

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Oakwood Centre on
Tuesday 27 June 2023 at 8 pm**

Present: *Councillors J. Anderson (Chairman); K. Baker; G. Bello; D. Bragg; A. Chadwick; K. Charles Bey; Y. Edwards; D. Errawalla; M. Firmager; K. Gilder; L. Guttridge; R. Horskins; C. Jewell; M. Kennedy; V. Lewis; B. Rowland; P. Singh; D. Smith; B. Soane; A. Swaddle; J. Taylor*

Officers present: *K. Murray, Deputy Town Clerk; A. Basra, Finance Officer; M. Filmore, Committee Officer;*

Also present: *1 member of the public*

26. *A maximum of 30 minutes was set aside before the start of the meeting for members of the public to pose questions to the Council in the Town Forum. As there were no members of the public wishing to address the Council the Town Forum did not take place.*

27. **APOLOGIES**
Apologies were received from Councillors Cheng, Holmes, Nagra and Sartorel.

28. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

29. **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2023**
The Deputy Town Mayor presented the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 May 2023.

RESOLVED

- ◆ To approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 May 2023 and that they be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

Voting: For: 20 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1 No Vote Recorded: 0

30. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

30.1 **Minutes of the Planning and Community Committee: 23 May 2023**
Councillor Soane presented the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 23 May 2023.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 23 May 2023.

30.2 **Minutes of the Leisure Services Committee: 6 June 2023**
Councillor Smith presented the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting held on 6 June 2023.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting held on 6 June 2023.

- 30.3 **Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee: 13 June 2023**
Councillor Baker presented the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting held on 13 June 2023.

The Committee Officer highlighted that the date of the meeting as stated on page 1 of the draft minutes was incorrect, but would be updated for the next meeting of the committee.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Strategy & Resources Committee meeting held on 13 June 2023.

- 30.4 **Minutes of the Planning and Community Committee: 20 June 2023**
Councillor Soane presented the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 20 June 2023.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 25 April 2023.

31. **LEADER'S STATEMENT**

Councillor Baker, as Leader of the Council, read out a statement, included at **Appendix A**.

32. **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2022/23**

32.1 **Financial Statements 2022/23**

The Deputy Town Clerk presented the Financial Statements for 2022/23, and advised Members that there had been amendments made to pages 3 and 5 of the Financial Statements since they were published in the agenda.

On page 3, Members noted that the expenditure in the year figure had been corrected to state £2,308,115, and the income figure had been corrected to state £1,014,316.

Members also noted there had been a change to the figures presented in the income and expenditure account on page 5, although this had not resulted in any change to the final general fund balance carried forward which had previously been stated. The updated Financial Statements page 3 and 5 are included at **Appendix B**.

It was also highlighted that the date of the next elections, as stated on page 2, was incorrectly stated as May 2023. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed this would be corrected.

It was proposed by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Gilder, and following a vote Members:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the Financial Statements for 2022/23 and that they be signed by the Deputy Mayor and the Deputy Town Clerk.

Voting: For: 21 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 0

32.2 **Annual Internal Audit Report for 2022/23**

Members received the annual internal audit report as set out in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

It was noted that the audit recommended a review of earmarked reserves in respect of managing assets, which the audit identified as being quite low. Whilst the general reserve was high, the Deputy Town Clerk advised this was at the top end of the expected reserve level for a council of this size.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report for 2022/23.

32.3 **Annual Governance Statement for 2022/23**

The Deputy Town Mayor explained that it was the responsibility of Members to ensure that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for preparation of the Accounting Statements. She went on to explain that Members had a responsibility to consider each of the Annual Governance Statements and vote as to whether, to the best of their knowledge and belief, they agreed with the statements.

The Deputy Town Mayor read each of the nine annual governance statements in turn. An individual vote took place regarding each statement, with each unanimously approved.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the Annual Governance Statements for 2022/23.

Voting for each individual statement:

For: 21 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 0

It was proposed by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Rowland, and following a vote Members:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the signing of the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 by the Deputy Mayor and the Deputy Town Clerk.

Voting: For: 21 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 0

32.4 **Accounting Statements for 2022/23**

Members considered the Accounting Statements for 2022/23.

It was proposed by Councillor Gilder, seconded by Councillor Soane, and following a vote Members:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the Accounting Statements for 2022/23, and approve the signing of the Accounting Statements 2022/23 by the Deputy Mayor.

Voting: For: 21 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 0

33. **GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE**

The Deputy Town Clerk set out Report No. FC 4/23 regarding the General Power of Competence.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that an immediate benefit of resolving that the Council meets the General Power of Competence would be that it would remove any potential subjectivity around the awarding of individual grants. Individual grants are currently awarded under the more restrictive Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, which requires that they must provide benefit to some or all of the residents of Woodley.

Members noted that the Council meets the eligibility criteria to use the General Power of Competence as over two thirds of the Members were elected, and the Deputy Town Clerk, currently Acting Town Clerk, had the applicable CiLCA qualification required. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that advice from the Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) had confirmed that the position of Acting Town Clerk was appropriate for this consideration.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. FC 4/23.
- ◆ To resolve that the Council meets the criteria for eligibility to use the General Power of Competence.

Voting: For: 21 Against: 0 Abstain: 0 No Vote Registered: 0

34. **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING SUB COMMITTEE**

The Deputy Town Mayor advised Members that was being proposed that an Annual Town Meeting Sub Committee be set up to consider the arrangements for the Annual Town Meeting each year.

Members noted that, in recent years, a working group had been in place to develop this meeting, and to identify interesting ways to engage residents and encourage attendance by giving the meeting a focus.

It was proposed by Councillor Anderson, seconded by Councillor Swaddle, and following a vote Members:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To set up the Annual Town Meeting Sub Committee, and approve the associated terms of reference as set out in **APPENDIX C**.

Voting: For: 21 Against: 0 Abstain: 0 No Vote Registered: 0

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillors Anderson, Edwards, Horskins and Kennedy to the Annual Town Meeting Sub Committee.

35. **NOTICE OF MOTION (MOTION NO. 72)**

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Jewell and seconded by Councillor Rowland:

"This Council is committed to continuous environmental improvement, in line with its adoption of a Climate Emergency strategy in 2019, and places a high importance on the promotion of cycling, walking and the use of public transport to reduce environmental impact."

Councillors Jewell spoke in favour of the motion, and her speech is included at **APPENDIX D**.

The Deputy Town Mayor asked if any Councillor wished to speak against the motion, with no Councillor indicating as such.

Following a vote, it was

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the motion be carried.

Voting: For: 21 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 0

36. **OUTSIDE BODIES**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the written reports from Town Council representatives on outside bodies provided to Members at the meeting, and included at **APPENDIX E**.
- ◆ To note that the Council are no longer required to appoint a representative to the governing body for Bulmershe School.
- ◆ To appoint the following Town Council's representatives to outside organisations:
 - Keep Mobile – Councillor Guttridge
 - Readibus - Mr Alex Heap

37. **TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

The Deputy Town Mayor advised Members to note the details of the events which the Town Mayor and the Deputy Town Mayor had attended since the last Full Council meeting, as provided in the agenda.

38. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no suggestions for future agenda items.

39. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

It was suggested that the Council should look to publicise the change to the parliamentary constituency area within which Woodley falls, which is due to come into force in 2024.

It was also suggested that the Climate Emergency Action Plan should be visible on the website.

Meeting closed at 8:36 pm

LEADERS STATEMENT

Meeting 27th June 2023

Cllr Keith Baker

First of all can I congratulate Cllr Beth Rowland in becoming the third Mayor of Wokingham Borough from Woodley in recent years following on from Cllr Bill Soane and myself. I know she will have an amazing time meeting so many different volunteers and so many different charities throughout the year.

Turning to more local matters we have now completed our first full round of Standing Committees and I hope the newcomers to those committees have enjoyed the experience. The feedback I have received is that regardless of political party allegiance the spirit of co-operation has been strong, which is exactly what the residents of Woodley want. We still have our political beliefs but this is not parliament or the Borough where such differences are more relevant. I hope that this will continue for years to come.

Finally, we have a motion coming up around the Climate Emergency. This council led the way in 2019 being the first Town Council in the Borough to adopt a strategy. So, we are already fully committed to continuous environmental improvements. Strategy & Resources have a standing agenda item on this very topic. So the Conservative Group will be supporting this motion and I urge the Labour Group to do the same.

**Woodley Town Council
Financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023**

Infrastructure Levy income of £25,649, making a total CIL balance of £86,435, of which £77,500 has been allocated to the following projects

- Electrical works at Woodford Park Leisure Centre
- New irrigation system at the Bowls Club.

At the end of the year the Council's general reserves totalled £857,788. Expenditure in the year totalled £2,308,115 with income of £1,014,316 received.

Signed on behalf of the Council

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Kevin Murray, Acting Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
27 June 2023

Woodley Town Council
Financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Note	Year ended 31 March 2023			2022
		Expense £	Income £	Net £	Net £
Leisure activities					
Woodford Park Leisure Centre & 3G pitch		447,155	396,859	50,296	-56,021
Outdoor sports and recreation		376,738	234,175	142,563	111,527
Play areas		13,643	0	13,643	22,102
Oakwood Centre		174,266	139,613	34,653	25,487
Coronation & Chapel Halls		50,545	68,990	-18,445	-15,964
Maintenance central costs		-7,146	0	-7,146	6,857
Town Centre Community Garden		0	0	0	8,672
Allotments		14,709	15,115	-406	4,524
Woodley Town Centre Partnership		67,089	67,089	0	-1,710
Grants under S137 LGA 1972	5	17,850	0	17,850	16,100
Other grants/SLAs	5	34,800	0	34,800	33,422
Youth services		0	0	0	0
Public amenities		7,678	0	7,678	3,798
Public events		13,359	479	12,880	1,900
Public toilet		5,673	329	5,344	3,744
Capital expenditure and receipts	6	0	0	0	2,951
Loan interest and repayments		184,978	0	184,978	184,980
Loan sinking fund investments		0	0	0	-1,831,918
CCLA Activities		0	62,143	-62,143	0
Administration and office costs		297,490	3,875	293,615	261,522
Democratic process		52,578	0	52,578	56,063
Council-wide central costs		390,007	0	390,007	366,905
Capital Programme		30,000	0	30,000	0
Community Infrastructure Levy		-51,851	25,649	-77,500	54,399
S&R EMR Net Transfer		96,696	0	96,696	
LS EMR Net Transfer		73,702	0	73,702	
Invest EMR Net Transfer		968	0	986	
Capital EMR Net Transfer		17,169	0	17,169	
Net cost of Council services		2,308,115	1,014,315	1,293,799	-849,458
Precept on Wokingham Borough Council			1,225,628		1,293,034
Precept support grant			0		0
Interest and investment income			4,113		29,638
Net income/expenditure (-) for the year			-64,058		2,172,130
Movements on earmarked reserves					
Transfers from reserves	14	-233,929		-188,553	-1,989,464
Transfers to reserves	14	45,376			
Increase in general fund for the year				124,495	182,666
Balance brought forward				733,294	550,628
General fund balance carried forward				857,788	733,294

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING SUB COMMITTEE

VERSION	DATE	AMENDED?	COMMENTS
0.1	23/05/23		Draft Version – pulled from previous Town Electors Working Group ToR
1.0	27/6/23	No	Approved at FC (27/06/2023)

1. **TYPE OF COMMITTEE** => Sub Committee
2. **PARENT COMMITTEE** => Full Council
3. **6 MONTH MEETING RULE VALID (see 6.1.k)**
 - a. NO
4. **SIZE** => 4 Councillors
5. **DUTIES AND POWERS**

5.1 OVERALL PURPOSE

The committee's role is to review the arrangements that were in place for holding previous Annual Town (previously Town Electors') meetings and to consider any new arrangements which might be appropriate to attract more residents to attend future meetings.

5.2 Meetings

The meetings of the committee shall take place each year in the run up to the Annual Town Meeting.

5.3 Terms of operation

- a. To consider the preferred date/s for future Annual Town meetings – the meeting must be held annually between 1 March and 1 June – and to make recommendations to Full Council as to the date/s on which meetings should be held.
- b. To review how the Annual Town meeting has operated in recent years.
- c. To consider ideas, arrangements and alternative structures to attract more residents to attend future Annual Town meetings.
- d. To consider how, for future Annual Town meetings, residents could be involved in suggesting and / or identifying items of interest relating to the town which could be discussed at the meetings.
- e. To make recommendations to Full Council on proposals for the 2024 Annual Town meeting and future Town Electors meetings.

MOTION TO FULL COUNCIL 27TH JUNE 2023

Proposers Speech

"I have submitted this motion to the Town Council for two main reasons:

1. I would like to reaffirm the Town Council's commitment to the environment and sustainability as we are at the start of a new cycle of the Council and have a number of new members.
2. I wanted to highlight the need for better provision for active travel, that is, walking, cycling and public transport.

Let's look at why this motion is needed:

Poor leadership in areas concerning the environment, for example the Cycling in Woodley WP and the Climate Emergency WP has meant few meetings have been called. If it wasn't for the hard work of the officers, we would not have achieved any sustainability targets.

There has been a lack of commitment by the majority party, demonstrated by the disbandment of the Cycling in Woodley Working Party and lack of support in finding appropriate safer cycling schemes by working with the Borough Council.

The Climate Emergency Strategy needs to be developed. For example, involving the community in sustainability issues. We need to seek a better understanding of how to measure carbon footprints through education and motivation.

In short, this Town Council needs to be proactive in environmental issues in the community and not just pay lip service by having Working Parties that don't work!"

Cllr Carol Jewell
27 June 2023

REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Provided to Members at the Full Council meeting – 27 June 2023

ARC (June 2023)

ARC held its AGM Vva Zoom on 22nd May this year; unfortunately I was unable to attend this and our next meeting is on 4th July which I shall attend.

At the AGM, the Chair reported on a very successful year for ARC, despite the challenges such as the aftermath of the COVID pandemic. Online counselling continues when required alongside face to face.

ARC continues to offer training to all counsellors, students, schools and colleges; one subject being the "Trauma of Suicide".

ARC now employs a worker for a "Youth Access Project" which delivers services to a variety of students on topics such as sexual health, substance abuse and mental health; it has proven to be a very successful venture.

Anxiety remains at the forefront of counselling sessions, with mental health and depression remaining on-going concerns

ARC remain grateful to Woodley Town Council for their on-going support.

Mrs Shelagh Flower, June 2023

Poor's Land Charity (June 2023)

A very successful fish and chip lunch was held to celebrate the King's Coronation. It was a lovely, social occasion involving both residents and trustees.

The day to day running of the almshouses remains at the forefront of each meeting, ensuring the smooth running and operations of the flats, from maintenance, decorations, refitting when required and general day to day repairs. As always, our residents remain our priority and we aim to try to support as much as we can within our remit, given we do not provide a care facility.

We continue to try to help those who qualify for our relief in need fund, recently helping a family who had lost all possessions in a fire and someone in need of a fridge freezer (a more usual request).

Our website is nearing completion, which will be a useful resource for both trustees, residents and the public at large.

Mrs Shelagh Flower, June 2023

Woodley Volunteer Centre (June 2023)

The AGM of the Woodley Volunteer Centre was held on Monday 26 June. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend as the date clashed with the Councillor Fundamentals Training Day which took place that same evening.

However, I made myself know to Karen Todd, Coordinator, at the Centre in Christchurch Hall, Crockhamwell Road, Woodley this morning, and watched her in action as she handled numerous calls from their registered clients which currently number around 200. The office is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from 10am to 12noon and an answer-phone is in operation at all other times.

Woodley Volunteer Centre was set up in 1982 and evolved from a Good Neighbours Scheme. Originally, volunteers provided support to Woodley residents in a variety of ways such as gardening, DIY, and shopping but now their focus is purely on medical appointments only.

Woodley Volunteer Centre receives an annual grant from Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) of £1,750. Clients are able to use their bus passes issued to them by WBC in payment of all medical jobs undertaken. Drivers are reimbursed 50p per mile for their services.

Woodley Volunteer Centre seeks to increase their number of drivers which currently stands at around 16. I am pleased to inform Council that I have increased that number by one today, and hope to attract other volunteers from Woodley and Earley Lions. If any member can spare a little of their time to help Woodley Volunteer Centre please contact them on 0118 969 8849.

Cllr Mike Kennedy, June 2023