

**Minutes of the Burford Town Council meeting held on
Wednesday 7th February 2024 at 7pm**

Present: Cllr P Higgs – Mayor, Cllr M Taubenheim – Deputy Mayor, Cllr J Tunnell-Westmacott, Cllr D Cohen, Cllr J White, Cllr P Bruce, Cllr S Lofthouse, Cllr J Rushton, Cllr S Palmer, Cllr J Craven, C. Edgar-Hiatt – Clerk.

1. MINUTES. Resolved: The minutes of the Town Council meeting of 3rd January were not approved as there needed to be several corrections made. The January minutes will be presented at March meeting for approval.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES.

Guildenford Car Park. West Oxfordshire District Council are carrying out an online survey of users of the car park. The use of green spaces in the car park for enlarging the car park has been rejected by planning. WODC will repaint the white markings that have faded. Cllr Tunnell-Westmacott requested that the kerbstones at the entrance and inside the car park are also marked white to be easily seen in the dark for health and safety issues. Council will request this to WODC.

Priory Lane Coach Park. Department for Transport will not agree to a new sign on the high street for restricted coach sizes. Councillors are waiting to hear the response from OCC and will continue conversations on this matter with the Department of Transport.

Tree Replanting Coronation Orchard. A letter will be delivered to residents around the site informing them of the new planting and requesting approval. The Council has been awarded £588.00 from the Coronation Fund to plant new trees at Oxford Road Coronation Orchard.

121 High Street. Residents of neighbouring properties are still suffering from the deterioration of the building. The Council will continue to pursue the matter.

WODC Local Plan & Consultation. Four sites in Burford have now been submitted under the ‘Call for Sites’ request by WODC. Councillors will respond to WODC on these submission in due course. Council will put a call for views in local community news feeds asking residents to come forward and responds to the submissions. Councillors would like to hear from residents on their views about the possible sites for development before submitting a response to WODC.

Coles Field. Cllr Higgs informed Council that the current application for development at Coles Field which had gone to appeal has been withdrawn. Resolved.

29 Lower High St. After consulting with neighbours, Council has decided to not move the bin further down the street. Councillors provided information on correct bin allocation to residents which is now sufficient to keep the area tidy. Resolved.

Tolsey Commercial Space, Advertising. Council has started advertising the space and will continue to contact local craftspeople and food producers with availability options for the Tolsey market space. Resolved.

Public Bench Memorial. WODC are to charge the Council a one off £300 licence fee for all benches that the Council puts in the Guildenford Car Park area. Councillors agreed to pay this amount to WODC but will introduce a £100 Installation fee for any future requests for memorial benches on Council land. Resolved.

Parking Wardens. Councillors agreed that parking wardens had been more active in January since Council complained to OCC regarding the lack of wardens in Burford. Clerk will chase OCC further for a more detailed response to the lack of wardens.

Bin Move, A40 Bus Stop. Council noted that the request to move the bin has been registered with WODC and will be moved in due course.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Cllr D Cotterill, Cllr H Ashton WODC, Cllr Field-Johnson OCC and John Yeatman RFO sent their apologies.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

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

Cllr Higgs – Finance. Received reimbursement for private electricity usage for town Christmas lights.

Cllr Tunnell-Westmacott – Cemetery & Environment.

Cllr Rushton - Recreation Ground.

Cllr Cohen – BEAP.

Cllr Taubenheim – Pavilion.

Cllr White – Traffic.

5. COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT. County Cllr Field-Johnson was absent from the meeting. Councillors received a report in advance which was received and noted. Highlights of the report included: Council's Secure £600M Additional Funding Package. Communities Secretary Michael Gove last month announced a total of £600m of additional funding for local authorities in England – including a £500m addition to the social care grant, and a £100m increase in core spending power. OCC is expected to benefit to an amount of approximately £5m.

Budget Proposals. Councillors are still in negotiations regarding the Oxfordshire County Council budget.

Children in Care Costs. *The Times* reported last month that Children's groups have accused private sector-backed firms of making "obscene" profits, charging councils up to £280,000 per year to care for young people. An investigation reveals the average cost of residential care for a child is £5,400 per week, exceeding £10,000 in some cases. Councils pay 25% more than two years ago, and the income of the top 20 independent care operators reached £1.63bn last year, with 19% as profit - up six points from the year before. The House Magazine survey shows the average annual cost of residential placement is £281,000, six times the cost of keeping an adult in prison. The highest annual average was £373,000 in the London borough of Sutton. The Children's Home Association argued: "There is a huge difference between 'profit' and 'profiteering'. The cost increase between public and private provision has been comparable for several years."

Fixmystreet App Improvements. Oxfordshire's FixMyStreet app, which allows residents to report potholes, faulty streetlights and a host of other street defects and queries, has been updated. The number of categories has been streamlined but they have now been split up into sub-categories to make it easier for people to find the section they are looking for. In some cases, more information and illustrations have been provided to help users choose the most appropriate category. The changes are aimed at reducing the number of reports sent to the wrong department or council, which can delay the problem being resolved. The updated version also includes an aerial map of the county, as well as a regular map, to help people pinpoint the location of the problem. The changes will be monitored over the next three months to see what impact they have, and the views of users will be sought. More than 1,000 reports are regularly made to Fix My Street every week, with users encouraged to include photographs of the defect to help the inspectors.

Proposal to Move County Council Offices. After extensive and independent evaluation, and consideration by a cross-party cabinet advisory group on city centre accommodation, it's proposed that the council moves its Oxford headquarters from County Hall to a reimagined Speedwell House campus. The sale or lease of County Hall is expected to meet the refurbishment costs of Speedwell House, which is already owned by OCC.

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT. District Cllr Ashton was absent from the meeting. Councillors received a report in advance which was received and noted. Highlights of the report included:

Guilford Car park. WODC is conducting an on-line survey of users of Guilford and Woodstock to ask about car parking issues.

Publica Transition. A Transition Project Manager has been appointed for the move from Publica back to Council owned administration. The whole process will take a couple of years.

Botley West Solar Farms. WODC is sending a response to what is effectively the Botley West Solar Farms 'pre-application' draft masterplan. It is pointing out that many aspects of the proposal will have a significant harmful impact on the setting of heritage assets and conservation areas, major visual impacts and potential noise impacts. A much fuller response will be submitted when the developer's final proposal is submitted to the Inspector.

7. OTHER MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION

Emergency Plan Review and Approve. Councillors approved the updated Emergency Plan. Resolved.

Approval of Bollards, Burford Hill. Council agreed to get the full expense of purchasing and installing Burford green anti ram type bollards to install in several grassed areas on The Hill in Burford. This is to stop cars driving on to the grass verge and damaging the grass. Councillors agreed to monitor the illegal parking

on double yellow lined areas of The Hill and will be putting notices on cars that park in these places and reporting the violation to OCC parking enforcement.

Dates for Yearly Events, Confirm. Council approved the dates for significant events in the year.

Risk Register Review. Councillors were briefed on the need for a risk register. Cllr Bruce was nominated as the new risk assessment officer for Council. A draft register will be presented at next month's meeting.

Pavilion. Councillors agreed that the Pavilion needs a health and safety check. Councillors agreed to postpone all hiring of the Pavilion for events until the building has been deemed safe.

Risk Policy Review and Approve. Councillors requested more time to review the Risk Policy and the matter will be reviewed at next meeting.

Publication Scheme Review and Approve. Councillors requested more time to review the Publication Scheme and the matter will be reviewed at next meeting.

8. MAYORS REPORT

The Mayor, Cllr Higgs, reported no events this month.

9. TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr Yeatman was absent from the meeting but gave his report on finance in advance of the meeting.

<u>Payments February 2024.</u>	
Cotswold Connect (Inv 1535)	£31.80
Castle Water Tolsey (568 Rec)	£46.35
That Event Company (Xmas Lights).	£1980.00
Mr P Higgs (EL for Xmas Lights)	£50.11
Castle Water (082 Tolsey)	£5.25
Castle Water (265 Cemetery)	£8.46
**Paid in Jan. after BTC Meeting	
WODC (Tolsey business rates)	£0.00
WODC (Cemetery business rates)	£0.00
Salaries –Services for Burford Town Council	£2458.50
HMRC PAYE	£370.07
Nest Pension	£75.04
A. Grotex Cleaning Services	£120.00
Systems & Solutions (Bytesafe)	£20.00
BT business bill	£71.50
AK Timms	£35.56
Hickman Bros	£39.62
CPRE (2024/25 Annual Membership)	£60.00
Petty Cash	£0.00
<u>Income January 2024</u>	
Interest	£458.19
Civic Service Collection (for charity)	£612.59
Cadet Hut Rent	£310.41
Media, Filming Donation	£150.00
Football Fees	£150.00

The above was approved and passed for payment.

Clerk Signatory. Councillors approved the addition of the new Clerk, Christina Edgar Hiatt to be added as a signatory for the Council bank accounts.

Declared Value of Play Equipment. Councillors agreed the value of Proludic playground and new Shilton Road playground declared value of £150,000 to be noted to insurers.

Accounting Software to Adopt. Councillors agreed and approved the use of a new accounting software for the Council to be used by the Clerk. The initial Scribe fee for the software will be £1,157 for the year. Resolved.

10. CORRESPONDENCE.

There was correspondence regarding several matters.

Councillors wished to note that the cemetery and graveyard memorial stones are all tested annually. In regard to the bonfire queries the following was stated:

The Council does the utmost to keep the recreation ground clean during bonfire and firework season.

Council's policy is to not sell sparklers but unfortunately people bring their own to the site. There is a clean up after the event and most rubbish including sparklers are taken from the site. The Council cannot provide buckets for rubbish due to the health and safety risk as a trip hazard in the dark. The Council has to put a boundary mesh fence around the bonfire site to help the grass grow again and protect children from the nails that come off the burnt wood.

A request to remove the dog bin from the playground in the recreation ground was received and noted. The Clerk has requested this removal to WODC.

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning.

24/00003/LBC Old Beams 145 The Hill Burford – Councillors made no objections to this planning application.

24/00064/LBC Bay Tree Hotel Sheep St Burford – Councillors objected to this application due to the excessive light pollution coming off the proposed lights.

24/00066/LBC Lamb Inn Sheep St Burford - Councillors objected to this application due to the excessive light pollution coming off the proposed lights.

24/00082/HHD 5 Swan Lane Close Burford – Councillors made no objections to this planning application.

Recreation Ground.

A report on the Recreation Ground was given by Cllr Rushton which was received and noted.

New Playground Equipment.

The playground committee will now start to make plans for the opening ceremony event which will hopefully be on the 25th March 2024. Councillors agreed to spend up to £250 for the event. Installation of the new playground is going well. Tree roots from cherry tree will need to be ground down. Cllr Rushton has contacted Mr Weir to help with this matter. Councillors approved Witney Signs at £732.83 for the new playground sign. Councillors approved a second sign of approximately £700 for the Shilton Road new playground.

Rec Maintenance. SSE have confirmed a survey of the trees on Tanners Lane which are close to electricity cables has been done but the Council has not had a response from them yet on what action is to be taken.

Tree Survey. Councillors reviewed the quotes for tree maintenance and agreed to the following contractors. Mr Weir to be contracted to do maintenance of the Churchyard trees. Treotech to be contracted to carry out maintenance work on the trees in the recreation ground and the cemetery. Quotes will now be sought for a full-scale tree survey on Council land.

Trees, Tanners Lane. Clerk to contact Highways in regard to overgrown hedge on A40/Tanners Lane.

Pavilion. A report on the Pavilion was given by Cllr Taubenheim, which was received and noted. Some ceiling tiles have been replaced due to water damage.

Environment. A report on Environment was given by Cllr Tunnell-Westmacott which was received and noted.

Cemetery. A report on the Cemetery was given by Cllr Tunnell-Westmacott, which was received and noted.

Climate Change. A report on Climate Change and an action plan was given by Cllr Craven which Councillors received and noted.

Councillors agreed to go ahead with the Climate Change Action Plan.

Traffic. A report on Traffic was given by Cllr White which Councillors received and noted.

Other reports. None.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS.

Cllr White noted his attendance at WODC forum on the Oxfordshire Charter and gave a review to Councillors.

Cotswold Connect have put in two new CCTV cameras to replace the faulty cameras.

15. CHARITY MATTERS

There were no charity matters to discuss.

The meeting concluded at 9.22pm.

Chairperson's Signature.....

Date.....