



Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on Wednesday 25th September 2024 at 7.30pm in the Green Room, Memorial Hall

Present: Cllrs: Frances Mortimer (in the chair), Peter Kenrick, Ed Bradbury, Roy Scott (late arrival), Tom Greenwood, Tony Vettors, Arthur Sinclair, **Town Clerk:** Lisa Wilkinson.

1. Apologies for Absence were received from Gary Harrison and Liz Reason.

In the absence of the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Council, it was proposed that Frances Mortimer chaired the meeting. This was agreed unanimously.

2. Declarations of Interest: none were received.

3. Contributions from members of public

None

4. To receive minutes from the Town Council meeting dated 28th August 2024

These were signed as a true record.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes (not elsewhere on the agenda)

- Item 14 Land & Nature Group: the group would like to change the date of the proposed workshop from 16th November to 11th January. This was agreed.
- Item 15a Street Fair: this was a useful event from a TC point of view and thanks and congratulations to the team for putting it on were noted.

6. Finance and Administration

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

These were agreed. These were authorised by Peter Kenrick. It was **resolved** that Gary Harrison would also authorise the payments despite his absence as the updated bank mandate with new councillors added is still awaiting approval.

b. To consider signing up to the Oxfordshire Council's Charter

This was agreed.

c. To appoint internal auditor for financial year 2024-2025

It was agreed to appoint Bridget Knight for a third (and final) year, at the cost of £250.

7. Amenities

a. Mill Field

i. To consider installation of third interpretation board

Content for the interpretation boards has been designed. This includes one board explaining the meadow restoration project and one board on the work being undertaken on the river. It was felt that the history of Mill Field was also important so it was agreed that a further board (already donated by Blenheim Palace so no further cost for the board) would be installed. The cost of the installation (£62 by Evenlode Landscaping) was **resolved**. The content of the interpretation boards was agreed with a few minor tweaks.

ii. Fallen tree on Mill Field

Due to the heavy rain, a field maple has fallen near the two picnic benches. It was **resolved** to ask Evenlode Landscaping to remove this at the cost of £200.

b. Bowls Club

i. To consider quote for felling ash tree (ash die back)

Three quotes have been obtained. It was agreed to award the work to JAG Trees at the cost of £620 (ex VAT).



c. Cemetery

- i. To consider quote for tree clearance and felling work

Due to the collapse of a lime tree at the cemetery emergency work had to be authorised to clear tree debris and to cut the tree down to a stump to make safe. The Council **resolved** retrospectively to award the work to Parkfield Tree and Garden Care at the cost of £2,440 (ex VAT).

- ii. Underground pipe work by Oxfordshire County Council

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has informed the Town Council that in order to mend a leaking pipe under Nine Acres Lane, it may be necessary to dig up part of the cemetery by the Wigwell entrance field gate down to the culvert. No graves will be affected and the adjacent ones will be shored up with steel plates before any digging commences. OCC has assured the Town Council that this will only have to happen if the leak cannot be found on Wigwell/WODC land (before the pipe enters the cemetery land).

d. Allotments

- i. To receive report

Report received following an allotment inspection carried out on 18th September. The Town Council agreed to implement a new numbering system at the allotments and to request the Community Workshop to provide the markers.

8. Town Maintenance

- a. Update from Charlbury Community Works! Working Group

There is continuing discussion and research on ways to reduce/prevent weeds on the streets and proposed wildflower verges to increase wildflowers. Paper will be brought to the November meeting.

- b. To consider quote to reduce trees around the substation on The Green

Ed Bradbury has consulted with Richard Wooley from SSE about this. It was **resolved** to go forward with this as a one-off cut but not to be a regular responsibility as the Town Council does not own the land.

- c. To sign agreement under section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to take on County Council grass cutting responsibilities

This was signed as resolved at the June 2024 Town Council meeting: clarification has been received from OCC that there are no areas that the Town Council would be responsible for outside of the 30mph speed limits.

- d. To agree to purchase two sets of electrode pads for the defibrillators at the cost of £120

This was **resolved**. Russell Ingham will install them.

9. Nine Acres

- a. To consider quotes for replacement swing

Four quotes have been received. It was proposed and **resolved** that Online Playgrounds will be asked to install a new swing and matting at the cost of £4218 ex VAT.

10. Walkers are Welcome

- a. To consider cost of £50 plus VAT for Ordnance Survey licence to enable publication of maps

This is no longer required.

- b. To consider cost of installation of four interpretation boards

A quote from Evenlode Landscaping for £256 was **resolved**. This will be partly funded by Cotswold National Landscape.

11. Land and Nature (LNG)

- a. To consider purchase of yellow rattle seed for Mill Field meadow restoration

In September 2023, the Town Council was awarded a grant from Sustainable Charlbury to support restoration of species-rich floodplain meadow on a half-acre area at the western end of the Mill Field. The yellow rattle seed sown last year as part of this project has failed (along with many other places due to the excessive wet weather). Following expert advice from Catriona Bass from Long Mead Local Wildlife Site in



Eynsham, who leads the Thames Valley Wildflower Meadow Restoration Project (TVWMRP) it was proposed to sow more Yellow Rattle, which helps with establishing other meadow plants.

The proposed (revised) plan is:

- Contractor to cut-and-collect; arisings to be composted on site (end September)
- Contractor to harrow, exposing 30% of soil (early October)
- Following harrowing, volunteer sessions to be arranged to re-seed with Yellow Rattle (October)
- Interpretation board to be installed (October)
- Members of the LNG have arranged to join one of the regular propagation sessions at Long Mead to explore setting up a similar scheme in Charlbury for next Spring/ Summer.
- Sow meadow seed from Long Mead in Summer 2025.

Costs of mowing and harrowing are explicitly covered in the project budget. The cost of Yellow Rattle seed is £243 for 1kg from Habitat Aid. This sum is also available within the project budget, from underspend on Yellow Rattle in 2023 (£200 was budgeted but the seed was donated) and underspend on mowing in 2024 (April and July mowing not carried out). This was **resolved**.

12. Traffic

- a. To consider request from Catholic Church for signpost (paid for by Catholic Church) on corner of Church St and Market St

The Town Council has no objection to having the sign but would like it differentiated from the Hixet Wood sign (as per the proposal) . The clerk will query if it should state 'Roman Catholic or 'RC' Church rather than 'Catholic' Church.

13. Correspondence

- Offer of Cotswold stone. Town Council is grateful for this offer but there is no capacity at the moment to take on another project.
- Notice of landholder deposit – Spelsbury Estate
- Possible drug use at bottom of Nine Acres Recreation Ground: the trees were massively cut back earlier this year so the picnic bench is now visible. However, as there may still be issues the bench will be moved back to the playground.
- Trees at Lee Place: the overhanging branches have been reported to Lee Place
- Broken manhole cover: this has been reported to Greensquare.
- Bus shelter Enstone Road: concern over uncomfortable and dark shelter. Quotes for a new shelter were obtained last year however there was no budget for one and no funding available. The clerk will investigate cost of a replacement bench and glazing.
- Leylandii on The Green. These are outside the Council's responsibility.
- Parking on Dyers Hill
- Acorn project by Charlbury Primary School: children have been growing oak trees over the last two years and are now looking for locations to plant them. Suggestions for locations are the Bowls club to replace the ash that is being removed, and Wigwell Nature Reserve - Wychwood Forest Trust will be asked if this is a possibility.
- Resignation of councillor: Paul Honey has resigned from the Town Council. The vacancy will be advertised and co-option will take place at the October Town Council meeting.

Meeting closed: 21.30



**Appendix 1
Payment Schedule**

a. Payments received:

West Oxfordshire District Council	Precept second instalment	£72,500.00
Funeral Directors	Cemetery fees	£590.00

b. Payments to be authorised:

Lisa Wilkinson	Clerk's September salary, allowance, pension & expenses	£2,423.73
HMRC	Income tax payment Quarter 2	£2,455.94
Witney Signs	Playground sign at Nine Acres	£36.00
Corner House & WMH CIO	September room hire	£60.00
Fasthosts	Email hosting	£2.40
Castle Water	Allotment water supply (direct debit)	£7.56
Castle Water	Cemetery water supply (direct debit)	£5.56
Basecamp (multipay card)	Monthly subscription	£90.68
Evenlode Landscaping	Grass cutting	£1,025.00
Society of Local Council Clerks	Arnold-Baker on Local Council Administration	£142.40
Screwfix (repay G Simper)	Wigwell permissive path improvements (part of Cotswold National Landscape funding)	£29.12
AWBS (repay G Simper)	Wigwell permissive path improvements (part of Cotswold National Landscape funding)	£252.90
Rob Jackson	Grass cutting cut - Mill Field	£200.00
Richard Fairhurst	Walkers are Welcome map (Cotswold National Landscape funding)	£960.00
West Oxfordshire District Council	Emptying litter bins (1/10/24 – 31/3/25)	£1,566.86
West Oxfordshire District Council	Commercial waste collections at cemetery (1/10/24 – 31/3/25)	£260.00

c. Charlbury Town Council balances

To 31st August 2024	
Unity Trust Current Account	£19,786.78
Unity Trust Instant Access Account	£76,394.10