

Ordinary meeting of Council

Monday 13th January 2020 at 7.30pm

Ladygrove Room, 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:

A Dearlove	D Macdonald
P Davies	M Mallows
P Giesberg	M McNeill
E Hards	J Moody
V Haval	D Rouane
S Hewerdine	P Siggers
A Hudson	M Walsh
M Khan	C Wilson
A Macdonald	J Durman
A Thompson	

Officers: Janet Wheeler - Town Clerk

Four members of the public were in attendance. Chelsey Lordan (Environment and Events Officer) was also in the audience.

Public Participation

None

92. To receive apologies

Cllr NF Harris and Cllr A Sandiford tendered apologies.

93. To receive declarations of interests

None declared.

94. To receive petitions

None received.

95. **To approve and adopt the minutes of the ordinary Council Meeting held on the 4TH November 2019 and to include questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item.**

The Mayor paged through the minutes for accuracy and to allow for questions.

It was proposed by the Mayor; seconded by Cllr M Khan and **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the minutes of the ordinary Council meeting held on 4th November 2019.

96. **To receive the Committee minutes and decisions taken under delegated authority, and to consider recommendations of Committees to Council in accordance with Standing Orders 100 to 107:**

(a) Planning and Development Committee

i. To receive the minutes:

30th October 2019, 20th November 2019 and 11th December 2019

Councillors were asked to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 30th October, 20th November and 11th December 2019. It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald, seconded by Cllr J Durman and **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 30th October and 20th November 2019. It was proposed by Cllr E Hards, seconded by Cllr J Durman and **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 11th December 2019.

(b) Finance and General Purposes Committee

i. To receive the minutes:

25th November and 16th December 2019

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody, seconded by Cllr P Siggers and **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 25th November 2019.

Cllr D Rouane asked for an up-date on the pending renewal of the PCSO funding. Cllr Moody confirmed that we were still awaiting contact from the police.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody, seconded by Cllr P Siggers and **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 16th December 2019.

Minute 91: Recommendation: To confirm the appointment of MFG as our new IT support and to change from server to full cloud.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody; seconded by Cllr P Siggers and **RESOLVED** to appoint MFG and to change our system from server to full cloud.

(c) Environment Committee

i. To receive the minutes:

18th November 2019

Proposed by Cllr D Macdonald, seconded by Cllr A Macdonald and **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Environment Committee on 18th November 2019.

Cllr E Hards asked for it to be put on record that, contrary to the minutes, she was not present at the meeting. Any other amendments to the numbers of people in the audience and Councillor attendance will be made at the next Committee meeting.

(d) Personnel and Administration Committee

i. To receive the minutes

9th September 2019 (deferred from the last full Council meeting)

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan, seconded by Cllr A. Macdonald and **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Personnel and Administration Committee on 9th September 2019.

11th November 2019

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan, seconded by Cllr A Macdonald and **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Personnel and Administration Committee on 11th November 2019.

Minute 28: Recommendation: To adopt the following three policies: Revised Grievance Policy; Dignity at Work Policy and Officer-Member Protocol.

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan; seconded by Cllr A Macdonald to adopt the three policies. It was proposed by Cllr E Hards and seconded by Cllr M Walsh that the Town Clerk be authorised to correct minor typographical errors, punctuation and spellings without coming back to Council. Cllrs S Hewerdine and P Davies did not agree as a minor change could alter the meaning of the sentence. Cllr E Hards then spoke to withdraw the proposal; this was **AGREED** by Cllr M Walsh.

There was a discussion on the need to revise these policies and a reference to the Ledbury case. Cllr D Rouane wanted to know if the policy had evolved from the ACAS guidelines. Cllr M Khan stated that the policies were a mix of current documentation and policies adopted by other Town Councils.

Cllr E Hards proposed an amendment, seconded by Cllr P Giesberg: Paragraph 4.2.3 of the Grievance Policy be struck out and replaced with: “*The grievance process between a former employee and a Member is ongoing even if the Member is no longer an elected Councillor until the matter is closed.*”

Vote on the amendment was upheld.

Cllr S Hewerdine proposed that the policies are referred back to the Personnel and Administration Committee pending legal approval. This was seconded by Cllr P Davies.

Vote on this amendment - falls.

The original proposal was to agree in principle but Members are invited to bring any comments to the attention of the Town Clerk or the Chair of the Committee. This proposal includes the amendment from Cllr Hards to replace paragraph 4.2.3 of the Grievance Policy.

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 N Harris		-	
Cllr V Haval	X		
Cllr S Hewerdine		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		-	
Cllr P Siggers	X		
Cllr A Thompson	x	-	-
Cllr M Walsh	X		
Cllr C Wilson	X		

Proposal upheld.

(e) Civic Hall Management Committee

There were no minutes but Cllr Siggers congratulated the Civic Hall Manager and his team for two nominations in the Thames Valley Business Community Awards. The Civic Hall was nominated for “Best Tourism and Business Venue” and “Outstanding Contribution to the Community”. She felt that these nominations reflected the hard work of the team. The Mayor reiterated the congratulations.

97. Mayor’s report

The report detailing the Mayor’s and Deputy Mayor’s appointments was **NOTED** – there were a couple of errors. The Mayor gave a short review of some of the highlights in a busy diary.

98. To receive and agree the schedules of financial payments made between 1st October and 30th November 2019

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody, seconded by Cllr P Siggers and **RESOLVED** to receive and agree the schedule of financial payments made between 1st October and 30th November 2019.

99. To agree the appointment of Cllr A Sandiford as a substitute on the Personnel and Administration Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan, seconded by Cllr C Wilson and **RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr A Sandiford to be a substitute on the Personnel and Administration Committee. It was noted that Cllr J Durman was appointed at the previous Council meeting.

100. To consider the creation of a new standing Committee named: Climate Emergency Advisory Committee and the suggested terms of reference.

The Mayor stated that he had resolved to defer this item and motion 2 which was very similar in content – to be discussed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 27th January 2020. This was seconded by Cllr A Thompson.

101. To consider the new Council and Committee meeting dates for the Civic year 2020-2021

The Mayor proposed that this item was also deferred to Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting on 27th January 2020. This was seconded by Cllr M Khan. The proposal was AGREED.

102. Report on the approval of Standing Orders

Cllr M Khan circulated an amendment to the recommendations in the report. The report attached to the agenda stated:

“2.1 That Didcot Town Council agrees to amend the two thirds approval to majority vote at a properly constituted Council meeting.

2.2 That Didcot Town Council agree a timetable to adopt this amendment in consultation with our Deputy Mayor who is chairing the Standing Orders Working Group.”

The amendment to the recommendation proposed from Cllr M Khan stated:

“2.1 That Didcot Town Council agrees to amend the two thirds approval to a majority vote with immediate effect.

2.2 – delete.”

This proposal was seconded by Cllr A Thompson.

Discussion followed and not every Councillor agreed with the recommendation. Cllr P Davies quoted Chippenham Town Council who still uses two thirds majority. He also defined the meaning of ultra vires – “beyond powers”. He requested that the rules should be fair.

Cllr S Hewerdine stated that the Town Council would need two thirds majority to change under our current standing orders.

On the proposal of Cllr C Wilson; seconded by Cllr P Davies – it was AGREED to suspend standing orders to allow questions to be put to the Town Clerk.

Standing Orders were then reinstated.

Cllr D Rouane supported keeping the two thirds majority for continuity.

Recorded Vote – on amended recommendation:

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

Cllr N Harris		-	
Cllr V Haval		x	
Cllr S Hewerdine		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		-	
Cllr P Siggers	X		
Cllr A Thompson	x	-	-
Cllr M Walsh	X		
Cllr C Wilson	X		

Proposal upheld.

Cllr S Hewerdine and Cllr P Davies stated that this was not a constitutional vote by our current standing orders. Cllr S Hewerdine left the meeting.

103. To consider and agree:

i) **Budget for the 2020 – 2021 financial year** – It was proposed by Cllr J Moody; seconded by Cllr P Siggers to approve the budget before the Council. There was a short discussion on the work that went into producing this budget and thanks were given to the Finance Committee. Funds had been allocated to some large projects – and a modest increase in the precept was recommended to help these projects progress.

Cllr P Davies wanted to know the operational cost of the Town Council along with other questions on housing numbers in the next year.

Cllr D Rouane supported the budget but raised three points: the £18,500 for a PCSO is a waste of money; resources were needed to pay for a professional fund-raiser and a query on the £117,000 loss on the Civic Hall. He called for an action plan to bring this sum down.

Cllr J Moody summed up by also thanking the staff who had worked on the budget. He felt that the increase of £1.66 per annum per band D property was modest and agreed that the Town Council would need professional help to raise the money to re-build the pavilion. He would like to use any money that is not spent on a PCSO on potential parking improvements. He acknowledged that the finances of the Civic Hall would need to be monitored.

Cllr Moody also commented on the allocation of £20,000 for green projects. He commended both the budget and the precept request. The budget was approved with 14 in favour and 4 abstentions.

ii) **Precept recommendation for 2020-2021** – It was proposed by Cllr J Moody; seconded by Cllr P Siggers – to approve the precept request of £1,050,667.80. The precept request was approved by 14 in favour and 4 abstentions.

104. To note the break-down of seats on Committees following the last by election in September 2019

A spreadsheet was circulated which Cllr P Davies stated had errors. It was AGREED to bring this back to the next Council meeting.

105. Up-date of actions taken since Didcot Town Council declared a climate emergency: Cllr M Khan wished to thank the Environment and Events Officer for her work detailed in this report. Cllr P Davies felt that very little had actually been achieved and more work needed to be done. The report was noted.

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

The Leader had no communications on this occasion.

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

1. Motion One: proposed by Cllr J Durman; seconded by Cllr A Thompson.

Cllr J Durman wished to make an amendment to the first bullet point to include all relevant County Councillors. This was seconded by Cllr A Thompson. Cllr P Davies asked to defer this to the Planning Committee; seconded by Cllr D Rouane. Vote was 10 in favour; 3 against and 2 abstentions.

The second motion was earlier deferred to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

108. Didcot Garden Town Project and the report of the Council's Representative on the Didcot Garden Town Management Board.

Cllr M Khan had circulated a written report as requested. The next meeting of the Advisory Board would be Friday 24th January 2020. The structure and governance is being considered and once resolved further meetings will become public. Cllr V Haval informed the Council that projects for the Garden Town were due to be discussed on 16th January 2020.

109. Questions to the Leader concerning the business of the Council in accordance with Standing Order 45.

Question by Cllr A Dearlove

The Mayor requested a report on what has been done regarding the S106 and CIL monies?

Response: The Officers will be asked to produce a report.

Question by Cllr A Dearlove

Will the Leader be attending the Mayor's Ball on 7th March and will he encourage other Councillors to attend?

The Leader will reserve a table to support this event and hopes other Councillors and the public will be able to attend.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

Signed:

(Mayor)

Date: