



Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on Wednesday 30th November 2022 at 7.30pm in the Green Room, Memorial Hall

Present: Cllrs: Liz Reason, Gareth Epps, Peter Kenrick, Tony Merry, Gary Harrison, Tim Crisp, Claire Wilding, Frances Mortimer, Janet Burroughs, Dan Raymond-Barker, James Styring, Nick Potter, **District Councillor** Andy Graham, **Town Clerk:** Lisa Wilkinson, 1 member of public

1. To receive Apologies for Absence
These were received from County Cllr Liz Leffman.
2. To receive **Declarations of Interest:**
Item 15b 'To consider working in partnership with Cosy Homes Oxfordshire (Retrofit Works)':
Gareth Epps declared an investment in a Low Carbon Hub project
3. Contributions from members of public
None. Ben Peters was invited to speak during item 15 To consider proposal: To engage with Charlbury residents, WODC Planning Department and local builders to develop the knowledge and skills base to establish an end-to-end supply chain which will facilitate the refurbishment of homes to net zero
Paper on this was received. Ben Peters, as chair of the buildings working group talked about the project.
4. To receive minutes from the Town Council meeting dated 19th October 2022 and minutes of extraordinary meeting dated 16th November 2022
These were agreed as a true record and signed by the chair.
5. **Matters arising from the Minutes** (not elsewhere on the agenda)
 - Remembrance Sunday parade took place. A member of public tripped over a pothole on Church Street. The pothole has been reported on fixmystreet. The TC was thanked for its support.
 - No progress on refurbishment of Evenlode Close.
6. **Communications/Engagement**
 - a. Report from Oxfordshire County Council
 - The County Council is currently consulting on the 2023/4 budget and this will continue until December 19th. The council needs to find savings of around £44 million. It will not know until the end of December what the government settlement will be so it may need to find additional savings before publishing the budget in January.
 - Some key decisions were made recently. On 29th November, the Cabinet agreed to an experimental traffic regulation order, which will introduce traffic filters into the City. This will be implemented in early 2024, following the reopening of the Botley Road which will be closed for a year while Network Rail complete work on Oxford station. This is all part of the overall plan to improve walking, cycling and bus use in the City and beyond. It will also be considering a timeline for the introduction of the workplace parking levy in Oxford at the Cabinet meeting in January.
 - The line painting for parking spaces etc from the recent Traffic Regulation Order should take place week commencing 5th December.



- Work has begun on the Rushy Bank site and Liz Leffman is pleased to be able to confirm that the money set aside by the County Council for the YDUKH project has been included in the council's budget for next year.
- Following the recent very heavy rainfall, three areas of the town that have previously been a major issue have not suffered from flooding thanks to work done by the gullies team. These are the area at the bend on Woodstock Road where flooding has been alleviated thanks to some structural work on the drains, the bottom of the dip on the Slade which has been thoroughly cleared out, and the area on Park St just past the pre-school where again the gully under the road seems to have been much improved.

b. Report from West Oxfordshire District Council

Andy Graham reported:

- WODC is waiting for a settlement from the government as it has a £2 million shortfall in its budget. It is looking at ways to do things differently rather than making cuts as people have already been hit by the cost-of-living crisis. If necessary, some of the £12 million reserves will be used to balance the budget.
- Support has been given to ladders and food banks and organisations supporting people.
- £100,000 fund has been created to support youth initiatives. A youth advocate is now in post. A youth needs assessment has been completed in West Oxfordshire in which 1500 people took part.
- Waterways day took place. This was run differently to usual; it was interactive with direct conversations taking place with Thames Water and campaigning organisations.
- Botley West solar project: WODC approach is to support local councils who are most directly affected by the process being imposed on them. Local Impact assessment will be undertaken and presented to the developers and the Inspector.
- Witney Hotel is being used for housing refugees/asylum seekers (one day's notice was given). Security and food are being provided by the Home Office.
- Cabinet on Tour continued at Chipping Norton. It was very well- attended.

c. Update on training/thank you event for members of all working groups and to allocate budget
This event will be deferred until January 26th.

7. Finance and Administration

a. To receive Payment schedule and authorise payments (see **Appendix 1**)

These were approved by Tony Merry and Gary Harrison

The payments for the two items of play equipment (Huck Nets and Playgrade) were approved but will be delayed until the contractor has inspected the goods.

b. Training

Liz Reason has attended Communication with the Community parts 1 and 2; the clerk has attended Advanced Social Media training.

c. To receive recommendations from the finance committee

Minutes from the finance meeting on 16th November were received. The TC will finalise the budget and precept request at the precept meeting on 7th December and recommend it to full Council at the 14th December TC meeting.

d. To adopt volunteer policy and risk assessment

These were adopted. (Proposed by GE, seconded by PK.)

8. Personnel Committee

a. To receive report and consider recommendation

Report was received and recommendation of an increase in clerk's salary to point 23 on NALC salary scale was **resolved**. (Proposed by JS, seconded) TC. Appreciation was given to the clerk for her work.



9. Correspondence (see Appendix 2)

- Lord Lieutenant '100 hours celebration'
- Cottsway Housing Association 'No Mow May' at Kendal Piece
- Commonwealth War Graves Commission Enquiry regarding installation of sign at entrance to cemetery. It was agreed to go ahead with this.
- Dangerous tree at Ticknell Piece: Nick Dalby at WODC will be contacted.
- Tree planting at Nine Acres: suggested location will be requested as concern was raised about the eventual size of an oak.
- Holiday let businesses in Charlbury: clerk will write to Robert Courts and WODC. Burford and Bampton Councils to be contacted to see if they are interested in writing to WODC with Charlbury TC.

10. Community

a. Report on cost-of-living summit

This was covered at the extraordinary meeting on 16th November.

b. Staffing at Charlbury railway station

Attempts for recruitment are continuing. Staffing will continue to be sporadic until a member of staff is appointed. Fabric of building is becoming a concern due to lack of maintenance. Tim King to be invited to talk to the Town Council.

11. Journeys

a. Promotion of buses

Bus patronage remains suppressed after the pandemic with approximately 80% of passengers having returned to the network, while the costs of provision have increased significantly. The Government requested that all local authorities worked with their bus operators to ensure financially sustainable services going forward, with operators required to identify all services as either commercial, marginal or non-commercial. Following this exercise, both bus routes S3 and X9 serving Charlbury were declared as non-commercial by their operators.

Charlbury Town Council (Journeys Working Group) would like to run a campaign to promote use of the X9 and S3 bus services.

Initial actions to include:

- Provide information re services on TC and Charlbury.info websites
- Produce map showing routes and display this at bus stops with QR code linking to webpage (**cost: £36** for 10x A4 outdoor (polyester))
- Produce a poster including map & QR code to display in community spaces (**cost: £48** for 10 x A3)
- Write to all Charlbury societies to make aware of the campaign and the £2 fare cap and encourage them to organise a trip using buses between Jan-March 2023
- Develop a short survey on barriers and enablers – administer online and (if volunteers available) face-to-face at Farmers Market.
- Consult on an effective campaign slogan
- Develop a plan of further actions to bring to future TC meeting.

This was proposed and seconded (FM, JS) and **resolved** to proceed with these actions. The Clerk will contact David Miles at WOCT for any support he can provide.

12. Amenities



a. Nine Acres

To consider removal of ivy on the walls by the footpath and the gate at the bottom end of Nine Acres

Quote not yet received.

13. Town Maintenance

a. Grass at Kendal Piece and The Green

To be deferred.

b. Graffiti

Graffiti has again been painted around the town. Claire Wilding and residents are cleaning this off. It was proposed to employ someone to clean off the graffiti. (JS and GE proposed and seconded.)

Resolved.

14. Trustees

a. Corner House and Memorial Hall CIO

- Two trustees have stood down and sadly a third trustee is seriously ill and is unlikely to return. One new trustee has been appointed and will take over the role of treasurer. Two further trustees are being sought to bring the board up to the desired operational level of resource.
- Finances are in good order. The annual accounts for the previous charity have been completed and are signed off.
- The users of the three fully occupied rooms have all agreed to a 20% increase in rent, effective from 1st January 2023, in line with the increase in other room hire charges.
- A £2,500 grant from OCC's Energy Support fund has been applied for.
- Gigaclear have agreed a free broadband connection to the Memorial Hall and OCC have offered a connection to the Museum, although that coverage does not currently extend throughout The Corner House.
- The new website is up and running, including a new email system which can be expanded as necessary.

15. Buildings

a. To consider proposal: To engage with Charlbury residents, WODC Planning Department and local builders to develop the knowledge and skills base to establish an end-to-end supply chain which will facilitate the refurbishment of homes to net zero

A paper was received on this proposal. Ben Peters, as chair of the buildings working group, and then Tim Crisp talked about the proposed project and introduced the new name for the project: Home Comforts.

Proposed Objectives:

To lead and catalyse wider transformative change, particularly to:

- Engage the residents of Charlbury in understanding the key elements of improving the energy efficiency and carbon performance of their homes whilst at the same time improving both winter and summer comfort.
- Increase the uptake of WODC's Sustainability Standards Checklist.
- Use the development of whole house plans for a range of house types which illustrate the path to net zero carbon.
- Encourage local builders to acquire the knowledge and skills to improve energy and carbon performance when they are engaged to deliver home improvements.
- Identify the challenges of retrofit for the planning system, including the barriers to implementation, and to work collaboratively with WODC Planning Department to develop new guidance and tools which will speed up planning decisions for enhanced refurbishment applications.



Approach

Homeowners, planners and builders are all crucial to the successful refurbishment of homes to net zero carbon. It is therefore proposed to work closely with a few householders who have already done work on their homes to use these as an educational tool, to engage with retrofit co-ordinators to deliver whole house plans and the subsequent building works, and then to engage with WODC planners on what has worked so we can all learn together and understand how best to ensure that delivering net zero carbon refurbishment is a collaborative process.

To fund this work, the buildings working group proposed applying for a grant from Sustainable Charlbury. This would be used to support the whole house plans, work with the planners at WODC and train builders in how to improve energy and carbon performance when delivering home improvements.

It was proposed and seconded (GE, FM) to support this paper. A named vote was requested: six for the proposal (LR, GE, FM, TC, DR-B, JS), 4 against (CW, GH, TM, JB), abstentions 2 (NP, PK).

- b. To consider working in partnership with Cosy Homes Oxfordshire (Retrofit Works).

An amendment to this proposal was put forward: to consider working in partnership with Cosy Homes subject to investigation of other possible suppliers to undertake these works. This was proposed by CW and seconded TC. This was voted for and **resolved** (1 abstention).

It was **resolved** to suspend standing orders in order to complete the items on the agenda.

16. Land and Nature

- a. To receive a discussion paper on management of verges owned by OCC

OCC is responsible for mowing the majority of grass verges within the town but most of these are actually maintained by local residents, some are already maintained by CTC, and some are left uncut until OCC mows them in October. In practice, in October, the OCC contractor does not recut the areas obviously already mown by others.

In 2022, some areas that the OCC is responsible for were no longer mown regularly by residents and so were only cut in October by OCC and this led to various complaints from members of the public.

If CTC entered into an agreement with OCC to cut all their verges, then the income would only be £842.50 but it would then be responsible for cutting them **all** twice a year.

The recommendation from the Land & Nature Group is for Charlbury Town Council to informally take over the maintenance of more of the significant OCC verges within the town and manage them to maximise the benefit for pollinating insects and flowering plants. In 2023, it recommends taking on the mowing of currently unmown parts of Nine Acres Lane, The Slade, and Sturt Road including Five Ways junction. The recommended mowing regime would be to mow at the end of April, in July and October, this would minimise the bulk of the grass growth and allow the flora to flower in May, June and later on in August and September. The roadside and pavement edges would need more frequent cutting for accessibility, safety and to show the areas are being cared for and not neglected.

It was agreed to include this in budget discussions to see if the funds could be identified before a decision is made.

- b. WODC Waterways day

Peter Kenrick reported that WODC hosted a Waterways Day on 18th November to give residents the opportunity to learn about the current status of our watercourses and to engage with the organisations that are responsible for their management. Water quality and sewage pollution were a



major focus but there was also considerable coverage of flood risk and mitigation as well as details of excellent initiatives in progress and planned in many areas, often with major involvement of volunteers.

Thames Water (and water privatisation generally) came in for a high level of criticism. However, there was also general agreement that the problems extend beyond this into failures of regulation (principally the EA), the planning system, building regulations and enforcement.

17. Energy

a. Update on hydro-electric project

Gary Harrison reported that the first feasibility study had been received. The project is feasible although other factors are involved. A further update will be received at the December meeting and next steps discussed.

Gary Harrison also reported that the Evenlode Catchment Project are keen to work with the TC on the feasibility of repairing the weir at Mill Field and installing a fish pass at the same time.

Meeting closed: 22.20

Appendix 1

Payment Schedule

a. Payments received:

Sole & Sons	Burial fees	£1,800.00
HMRC	VAT reclaim Quarter 2	£1,465.29
Banbury Memorials	Memorial fees	£150.00

b. Accounts for authorisation and payment:

Lisa Wilkinson	Clerk's November salary, allowance & expenses	£2682.88
Nest	Clerk's pension	£200.43
Corner House CIO	Street fair stalls	£20.00
Corner House CIO	Annual grant	£1,200
Basecamp (repay L Reason)	Monthly payment	£86.96
PWLB	Public Works Loan	£4,027.23
OALC	Training(Communication, Social Media & GDPR)	£144.00
Corner House & WMH CIO	Room hire November	£55.00
Playgrade	Trampoline for Nine Acres Recreation Ground	4,134.00
Huck Nets	Rope Net Pyramid for Nine Acres Recreation Ground	£10,622.40
Society of Local Council Clerks	Annual membership	£234.00
Kompan	Bi-annual inspection of playgrounds – 2 sites	£290.40
Cotswold Landscaping	Grass cutting/cemetery & playground maintenance, Mill Field gate	£7,848.79
Friends Meeting House	Room hire (Land & Nature Group)	£80.00
Wild Oxfordshire	Hedge workshop	£900.00

c. Charlbury Town Council balances



To 31st October 2022	
Unity Trust Current Account	£107,086.92
Unity Trust Instant Access Account	£20,031.24

Appendix 2

Correspondence

Date received	Sender	Topic
21/10/2022	Resident of Playing Close	Report an abandoned car
3/11/2022	Dave Harrison	Bus shelters
7/11/2022	Lord Lieutenant	100 Hours Celebration
7/11/2022	Resident	Complaint about burial plot
8/11/2022	Cottsway Housing	'No Mow May' at Kendal Piece
9/11/2022	Commonwealth War Graves Commission	Enquiry regarding installation of sign at entrance to cemetery
14/11/2022	Charlbury Patient Steering Committee	Tree planting on Nine Acres
17/11/2022	Corner House CIO	Invite to users meeting
23/11/22	Resident of The Green	Possible intrusion
28/11/2022	Resident of Ticknell Piece	Dangerous tree