

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
THE WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
ON TUESDAY 19th MAY 2020
HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING**

PRESENT:

Cllr M Parkinson (Mayor)

Cllr J Bleakley

Cllr P Jay

Cllr U Parkinson

Cllr E Poskitt

Cllr T Redpath

Cllr A Grant (Deputy Mayor)

Cllr J Cooper

Cllr S Parnes

Cllr S Rasch

Cllr P Redpath

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: The Clerk, Mrs Janine Saxton, CClr I Hudspeth, two member of the public and Kate Begley as she will be writing a summary of the meeting for the Woodstock and Bladon News.

WTC28/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

No apologies for absence received.

WTC29/20 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST:

No disclosures of interest received

WTC30/20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION:

Mr Dennis Allen, Chair of Wake Up To Woodstock addressed Council to confirm that the committee of Wake up to Woodstock had expressed interest in having a Banking Hub located in Woodstock. They believe that it would be helpful to local businesses in general and to residents of Woodstock and the surrounding villages.

WTC31/20 COMMUNICATIONS:

The Mayor briefly updated Council on 2 Market Street. He confirmed that the lease on this property had expired and Property Agent had met with the outgoing tenant on 15th May to complete the handover of the keys. Arrangements had also been made for the locks to be changed and for contractors to commence work, hopefully before the end of the current week, whilst adhering to the Government social distancing guidelines.

The Mayor also confirmed that the Staffing Panel had approved the request from the Administrative Assistant to return to work in the Town Hall office on a trial basis for two mornings at the end of the current week. The Staffing Panel had considered the Government 'Back to Work' guidelines in detail and were satisfied that these could be adhered to by the Administrative Assistant. The Town Hall would remain closed to members of the public, the Administrative Assistant would comply with the lone working risk assessment that has been put in place and with all relevant health and safety measures related to workplace cleanliness and hygiene.

WTC32/20 QUESTIONS

No questions had been received.

WTC33/20 MOTIONS PRESENTED TO THE COUNCIL:

There were no motions presented to Council.

WTC34/20 CO-OPTION TO CASUAL VACANCY IN OFFICE OF TOWN COUNCILLOR:

The Mayor confirmed that the process of voting for the two applicants who had applied to fill the vacancy would be by show of hands.

Cllr E Poskitt commented that both candidates had submitted impressive applications and should be thanked for being prepared to stand for Council.

There was a discussion concerning the co-option procedures as Council had no written co-option procedure. The Mayor confirmed that the Town Council would explore developing co-option procedure in the future.

The Mayor proposed that a vote was taken which was seconded by the Deputy Mayor. Cllr S Parnes requested a named vote.

VOTE:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| In favour of co-opting Les Burnham | 8 | Cllrs A Grant, M Parkinson, P Jay T Redpath, P Redpath, J Cooper, E Poskitt & U Parkinson |
| In favour of co-opting Jo Lamb | 3 | Cllrs S Parnes, J Bleakley & S Rasch |

RESOLVED: Les Burnham was voted onto the Council and once his signed declaration of acceptance of office had been received, Council would look forward to him joining their June meeting.

Cllr T Redpath offered congratulations to Les Burnham on behalf of the Council.

WTC35/20 APPROVAL OF INVOICES:

The lack of information received from Freeths in relation to a breakdown of the costs for work undertaken to date on the lease for 6 Park Street and rates charged was discussed by the Council.

The Mayor proposed the following motion which was seconded by the Deputy Mayor:-

that the invoice from Freeths Solicitors be approved for payment

Cllr S Parnes requested a named vote.

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------|---|---|
| VOTE: | For: | 2 | Cllrs P Jay and J Cooper |
| | Against: | 8 | Cllr T Redpath, P Redpath, A Grant, M Parkinson, J Bleakley, S Rasch, U Parkinson and S Parnes |
| | Abstaining: | 1 | Cllr E Poskitt |

RESOLVED: The motion fell and the Clerk was asked the request a breakdown of the costs for work undertaken to date on the lease for 6 Park Street and rates charged from Freeths.

Cllr S Parnes proposed the following motion which was seconded by The Mayor:-

that a polite letter is written to the Council's legal advisors asking them to please be sure that in future any invoices are accompanied or contain an itemisation of the work for which they are billing the Council.

VOTE: For: 11 Against: 0 Abstained: 0

RESOLVED: The motion was carried.

Cllr J Bleakley stated that the fees the Council were being charged to prepare leases were high. Cllr P Jay clarified that the Council can seek advice from alternative legal advisers despite having approved Freeths as their solicitor at the Annual Town Council meeting. Cllr J Bleakley offered to look into alternative local solicitors that Council could use for the preparation of commercial leases.

It was agreed to reiterate to the Council's Property Agent that alternative solicitors can be used to ensure that best value is being obtained in relation to the preparation of commercial leases on behalf of the Council.

The Mayor proposed the following motion which was seconded by the Deputy Mayor:-

that the invoice for the Annual Premium of £7,417.69 from Zurich Insurance was approved for payment

The Deputy Mayor brought to the Council's attention that this was the final year of the 5 year contract with Zurich and quotes would need to be obtained for a new contract towards the end of the year.

VOTE: For: 10 Against: 0 Abstained: 1 (Cllr S Parnes)

Cllr S Parnes requested that his vote to abstain was recorded as a named vote.

RESOLVED: The motion was carried.

WTC36/20 BANKING OPPORTUNITY:

Following on from Dennis Allen's address to Council as the Chair of Wake Up To Woodstock, Cllr T Redpath expressed her support for the trial of community based branch infrastructure sharing opportunity and encouraged Council to put in a bid to be part of the trial as WTC can pull out if necessary. She also suggested that Council should only go forward with the trial (if chosen) if they have the support of Wake Up Woodstock as they would have to take the lead on it. Cllr E Poskitt supported Cllr T Redpath's suggestion and reiterated that it is a community based application. The issue of a suitable venue being available was raised as was the pollution from having to travel to Kidlington, Witney or Oxford to using banking facilities.

The Mayor's computer froze at this point in the meeting and the Deputy Mayor took over as temporary chair of the meeting.

Cllr P Jay expressed concern as to how much the facility would be used if Woodstock were chosen to participate in the trial.

Cllr P Redpath proposed the following motion which was seconded by Cllr T Redpath:-

Woodstock Town Council submit an application to take part in the trial with the provisional support of Wake Up to Woodstock but WTC can pull out of the trial if they feel that they do not have the support from WUTW or the local community.

VOTE: For: 8 Against: 1 Abstained: 1

RESOLVED: The motion was carried.

The Mayor re-joined the meeting to vote and then resumed chairing the meeting.

WTC37/20 WOODSTOCK DESIGNATED GREEN SPACES:

It was confirmed that a second grant application was in the process of being submitted and the next stage of the process is to undertake public consultation which can be completed online although a referendum could not be completed until next year. Cllr T Redpath said that the Council may be able to negotiate with Troy Planning to complete the online public consultation if it was only required for the Designated Green Spaces.

At this point Cllr T Redpath informed the Council that she had been in contact with OALC to clarify the requirement for public consultation when submitting the application for the Public Work Loan Board (PWLB) for the Lawn Cemetery Extension. OALC confirmed that regulations had changed in 2015 and Councils now have to show that they have public support for projects where the precept would be increased. As a result of her discussion with OALC, Cllr T Redpath suggested that a lower key consultation process be conducted for the Lawn Cemetery Extension. Putting up notices on town noticeboards, on the website, using local facebook groups and putting a notice in the Woodstock & Bladon News could inform local people fairly widely. This could be accompanied by access to the historic information that the Council has put out to the public arena over the past 9 years. This may suffice to support the loan application. If the information proved insufficient for the PWLB, the Town Council would then learn what additional information was needed.

Cllr T Redpath proposed the following motion which was seconded by Cllr E Poskitt:-

that the Council ask Troy Planning if they would be able to complete the public consultation required for the Designated Green Spaces. The Council would see if it can come up with another arrangement for the Cemetery Extension public consultation rather than setting up an account with an online survey provider.

A vote was taken.

VOTE: For: 10 Against: 0 Abstained: 1

RESOLVED: The motion was carried.

WTC38/20 INTRODUCTION OF A POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT FOR FORMALISATION & CONSISTENCY OF COUNCIL CO-OPTIONS:

This agenda item was deferred to the June meeting due to Cllr S Parnes having technical issues with his computing equipment which had affected his ability to produce a report.

The Mayor informed Council that he would circulate a copy of a motion passed in 2016 relating to the submission of agenda items and reports. Councillors should abide by the deadlines specified within that motion.

WTC39/20 WYCHWOOD REPORT FOR PERIOD OCTOBER 2019 – MARCH 2020:

The report from the Wychwood Project for the period from October 2019 to March 2020 was noted.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm