

Didcot Town Council

Council Meeting

Monday 1st March 2021 at 7.30pm

Online at zoom.us (or via your device app)



Minutes

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

PRESENT

Councillors:

P Davies	M Mallows
A Dearlove	M McNeill
P Giesberg	J Moody
E Hards (Mayor)	D Rouane
V Haval	A Sandiford
A Hudson	P Siggers
M Khan (Deputy Mayor)	A Thompson
A Macdonald	M Walsh
D Macdonald	C Wilson

Officers:

Janet Wheeler - Town Clerk

Five members of the public were also present.

The Mayor opened the meeting to propose the suspension of Standing Order 71 – standing to address the Chair.

77. To receive apologies

Everyone was present but Cllr D Rouane was slightly late due to attendance at an SODC meeting.

78. To receive declarations of interests

Cllr D Macdonald declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in motion one (item 00 on the agenda). Cllr A Macdonald and Cllr J Moody declared an interest in motion one due to being employed by Public Health England.

79. To receive petitions

Mr Dan Andrew spoke to support his petition - *“We the undersigned wish to propose that the Town Council approve, fund and build a mountain bike park, for all ages and abilities, to serve as a safe training space allowing riders to develop their bike skills and to encourage physical activity and time outdoors for the wider community. The electronic petition has raised over 700 signatures so far.”*

Mr Andrew spoke to support his petition to say that the nearest mountain bike park was some distance from Didcot. It was confirmed that the size of the plot needed would be around 12 acres or a minimum of 6-8 acres. It was agreed to send this to a Committee for a more in-depth consideration. Mr Andrew was asked to ascertain how many signatures were from Didcot residents.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow members of the public to speak.

Mr Phil Mousley,, Co Chair of Sustainable Didcot, introduced Mr Andy Tunstall from the Green Group UK Ltd – a sales and marketing company specialising in the promotion of renewable energy and working in partnership with IDDEA on commercial leads and Solar Streets as the marketing arm. The request was for the Town Council to support the Solar Streets programme. Several other Councils and groups had publicly supported the principles of solar roofing and other sustainable products. The scheme encourages homes in the same town to make their purchases together to achieve maximum efficiency. The company requested permission to use the Council crest on their advertising materials and to agree a quote for use on their website and other social media.

Motion two on the agenda would deal with the Council’s official response to this request.

Mr Dave Reeves spoke to the reiterate the questions he had asked at the January Council meeting including the setting up of a working group in which he offered to participate and help the Council. He listed the displaced groups since the Willowbrook building had closed and his concern that the activities will have nowhere to meet once the Government finally eases lockdown.

The Mayor thanked all the speakers for their contribution to the meeting and reinstated Standing Orders.

80. To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council meeting held on 11th January 2021

The Mayor paged through the minutes of the Council meeting held on **11th January 2021** for accuracy and to allow for questions.

It was proposed by Cllr E Hards and seconded by Cllr M. Khan and RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the full Council meeting held on 11th January 2021. There were several amendments requested:

Cllr P Davies stated that there was an incorrect sentence on page 4 – 2 “It was also AGREED that the Town Clerk would destroy the signatures.” The Town Council did not make a resolution. This was seconded by Cllr A Dearlove. The Mayor requested that the sentence be changed to “The Mayor instructed ...” rather than “ordered”. She also directed the Councillors to the ICO website for more information on the legalities of data retention.

VOTE in favour of the change “The Mayor was instructed ...” was carried.

81. To consider recommendations of Committees to Council in accordance with Standing Orders 95 – 112

a) Planning and Development Committee

It was proposed by Cllr A Dearlove and seconded by Cllr M Mallows and RESOLVED to receive the Minutes for the meeting held on **13th January 2021**.

It was proposed by Cllr A Dearlove and seconded by Cllr M Mallows and RESOLVED to receive the Minutes for the meeting held on **3rd February 2021**.

b) Finance and General Purposes Committee

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to receive the Minutes for the meeting held on **25th January 2021**.

c) Personnel and Administration Committee

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr A Macdonald and RESOLVED to receive the minutes for the meeting held on **1st February 2021**.

(i) Recommendation – Minute 70 Data Retention Policy - It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr A Macdonald to approve the recommendations in the Data Retention Policy. Cllr P Davies queried that the destruction of the recordings was addressed in the minutes as a contentious item but were not specifically included in the policy on page 5-28. He requested that the recordings should be kept for a period of time. Cllr M Khan summed up to say that recordings can take up a lot of space and once the final version of the minutes is agreed at Council there is no reason to keep the recordings. A recorded vote was requested which included destruction of the Council recordings:

	For	Against	Abstention
Cllr J Durman	x		
Cllr P Davies		x	
Cllr A Dearlove	X		
Cllr P Giesberg		x	
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	x		
Cllr M McNeill	X		
Cllr J Moody	X		
Cllr D Rouane		x	
Cllr A Sandiford	x		
Cllr P Siggers	X		
Cllr A Thompson			x
Cllr M Walsh	X		
Cllr C Wilson	X		

The recommendation was RESOLVED.

(ii) Recommendation – Minute 71 Council meeting dates 2021 - 2022 - It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr A Macdonald to approve the recommendation. Cllr M Khan explained the difficulty facing the Council this year regarding virtual meeting currently due to be lifted by 7th May 2021 and the by - election where the results (two Town Council seats) may not be confirmed until the weekend after Polling Day. It was proposed to have the Mayor-Making on 4th May 2021 using the right to hold a virtual meeting and then a second meeting on Monday 10th May 2021 to consider the political balance of the Committees after the election results are known.

Cllr P Davies agreed with the dates but did not agree with the election of Leader and Deputy Leader and Committee Chairs on 4th May.

Cllr P Davies requested a recorded vote:

	For	Against	Abstention
Cllr J Durman			x
Cllr P Davies		x	
Cllr A Dearlove	X		
Cllr P Giesberg	x		

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	x		
Cllr M McNeill	X		
Cllr J Moody	X		
Cllr D Rouane	X		
Cllr A Sandiford	x		
Cllr P Siggers	X		
Cllr A Thompson	X		
Cllr M Walsh	X		
Cllr C Wilson	X		

The recommendation was RESOLVED.

(iii) Recommendation – Minute 72 Terms of reference for new Property and Facilities Committee - It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to approve the terms of reference for this new standing committee.

d) Environment and Climate Committee

It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald and seconded by Cllr A Macdonald and RESOLVED to receive the minutes from the meeting held on **18th January 2021**.

(i) Recommendation – Minute 83 Adoption of Green Strategy - It was proposed by Cllr C Wilson and seconded by Cllr D Macdonald and RESOLVED to adopt this strategy as a starting point and as a channel for Councillors to forward their ideas.

(ii) Recommendation – Minute 89 – purchase of electrical hand tools – It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald and seconded by Cllr A Macdonald to commit to the purchase of at least one electrical grounds maintenance tool subject to satisfactory demonstration.

e) Civic Hall Management Committee

It was proposed by Cllr P Siggers and seconded by Cllr J Moody and RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the meeting held on **27th January 2021**.

(i) Recommendation – Minute 63 Confirmation of write offs – This list had also been approved by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at their meeting on 22nd February 2021. It was proposed by Cllr P Siggers and seconded by Cllr J Moody and RESOLVED to approve the write-off of sums unlikely to be recovered.

82. To receive the Mayor's Report

The Mayor's report was noted by the Council.

83. To approve the election of the Mayor-designate for 2021 – 2022 civic year

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald and seconded by Cllr E Hards and RESOLVED to appoint Cllr M Khan as the Mayor-designate for the 2021 – 2022 civic year. The Mayor congratulated Cllr M Khan.

84. To consider delegating the potential membership of the Oxford Green Tech organisation to the Finance and General Purposes Committee

It was RESOLVED to send this item to the Environment and Climate Committee and then ratify the decision at the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Cllr P Davies proposed an amendment, seconded by Cllr D Rouane, to send this to the Environment and Climate Committee first. This was AGREED and voted accordingly.

85. 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.

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

Two motions were received.

Motion One was proposed by Cllr M Walsh and seconded by Cllr A Sandiford:

Coronavirus Test, Trace, Isolate and Support

"In the interests of local residents, Didcot Town Council has given full support to the Covid-19 response, including by providing use of the Civic Hall for testing and vaccinating.

Didcot Town Council expresses concern that, so far into the COVID-19 pandemic, the country still does not have an adequate 'test, trace and isolate system', and that this puts the people of Didcot at increased risk of suffering from Coronavirus.

'Test, trace, isolate and support' has been proven in countries with a properly functioning system to be a successful strategy to manage and contain COVID-19 outbreaks.

Numerous experts have repeated that, to be effective, testing and tracing needs to be managed and carried out at a local level. However, instead of funding local bodies – which have the expertise, experience and vital local connections – this Government has squandered billions of pounds of public money on private companies (though the system has still been misleadingly named 'NHS' Test & Trace).

This poor performance has contributed to the on-going failure to contain COVID-19 outbreaks. The lack of integration with local authorities prevents the timely offering of financial and practical support. In addition the lack of integration into normal local NHS services hinders the ability of GPs to contact positive cases with crucial and timely medical advice. These failures combined are contributing to the proportionately high loss of life in the UK when compared to the majority of countries of the world.

In late recognition that its tracing performance could not improve without local participation, NHS Test and Trace have in recent months passed to local authorities the names of people with positive tests who they failed to reach. In short, they are getting local authorities to clean up their mess.

This Council believes the only way to fully rectify the situation is for full control to be passed to local authorities, with the necessary funding to do the job properly, with national input providing any support necessary to ensure effective co-ordination.

We believe a local scheme will:

- *Improve traceability*
- *Enable increased and targeted testing, including asymptomatic testing*
- *Be better integrated into existing Council COVID support services*
- *Be a more cost-effective solution*
- *Achieve greater community engagement*
- *Better allow for the engagement of local volunteers*

Pressure is building on the Government both to use local authorities more and to cease contracting out 'NHS' Test and Trace' to private companies. This Council agrees to add its voice to those challenging the current, failed system by asking the Leader to:

- *Call on Oxford County Council Director of Public Health, Ansaf Azhar, and the leader of the County Council, Cllr Ian Hudspeth, to support the proposal that full control for the test, trace and isolate system is passed to local authorities along with the full resources necessary to implement it.*

- *Write to our MP asking him for his support.”*

There was a discussion on whether this motion contravened standing order 44 but it was argued that the Town Council could look at motions that affected the well-being of the people of Didcot.

Some Councillors felt that this was beyond the remit of the Town Council and that the Council did not enough information to claim that this was a failed system. There was also a question of timing and whether this was the best time to call for this. A recorded vote was requested:

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

The motion was up-held.

The Council voted to extend the meeting for an additional thirty minutes.

Motion Two was proposed by Cllr C Wilson and seconded by Cllr A Macdonald:

Supporting Solar Streets.

“Didcot Town Council resolves to support the Solar Streets Scheme and to consider any other suitable initiatives to combat Climate Emergency. “

The Councillors spoke to their motion to state that this was an opportunity for the Didcot Town Council to support initiatives which help combat climate change. Public bodies can support rather than endorse. There was concern that the wording of the motion did not include use of the Didcot Town Council town crest. Cllr P Davies proposed amending the motion to state “Supported by Didcot Town Council”. It was clarified that Sustainable Didcot does not financially benefit from this initiative. This amendment was accepted.

The motion was carried.

87. Didcot Garden Town Project and the report of the Council’s representative on the Didcot Garden Town Management Board

Cllr M Khan stated that a written up-date was attached to the agenda.

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

Q: *“Can the Leader give an up-date as to the progress with Willowbrook?”* (Cllr M Walsh)

A: The Leader clarified that there has been over sixteen expressions of interest. There is also a public consultation that will be launched around the time of the Annual Town Meeting.

Q: *“How are the vaccines going at the Civic Hall?”* (Cllr D Macdonald)

A: The Leader said that it is going well – the doctors and volunteers are like a well-oiled machine. Every full day session sees over 800 people vaccinated.

Q: *“How much is the by-election of the Ladygrove seats costing the Council?”*

A: The Leader did not have the actual costs.

89. 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

90. To note the revised procedures to facilitate Operation London Bridge during the pandemic

The confidential documents were noted by the Councillors and suggestions for consistency and improvement expressed to the Town Clerk.

The meeting closed at 10.04pm.

Signed:

(Mayor)

Date: