the last meeting.

- 32.3 Councillor Bragg provided members with an update on the Surrey and Berkshire Armed Forces Virtual Briefing, which he attended in the absence of both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on 1 June. Councillor Bragg advised this was an example of how a virtual event should be run; it was well attended, by over 200 people, and provided an update on the activities of the Army, Navy and Royal Air Force within the area. This included work with local schools and engagement with the public, as well as overseas support being provided in areas, such as Africa, with major human rights and piracy problems.

33. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

With only half of the Council's Members in attendance, mostly due to the pandemic, Councillor Jewell asked Council Staff to provide a review to all Councillors appraising how the measures taken to enable the meeting to go ahead had worked and were received. She also recommended this set out likely plans for future meetings. Councillor Jewell also thanked Officers for the hard work they had undertaken to ensure the meeting took place in as safe a manner as possible, and commented that she had felt safer than she thought she would.

Following requests, the Committee Officer agreed to circulate an up to date Committee Membership list to all Members and to update the Committee, working party and sub committee pages of the website to identify their party political composition.

Meeting closed at 20:24 pm

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