

**Minutes of the Burford Town Council meeting held on  
Wednesday 6 July 2022 at 7pm**

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**Present:** Cllr P Higgs – Mayor, Cllr M Taubenheim – Deputy Mayor,  
Cllr J Tunnell Westmacott, Cllr D Cotterill, Cllr S Lofthouse, Cllr D Cohen,  
Cllr S Palmer, Cllr J Rushton, Cllr P Bruce, Cllr J Craven, Cllr J White,  
Cllr H Ashton, Maggie Andrews – Clerk, John Yeatman – RFO.  
Mr K Gray.

**1. MINUTES. Resolved:** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 1 June 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

**2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.**

Cotswold Arms. It has been determined that the area in Priory Lane where barrels and bins are stored is not owned by them. Council will visit the premises and discuss the situation with them. If our request for the removal of bins and barrels is not successful, we will take further action.

Street Furniture. A Chamber of Trade meeting is planned for 17 July at which this matter will be discussed. Street licenses are required for furniture on the street, and it would be useful to determine who has one. We are concerned that furniture does not impede the pedestrian pathway. Cllr Taubenheim will report back.

**3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were noted from Cllr Field-Johnson.

**4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

The following Councillors declared a personal interest because they represent the Council as Chairperson of the following committees:-

Cllr Tunnell-Westmacott – Cemetery & Environment. Declared an interest for reimbursement catering costs for Mayor's reception £800.00.

Cllr Rushton - Recreation Ground

Cllr Taubenheim – Pavilion & Planning

Cllr Cohen – BEAP.

Cllr Higgs declared an interest regarding reimbursement payments for the Mayor's reception (£303.89 & £67.87 for Cemetery signage).

**5. CLLR FIELD-JOHNSON REPORT.**

The full report was circulated to all Councillors.

OCC has spent £12,000 on repairs to bollards and planters in the new East Oxford Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN), despite the scheme being unwanted by many city residents. There have been reports of repeated vandalism. OCC have pledged to keep replacing them. A commitment to Vision Zero – the elimination of deaths and serious injuries from road traffic collisions in Oxfordshire has been agreed by OCC's cabinet.

OCC Leader Cllr Liz Leffman has signed a letter to the UK Environment Secretary George Eustice pledging to meet World Health Organisation targets on deadly air pollution 10 years ahead of the Government's 2040 deadline.

As the debate continues to add 20mph speed limits in our villages, Thames Valley Police has re-stated its stance on 20mph limits. An objection was recorded in a recent OCC officer report which included the Police position which reflects that 20mph limits and zones should still be self-enforcing. In a separate report the Police noted “if a speed limit is set too low and is ignored then this could result in the vulnerable road user being less safe and cause the majority of drivers to criminalise themselves and could bring the system of speed limits into disrepute. It is also important to set reasonable speed limits to ensure consistency across the country”.

#### **6. CLLR ASHTON REPORT.**

Coles Field inquiry. Highway matters were not included as reasons for refusal, so we were not part of the District’s case. Cllr Ashton presented a closing statement explaining the impact the development would have on the tranquility of the AONB (particularly in Frethern Close and on Witney Street) and on arguing that the claimed ‘ease of access by sustainable modes’ was poppycock, particularly for the future residents of the proposed retirement housing or care home, owing to the topography of the site and steepness of access approaches.

Planning Applications in the past have relied on yellow notices being posted by planning officers and WODC informing us if a neighbouring property is the subject to an application. These practices have been changed and the applicants themselves are required to post the notices, and neighbours are no longer automatically informed.

#### **7. OTHER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

River Windrush. Emanating from the Town AGM there was a suggestion that the Town Council, & Riparian owners of the Millstream & Windrush should work together. Apparently a recent meeting was convened; the Council were not invited to attend. Cllr Cotterill was able to give an insight on who attended and we will request that BTC are included in future if further meetings are arranged.

VIC sign. This will be displayed on the open front door of the Tolsey when the Museum is open so that visitors and tourists can obtain information from the Museum.

Warwick Hall user committee. At the Town AGM a suggestion was put forward for a ‘User Committee’ to be set up to try and solve some of the problems experienced by users. The Town Council felt we should not lead this committee if it were to be set up. The Burford & District Society may well be best to organize a committee.

Subsequently, the Mayor met with the Rev Tom Putt to discuss issues raised at the Town Meeting and to gain an understanding of the situation from his point of view.

Heating. The ground source heating has failed; the plan is to replace the ground source with air source which is compatible with the internal heating system. They hope work will be completed by October. The audio-visual system was never designed to live webcast.

However, the church has spent £30,000 to install a complete live webcast system in the church. This is available to users who need the facility when using the church.

Charges. These need to be reviewed.

The Mayor felt that there is still no overall strategy for how to run the hall. It is run by the manager and the PCC. Both Tom and Peter felt BTC could not help other than gently lobbying for change where it is needed for the community

Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct . West Oxfordshire have adopted a revised Code of Conduct for Members. It has been amended in places for clarity and optimization. The document was circulated to all Councillors who agreed to adopt it.

Community Forum. Chris Ball the Neighbourhood Inspector for West Oxfordshire gave an outline of crime figures locally, mainly break-ins, burglaries, which are generally low in Burford. Discussion took place and several local matters were raised for him to either log or investigate. He felt that a Forum of Clerks and representatives could prove useful if we met every 3-4 months to share issues with the Police and other agencies, to advise, raise issues and assist where possible. The Clerk & Cllr Palmer will attend when meetings are convened.

Social Media. After discussion it was agreed that Cllrs Bruce & Craven should pursue the matter. They will consider the constraints and advantages, carry out a survey, decide which tools, and carry out a 6 month pilot. The Council will then review their report and determine the next steps.

### **8. MAYORS REPORT**

As part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee the Mayor and Mayoress attended Christchurch Cathedral at the invitation of the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire for a celebration. They also attended St. John the Baptist Church for the Platinum Jubilee service.

The Mayor opened the Jubilee Street party in Priory Lane supported by the Mayoress, giving Jubilee mugs to the Burford Preschool children.

He hosted the Mayor's reception heralding the start of the Burford Festival, thanking staff and Councillors for their help in making a very successful and enjoyable event.

The Mayor attended an OALC zoom course on managing difficult people and conversations, and also attended the Brize Norton Annual Reception with the Mayoress.

### **9. TREASURER'S REPORT**

The 1<sup>st</sup> quarter expenditure and account balances & reconciliation were circulated.

July payments:

Rachel Kempe (street part face painter)	100. 00
P.Higgs reimbursement (travel expenses)	98. 00
A.K Timms	75. 89
Allan Read (street party stage services)	300. 00
P.Higgs reimbursement (Mayor's Festival reception)	303. 89
Burford PCC (Mayor's reception Warwick Hall hire)	112. 50
Mrs Tunnell-Westmacott (Mayors reception catering)	800. 00
Castle Water Cemetery	18. 35
WODC Tolsey business rates	207. 00
WODC Cemetery business rates	125. 00
Mrs M Andrews	1014. 75
Mr D Buckland	1291. 29
J Yeatman	380. 00
HMRC PAYE	583. 09
Nest Pension	69. 78
Anna Grotex cleaning services	100. 00
Systems & Solutions (Bytesafe)	20. 00
BT business bill	76. 70
McCracken & Son	TBC
Margaret Johnson	92. 40
Hickman Bros	17. 52
Vaughtons (service medals)	862. 32
Petty Cash	50. 00
Castle Water Rec	40. 61

P Higgs reimbursement	79. 99
J Yeatman reimbursement	39. 99
P Higgs reimbursement (Cemetery signage)	67. 87
D Buckland reimbursement B & Q	40. 00

The above were approved and passed for payment.

#### **10. SHILTON ROAD**

OCC have approved the installation of white gates at the south end of Shilton Road by the 30mph signs. These will be erected in due course.

Grass verges. McCrackens are submitting a quotation which will be sent to John Exley of OCC.

OCC are chasing up dropped kerbs.

Play Area Cotswold Gate. Once the play area is completed it will be offered to BTC to buy for one pound. We will receive the £71,916 plus indexation from 2016 according to the S106 agreement. We will need to inspect the finished play area and accept it from Lioncourt and suggest RoSPA carry out the inspection.

Grassed areas on Cotswold Gate. There are a number of grassed areas; we need to find out if we will have to take responsibility for these or whether there will be a management company handling this along with the gas supply etc.

#### **11. CORRESPONDENCE.**

Correspondence has been received from the Burford Environmental Action Group (BEAG) asking the Council to take some basic steps forward to promote and improve Burford's environment. We as a town have planted many trees, voiced our concerns on HGV issues, new housing developments, river pollution and we agreed to support the call for a national Climate & Ecological Emergency Bill (CEE).

BEAG have asked us to consider taking some steps to improve Burford's environment which includes the use of pesticides and any update on the status of the Plastic-free campaign and the river Windrush pollution.

They have also asked us to consider a formal working arrangement between BTC & BEAG.

BTC responded stating all that we have addressed so far: BTC supported the CEE bill by writing to Robert Courts and publishing our support to the community,

Historically BTC have used herbicides throughout public areas of the town where required to keep control of weeds. Tourism is the lifeblood of the town, and it is vital our public areas are kept tidy. We are experimenting with 2 different types of natural herbicides for weed control.

BTC have taken on a plastic free approach for some years, using glass for water in our meetings, paper plates and glasses at other events where possible. We used wooden utensils at the Jubilee Street party, paper plates, cloths, cups. We did use plastic bottled water for attendees for safety measures and found a brand that claimed to use 100% recycled plastic.

We used recycled tin cans for flower arrangements; a lot of work went into providing an ecologically friendly event for the community.

We continue to work closely with WASP supporting them and attending their visits to local Thames Water sites in conjunction with Cllr Field-Johnson, and Council have made significant donations to them.

BTC is elected to support the local community with limited resources for large campaigns. We support regional and central government in their effort to limit climate change.

Community Allotment. Lucy Staveley is keen to promote the Community Allotment by erecting a non-permanent sign on the plot advertising surplus veg to give away. The Chairman of the Allotments and BTC are happy as long as the sign is not permanent. More information will be available on Facebook.

## **12. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Planning.**

22/01709/FUL. Land South of Swan Lane. Erection of two dwellings, tree planting and landscaping.

Council felt this was over-development for the plot, it is too high in the landscape, access is too confined and constrained and it is not compliant with OS2.

22/01763/LBC & 01762/FUL. Warwick Hall. Installation of air source heat pumps with timber enclosure.

Council has no objection but ask that any noise pollution is taken into consideration.

22/01751/HHD & 01752/LBC. 182 The Hill. Rear single storey extension, altering floor to kitchen to remove current ramp to form smaller step and formation of stone outbuilding. No objection.

22/01701/FUL & 01702/LBC. Lloyds Bank, Sheep Street. Conversion to residential dwelling, additional windows on right elevation, removal of strong room to form small courtyard. No objection.

Coles Field. Cllr White reported that the appeal by Greystoke against the refusal by WODC to grant planning permission had closed that day after 8 intensive days. We shall have to wait several weeks and possibly months before the Inspector's decision is known. The Inspector spent a whole day on a site inspection but had not offered any clues as to her ultimate decision. Cllr White had previously expressed the tentative view that the chances of success were 65/35 in our favour. After the appeal his view is that we are now on a knife edge i.e. 50/50. The reason is that during the appeal, WODC collapsed on a crucial point. If a local authority can demonstrate a supply of developable land for 5 years or more, it is much more difficult for a developer to get planning permission. WODC had claimed a 5.3 year land supply but were forced to concede, under cross examination that it was only 3.8.

### **Recreation Ground.**

Cllr Rushton's report was circulated and included the following.

Football Club. The steel container has been delivered. The lease is under consideration.

Toilets – concerns were raised over the way the toilets have been left on occasion.

Investigation required.

Rabbits. Brambles will be cut back around the perimeter to discourage rabbit warrens. There are several options being investigated to control the rabbit population which is causing a lot of damage to the football pitches.

It was noticed that the Scouts wild area is not being maintained. Cllr Taubenheim will bring this up with the Scout committee.

A RoSPA inspection has been booked for the play area.

Recreation Ground plan. Councillors raised several points regarding the future plan. We are very happy with the Community orchard, but focus is needed on the play park, and a trim trail. The current plan was felt to be too large with too many trees obscuring views.

Football facilities: Any refurbishment to the pavilion should be separate from the main plan.

A Recreation & Pavilion committee meeting will be convened, and Lucy Staveley will be asked to also attend.

A request to erect a marquee on Westfield for a wedding has been received. After discussion this was refused.

**Pavilion.** The Church are holding a youth and family picnic on the Rec on the 10 July.

**Environment.** A working party will be held on 13 July to clear debris/weeds from areas in the town.

It has been noted that a couple of metal bollards at Lower High Street are damaged.

**Cemetery.** A Committee meeting will be held on 11 July. Topple testing of memorial stones will be high on the agenda. Signage will be erected warning visitors to the Cemetery of uneven ground and unsafe headstones.

**Traffic.** Cllr White referred to the suggestion, mooted by PCSO Darryn Moulding that Church Lane should be made one way to avoid the clogging up problems. James Wright had been consulted and had come up with two schemes. The first makes Church Lane and Guildenford one way, the second makes Church Lane one way up to Tiverton Villa/entrance to the car park.

The Traffic Committee had met and had decided to recommend the second scheme because the first would have forced all traffic using Witney Street to get to the car park to go onto and down the High Street instead. If the second scheme was to proceed, we would ask for a white cross hatched walk way along the southside of Church Lane. There would have to be public consultation and a robust establishment of the costs involved. The Traffic Committee was authorised to progress the proposal with James Wright.

Mr Ken Gray raised the matter of a radar attachment to the ANPR cameras which would measure the speed and number plate of every vehicle on the High Street and be integrated with the existing ANPR system. The cost including installation and software is £6,108. Discussion took place and we decided not to proceed because it was too expensive. Chris Ball suggested we signed up to the Community Speed Watch.

**Whitehill.** Council agreed to the quote of £195 for a speed survey to be carried out from Whitehill/A40 junction to the Witney Street 20mph signs.

**Burford bridge.** Council felt a full structural survey is required after the bridge was badly damaged.

Cllr Bruce circulated a report on traffic matters. He attended the Oxford Transport & Access Group (OXTRAG). The agenda was very city focused despite it having a County brief. He felt there was a lack of representation from District Councils. The focus is largely about equality of access, such as buses, trains, cycle lanes.

Bus subsidies are due to end in September, No further information to date.

Cllr Bruce helps OCC spot faults with low speed roads (non-A roads and below 30 mph around Burford) including information on those fixed and those outstanding.

**BEAP. (Burford Emergency Action Plan)** Nothing to report.

### **13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.**

The Bowls club have asked for over flow parking on Westfield 13 & 26 July for county matches. All agreed.

Council agreed to planters outside the Tolsey between the bollards.

Several Councillors will be going to Potenza Picena, our twinned town, in September.

An Ocado van damaged a wooden bollard on The Hill. They have agreed to reimburse us for the repair.

The epicormic growth to trees on The Hill, Sheep Street & Witney Street needs cutting back. OCC have said this is within their current schedule for works but it is now overdue and causing vision problems at junctions and driveways.

A Burford resident has asked if they can purchase a seat for the town. We will identify a site and arrange for this to be carried out.

**14. CHARITY MATTERS**

The Tolsey & Thomas Collier Charity annual returns to the Charity Commission were completed on 28 June 2011.

The Tolsey Charity account balance and reconciliation papers were circulated to Councillors.

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