

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 16 October 2020 at 7.15pm via Zoom, the following members were present: -

Cllr. G. Mazower, Town Mayor  
Cllr. S. Coleman, Deputy Mayor  
Cllr. R. Benfield  
Cllr. N. Bradley  
Cllr. C Butterworth  
Cllr. L. Carter  
Cllr. J. Graves  
Cllr. D. Heyes  
Cllr. M. Jarratt  
Cllr. R. Poole  
Cllr. L. Tuckwell  
Cllr. M. Tysoe  
Cllr. M. Walker

OCC Cllr H Biles  
WODC Cllr M Cahill  
WODC Cllr L Carter  
WODC Cllr G Saul

Officers: Louise Steele, Locum Town Clerk  
Miss K. Linnington, Deputy Town Clerk  
Mrs Sonia Murgia, Accounts Assistant  
Terry Palmer, Town Hall Keeper  
Paolo Oliveri, Maintenance Operative

Others: 13 Members of the Public

7532. Mayor's Welcome.

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

7533. The Minutes of the Meeting held on the 19 October 2020. The draft minutes of the meeting held on Monday 19 October 2020 were not agreed and were deferred to the next meeting of Council.

7534. Public Participation

Claire Beswick spoke in support of her recent planning application. [Note the Council's comments on the application (CNTC Ref: 4500 – WODC Ref 20/02481/FUL 29-30 High Street Re-development to create a mixed-use site comprising of a cinema and thirteen serviced self-contained (short term let) apartment suites together with provision of car parking were considered at its Planning Committee meeting on 2 November 2020]. Ms Beswick, the cinema operator, was accompanied by Alex Giachetti who owns the building at 29-30 High Street. Ms Beswick explained that it was her intention to provide more amenities for a growing resident population and a further reason for visitors to come to Chipping Norton. Ms Beswick explained

the research behind the project showing that there no cinemas within a twenty minute drive-time radius and there is a population of some 200,000 within that radius who are not regular film goers because they do not have cinema on their doorstep; there is evidence that this population includes many interested in film. Ms Beswick gave her account of the cinema provision envisaged if planning permission were to be granted by the planning authority. She explained the further benefits that might accrue including additional custom for other businesses (e.g bars and restaurants) and the possibility of new businesses following. Eight to twelve jobs might be created and there is the aspiration to use local produce in the bar. The programming strategy was to show films that would increase the choice of films for locals without overlapping with the film offer from the Chipping Norton Theatre. Ms Beswick took Members questions and addressed their concerns about competition with the Chipping Norton Theatre which also screens films with the observation that she hoped to work with the theatre and that together they would be stronger than the sum of their individual parts.

Paul Jackson spoke about the story of the Ascott Martyrs, their arrest, imprisonment and consequent riots – an historic event (1873) of local significance which received national coverage. Mr Jackson spoke of the opportunity presented by the proposed development at the former Police Station to commemorate the event with, potentially, the retention of some features of the Police Station and installation of a bronze statue. Mr Jackson indicated that he would like the Town Council's support in approaching West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC). In answer to Members questions Mr Jackson said costs were envisaged to be £50,000 to £100,000. Members indicated their support and advised Mr Jackson on campaigning and communication with WODC. Councillor Carter was asked to take things forward on behalf of the Town Council.

Pat Lake spoke to the meeting asking for some clarity about how Christmas Trees in the town centre should be installed in 2020. Mr Lake explained how the current lighting scheme evolved and the challenges that are faced this year as a consequence of Covid-19. 29 November was designated as the day for getting the volunteers together to put the lights up but that was before Lockdown 2. It was agreed that the day should be moved to Sunday 6 December to maximise the opportunity of using the Town Hall to accommodate the activity (in accordance with social distancing guidelines etc.). There was some discussion of how to communicate the change of date to potential volunteers and the Deputy Clerk was asked to use the Town Council's social media channels to publicise the change of date.

The Mayor thanked all speakers for their participation in the meeting.

7535. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr. E. Coles.

7536. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

7537. Mayors Announcements

The Mayor announced the recent resignation of Don Davidson from the Town Council and read from his email of resignation dated 29 October 2020 "I have thought long and hard before writing this e-mail which I do with great regret. Recently Chipping Norton Town Council has taken a number of decisions I do not and cannot support. After taking considerable time I have come to the conclusion that my only honourable course of action is to resign my position as a Town Councillor, this to take effect as of 1st November 2020".

Don Davidson first became a Town Councillor in 1991 and served for six years (1996, 1997, 2004, 2005, 2018, 2019) as Mayor. The Mayor asked all Members to join with her in recording a formal vote of thanks to former Councillor Davidson for his many years of outstanding service to the Council and to the town. The Deputy Clerk was asked to co-ordinate a collection for Mr Davidson.

Members were pleased to vote unanimously in favour of thanks to former Councillor Davidson.

Events attended – the Mayor reported that she had received an invitation from the Green Gym to attend the opening ceremony for the new raised bed garden at the Health Centre on 4 November; the Deputy Mayor had agreed to attend on the Mayor's behalf but the event was cancelled owing to Lockdown 2. The Mayor further reported that the office had received a letter from the local Royal British Legion detailing arrangements for Remembrance Sunday (8 November 2020), including wreath laying and the Mayor had attended. Regarding events on Armistice Day (11 November 2020) the Mayor turned to the Locum Clerk who read out a statement of apology.

7538. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

Cllr Biles reported the following:

- Church Road resurfacing will finally take place on 26 & 27 November 2020
- OCC Libraries are closed for browsing until 2 December 2020 but there is a click and collect service available via the OCC website
- Headteachers and Early Years Leaders are receiving Covid-related support and advice from a dedicated support team of staff from the Public Health teams
- All OCC staff are encouraged to work from home if they can
- Covid numbers are still going up in Oxfordshire and it is too early to tell if lockdown 2 has made a difference

A local Covid testing centre is being set up at Wood Green Leisure Centre in Banbury. It is planned to open on Wednesday 18 November and continue until March 2021. Residents with symptoms need to book a test by using <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or calling 119.

Finally Councillor Biles made a personal tribute to Don Davidson and expressed her gratitude for his assistance over the years particularly for his assistance with establishing youth clubs at Glyme Hall.

7539. West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)

Cllr Carter reported that she would report on the WODC Covid Recovery Plan at the next Town Council meeting; she referred to recent excellent training for District Councillors on domestic violence, particularly timely since the incidence of domestic violence is increasing during Covid, further that there will shortly be a meeting with Chief Superintendent Garside to find out more about policing in West Oxfordshire. Finally Cllr Carter referred to the proposed closure of the New Street recycling centre and passed over to her colleague Cllr Cahill for his report on that subject.

Cllr Cahill spoke to his previously circulated report (that report is appended to these minutes) and referred to the proposed closure of the bring sites on Albion Street and New Street. If the closure is approved at the WODC Cabinet meeting on 18 November 2020 then there will

be a problem because of the travel distance to the OCC recycling sites and the high cost of the bulky waste collection.

Town Councillors expressed their concern about the lack of consultation on this proposal and the negative impact that this would have, potentially increasing fly tipping. Cllr Carter assured Members that she and Cllr Cahill would attend the Cabinet meeting and asked individuals to contact them with any observation that they would like raised at that meeting. Cllr Saul pointed out that the proposal is to close all the bring sites across West Oxfordshire and is not unique to Chipping Norton (and not connected with a specific planning application).

Cllr Saul spoke about WODC consultation on planning matters. There is a paper on Local Development Schemes which goes through all the Supplementary Planning guidance; a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) draft charging schedule (to be submitted for examination in November, hearings in January/February and adoption April 2021); and a separation paper on developer contributions (not CIL). In terms of response to consultation Cllr Saul reiterated the view, previously discussed by the Council, that CIL should not be set at zero for strategic development sites. In the 28 suggested funding areas (for S106, s138 and other funding) there are significant omissions for example no funding for town centre parking provision. If there is to be no CIL contribution from strategic development the S106 should be extended to cover more general provision of infrastructure.

7540. East Chipping Norton Working Group

Cllr Heyes reported on a useful meeting with WODC – it seemed probable that, because of lockdown, publication of the Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) will be delayed until January. There have also been useful meetings with Cala Homes The Mayor updated on the ongoing work with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) to get independent advice from a consultant.

7541. Update on meeting with TVP and ongoing engagement

Cllr Walker reported on recent meeting with Thames Valley Police (TVP) with the Area Commander, Superintendent Garside, and others to discuss the effectiveness of policing in Chipping Norton. Statistically Chipping Norton has relatively low levels of crime but public perception is of inadequate policing, that perception was fed by the closure of the Police Station a year or so ago but in fact the building had not been operational for many years before that.

The meeting discussed improving the visibility of policing in the town and how the Town Council and the Police might work better together for example by setting up a Community Resilience Forum or reinvigorating Neighbourhood Watch. Potentially bring the mobile Police Station to the town was discussed and better publicising existing arrangements (the PCSOs and PC Rob Webb) were also discussed. PC Webb and colleagues will be engaging with residents during Road Safety Week (this week). Police priorities of improved community relations and violence reduction were discussed.

Cllr Walker expressed his gratitude to the senior police officers who had demonstrated their willingness to work with the Town Council. The Mayor endorsed that view and took the opportunity to introduce Mark Lacey (present as a member of the public) to the meeting.

Mr Lacey has been cleared by TVP as an Independent Action Group member which means that he will act as liaison between the community and the Police – the output being recommendations and constructive feedback to enable improvements in policing. Mr Lacey will meet with Cllr Walker to ensure there is no duplication between his work and the Council's.

7542. Grants Committee

The minutes of the Grants to Voluntary Bodies Committee meeting held on 26 October 2020 were received.

The Committee recommended that grants be awarded as shown below and by unanimous vote the Council RESOLVED to accept the recommendation and make the grants.

CAP Life Skills	£500.00
Chippy Larder	£1,000.00
Community First Responders, South Central Ambulance Service, C/N	£1,000.00
Gateway Club, C/N	£500.00
Glyme Hall Youth Club	£1,000.00
Green Gym	£1,000.00
Home Start - Banbury	£2,900.00
Lido	£5,000.00
Literary Festival, ChipLitFest	£600.00
Museum, C/N	£3,000.00
Music Festival	£1,000.00
Pet Food Bank, C/N	£300.00
Pre-School, C/N	£850.00
Rainbows	£500.00
SENjoy, Dance Class	£250.00
Scouts, C/N	£500.00
Swifts Football, C/N	£1,500.00
Theatre, C/N	£5,000.00
Town Festival, C/N	£500.00
Total Grants Awarded	<u>£26,900.00</u>

7543. Planning Committee

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 2 November 2020 were received.

The Mayor asked if a supplementary comment could be submitted to WODC on a planning application and the Locum Clerk confirmed that, if consultation on that application was still open, then the Council could make another comment.

It was agreed that in respect of Application CNTC Ref: 4500 WODC Ref 20/02481/FUL an additional comment expressing the Council's concerns about the safety of the proposed exit on to Horsefair be submitted.

7544. Community Committee

The minutes of the Community Committee meeting held on 5 November 2020 were received.

The Committee Chairman Cllr Coleman referred to three recommendations made by the Committee. The first, concerning a grant to “Illuminate Chippy” was withdrawn because the activity envisaged would no longer proceed because of Covid restrictions.

The second recommendation concerned repairs to the Town Hall roof. The Committee recommended that an order be placed for a permanent repair of the roof which would involve new copings, new lead flashing and soakers and that a surveyor should be appointed to prepare a quinquennial survey which would assist the Council in programming the more major roof repairs that will be needed. This recommendation was deferred to the next meeting of Council for more information about cost and available budget.

The third recommendation, that the ground maintenance contracts be extended for a second year by negotiation and that a tendering exercise should take place during 2021 for new five year contracts to start in April 2022, was agreed by unanimous vote.

7545. Strategic Planning Committee

The minutes of the Strategic Planning Committee meeting held on 12 November 2020 were received.

The Mayor referenced the budget recommendations and Council agreed unanimously that those recommendations be passed to the Finance and Resources Committee. The Mayor also presented the Committee’s recommendation to the Council which concerns WODC’s request for the Council’s thought on the future use of The Guildhall

It was agreed by unanimous vote that the Locum Clerk should advise WODC that the Town Council would be interested in exploring a range of options for The Guildhall over the coming months.

7546. The Town Clerk’s Report

The Town Clerk’s report was noted and is attached to the record minutes. A few questions about the detail of the accounts for payment were answered and subsequent to that the payments detailed in the report were approved by unanimous vote.

7547. Date of next meeting: 21 December 2020

7548. Resolution to Move into a Confidential Session

The meeting indicated its assent to the Mayor’s proposal to move into a Confidential Session to discuss Separate Business, pursuant to s.1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960. The public, press and officers (apart from the Locum Clerk) left the meeting at this point.

7549. Recruitment of Town Clerk

Note that while this matter was considered in confidential session this the resulting minute need not be considered confidential.

The Locum Clerk reported orally on the Town Clerk recruitment process so far; the selection panel had recommended that the job be readvertised as soon as possible and Council was asked to consider whether interviews should be held before or after Christmas. The meeting agreed that the job should be advertised immediately and interviews should be held in the New Year.

There was some discussion as to how and where the post should be advertised and a budget of £2,000 for advertising was agreed. The possibility of using a Locum Clerk as a mentor for a time if an unqualified Clerk were to be appointed was also discussed.

Mrs Steele explained that she would be able to remain in place as a Locum Clerk for the foreseeable future but that Mrs Eustace had other work commitments from the New Year; LGRC would place a second Locum from that time.