

BANBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Banbury Town Council held as a virtual meeting on Tuesday, 09 February 2021 at 6.30pm.

Present: Councillor Colegrave (Town Mayor)
Councillors: Beere, Bell, Beverly, Bignell, Cherry, Clarke, Dhesi, Fatemian, Hussain, Harrison, Kilsby, Mallon, Mepham, Milne Home, Richards, Ross, and Woodcock.

Officers: Mark Recchia (Town Clerk)
Mark Hassall (Deputy Town Clerk/RFO)

C.47/20 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Banfield.

C.48/20 Declarations of Interest

None.

C.49/20 Minutes of the Last Meeting

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 January 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

C.50/20 Communications

The Council noted that on Thursday 4th February the Town Mayor had hosted a Charity evening offering an opportunity for Banbury charities to virtually meet representatives from a cross-section of other local Banbury groups. The event had featured guest speakers, and aimed to encourage, support and fuel collaboration between charities and included advice for future charity funding, along with a Q&A session.

The Town Clerk also thanked the Mayor for assistance he had provided to the parks team during the recent snowfall, in moving a number of large grit bags within the Southam Road depot.

C.51/20 Questions - Elected Members and Members of the Public

(1) A question was asked of the Chairman of General Services Committee by Councillor Woodcock, about involving Frank Wise School in the development of sensory gardens.

The Chairman reminded Members that under Minute Ref C.34/20 it had been noted that, whilst the idea of sensory gardens was generally supported, the motion had been referred to the General Services Committee for investigation. That Committee had not met due to Covid restrictions and the retirement of the Recreation & Amenities Manager, but it was planned to meet virtually during March.

C.52/20 Income and Expenditure

The Council considered a report prepared by the Deputy Town Clerk/RFO comparing year-to-date income and expenditure with the projected annual budget to 29 January 2021.

The Deputy Town Clerk/RFO drew attention to the fact that overall the Committees expenditure was within forecast versus the projected annual budget. This recognised 82% of annual expenditure to date versus 83% of the planned expenditure, a phased underspend reflecting muted ongoing building running costs and reduced activity across the estate due to public safety currently in place. A number of detailed questions were raised by Members and responded to by the RFO. A Member asked for a written response in respect of an area of flooding along the Leys adjacent to People's Park. A discussion was also had around the possibility of offering refunds to sports clubs for unused pitch hires, and it was noted that this would be considered by the General Services Committee when it met.

RESOLVED to receive and note the Income and Expenditure report.

C.53/20 Internal Audit Report 2020/21

The Council had appointed Auditing Solutions Ltd as its internal auditors. The Internal Auditor's work was undertaken on 7th November 2020 and 22nd January 2021. The Auditor had completed his review and concluded that, on the basis of the programme of work undertaken, the Council had maintained adequate and effective internal control arrangements during the year. In the areas examined, no major issues or concerns had been identified and it was considered that the Clerk and staff continued to operate generally effective control procedures in each relevant area. The areas of review included:

- Accounting records and bank reconciliations,
- Corporate Governance,
- Review of Expenditure,
- Assessment and Management of Risk,
- Precept Determination and Budgetary Control,
- Review of Income,
- Petty Cash,
- Staff Salaries,
- Fixed Asset Registers,
- Investment & Loans,
- Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

The Internal Auditors had also completed and signed the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the year's Annual Governance and Accountability Return, having concluded that, in all significant respects, the control objectives set out in that report were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Council receive and note the Internal Audit Report.

C.54/20 Environmental, Health and Safety Policy Statement

The Council considered the overarching Environmental, Health and Safety Policy Statement, which was reviewed annually.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Environmental Health & Safety Policy Statement ([Appendix A](#) to these Minutes) be approved and the Town Clerk be authorised to sign the statement.

C.55/20 Resolutions Moved on Notice

Resolution No 53

It was proposed by Councillor Mallon and seconded by Councillor Fatemian that:

"This Council fully recognises the value of the much-loved Horton General Hospital to the residents of Banbury and its surrounding catchment area, which uniquely covers four counties.

Local efforts to retain acute services at the Horton have been welcomed by Councils at all tiers in recent months and by community groups and residents alike. This Council's position has always been that the Horton's future should be as a fully functioning General Hospital complementing the world-class services at both the John Radcliffe Hospital and Churchill Hospital so as to build on Oxfordshire's enviable reputation – both nationally and internationally – as a centre for excellence in healthcare. That remains unequivocally the case today.

This Council is encouraged that Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (OUHFT) and the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) have listened to the strong representations of residents, Councillors and community groups (notably, Keep the Horton General) in recent years and those of Victoria Prentis MP and this Council welcomes steps taken by both OUHFT and OCCG to develop a masterplan for the Horton without delay.

For its part, this Council resolves to do all it can to support the advancement of this vision and commits to reviewing options with Councils at other tiers with a view to supporting OUHFT and CCG-led redevelopment plans so as to deliver an improved facility on the hospital's existing site or at a new and improved one within the Banbury area that is accessible to residents across the Horton's unique four-county catchment area."

Councillor Kilsby proposed an amendment to the motion, seconded by Councillor Cherry, to delete the words "and those of Victoria Prentis MP" in the third paragraph and to add a further paragraph to the end of the motion to read "Banbury Town Council would like to voice its' very real concerns to the CCT and the OUHFT and it reaffirms that will do all within its' power to retain our local General Hospital and all of its' current services". Following further debate the mover of the amendment accepted a suggested re-wording so that the additional paragraph would read:

"Banbury Town Council will continue to be a voice for Banbury and will raise any concerns it may have with the CCG and OUHFT and re-affirms that it will do all within its power to retain the Horton as a fully functioning General Hospital."

Following further debate a vote was then taken upon the amendment, which was carried unanimously. This then became the substantive motion, which was moved by Councillor Mallon, seconded by Councillor Kilsby, and when put to the vote it was carried unanimously and **RESOLVED** accordingly that:

"This Council fully recognises the value of the much-loved Horton General Hospital to the residents of Banbury and its surrounding catchment area, which uniquely covers four counties.

Local efforts to retain acute services at the Horton have been welcomed by Councils at all tiers in recent months and by community groups and residents alike. This Council's position has always been that the Horton's future should be as a fully functioning General Hospital complementing the world-class services at both the John Radcliffe Hospital and Churchill Hospital so as to build on Oxfordshire's enviable reputation – both nationally and internationally – as a centre for excellence in healthcare. That remains unequivocally the case today.

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Banbury Town Council will continue to be a voice for Banbury and will raise any concerns it may have with the CCG and OUHFT and re-affirms that it will do all within its power to retain the Horton as a fully functioning General Hospital."

C.56/20 Confidential Business Exclusion

It was proposed by the Town Mayor and **WAS RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

SUMMARY of items discussed during confidential session

C.57/20 Acceptance of Tenders

Members were asked to note that tenders had been submitted for refurbishment of the play area at Timms Road. The winning scheme would be assessed primarily on its play value and the designs would be shown to local residents for approval prior to any award of the contract. The public consultation exercise would also involve local schools. The maximum budget for this project was £80,000 and tenderers were advised that no bids would be accepted if they came in at a higher value and that this budget included any funds to be set aside for contingencies.

This site was an old site in dire need of refurbishment, with equipment set in primarily a sunken bark pit with a small area of wet pour safer-surfacing under the old swing unit. Once refurbished it would provide maximum play value for local residents, resulting in a Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP) for children up to the age of 12 years. The area was to be designed to provide access to all user groups and be DDA compliant and accessible, with the bark in particular removed from the site.

RESOLVED that the Council notes the report on tenders received for the project; and that the Town Clerk be authorised to enter into a contract with the successful tenderer once determined, in the sum set out above.

C.58/20 People's Park Capital Works Update

The Council considered a report of the Town Clerk updating Members on various capital projects relating to People's Park.

New Toilet Facilities/Mess Room and Covered Demonstration Area

Work was now complete on the new toilet, mess room and covered demonstration area within the Walled Garden that had replaced the former dilapidated prefab building and poly-tunnels. The building was currently providing a mess room facility for the in-house parks team whilst working in the park, but had not been opened to the public pending re-surfacing of the surrounding area. A separate contract had been awarded to N C + J C Construction Ltd, who were already engaged on footpath works within the Park, for a tarmacadam resurfacing of the area surrounding the new facility (Minute C.46/20 refers). This work had commenced on site on Monday 8 February with an expected duration of 3 weeks. It was hoped that the new block, including the public toilets, would open during Spring.

Café Project

Members were reminded that tenders received for the Café as originally proposed had been well in excess of the budget provision. It was also felt that the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic, and specifically its impact upon the catering and hospitality industry, warranted a re-assessment of the proposal. (Minute C23/20 refers).

Since this decision was taken discussions had been ongoing with the architects, quantity surveyors, planners and the Committee Chairmen, with the way forward crystallising around refurbishment of the existing Victorian Toilet Block within the current building envelope to create a smaller, kiosk style catering offer. This option would bring a redundant building back into use and be less problematic in planning terms, whilst carrying less risk of a lack of business viability in a post Covid 19 catering environment. Sketch designs and revised budget estimates were submitted for consideration.

It was noted that the external area around the refurbished building would now be key and needed to be well laid out with good paving/seating to make it attractive to customers. Some of the nearest trees would also need trimming or felling to make the surrounding area more open.

Tender and Planning Approval documentation was currently being worked up for the revised scheme and it was hoped to be in a position to let a construction contract prior to the next Council Meeting, if delegated authority was given at this meeting to proceed.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the update on Capital Works within People's Park be noted;
- (2) that the plans and budget estimates for conversion of the former Victorian Toilet Block into a kiosk style catering offer be approved; and
- (3) that the Town Clerk be authorised to obtain any necessary additional planning consent for the revised design and to undertake a further tender exercise, including entering into a contract with the successful tenderer.

The meeting ended at 7:30pm

ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

The management of Banbury Town Council operates an integrated environmental, health and safety management system, which is geared towards the identification and control of key processes in our organisation. It is also our intention to encompass environmental, health and safety best practice into our business activities and decisions and to:

- bring this Policy Statement to the attention of all stakeholders
- carry out regular audits of our environmental, health and safety management systems
- comply with legislation, guidance and approved codes of practice issued at International, National and Local levels
- eliminate risks to the environment, health and safety, where possible, through selection and design of materials, buildings, facilities, equipment and processes
- ensure that emergency procedures are in place at all locations for dealing with foreseeable environmental, health and safety incidents
- establish meaningful, measurable targets and goals for environmental, health and safety performance
- maintain an open and constructive dialogue on environmental, health and safety issues with our employees, contractors, suppliers, customers and regulatory authorities
- maintain our premises, provide and maintain safe plant and equipment
- minimise waste and increase recycling within the framework of our waste management procedures
- only engage contractors who are able to demonstrate due regard to environmental, health and safety law
- prevent pollution to land, air and water
- promote environmentally responsible purchasing
- provide adequate resources to control the environmental, health and safety risks arising from our work activities
- raise awareness, encourage participation and train employees in environmental, health and safety matters
- reduce the use of water, energy and any other natural resources
- seek opportunities to continuously improve our ability to identify measure and control the environmental, health and safety impacts of our activities
- where risks cannot be eliminated they will be minimised by substitution, use of physical controls or, as a last resort, through safe systems of work

This Policy will be reviewed at least annually and revised as necessary to reflect changes to the business activities and any changes to legislation. Any changes to the Policy will be brought to the attention of all stakeholders.

Signed:

Dated:

Position: Town Clerk