

Didcot Town Council

Council Meeting

Monday 27th June 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
P Davies	J Moody
A Dearlove	D Rouane
J Durman	B Service
E Hards	A Thompson
V Haval	M Walsh
A Hudson	C Wilson

Officers:

Janet Wheeler - Town Clerk

Two members of the public were also present.

Public participation

Standing orders were suspended to allow Mike Piggford and Ed Nieburg from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to speak in support of their proposal to run tennis coaching sessions on the tennis courts at Ladygrove. This request had been considered by the Environment & Climate Committee and the recommendation was for refusal because it would restrict the free availability of the tennis courts to the general public. Mr Piggford and Mr Nieburg spoke at length on how the system would work and the advantages of the scheme such as more people playing tennis and the benefits of organised activity through a gate system. The scheme would bring funding (around £40,000) but there would be an on-going cost to the Council plus the VAT of £8,000 would not be covered. The members asked questions.

Cllr P Davies left the meeting early due to family health reasons.

24. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs P Giesberg and A Sandiford.

25. To receive declarations of interests

Cllr A Thompson declared a personal interest in item 11 on the agenda – the parking proposals at Hayden Road because he lives in the vicinity.

26. To approve and adopt the minutes of the Mayor Making meeting held on 3rd May 2022 and the Annual meeting held on 9th May 2022 and to include questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item

The Mayor paged through the minutes for amendments:

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr D Macdonald and RESOLVED to approve both sets of minutes. The vote was unanimous and there were no questions.

27. To receive the Committee minutes and decisions taken under delegated authority and to consider recommendations of Committees to Council in accordance with Standing Orders 95 – 112

a) Planning and Development Committee

It was proposed by Cllr E Hards and seconded by Cllr D Macdonald and RESOLVED to receive the Minutes for the meeting held on 18th May 2022 and 1st June 2022 (to be approved at Committee). There was one recommendation.

Minute 23: To note the comments on the Joint Local Plan – The comments were circulated to all Councillors but there were no additional comments. It was proposed by Cllr Eleanor Hards and seconded by Cllr A Dearlove and RESOLVED to approve the comments. There was one abstention.

b) Finance and General Purposes Committee

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to receive the Minutes for the meeting held on 23rd May 2022 and 20th June 2022 (to be approved at Committee). The vote was unanimous.

There were two recommendations:

Minute 12: Review of Grant Policy. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to approve the Grant Policy with no further amendments. The vote was unanimous.

Minute 13: Review of the Investment Policy. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to approve the Investment Policy. Cllr E Hards clarified that the policy referred to the Council's investment with CCLA Deposit Fund. This vote was unanimous.

c) Environment & Climate Committee

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald and seconded by Cllr C Wilson and RESOLVED to receive the Minutes for the meeting held on 16th May 2022. The vote was unanimous. There were no recommendations.

d) Personnel and Administration Committee

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr D Chandran and RESOLVED to receive the minutes for the meeting held on 30th May 2022. The vote was unanimous.

There were four recommendations:

Minute 9: To approve the draft vision and objectives document. It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr D Macdonald to approve the draft vision and objectives document. There was a short discussion and Cllr J Moody said that a lot of the objectives in the document are actively being achieved. It was RESOLVED to note this document. The vote was: 11 – IN FAVOUR; 0 – AGAINST and 4 ABSTENTIONS.

Minute 8: To approve the adoption of Petition Policies. It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr D Macdonald and RESOLVED to approve both the traditional paper petitions and the online petitions with the following four amendments:

- Completed petitions are to be submitted to the Town Clerk on the last working day before the Council meeting.
- The headings will make it clear for both the traditional paper policy and the online policy
- Vulnerable residents would be able to vote submitting the post code only
- Email or telephone would allow all residents to answer a petition.

On these four amendments it was RESOLVED to approve both policies.

Minute 10: To approve the adoption of the Flexible Working Policy. It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr D Macdonald and RESOLVED to approve the flexible working policy. Cllr M Khan proposed one amendment to the policy – the introduction section would state:

- To give flexibility of working hours should there be a Council meeting that over runs - and allow other staff to help cover the work.

This policy would be reviewed annually. There was one vote against.

Minute 15: To approve the request for exceptional paid leave for two new staff – one for £470.47 and one for £325.42 – total £795.89. It was proposed by Cllr M

Khan and seconded by Cllr B Service and RESOLVED to approve this request. There was one abstention.

e) Property & Facilities Committee

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May 2022. The vote was unanimous.

28. To receive the Mayor's Report and the Deputy Mayor's report

Both reports were noted by the Council.

29. To receive the end of year statement for the 2021 – 2022 financial year

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to note the end of year statement. The vote was unanimous with no questions.

30. To note and approve the internal audit report for 2021 – 2022 financial year

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to approve the internal audit report and in particular to note the issues with the recording of the petty cash and till floats. It was agreed that the accounts were generally in a good place in terms of scrutiny. Cllr B Service questioned whether there was any scope to consider an increase in the Mayor's allowance in the next financial year. The Finance Chair said that this would be considered. The vote was unanimous.

31. To review, approve and sign the Annual Governance & Accountability

Return (AGAR) The Council discussed the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 in Section 1 of the AGAR and the accounting statements recommended for approval by the Finance & General Purposes Committee. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to approve the Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2021/22 and the statements therein. The vote was unanimous.

Cllr M Khan thanked the Finance & General Purposes Committee for their hard work and in particular the work of Cllr J Moody as the Chair of Finance and the Town Clerk.

32. To approve the vacant seats on the standing Committees: It was RESOLVED that the following seats would be approved:

- Cllr M Mallows to sit on the Property & Facilities and Planning & Development Committee.
- Cllr D Chandran to sub for Cllr D Rouane on the Planning & Development Committee
- Cllr A Hudson to sit on the Personnel & Administration Committee.

33. To approve the adoption of the new Code of Conduct policy as

recommended by SODC. It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr D

Macdonald and RESOLVED to adopt the new Code of Conduct and align the Town Council with SODC. The vote was unanimous.

34. To consider the new proposals for the Haydon Road parking Cllr M Khan spoke to say that the proposals need more debate and consideration. It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr B Service and RESOLVED that the scheme would be considered at the next meeting of the Planning & Development Committee and then come back to Council. There was an Extra Ordinary Council meeting planned in July which could receive the comments from the Committee. Cllr C Wilson called for a policy for the whole area of Didcot. Members were encouraged to submit their comments to the Chair of Planning & Development Committee ahead of the meeting. There was one abstention.

35. To approve a new Christmas lights contract. The tenders were considered and it was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald and seconded by Cllr C Wilson and RESOLVED to award a three year contract to Blachere Illuminations at a cost of £7,261.68 for the first year; £7,761.68 for years two and year three. The option to include the children's decoration element was not taken up. Cllr A Macdonald said that there were lots of other ways to involve the children in Christmas competitions. The vote was unanimous.

36. To review a proposed sub Committee to administer the management of Ladygrove Lakes. It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald and seconded by Cllr A Dearlove and RESOLVED to set up a liaison group in principle similar to the Traffic Advisory Group. There would be a mix of elected members and local representatives. The terms of reference would be considered by the Environment & Climate Committee. It was noted that the group would not be exclusive to the lakes and would cover all activities. It was also suggested that a member from Earth Trust should be invited to join. The vote was unanimous.

37. To receive such communications as the Leader of the Council may wish to bring before Council and to consider the recommendation of the Leader on how such communications should be dealt with.

There were no communications for this meeting.

38. To consider motions in the order in which they have been notified:

There were two motions to be considered:

Motion One proposed by Cllr M Khan; seconded by Cllr C Wilson: *Didcot Town Council wants to resolve the boundary issues regarding Great Western Park. Didcot Town Council resolved that the Leader writes to inform the Boundary Commission and other relevant stakeholders to review and finalise the boundary so that Great Western Park resides under one District Council.*

Cllr M Khan spoke to this motion to say that the area of Great Western Park should have had its governance reviewed a long time ago. The boundary splits the community going through two parish council boundaries and two district council boundaries. The council tax goes to Harwell and Vale of White Horse and yet most residents consider that they live in Didcot and make full use of Didcot's facilities. If this motion is passed, a letter will go for review to the Electoral Governance Committee and then to the full Council at SODC.

Cllr J Durman proposed an amendment to try to mitigate the risk that Great Western Park would go into the Vale of White Horse. Cllr M Khan did not support the amendment. The amendment was seconded by Cllr B Service.

The amendment was discussed. Cllr A Dearlove did not support the amendment because he felt that the wording was more diplomatic on the original. Cllr D Rouane said that there were no guarantees.

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

Cllr M Walsh		x	
Cllr C Wilson		x	

The vote was 5 = IN FAVOUR; 11 = AGAINST; 1 = ABSTENTION. The amended motion falls.

The vote was held on the original motion was unanimous – in favour.

Motion Two proposed by Cllr M Khan; seconded by Cllr A Thompson: *Didcot Town Council to recommend that the next appropriate Road to be named after Cllr Des Healy as a celebration of his contribution to Didcot. Didcot Town Council to review previous suggestions and identify if they have been implemented by contacting the appropriate stakeholders.*

Cllr M Khan spoke to this motion. It had been the intention to award the Freedom of Didcot to Des Healy before his untimely passing. He had been a Councillor for over 25 years and a former Mayor and would be a worthy recipient of this honour. The vote was unanimous.

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

Cllr M Khan spoke to say that there was a meeting on 18th July where more information on future plans would be circulated to all Councillors.

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

Q: *“After the recent event of travellers in the community what plans are in place to tackle future incidents ?”* (Cllr C Wilson)

A: The Leader stated that whilst we should respect the travellers’ life style we would also be looking at our sites to improve security. The Leader also thanked the DTC staff and the outside team for the cleaning up.

Q: *“Does the Leader have an up-date on the splash park and pavilion?”* (Cllr A Hudson)

A: The Leader confirmed that various surveys were being done to support the procurement package which was now on the contracts finder website. The cost of the project needs debate and an Extra Ordinary Meeting will be held to do this.

Q: *“Does the Leader have an up-date on the roundabout at Jubilee Way?”* (Cllr J Durman)

A: The Leader would seek an up-date at the next meeting of the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board meeting.

Q: *“Does the Leader know how much the travellers cost Didcot Town Council?”* (Cllr J Durman)

A: The Leader said around £5,000 (NB: the cost of the eviction and the clean up was in the region of £10,000)

A: *“Would the Leader support re-naming Boundary Park to the Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Park or Platinum Park?”* (Cllr B Service)

Q: The Leader felt that this was a good idea but we were a long way from this being possible.

A: *“Is the Leader disappointed in the graffiti on the outdoor table tennis tables?”* (Cllr D Macdonald)

A: The Leader agreed but said that these were brand new tables and widely used. He would ask the outside services team to report back on how we can tackle this problem and perhaps educate the community to take care of them.

The meeting closed at 9.28pm.

Signed:

(Mayor)

Date: