

Didcot Town Council

Extra Ordinary full Council Meeting

Monday 18th July 2022 at 7.30pm

Main Hall, Didcot Civic Hall



Minutes

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a true and correct record by the next meeting of the Council.

PRESENT

Councillors:

P Siggers (Mayor)	M Khan (Leader)
A Macdonald (Deputy Mayor)	D Macdonald (Deputy Leader)
D Chandran	M McNeill
A Dearlove	J Moody
J Durman	D Rouane
V Haval	B Service
A Hudson	A Thompson
M Mallows	M Walsh
A Sandiford	C Wilson

Officers:

Janet Wheeler - Town Clerk
Nicholas White – Property & Facilities Manager

Five members of the public were also present plus two representatives from company, Splash. The Mayor suspended standing orders to allow members of the public to address the meeting.

Public participation

Ms Cath Convery spoke of the motion on the agenda to introduce 20mph speed limit throughout Didcot. She asked questions about what wider research had been done before putting this motion to Council. She asked if any modelling had been done on the effect this would have on Didcot roads. She mentioned the impact to other road users including buses; cars; emergency vehicles; cyclists and pedestrians. She questioned whether this would impact on local pollution with vehicles moving at a slower speed. She also asked where the money would come to enforce this scheme.

Standing orders were reinstated.

41. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs P Giesberg; Cllr E Hards and Cllr P Davies.

42. To receive declarations of interests

None declared.

43. To discuss the documents in relation to the new Community Building at Edmonds Park

The papers circulated to the Councillors covered the project estimate for the new sports and community pavilion at Edmonds Park. The project has been assessed by our consultants at a total of £2,769,800 plus VAT. This sum includes a risk allowance of £502,000 and inflation at £72,900. Cllr M Khan spoke in favour of going ahead with the project using a loan from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) and possible grants from other sources to bring the cost down. The Chair of Finance, Cllr J Moody said that borrowing from the PWLB is the cheapest form of borrowing and the Town Council can afford the repayments. The building was long awaited and would be a great legacy for the people of Didcot.

The Councillors asked questions about the project. Cllr J Durman wanted to know if council tax would be increased. Cllr J Moody said that the current income from the Civic Hall meant that any increase in the precept would be minimal. Cllr A Hudson spoke in favour of the project. Cllr B Service asked if we met the criteria for borrowing from National Association of Local Councils (NALC) for such a large sum of money or was this against their advice? It was explained that this application would need to be approved by the County branch before going to the NALC offices in London. Cllr D Rouane spoke in favour of this project and spoke of other towns that had successfully built their new pavilions. He spoke of other sources of funding and suggested that the sports clubs may be willing to fund raise.

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr J Moody to go ahead with the new sports and community pavilion in Edmonds Park at a cost of £2.8 m plus VAT. A recorded vote was requested.

Recorded vote

	For	Against	Abstention
Cllr D Chandran	x		
Cllr P Davies	-	-	-
Cllr A Dearlove	x		
Cllr J Durman	x		
Cllr P Giesberg	-	-	-

Cllr E Hards	-	-	-
Cllr V Haval	x		
Cllr A Hudson	x		
Cllr M Khan	x		
Cllr A Macdonald	x		
Cllr D Macdonald	x		
Cllr M Mallows	x		
Cllr M McNeill	x		
Cllr J Moody	x		
Cllr D Rouane	x		
Cllr A Sandiford	x		
Cllr B Service	x		
Cllr P Siggers	x		
Cllr A Thompson	x		
Cllr M Walsh	x		
Cllr C Wilson	x		

The vote was IN FAVOUR – unanimous.

44. To discuss the documents and design in relation to the proposed new Splash Park at Edmonds Park

Cllr A Macdonald said that this project was a matter of civic pride. He said that neighbouring towns all had splash parks but Didcot has no such facilities – and these facilities should be free for all residents to enjoy. The size of the splash park should be appropriate for Didcot even though this had increased the cost to around £450,000 + vat. It was considered that with £200,000 in reserves, it would be possible to commit to this project with minimal impact on the budget. Applications for grants and other sources of funding would potentially offset some of the cost.

The Councillors asked questions. Cllr J Durman asked whether this was the right time when the cost of living was a challenge to many Didcot families. Cllr A Macdonald said that this facility would be free for every Didcot family and he felt that this was the right time. Cllr A Hudson was in favour of going ahead as quickly as possible. Cllr A Dearlove had concerns over whether the Council could afford the splash park. Cllr M Khan felt that this would be a great asset for Didcot and the community has asked for this facility. Cllr B Service wanted to know when something of substance would be provided at Ladygrove Park. There were further comments regarding running costs; facilities for the disabled and the fact that the grounds works could be done at the same time as the pavilion thus making some savings.

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald and seconded by Cllr D Macdonald to go ahead with the splash park at a cost in the region of £450,000 + VAT. A recorded vote was requested.

Recorded vote

	For	Against	Abstention
Cllr D Chandran	x		
Cllr P Davies	-	-	-
Cllr A Dearlove			x
Cllr J Durman			x
Cllr P Giesberg	-	-	-
Cllr E Hards	-	-	-
Cllr V Haval	x		
Cllr A Hudson	x		
Cllr M Khan	x		
Cllr A Macdonald	x		
Cllr D Macdonald	x		
Cllr M Mallows	x		
Cllr M McNeill	x		
Cllr J Moody	x		
Cllr D Rouane	x		
Cllr A Sandiford	x		
Cllr B Service			x
Cllr P Siggers	x		
Cllr A Thompson	x		
Cllr M Walsh	x		
Cllr C Wilson	x		

The vote was 15 - IN FAVOUR; 3 – ABSTENTIONS. The company “Splash” would need to apply for planning permission on behalf of DTC. The contract would then be put on the Contracts Finder website in order to seek applications to carry out the build.

45. To consider the funding of the new community pavilion and splash park

The Town Clerk circulated documents with the agenda to detail the process of applying for a loan from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB). Cllr M Khan spoke

in support of the application to the PWLB and said that all the requirements to support and publicise this decision would be followed. Cllr V Haval spoke of the details of the loan application and how the Council would afford the repayments – she asked whether the application would come back to Council. Cllr M Khan said that the details would be made available to all Councillors but would not necessarily be on an agenda.

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr J Moody and RESOLVED to make an application for a loan from PWLB for £2.8 million to fund the new sports and community pavilion at Edmonds Park. The VAT would put the total up to £3.2 million but there were options to deal with the VAT that the Council would need to consider at a later stage in the project. This sum is in addition to the £450,000 needed for the new splash park which would not be part of the loan application.

The vote was: 14 - IN FAVOUR; 4 – AGAINST.

46. To consider the recommendations from the Planning & Development Committee in relation to the parking proposals for Hayden Road

This scheme was considered in detail at the meeting of the Planning & Development Committee held on 13th July 2022. The Committee recommended supporting the proposal but members wanted to submit the following comments to OCC:

- In relation to point 2 on the correspondence, the Committee did not feel that residents of Compton Close should be able to apply for permits on the adjacent roads (Lydalls Road and Station Road). As stated, Compton Close is an unadopted road and has its own private parking. Either the land is included in the scheme or it isn't.
- The Committee felt that the short stay bays should be limited to a 30 minute stay instead of two hours.
- The Committee suggested that some short stay bays be investigated by OCC for the bottom of Station Road (could be used for school drop off and pickup), decreasing the number of short stay bays on Lydalls Road and freeing up spaces on Lydalls Road for residents.
- The Committee recognised the limitations for resident spaces in these areas.
- The Committee requested that the text for the information to residents be amended to recognise that this is Didcot and not Oxford. Para 3 refers to “official business from the Oxford area” documentation believed to have been taken from the Botley, Cowley, Summertown, Headington or County Library for verification, when the most convenient location is Didcot Library.
- The Committee would like clarification on the process following the public advertisement. Could the proposals be amended as a result of public response or is it a matter of accepting or rejecting?

Cllr C Wilson proposed two amendments which were seconded by Cllr J Moody:

Amendment 1: The problem of “end on “ parking in Lydells Road should be approached in a different way by the scheme. (For example, paint a “box” for parallel parking). Double yellow lines will mean the loss of at least one space.

Amendment 2: The overall number of spaces in the scheme may be too small, particularly for those who do not have drives or garages. This may impact the success of the scheme and its use as a demonstrator for the town. DTC invites OCC to find a solution to this problem.

Cllr D Macdonald accepted both amendments. It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald and seconded by Cllr J Moody and RESOLVED approve the comments detailed above including both amendments - and to send these comments to OCC. There was one abstention.

47. To comment on the report from SODC concerning the Community Governance Review and the representation in Didcot wards

Cllr M Khan reminded the Council of the three requests forwarded to SODC in the previous consultation. SODC had made some suggestions on revising the numbers of Councillors in the Didcot wards to achieve a more even representation.

Cllr M Khan proposed that Council note these comments and send back our original three requests for further review at the SODC Governance Committee meeting on 8th September 2022. DTC would then get another chance to comment on the recommendations. This proposal was seconded by Cllr A Hudson.

Cllr J Durman spoke to say that this did not resolve the issue of unequal representation in the Didcot wards. Cllr D Rouane spoke as Leader of SODC to say that he was not able to intervene in the electoral arrangements for the District.

The vote in favour was unanimous.

48. To note a report regarding the water quality at the Ladygrove Lakes and urgent playgroup repairs

Cllr A Macdonald spoke to say that these items were on the Extra Ordinary meeting agenda because the Environment & Climate Committee had been cancelled in favour of this meeting. The Ladygrove Lakes was an urgent item because the warm weather was making the welfare of the fish critical.

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald and seconded by Cllr C Wilson and RESOLVED to ask the outdoor team to go ahead with the order of a new pump. The vote was unanimous.

Cllr B Service spoke in favour of turning the small lake into a reed bed to filter the water into the main lake. This would be taken in to account by the E&C Committee.

49. To consider a proposal relating to the Didcot Farmer's Market at the Civic Hall car park

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr J Durman and RESOLVED to delegate this item to the Property & Facilities Committee. The request should be treated like a booking.

50. To consider the motion from Cllr D Rouane and Cllr P Davies to extend the 20mph speed limit throughout the Ladygrove ward (excluding the A4130) to other areas of Didcot

Cllr D Rouane gave some of the background to this motion which was originally a speed limit for Ladygrove ward only. It was the Traffic Advisory Group who requested that this be extended to the whole of Didcot. It was noted that OCC would not be able to work on this proposal until 2024 – 2025 due to work load.

Cllr A Dearlove proposed an amendment to consult with the public using an advisory referendum. This would mean that the motion could only move forward with the residents support. Cllr Dearlove proposed a referendum conducted at the same time as the local election in May. This was seconded by Cllr J Durman.

Cllr D Rouane did not accept the amendment because the consultation was an important part of the process.

Recorded vote – first amendment

	For	Against	Abstention
Cllr D Chandran		x	
Cllr P Davies	-	-	-
Cllr A Dearlove	x		
Cllr J Durman	x		
Cllr P Giesberg	-	-	-
Cllr E Hards	-	-	-
Cllr V Haval		x	
Cllr A Hudson	x		
Cllr M Khan		x	
Cllr A Macdonald		x	
Cllr D Macdonald		x	
Cllr M Mallows		x	
Cllr M McNeill		x	
Cllr J Moody		x	
Cllr D Rouane		x	
Cllr A Sandiford		x	

Cllr B Service	x		
Cllr P Siggers		x	
Cllr A Thompson	x		
Cllr M Walsh		x	
Cllr C Wilson		x	

The vote for the first amendment was: 5 – IN FAVOUR; 13 – AGAINST – the first amendment falls.

Cllr M Khan proposed a second amendment – to ask OCC to carry out a consultation and feasibility study on 20 mph to all areas of Didcot and report back to the Town Council. This was seconded by Cllr C Wilson. Cllr D Rouane accepted this amendment.

Cllr A Dearlove said he would not support a consultation rather than a referendum. Cllr B Service said that there was no consultation with the residents of Ladygrove before submitting a request for the 20mph speed limit in Ladygrove ward. However DTC was now proposing to ask OCC to consult on 20 mph in the rest of Didcot.

Cllr D Chandran and Cllr D Rouane said that this was the first step in a long procedure and all issues will be considered in depth.

Cllr A Thompson leaves the meeting.

Recorded vote – second amendment

	For	Against	Abstention
Cllr D Chandran	x		
Cllr P Davies	-	-	-
Cllr A Dearlove		x	
Cllr J Durman		x	
Cllr P Giesberg	-	-	-
Cllr E Hards	-	-	-
Cllr V Haval	x		
Cllr A Hudson		x	
Cllr M Khan	x		
Cllr A Macdonald	x		
Cllr D Macdonald	x		

Cllr M Mallows	x		
Cllr M McNeill	x		
Cllr J Moody	x		
Cllr D Rouane	x		
Cllr A Sandiford	x		
Cllr B Service		x	
Cllr P Siggers	x		
Cllr A Thompson	-	-	-
Cllr M Walsh	x		
Cllr C Wilson	x		

The vote for the second amendment was: 13 – IN FAVOUR; 4 – AGAINST – the second amended motion is supported.

51. Didcot Garden Town Project and the report of the Council’s representative on the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board

Cllr M Khan circulated the papers from the meeting earlier in the day – a number of projects have been removed from the list. The popular Garden Party events will be held over six weeks during the summer at Cornerstone Theatre again.

52. Questions to the Leader concerning the business of the Council in accordance with Standing Order 58

Question about EV charging from Cllr V Haval – unable to hear the detail from the tape.

Q: *“Do we need new sound equipment in the Civic Hall?”* Cllr B Service

A: Yes

53. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 the committee will be asked to exclude the press and public from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted

54. To approve a nominal sum to be made available for new tenants of Willowbrook Leisure Centre

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr B Service and RESOLVED to defer this item to the next meeting of the F&GP Committee. There were two abstentions.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Signed:

(Mayor)

Date: