

Woodley Town Council

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Thursday 23th May 2024 at 7pm

Present: Councillors:

*J. Anderson (Chairman); K. Baker; K. Charles Bey; Y. Edwards; D. Errawalla;
M. Firmager; R. Horskins; V. Lewis; J. Sartorel; D. Smith; J. Taylor*

WTC Officers:

*K. Murray (Town Clerk); M. Filmore (Deputy Town Clerk);
A. Ransley (Communications Manager); N. Syers (Venues Manager)
E. Whitesmith (Leisure Services Manager); B Fennelly (Town Centre Manager)*

WBC Officers:

*Mhairi Adams (Climate Emergency Manager)
Resh Thorpe (Climate Emergency Engagement Officer)*

Also present: 40 members of the public

Preceding the Annual Town Meeting, the Deputy Town Clerk introduced the Council's Community Heroes Awards 2025. Awards were presented by the Mayor – Cllr Juliet Anderson.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bello, Bragg, Gilder, Holmes, Kennedy, Jewell, Singh, Soane and Swaddle

2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING – 26 MAY 2023

Those in attendance noted the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting which was held on 25 May 2023.

3. TOWN MAYOR WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed everyone and outlined the format for the Annual Town meeting.

4. CLIMATE EMERGENCY PRESENTATION

A presentation on Climate Emergency was delivered by Climate Officers Resh Thorpe and Mhairi Adams from Wokingham Borough Council and Matthew Filmore – Woodley Town Council Deputy Town Clerk. The presentation provided an update on actions taken so far by the Borough and Town Councils and also focused on the importance of individual participation to help reduce carbon emissions.

Climate related questions from the public;

- 4.1 A question was asked about how short car journeys to school could be addressed. WBC Officers advised that by 2025 all schools in the borough will need to have its own Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP), and that educating children through school was very effective in changing the behaviour of parents, rather than the Council simply sending out information and messages.
- 4.2 A question was asked as to whether methane emissions from Ashenbury Park, which was once a landfill site, could be harvested. WBC Officers said that this comment would be passed on to the climate team at WBC.
- 4.3 A question was asked regarding how young people could be discouraged from discarding disposable vapes and drinks cans/bottles inappropriately. WBC Officers advised that this could form part of the discussion in schools and feed into their CEAP.

It was also noted that there was a planned campaign regarding the correct disposal methods for vapes.

- 4.4 A question was asked about the amount of waste generated by the Carnival and whether this was recycled. Councillor Anderson, as a member of the Carnival Committee, responded that some work had been done on this and the general waste bins this year will have recyclable materials separated by the waste contractor after collection. It was noted that this was a step forward from previous years and that fully segregated on site waste bins were prohibitively expensive.

5. GENERAL QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

- 5.1 A question was asked as to whether a ramp could be installed at the far end of the library car park. The Town Clerk agreed to forward this comment to Wokingham Borough Council, which has responsibility for this.
- 5.2 A question was asked as to whether a map could be produced showing the location of all publicly accessible defibrillators in Woodley. The Town Clerk agreed to look into this.
- 5.3 A question was asked regarding the Sunflower Hidden Disabilities Scheme and whether the profile of this could be raised in Woodley. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that Woodley Town Council had signed up to the scheme and the Town Clerk agreed to take the details of the resident and discuss this further.
- 5.4 A comment was made regarding the poor road markings at a junction in Woodley. It was noted that this was a Wokingham Borough Council highways matter and the resident was advised to report it to them.
- 5.5 A resident asked what the Council could do regarding inconsiderate and illegal parking in the area of Caldbeck Drive and Arundel Road as this was causing a safety hazard and inconvenience to residents being blocked in or out of their driveways. The resident stated that they had contacted the police who had said it was the Council's responsibility. Councillor Baker advised that this information was not entirely correct and that the Borough Council only had responsibility where the issue was regarding parking on yellow lines.
- 5.6 A resident asked why there was a break in the double yellow lines in Church Road, just after the junction with Butts Hill Road. Councillor Baker advised that he had argued against this before the lines were installed but the decision had rested with the Highways Officer at Wokingham Borough Council.
- 5.7 A question was asked about the graffiti on the railway bridge in Butts Hill Road. It was noted that the bridge belonged to Network Rail and that they were unlikely to remove graffiti unless it was offensive.
- 5.8 A question was asked as to what happened to the old graffiti wall in Woodford Park. Councillor Baker advised that the wall was removed some years ago as it was old and in poor condition. He added that a suggestion had been made regarding the reinstatement of something similar but that this had yet to be formally considered.

As there were no further questions from residents in attendance the Deputy Town Clerk read out a number of questions which had been received in advance of the meeting in writing.

- 5.9 A question was asked regarding the poor condition of some of the paving slabs and gulleys in the town centre. The Town Centre Manager responded that this was the responsibility of Wokingham Borough Council and that he had walked the site with WBC officers recently to look at this and other issues and hoped that this would be dealt with shortly.
- 5.10 A comment was made regarding the limited number of parking spaces for people with disabilities in the Waitrose Car Park. Councillor Baker advised that the Borough Council is probably meeting the minimum requirements but felt there was room for further dedicated spaces. It was noted that this was the responsibility of Wokingham Borough Council. Councillor Horskins commented that blue badge holders were also entitled to park in any other normal parking space and also on double yellow lines in certain circumstances.
- 5.11 A question was asked as to whether the temporary parking restrictions on Haddon Drive would become permanent. Councillor Baker advised that this was likely to be in the next batch of traffic management matters to be implemented by the Borough Council and that his understanding was that the restrictions would be permanent.
- 5.12 A question was asked if more lighting could be installed in Woodford Park and whether the net on the basketball hoop could be replaced. The Town Clerk advised that the potential for additional lighting in the park would need to be carefully considered so as not to encourage people to gather in certain areas and that the damaged hoop basket would be removed.
- 5.13 A request was submitted to provide facilities for Padel Tennis at Woodford Park Leisure Centre. It was noted that this would be forwarded to the Town Council working group that was currently looking at future sports provision at the centre. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that there was currently a public consultation survey available for all users and non-users of the centre to feed ideas into, and that this had received around 1000 responses so far.

Councillor Baker rounded off the Q&A session by advising residents that if they wished to object to planning applications affecting them, they must respond to Wokingham Borough Council as the planning authority, and also to contact their Borough Councillor to request that the application be 'listed'. This process means that the application will be considered fully by Borough Councillors, rather than simply decided by Planning Officers.

6. **MEETING CLOSE**

The Mayor brought the meeting to a close by offering her thanks to those who had attended.

The meeting closed at 9:04 pm
