

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
WOODSTOCK TOWN COUNCIL MAYOR'S COMMITTEE
HELD AT 7:30 PM ON TUESDAY 24th July 2012
IN THE MAYOR'S PARLOUR, WOODSTOCK TOWN HALL**

PRESENT:

Cllrs Mr B Yoxall (Town Mayor)	Cllr Mrs E Stokes (Deputy Mayor)
Cllr E Poskitt	Cllr P Jay
Cllr R Gunthardt	Cllr S Parnes
Cllr J Cooper	

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Cllrs Carritt, Mrs Richardson and approximately 50 members of the public.

MC/1/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Mrs Edwards

MC/2/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

MC/3/12 CHAIRMANSHIP

The committee confirmed that the Mayor will be Chairman of the Mayor's Committee.

MC/4/12 TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DELEGATED POWERS

The terms of reference of this committee and delegated powers are attached as Appendix A of these minutes.

The Mayor asked the Committee to agree to bring forward Agenda item 7 followed by Agenda Item 5 and Cllrs agreed to do so.

MC/5/12 OLD WOODSTOCK PLAY AREA LICENCE

The Mayor reported that on 16th July 2012 WTC received an eviction notice from solicitors representing Caledonia Land and Property Ltd giving WTC until 31st August 2012 to vacate the play area at Rosamund Drive, Old Woodstock. The following actions were then taken by WTC.

(i) The Clerk immediately forwarded the letter to the council's solicitors and asked them to confirm the legal position.

(ii) The Old Woodstock Play Area was included as an agenda item for this meeting of the Mayor's Committee.

(iii) The Mayor and Deputy Mayor met with the Clerk and decided to call a Town Meeting that will be held at 7.30pm on Friday 17th August 2012 in the Community Centre. Caledonia Land and Property Ltd will be invited to participate in this meeting.

(iv) The Mayor has emailed the Woodstock MP (David Cameron) and County Cllr (Ian Hudspeth), made them aware of the situation and invited them to attend

the town meeting. Mr Cameron's office has advised that they are making enquiries into this matter.

Discussion followed during which some residents raised the fear that the WTC eviction from the play area suggested that Caledonia Land and Property Ltd might be planning to build houses on this area of land. The recommendations of the WTC solicitor were read out by the town clerk. The Town Clerk recommended that residents start a petition and involve residents from other parts of the town as the closure of this play area would impact upon them.

Cllr Poskitt proposed, Cllr Gunthardt, seconded and the Mayor's Committee unanimously

RESOLVED

That WTC deplores the actions of Caledonia Land and Property Ltd., and the notice they have served on the Council to quit the Old Woodstock Play Area. Caledonia Land and Property Ltd. claim to be 'an investment company with strong family values, [who] believe in the highest standards of integrity and take our environmental and social responsibilities very seriously. Each year we make small donations to charities with a connection to our historic interests or portfolio companies. We also encourage employees to support local voluntary organisations and charitable causes.' We seek assurances from Caledonia that they will engage with us in face to face dialogue with the Council in order to find a solution to the problem that will not require the children of Old Woodstock to travel to the far side of the town for recreation.

It was recommended that letters be sent to His Grace, The Duke of Marlborough and also Charles Ponsonby, Chairman of the Oxfordshire Association for Young People (OAYP) .

Cllr Carritt left the meeting at this point.

MC/6/12

FINANCE MATTERS

(i) Timetable for Finance Matters for the Year

The committee noted the timetable for finance matters for 2012.

(ii) Calendar of Internal Reviews

The Finance Assistant explained what the internal reviews are and why it is important that some are undertaken on a regular basis. WTC follows the national guidelines. One key requirement is for the bank reconciliation to be examined regularly. WTC currently requires 3 Cllrs to undertake the internal reviews, however WTC now has less Cllrs and there are availability issues. It was therefore recommended that in future two Cllrs would undertake the internal reviews, the bank reconciliation would be checked bi-monthly and that in every other month a different one of the other existing internal reviews would be undertaken. The Mayor endorsed these recommendations as did Cllr Jay who reminded Cllrs of their obligation to check the council's financial management.

RESOLVED (Unanimous)

That two Cllrs will undertake the internal reviews, the bank reconciliation will be checked bi-monthly and that in every other month a different one of the other existing internal reviews will be undertaken.

(iii) Review of the Internal Auditor

The clerk reported that it was normal practice to periodically review its service providers including the internal auditor. Two quotations for this service have already been obtained and a third is being sought.

RESOLVED

That details of the quotations will be reported to the next Mayor's Committee meeting.

(iv) Review of the Risk Assessment

The clerk noted that the current risk assessment package was cumbersome and took a long time to action. She reported that Cllr Carritt has indicated his willingness to help review and streamline the current process. Cllr Poskitt also offered to assist with this project.

RESOLVED

That the clerk will work with Cllrs Carritt and Poskitt to review and simplify the WTC risk assessment.

(v) Revised Barclays Bank Mandate

It was agreed that the Barclays bank mandate needs to be amended to remove former Cllrs and add those current Cllrs that are usually available during the day as signatories.

RESOLVED

That the Barclays Bank Mandate should be amended - this will require affirmation by the full town council in order that this resolution is minuted in the town council minutes.

(vi) Electronic Banking

Electronic banking was discussed.

RESOLVED

The town clerk will confirm with NALC what councils are permitted to do and also ask Banbury Town Council for details of their procedure for using BACS payments.

(vii) Review of Grants Policy

The clerk recommended that the Grants Policy and paperwork be reviewed as good practice. She presented the key differences between current WTC procedures and those of a 'quality' council based in Oxfordshire.

RESOLVED

(i) The Clerk will review the current application form and present the updated version to full council for consideration in August.

(ii) The Clerk will present recommendations for a new policy document to the next Mayor's committee meeting.

(iii) The deadline for the receipt of properly completed grant applications will be 27th October 2012.

Cllr J Cooper had been unable to attend the start of the meeting due to a previous district council commitment but joined the Mayor's committee meeting at this point.

MC/7/12 PLANNING MATTERS

(i) The Holdings

It was noted that the Clerk had worked with Cllr Parnes to draft a letter to Mr A Tucker at WODC to enquire why the objections of residents and WTC to this planning application had been ignored. The Mayor has also written to Mr Barry Norton at WODC separately.

(ii) Planning Application

The committee received and considered the following planning application.

Ref: 12/1109/P/FP – 8 Park Lane, Woodstock

Erection of single storey rear extension and dormer window.

RESOLVED

That WTC has no comment to make about this planning application.

MC/8/12 PROPERTY MATTERS

RESOLVED

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

That in view of the special or confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are asked to withdraw whilst the next item was discussed.

(i) War Memorial

The need for, and potential cost of, cleaning the War Memorial (particularly the surrounding flag stones) was discussed. The Mayor reported that the cleaning of the flag stones was a H&S matter of some urgency. One quotation has already been received.

RESOLVED (4 votes for, non against)

That the Clerk will seek further quotations in order to try and ensure that the flag stones around the War Memorial are cleaned before 8th August 2012.

(ii) Meeting with Carter Jonas

The Mayor reported that he and Cllr Parnes had recently met with the WTC property managers, Carter Jonas. The clerk asked that she be included in any future meetings with Carter Jonas.

(iii) Leases and Rent Arrears

Cllr Poskitt reported on progress with various leases, reported upon the current rent arrears and also upon the meeting that she had attended at the town hall with the town clerk, finance officer and a member of Carter Jonas staff. The new CMfP, Cllr Parnes had been unable to attend this meeting.

The council then went back into open session.

MC/9/12 TO CONSIDER POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS

The committee considered possible amendments to the Standing Orders in respect of:

(i) Voting powers of the Mayor/Deputy Mayor

RECOMMENDED

The Mayor's Committee recommends that Standing Order 15(c) is amended to entitle the Mayor and Deputy Mayor to vote when they attend committees *ex officio*.

(ii) Former S.O. 72

RECOMMENDED

The Mayor's Committee recommends that the former S.O. 72 "If a member of the public interrupts proceedings at any meeting the Chairman may, after warning, order that they be removed from the Council chamber, and may adjourn the meeting for such period as is necessary to restore order" is reinstated.

MC/10/12 DIAMOND VOLUNTEERS

RESOLVED

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

That in view of the special or confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are asked to withdraw whilst this item was discussed.

(i) To Confirm Action Taken

The Mayor reported that he had approached the person approved by the full council. The person was grateful to be nominated but declined the nomination.

(ii) To Consider Other Nominations

No other nominations were made for the Diamond Volunteers Award.

The meeting finished at 8.45pm

Signed.....

Date:.....

Appendix A

Mayor's Committee Terms of Reference and Delegated Powers:

a) General administrative matters:-

i) Terms of reference:-

- (1) All such matters not otherwise specified;
- (2) Cohesion between all council policies e.g. newsletter, web site, staff ;

ii) Delegated powers – Minor and/or urgent executive action in line with council policies;

b) Finance:-

i) Terms of reference – all aspects of the council's financial affairs, including budgets, accounts, audits, risk, insurance, tax, financial regulations and precept;

ii) Delegated powers:-

- (1) Financial Regulations provided that "The clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the council which is necessary to carry out any repair replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £500. The clerk shall report the action to the council as soon as practicable thereafter". The Mayor's/finance committee shall have similar powers up to a limit of £1000;
- (2) To set a timetable for the annual budget process, subject to overrule by the council;
- (3) To decide on all matters to do with VAT, including registration etc.;
- (4) To decide routine adjustments in staff remuneration (other than for the clerk);
- (5) To decide routine matters related to audit, risk management and annual accounts;

c) Personnel:-

i) Terms of reference:-

- (1) Administrative matters;
- (2) IT ;
- (3) Compliance with freedom of information and data protection requirements;
- (4) Recruitment;
- (5) The terms and conditions of employment of the Council's staff, excluding the clerk/RFO;
- (6) The personnel policies of the council;
- (7) Training;

- (8) The terms and conditions of employment of the clerk/RFO/proper officer; and
- (9) Annual review of staff remuneration;
- ii) Delegated powers – minor, routine and/or urgent decisions in line with council policies on:-
 - (1) Administrative matters;
 - (2) IT ;
 - (3) Compliance with freedom of information and data protection requirements;
 - (4) Recruitment;
 - (5) The terms and conditions of employment of the council's staff, excluding the clerk/RFO; and
 - (6) Training;
- d) Rules and constitutional:-
 - i) Terms of reference:-
 - (1) Advice and comment on local government law;
 - (2) Standing Orders;
 - (3) Code of conduct;
 - (4) Other matters pertinent to the constitutional,, legal and regulatory framework within which the council, council staff and councillors operate;
 - ii) To decide minor and routine matters in line with council policies related to:-
 - (1) Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, not including changes;
 - (2) the council's legal and constitutional environment;
 - (3) the code of conduct; and
 - (4) authorization of budgeted expenditure on legal advice up to £1000;
- e) Strategy:-
 - i) Terms of reference - all matters of council strategy affecting the future character and integrity of the Woodstock community; and
 - ii) Delegated powers - None;
- f) Planning:-
 - i) Terms of reference:-
 - (1) All planning matters of concern to Woodstock;
 - ii) Delegated Powers:-
 - (1) Extensions and internal or external alterations to domestic properties where the gross application area does not exceed 25% of the floor area of the main building;

- (2) Other small residential proposals of less than one complete house, such as a garage, free-standing conservatory or workroom;
 - (3) Internal alterations only for business premises; and
 - (4) Liquor and entertainment licenses;
- g) Property –
- i) Terms of reference:-
 - (1) To develop for the council's approval a budget for the management of town Council property including the contract with the property agents;
 - (2) To review and make recommendations to the council on the performance of the property agents on a regular basis and to oversee renewal of contract or re-tendering for the contract;
 - (3) To recommend terms and conditions for hire of council property;
 - (4) To nominate for the council's approval a specific councillor and a deputy to act as liaison with town clerk and property agents over both the urgent and the minor everyday property matters which need council advice/input; and
 - (5) Supervising the clerk's responsibility to ensure that the town hall and community centre comply with all relevant legislation (e.g. health and safety), appropriate licensing and proper maintenance;
 - ii) Delegation:-
 - (1) To agree minor, routine and urgent terms and conditions for hire of council property in line with council policies;
 - (2) To liaise with the council's property agents over management of the property; and
 - (3) To approve minor, routine and urgent decisions on fees, booking forms and terms and conditions for the town hall and community centre;