

BANBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of Banbury Town Council held on Tuesday, 11 January 2022 at 6.30pm.

Present: Councillor Hussain (Town Mayor)
Councillors: Bunce, Cherry, Colegrave, Garrett, Ilott, Kilsby, Mallon, and Powell.

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

C.42/21 Apologies for Absence

Councillors Ahmed, Ayers, Beere, Biegel, Bishop, Dalton, Donaldson, Hodgson, Mears, Phillips, Reeves, Richards and Strangwood.

C.43/21 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Kilsby declared a personal interest in the Minutes of the Planning Committee (Minute No C.47/21) where the dismissal of the appeal against refusal of Application No's 20/03419/F and 20/03420/LB at 18 Boxhedge Road, Banbury for retrospective planning permission and listed building consent for an existing UPVC conservatory on the rear of the property was noted, as an adjoining property owner, and remained in the meeting during the discussion and voting thereon.

C.44/21 Minutes of the Last Meeting

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

C.45/21 Communications

None.

C.46/21 Questions - Elected Members and Members of the Public

There were no questions from Elected Members.

At the invitation of the Town Mayor a member of the Banbury Litter Pickers group addressed the Council in connection with the motion to be considered later in the meeting. A request was made that the town council work closely with Cherwell DC and Oxfordshire CC in tackling litter and cleansing issues in the town, and reference was made to the current state of land at Malthouse Walk, which the Banbury Litter Pickers had been clearing until recently.

C.47/21 Planning Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Ilott, and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 15 December 2021 be received.

A Member then asked the Chairman whether the Town Council had taken a position on the current poor performance of the Local Planning Authority in processing applications relating to development in the town, which was causing real distress to applicants as a result of delays in processing, and that this was leading in some instances to companies taking their business elsewhere, to the economic detriment of the town. Members felt it would be helpful for the Planning Committee to hear directly from the Head of Planning and the Development Portfolio Holder on what the current issues were and how they were being addressed.

It was then **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk be instructed to write to the Chief Executive of Cherwell District Council explaining Members concerns and asking that the Head of Planning and the Development Portfolio Holder attend a BTC Planning Committee meeting to brief Members on the current issues and how they were being addressed.

C.48/21 General Services Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Colegrave and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the General Services Committee meeting held on 14 December 2021 be received.

C.49/21 Resources Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Mallon, and **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 04 January 2022 be received.

It was then also **RESOLVED** that further to:

- (1) Minute R.42/21, the Estimates as recommended by the Grants and Budget Sub Committee on 24 November and the General Services Committee on 14 December 2021 be approved; and that the Four Year Financial Forecast be approved.
- (2) Minute R.45/21, the 2022/23 Calendar of Meetings, as attached at Appendix A to the Resources Committee Minutes be approved.
- (3) Minute R.47/21, that the response set out at paragraph 5.7 of the report, and summarised in the Minute, be made to the Community Governance review consultation.

C.50/21 To set the Precept for 2022/23

The Leader of the Council expressed thanks to Officers and Councillors that had been a part of the Budget process, particularly those that attended the Grants & Budgets Sub Committee. He then outlined the budget highlights, which included a 2% increase in Banbury Town Council's share of the Council Tax bill, meaning the levy would increase from £122.12 to £124.56 for a D band home.

In proposing the budget, the Leader explained that for the first time in 12 years, Banbury Town Council's share of the council tax bill was to go up. The last time the town council increased its precept was in 2010. The increase would cost residents an extra £2.44 a year – or the equivalent of 20p per month for a Band D property. For that, the town council maintained and improved all of Banbury's parks, play areas, open spaces and two cemeteries. It looked after 11,000 trees, four miles of hedgerows, and was also responsible for bus shelters, allotments, sports grounds, dog waste bins, Christmas street lights, and annual events including Remembrance Sunday.

The Council had provided excellent and improved services without burdening residents with higher taxes for more than a decade but this year it had been hit by the higher costs that everyone was noticing. The increase was necessary to continue providing the extremely high standard of services that people had become accustomed to. In addition to continuing a programme of improvements to cemeteries, parks and play areas climate change initiatives would make the town a healthier place to be. These would include replacing the Council's petrol vehicles with electric-powered models.

In responding to the Budget proposals the Leader of the Opposition indicated his support, and was pleased to note that only an inflationary increase was proposed. However, he indicated that his Group would be keeping close scrutiny of expenditure proposals.

Following further discussion, it was moved by Councillor Mallon, seconded by Councillor Colegrave and **RESOLVED** unanimously that the Town Council set a precept of £2,017,911 (or £124.56 per Band D property), being an increase of 2%.

C.51/21 Resolutions Moved on Notice

Resolution No 57

It was moved by Councillor Garrett and seconded by Councillor Kilsby that:

"This Council recognises and appreciates the hard work being carried out by the volunteer group Banbury Litter Pickers.

They are active in all wards of the town, their diligence and community minded endeavour helps to keep the streets, lanes, public spaces and perhaps more importantly privately owned spaces free from litter.."

In outlining the motion Councillor Garrett paid tribute to the Banbury Litter Pickers Group and to the good working relationship it had forged with the Street Cleansing team at Cherwell DC. Whilst recognising the good work of this group, other members commented upon similar initiatives they were aware of operating in their particular wards. A discussion also took place about the problems being experienced in Malthouse Walk, which was private land and it was understood that Cherwell DC were investigating ownerships so that enforcement action could be pursued.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the motion as set out above be carried.

C.52/21 Change of Committee Membership – Resources Committee

Due to work commitments Councillor Reeves had resigned from the Resources Committee.

RESOLVED that Councillor Powell be appointed to fill the vacancy on Resources Committee and that Councillor Reeves be appointed as an Alternate Member on the Committee.

The meeting ended at 7:15pm