

Ordinary meeting of Council
Monday 1st July 2019 at 7.30pm
Main Hall, Civic Hall, Didcot



Minutes

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

PRESENT

Councillors:

Mr A Dearlove
Mr P Davies
Mr P Giesberg
Mrs E Hards
Mr N F Harris
Ms V Haval
Mr S Hewerdine
Mr A Hudson
Mr M Khan
Mr A Macdonald

Mrs D Macdonald
Mrs M Mallows
Mr M McNeill
Mr J Moody
Mr D Rouane
Dr A Sandiford
Dr P Siggers
Mr A Thompson
Ms M Walsh
Ms C Wilson

Officers: Mrs J Wheeler (Town Clerk)
Mr T Hudson (Deputy Town Clerk)

Twenty members of the public in attendance.

Public Participation

Ann Paterson spoke about the land adjacent to Didcot Football Club which the Town Council had partially cleared to tidy up the site. Ownership was not clear but the site would be improved if the Town Council took over maintenance of the whole site.

Anthony and Kevin Hudson spoke about the poor state of the sports pavilion at Edmonds Park. Girls' football is getting more popular and the use of adequate dressing rooms and toilets is required. The current facilities need urgent improvement. Plans were drawn up some eight years ago but not progressed.

Councillor C Wilson asked whether it was possible to carry out any short term improvements. Cllr D Macdonald pointed out that the pavilion was on the agenda of the Environment Committee. It was stated in response that other neighbouring parishes have better facilities.

42. To receive apologies

No apologies.

43. To receive declarations of interests

No declarations were declared.

44. To receive petitions

A petition has been received from Mr Adrian Bernard, supported by Mr Andrew Isaac. The statement is in to request that Civil Parking Enforcement is made an urgent priority. The petition contained 260 signatures plus a further twenty-five were gathered after the petition was delivered. The residents spoke to their petition to detail the problems residents were having – mainly from commuter parking. Several scenarios were described which indicated the difficulties and dangers of the lack of enforcement.

It was confirmed that they would be presenting the petition at the meeting of the Traffic Advisory Group the following Thursday.

45. Minutes of the ordinary meeting held on the 10th June 2019 and questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item

It was proposed by Councillor E Hards and seconded by Councillor D Macdonald it was **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 10th June 2019. There were several amendments.

There was confusion on Minute 29 – the Standing Orders working group. It was proposed by Councillor Rouane, seconded by Councillor Hewerdine to defer the minutes until the Mayor and the Town Clerk had time to check the recording. **Motion fails.**

On the proposal of Councillor Wilson, seconded by Councillor Thompson – it was agreed to re-word this section. The meeting was suspended whilst the wording was typed out and circulated to all members before voting.

Page 10; Minutes 29; first paragraph – AGREED amendment:

“The Mayor confirmed that the recommendation was to set up a Working Group using the NALC national standing orders and our March 2018 Standing Orders as a basis.”

Also on Page 10: The Leader wished to amend his proposal to include a Conservative Councillor as part of the eight members making up this Working Group. (Three Labour; two Procedure; one Liberal Democrat; one Independent and one Conservative).

Councillor V Haval wished to clarify Minute 32: if Didcot First and SOFEA arrange a meeting, DTC Councillors would attend and engage to hear their ideas.

Cllr Hewerdine stated that he was unhappy and unwilling to accept a post meeting note on Page 7 unless it was backed up with a statute or standing order.

It was proposed by Councillor E Hards; seconded by Councillor D Macdonald to accept the minutes with the agreed amendments. **Vote carried.**

46. Committee minutes and decisions taken under delegated authority, and recommendations of Committees to Council in accordance with Standing Orders 100 -107

(a) Planning and Development Committee – meeting cancelled due to incident closing the Civic Hall – meeting re-scheduled for 26th June – minutes available for next meeting.

(b) Finance and General Purposes Committee 24th June 2019 – minutes only circulated today so deferred to the next Council meeting. Cllr Davies to email the Town Clerk regarding the alleged breach in standing orders when he spoke from the audience.

c) Environment Committee 17 June 2019 (not yet agreed by Committee) – It was proposed by Councillor A Macdonald; seconded by Councillor D. Macdonald to receive these Minutes plus the table on the final page which should have been attached.

Recommendation to Council

Minute 14 Smallbone Rec Refurbishment

It was proposed by Councillor A Macdonald and seconded by Councillor S Hewerdine to award the contract for the refurbishment to Sutcliffe Leisure. The Committee would work with the contractor to draw up a final list of play equipment to ensure that the playground had equipment for all abilities. Emphasis would be given to ease of maintenance for the equipment. **Vote carried.**

(d) Personnel and Administration Committee – no meeting held.

(e) Civic Hall Management Committee – no meeting held.

47. Mayor's report

The report detailing the Mayor's and Deputy Mayor's appointments was **NOTED**. Councillor Hewerdine commended the Mayor on his entertaining reflection of the events he has attended.

48. Schedules of financial payments made between 1st May and 31st May 2019

It was proposed by Councillor J Moody, seconded by Councillor A Thompson and **RESOLVED** to receive and agree the schedule of financial payments made between 1st May and 31st May 2019.

(a) The list of supplier direct debits payments made between 1st May 2019 and 31st May 2019 amounting to £43,529.08

(b) The list of supplier BACS payments made between 1st May and 31st May 2019 amounting to £50,837.17

(c) The list of supplier cheque payments made between 1st May and 31st May 2019 amounting to £170,030.40

It was confirmed that there were currently two signatories – Councillor E Hards and Councillor A Thompson. It would be good to have some more signatories to share the load as every transaction must be signed by two different Councillors.

Any Councillor who wished to go through monthly figures is welcome to have a meeting with the Finance Officer or the Responsible Finance Officer. There is no need to become a signatory in order to sign off monthly transactions.

Councillor Wilson noted the monies spent on the hire of the pumps - £14000 – to attempt to aerate Ladygrove Lakes. Councillor S Hewerdine wanted to know whether this cost was a one off or recurring – the Town Clerk would find out this information.

49. To agree the members of the Standing Orders Working Group

It was agreed that the members would be Councillors E Hards; J Moody; M Walsh; P Davies; A. Thompson; M McNeill; D. Rouane. The Town Clerk later received an email to confirm that Councillor Harris would also join the group.

50. To agree the sealing of the Bowls Club lease

It was proposed by Councillor J Moody and seconded by Councillor A. Thompson to approve the Bowls Club lease.

51. To receive communications from the Leader and to receive questions concerning the business of the Council in accordance with Standing Order 45

There were no communications from the Leader.

Question from Councillor A Sandiford

Are the Standing Orders currently used legal and whether the Council had acted legally?

Response: Councillor Khan invited the Town Clerk to give the Council the advice that she had received. The Town Clerk confirmed the advice that the current Standing Orders (March 2018) do not contain the mandatory paragraphs from the NALC 2018 generic standing orders and therefore could be considered not legally correct. Even though the Standing Orders are not a legal document in themselves – and can be suspended by the Council at any time – if a Council chooses to have Standing Orders they must contain the mandatory text. Acts of Parliament are the only legal statutes which the Council has a duty to follow at all times.

Question from Councillor S Hewerdine

How are the Standing Orders illegal if they are just a procedure and not a legal document?

Response: The Town Clerk stated that the only part of Standing Orders which must be followed is the mandatory sections on the NALC 2018 version which is in bold.

Question from Councillor N Harris

Is the Leader aware that the Town Clerk has no right to answer questions asked of you? Would the Leader caution the Town Clerk about not saying things which are incorrect?

Response: The Leader stated that he was aware that the Town Clerk was the Proper Officer and could often supply the answers to questions to save time.

Question from Councillor P Davies

Are the Standing Orders illegal – or just not legal?

Response: The Leader will speak to the Town Clerk but as things stand at the moment the Didcot 2018 Standing Orders are not fit for purpose.

Question from Councillor C Wilson

Can the Leader give us ways to show the public that the needs of Didcot are paramount and that the emerging Local Plan must not be changed in order to give protection against unwanted development which may be too much.

Response: The Leader felt that the need to educate and inform the residents would be helpful. He would let the Council know when this was organised.

Question from Councillor S Hewerdine

Does the Leader regret submitting an identical motion to support the emerging local plan?

Response: The motion was not discussed – so I have no regrets. When the Local Plan is discussed I will take full part and will be voting.

Question from Councillor P Siggers

Do you have any more news on the Didcot Garden Town?

Response: Another two meetings – one on 16 September and another on 16 December. They are looking at forming three sounding boards – one for residents; one for businesses and one for Parish and Town Councils. We have a seat on the third. The Leader has also asked the Project Manager if she will attend the Council meeting on 02 September to give a summary and take questions. She also comes to Didcot on the fourth Friday of every month to engage further.

Question from Councillor S Hewerdine

Would the Leader circulate a full report on the progress of the Didcot Garden Town?

Response: The Leader confirmed that he would be happy to circulate a written report.

Question from Councillor N Harris

Is the Leader aware that the Didcot Garden Town should be an agenda item for every Council meeting?

Response: The Leader stated that very little has happened for the past nine months. I have given you the details of the next meetings.

The Mayor confirmed that this should be on the agenda.

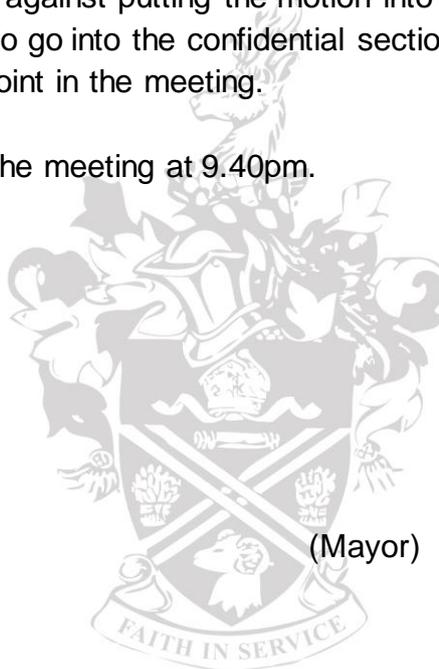
52.. Exclusion of the press and public

RESOLVED: pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 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.

Councillor N Harris spoke against putting the motion into the Part two – he would not move the motion if it had to go into the confidential section of the meeting. The public were still present at this point in the meeting.

It was AGREED to close the meeting at 9.40pm.

Signed:



(Mayor)

Date: