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CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL

At the Council Meeting held remotely due to restrictions imposed by government because of the COVID-19 pandemic, pursuant to notice on Monday 15th June 2020 at 7.15pm on line and via video conference, the following members were present: -

Cllr. D. Davidson, Town Mayor

Cllr. M. Walker, Deputy Mayor

Cllr. R. Benfield

Cllr. C. Butterworth

Cllr. L. Carter (joined the meeting at 7.20pm)

Cllr. S. Coleman

Cllr. J. Graves

Cllr. D. Heyes

Cllr. M. Jarratt

Cllr. G. Mazower

Cllr. R. Poole

Cllr. M. Tysoe

Officers: Mrs J. Sparrowhawk, Town Clerk

Miss K. Linnington, Deputy Town Clerk

Others: 2 Members of the Public

7455 Mayors Welcome

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the remote formal meeting of the Council.

7456 The minutes of the meeting held on the 18th May 2020 – were approved as a correct record and will be signed by the Mayor at the next face to face meeting.

7457 Public Participation

There were no applications to address the Council.

7458 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr. N. Bradley and Cllr. E. Coles.

7459 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest to report at the meeting.

7460 Oxfordshire County Council

Cllr. H. Biles had continued to provide briefing updates to Members during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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7461 West Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr. G. Saul had provided a brief report for the meeting and reported on the following:

* East Chipping Norton Development Framework:The timetable for the East Chipping Norton (Tank Farm) Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been revised following the Covid-19 interruption.  The Consultation on the draft SPD is now pencilled in for September 2020 with adoption planned for December 2020.  The SPD is the document that includes consideration of the site context, characteristics and opportunities, vision, objectives and key principles for development, quantum and mix of uses, supporting infrastructure requirements, transport and access arrangements, housing type, size and tenure mix, environmental and heritage considerations, design, delivery and implementation.
* Planning application for 73 holiday homes at Cotswolds Hotel and Spa: At the Planning Committee meeting on 1st June, Cllr. M. Cahill and I led the committee in recommending the application for refusal.  After some debate, the application was then unanimously refused by the Committee.
* Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document: The Consultation Paper on this has now been issued for consultation by the District Council.  One interesting point is that the Council have committed to exploring a “Living Rent Model” for West Oxfordshire with a discount from market rent at a level that would be required to be realistic for local people.  This would incorporate tenancies for a minimum of 3 years with a view to allowing residents to build up savings to buy a home.  It would probably include an option for tenants to buy their home on a shared ownership basis during their tenancy.   Full details of this proposal should be available later this year.

Cllr. M. Cahill had provided a brief report for the meeting and reported on the following:

* Highways work between the Kings Arms and the Town Hall starting 22 June 2020: The notices that have been erected state works will be starting on the 30 June 2020. Clarification from Officers had been sought. The notices will be changed to indicate the pre-works will start on the 22 June 2020 and the road closure will be the 30 June 2020 with 11 working sessions.
* Covid-19 Support: Cllr. M. Cahill is continuing to support members of the community identified as being vulnerable on the basis of needing help with moving bins. It is pleasing that I have been able to enrol some on the Chippy Larder scheme run by Cllr Poole and to support others who need help with collecting medication, filling in forms and fitting doorbells and door chains. What many continue to appreciate most is a chat even if a friend, relative or neighbour is helping with the shopping. The lonely and vulnerable are among us and always will be and it is very important that councillors, both District and Town work together, and with others, to identify residents who need support and then to help provide it. The WODC leadership and officers are doing a tremendous job of responding positively to the challenge that we face.
* WODC meetings continue remotely.

Cllr. L. Carter reported on the following:

* The WODC Covid-19 briefing dated 11 June 2020 detailed information about ‘what and when’ will be re-opening. Mr. W. Barton, WODC Business Development Officer, is keen to visit Chipping Norton to discuss ongoing issues regarding empty shops. This is important as we now have the opening of shops and local businesses that are under increasing pressure. Funding will be available to enable the town to be promoted and further information will be provided. If any Members want to join a meeting with WODC Councillors and Mr. W. Barton please advise Cllr. L. Carter of this or any questions that you wish to be discussed.

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* Dog fouling: This has been a problem for many residents and there are requests for new dog bins on the Bellway Estate.
* Community speed Monitoring: Members of the public had been undertaking speed monitoring on New Street. 136 speeding drivers had been identified in one day as driving in excess of the 20mph speed limit. This issue was to be discussed at the next Traffic Advisory Committee Meeting. The community are very concerned about speeding and this was also of concern in other areas within the town.
* Illegal parking: Enforcement warnings notices are now being put on cars that have been parked illegally. Enforcement notices will soon recommence.
* Eviction: The government has now extended protection from eviction from homes if rent has been missed until the end of August. The WODC Homeless Officer should be contacted by any resident for advice and support.
* Community Support Service: The service is being withdrawn and the Officer is being made redundant. The Officer supports 37 voluntary organisations. The organisations should be consulted prior to the post being lost.

7462 Planning

(a) The Council received the list of applications and comments discussed by email due to the Corona virus situation during May/June 2020.

(b) Appeal Decisions: None notified.

7463 Town Clerk’s Report

The correspondence report was noted.

7464 Town Council Vacancy

The Council noted that following the resignation of Cllr. G. Brown a vacancy has arisen on the Town Council. The vacancy will be filled by election currently scheduled for 6th May 2021.

7465 Internal Audit Report: Final 2019/20

The Council noted the Internal Audit Report dated 18 May 2020 and the recommendations contained within. The Town Clerk advised that an Investment Strategy would be drafted for consideration at a future meeting. Cllr. M. Walker wished to thank the Accounts Assistant for the worked involved with the Audit and highlighted the conclusion of the Internal Auditor ‘that the financial records are well maintained’.

7466 The Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2019/20

* + - 1. To receive and authorise the Annual Return for 2019/20

Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20

**RESOLVED:** The Council received and noted the report.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20.

**RESOLVED**: The Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20 be approved.

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/20.

**RESOLVED:** The Accounting Statements for 2019/20 be approved.

* + - 1. To receive the Bank Reconciliations as at 31.03.20.

**RESOLVED:** The Council received the Bank Reconciliations as at 31.03.20.

* + - 1. To receive and approve the Income and Expenditure Account, Balance Sheet and Supporting Notes for year ended 31.03.20.

**RESOLVED:**  The Income and Expenditure Account, Balance Sheet and Supporting Notes for year ended 31.03.20 be approved.

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7467 Finance and General Purposes Committee

The Council received the minutes including the detailed financial reports for 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020 and the detailed financial reports up to 19th May 2020 of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 28th May 2020. A correction on page 3, item 9, last point was to be amended to read ‘Councils precept’ and not ‘Councils budget’. Cllr. M. Tysoe summarised the main points from the minutes. Cllr. M. Tysoe had provided Cllr. G. Mazower with a number of quotes for smaller bus shelters following the meeting. The dog bin requests had also been considered and one request had been withdrawn following identification of other nearby bins.

7468 Cotswold Crescent Play Area – Potential New Licence Agreement

The Council noted that Cllr. R. Poole, Chair of the Recreation and Sports Committee and the Town Clerk are in communication with Cottsway Housing Association regarding a potential new Licence Agreement for the play area.

7469 Queens Award for Voluntary Service

The Council noted the correspondence regarding the Queens Award for Voluntary Service. Further information regarding the award and criteria are detailed within the correspondence. Nominations are to be given to the Town Clerk.

7470 BT Phone Box, Market Place

Members discussed adopting the BT phone box for community use. Members all agreed that the phone box was in a very poor state. There had been community interest for the Council to adopt the phone box. The phone box is still operational and has not been decommissioned. Cllr. G. Mazower advised that Chipping Norton Arts (CNarts) had approached BT to adopt the phone box. The adoption was only available to Councils and registered Charities. CNarts had considered various options for the use of the phone box including exhibitions. Cllr. G. Mazower would establish further information from CNarts and report back at a future Council meeting to enable consideration of the use of the phone box.

7471 Covid-19 Support

Chippy Larder

Cllr. R. Poole had provided a report for Chippy Larder. The report was noted.

Thrive North Ox

Members considered the grant request from Thrive North Ox. Cllr. G. Mazower had undertaken further research on the work that the group were doing within Chipping Norton. There was an urgent need for Chromebooks to enable students to home study. Members agreed that a grant towards this lack of resource would benefit students. Cllr. G. Mazower proposed grant funding to Thrive North Ox of £1,000. Cllr. M. Tysoe seconded the proposal. On being put to the vote the proposal was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:** To award a grant of £1,000 to Thrive North Ox in support of the local community in purchasing Chromebooks during the COVID-19 pandemic under the General Power of Competence.

St. Mary’s Church, Community Outreach

A report had been provided to Members with a further update on how money was being spent and the response to the Covid-19 crisis that various groups are undertaking within the community. The update also thanked the Council for the recent additional financial support. Cllr. R. Poole clarified aspects of the report. Members discussed the report and the work that was being undertaken by various groups. A further request for additional funding through July

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and August was also being applied for. Cllr. M. Walker proposed grant funding of £12,500 to St. Mary’s. There was no seconder for the proposal. The proposal failed.

Cllr. M. Tysoe proposed grant funding to St. Mary’s – Mary’s Meals of £2,000 per month for two further months for July and August. Cllr. R. Benfield seconded the proposal. On being put to the vote the proposal was carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED:** To award a grant to St. Mary’s – Mary’s Meals in support of the local community during the COVID-19 pandemic under the General Power of Competence at £2,000 per month for two further months for July and August.

Members agreed that a longer-term solution was required for the various groups involved with supporting the local community and that a meeting between the groups would be beneficial. Cllr. R. Poole would organise the meeting with the various representatives.

Cllr. D. Davidson discussed the idea of a banner being displayed thanking key workers and volunteers from the Town Council. A draft design would be circulated following the meeting. Any comments on the design are to be sent to Cllr. D. Davidson for consideration. Cllr. S. Coleman thought a public statement was a good idea and suggested the painting of a rainbow on a bench.

Cllr. G. Mazower updated Members on the art work being done by Luke Embden, an artist that had emailed the Town Council following his lockdown whilst visiting family in Chipping Norton. The Co-op had agreed that artwork could be undertaken on the windows of the closed Beales store. The work would commence this week and there was a section that would thank key workers and also include iconic architectural features from the town. This would be a celebration of the town.

Cllr. L. Carter felt a press release detailing the funding support of local charities and the community by the Council would be a more fitting thank you.

Cllr. H. Biles advised Members that she would speak with St. Mary’s Community Outreach regarding the OCC Councillors budget and possible funding.

7472 Nominations for the position of Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Cllr. D. Davidson called for nominations for the position of Mayor.

Nomination: Cllr. G. Mazower

Proposed: Cllr. R. Poole

Seconded: Cllr. L. Carter

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr. G. Mazower becomes Mayor elect and that this decision is ratified at the meeting of the Council on 20th July 2020 with the Acceptance of Office being signed.

Cllr. D. Davidson called for nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor.

Nomination: Cllr. S. Coleman

Proposed: Cllr. R. Poole

Seconded: Cllr. L. Carter

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr. S. Coleman becomes Deputy Mayor elect and that this decision is ratified at the meeting of the Council on 20th July 2020.

The position of Mayor and Deputy Mayor will take effect on the 20th July 2020 for the remaining municipal year. Cllr. D. Davidson advised Members that it may not be possible to have the formal Mayor Making at the meeting due to the current government restrictions.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.