

Bicester Town Council



Annual Town Meeting

Ref: Annual Town

Monday 22nd May 2023

at 19:00hrs

**The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council,
Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS**

Members:

Cllr Harry Knight – Chairman,

Cllr Paul Wheatley, Cllr Dan Hallett, Cllr Harry Knight, Cllr Nicholas Mawer,
Cllr Les Sibley, Cllr Tom Beckett, Cllr Nick Cotter, Cllr Donna Ford,
Cllr Sam Holland, Cllr J Jessett, Cllr Damien Maguire, Cllr Rachel Mallows,
Cllr Rich Oliver, Cllr C Pruden and Cllr Jim Webb

Other Circulation:

Cllr Calum Miller (Oxfordshire County Council)
and Cllr Michael Waine (Oxfordshire County Council)
Cllr Sandy Dalimore (CDC) Cllr Simon Lutton (CDC)
Cllr Dan Sames (CDC) and Cllr Lynn Pratt (CDC)



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16 May 2023

Sir/ Madam

To all Electors of Bicester, The Annual Town Meeting which will be held on Monday 22nd May 2023 at 19:00hrs at the The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS at 7pm under the Chairmanship of Councillor Harry Knight.

Phil Evans
Town Clerk

Agenda

All Council Meetings are open to the public and press, unless otherwise stated.

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Monday 16th May 2022.

(Pages 4 - 9)

3. Town Mayor's Report

To **NOTE** the Town Mayors report from 2022/2023

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4. Reports from the Town Council for 2022/2023

To **NOTE** report from the Town Council for 2022/2023

5. Reports from Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Councillors servicing Bicester Wards

To **NOTE** reports from Oxfordshire County and Cherwell District Councillors serving Bicester Wards.

6. Consideration of any written resolutions of which the Parish Clerk has been given three days' notice

Consideration of any written resolutions of which the Town Clerk has been given three days' notice.

7. Appointments to Outside Bodies

(Page 11)

Council is asked to **AGREE** to the appointment of Mrs Diana Edwards as a Trustee of the Bicester Feoffee charity for the ensuing 4 years.

8. Public Questions and Comments

9. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 20th May 2024 – 7pm – venue to be confirmed.

Close of meeting:

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Cllr Harry Knight, Town Mayor

Minutes of the Annual Town

A meeting of the **Annual Town** was held on **Monday 16th May 2022** at **19:00 hrs** at the **The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS.**

Present:

Cllr Alex Thrupp – Bicester Town Mayor
Cllr Nick Cotter
Cllr Sandy Dallimore
Cllr Donna Ford
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Harry Knight
Cllr Nicholas Mawer
Cllr Zoe McLernon
Cllr James Metcalf
Cllr Richard Mould
Cllr Lynn Pratt
Cllr Dan Sames
Cllr Les Sibley
Cllr Jason Slaymaker
Cllr Alex Thrupp
Cllr Fraser Webster

In Attendance:

Phil Evans – Town Clerk
Julie Trinder – Office Administrator
Cllr Michael Waine - OCC

36/22 Apologies for Absence

23 **RESOLVED** that apologies were received from Cllr Harry Knight, Cllr Nicholas Mawer and Cllr Fraser Webster.

37/22 Minutes of the Annual Town

23 **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on:

Thursday 27th May 2021

38/22 Town Mayor's Report

23 **RESOLVED** that Cllr Alex Thrupp reported on Cllr Nicholas Mawer's report who was away on business in Israel so unable to attend the Annual Town meeting this evening. Cllr Thrupp thanked Cllr Mawer for giving him the opportunity to support him in his capacity of Deputy Mayor and grateful for the support given to him. The following points were covered:

- The Mayoral year started under the cloud of the pandemic and as a result the full Civic Service was unable to take place. However, a final farewell was given to the Team Rector, Reverend Verena Breed with an unofficial socially distanced church service and refreshments with a parting gift to Verena presented by Cllr Mawer from Bicester Town Council Councillors and Colleagues.
- A Farewell reception for the Lord Lieutenant Sir Tim Stevenson at Blenheim

Palace was held.

- A Ukraine fund raising page was set up support Ukrainian refugees in our town town of Czernichow in Poland which has so far raised £5184. The funds raised have been to support education of children fleeing the war.
- Attended a Multi-Faith service held at Eton College's boathouse.
- Paying a special tribute to our military ties:
 - A Flag Raising Ceremony for Armed Forces Day
 - Remembrance Day Service and Parade
 - Freedom of Entry for Headquarters Bicester Garrison
 - A simple ceremony organised by residents and veterans to remember the tenth anniversary of the deaths of Corporal Andrew Roberts and Private Ratu Silibaravi
- And Christmas visits to; Staff Care Homes, the Police and Fire Stations, The Post Office depot, the staff at the Bicester Community Hospital and the Cherwell District Council's depot in Highfield Road.

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Reports from the Town Council for 2021/2022

RESOLVED that Cllr Donna Ford reported on the following points over the year 2021/2022:

Environment Committee

- This committee deals with the upkeep of our town open spaces, play areas and cemetery as well as through its working group the Events committee organises all the council events held throughout the year. It has been a busy year with council continuing with the refurbishment / up grading of its play areas with more to come in the new council year. The upkeep of our sports pitches has continued with the surfaces scoring well with the sports association when inspected. We continue to maintain our cemetery and at the same time striving to get are hands on the new Burial Ground in North West Bicester as we await the release of the land by developers. We have recently undertaken the refurbishment of the 11 Bus shelters which the council own to bring them back to a high standard.
- Over the coming weeks we will see improvements to Garth Park footpaths when the resurfacing programme begins, his has taken longer than we would have wished but we need the support of the tree experts so make sure we do not cause damage to the roots of our trees.
- Looking to the future the council have taken the decision to take ownership of the Whiteland's Farm Sports facility from this September and our working with to ensure a smooth take over and to provide improved service to our residents.
- The events committee organised a series of events during the year the only disappointment being the cancellation of Armed Forces Day due to the Covid restrictions still in place in June last year. All other events were very well attended our residents set out to enjoy themselves. Particular mention must be made of the

Christmas Lights Trail and the illumination of Garth House which was a spectacular success with some people booking again and again. Watch this space for this year's event.

Planning Committee

- The Planning committee had another busy year with the number of applications rising again. The number of residents coming to meetings has also grown and reflects their concerns over some of the applications. We expect the number of applications for major projects to continue to put pressure on the committee.

Finance Committee

- The Finance committee working with our newly appointed Responsible Finance Officer Callum McMahon has continued to keep a tight hold on expenditure so much so that we expect the year end accounts to record a small surplus. The committee is very conscious of the strain on residents finance and will always strive to keep any precept increase to a minimum whilst making sure our service to residents is maintained and improved where possible.

Policy Committee

- The Policy committee have also had a difficult year continuing to deal with staff working from home until late summer, the time was not wasted as Mr Evans and his team worked to improve the working environment, keeping our staff safe and ensuring the public had access. Covid had an impact throughout the early part of the year with staff sickness adding to the burden of three members on long turn sickness on non-related Covid issues. The committee continued its normal work schedule reviewing policies and procedures as they fell due or changes in law required it.
- The Personnel sub Committee reports to the Policy committee and was extremely busy throughout the year. With the resignation of the Chief Officer who left the council at the end of September he launched the recruitment process in the Autumn and received more than 12 applications with some 7 candidates being short listed by the Personnel committee. These applicants were interviewed and 3 were put forward for final interview by the Full Town Council. After what was a very thorough process Acting Chief Officer was appointed to the position of Town Clerk on the 1st March. This of course set off another recruitment process for a replacement Services Manager which has just been completed and Mr Paul Channing is due to start on the 13th June.

40/22
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Reports from Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Councillors servicing Bicester Wards

RESOLVED that reports were given on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council officers and Cherwell District Council officers and the following points were covered:

Report From Cllr Michael Waine, Oxfordshire County Council

- Following the County Council Elections last May we have we have worked together always seeking to reflect and act on the concerns of our town and its people.
- The County Council is now led by a new administration comprised of Liberal

Democrats, Labour and Greens.

- Planning issues have been to the fore, and we have consistently met with planners and officers on the ever increasingly problematic applications coming forward that dramatically impact on our community.
- First amongst these must be planning issues at NW Bicester and the decision of the County Council to withdraw Government Funding for the re-alignment of Howes Lane and redirect it to the South of the County. We were extremely disappointed that the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet at its meeting on 21st December last year endorsed and agreed the recommendation to remove the already allocated funds from the A4085 Howes Lane project and divert these funds to other schemes at A34 Lodge Hill Interchange and Milton Heights Bridge in the South. This is something we strongly opposed and still, five months later, have yet to see the relevant project appraisal for these schemes.
- Residents will be aware that in April of last year it was a fantastic engineering feat to install an underbridge and underpass through the railway embankment to enable the realignment of the A4095.....currently a 'white elephant'! The removal of funding from this key infrastructure project will cause years of delays to major housing and road building projects in this part of our town. The Howes Lane realignment is the 'key' to facilitate the delivery of thousands of zero carbon neutral homes, a fit for purpose road network, and social infrastructure. We a County Councillors are working with others to find alternative funding options to deliver this key project.
- Linked to the re-alignment of Howes Lane is the re-development of the Banbury Road roundabout for which Government Funding was available. However, delays and significant changes to the scheme to further accommodate cyclists have meant that the funding is insufficient. We are very unhappy that our views as County Councillors and those of the public counted for so little by an administration that says it is so concerned to consult and give residents a voice.
- We have been concerned that the proposed SE Link Road aimed at taking the A41 traffic away from the town remains a priority with the County Council, and continue to keep it to the fore at meetings and with questions at Council.
- We are also very concerned about the planning application for the demolition of the former Magistrates Court at Waverley House in Queens Avenue, a locally listed building, and its replacement with a so-called 'car free' 48 bed block of high rise flats. Queens Avenue is a very special tree lined, wide verge street in our town with setback buildings, developed at the time of the Queen's Coronation. In this year of her Platinum Anniversary, it falls to us all to protect this precious heritage.
- Whilst supporting the new health facilities for our town we have continued to try and achieve a re-think on the now agreed plans to build the new Health Hub on the Rodney House site at Graven Hill. Given that planning had now been given we continue to pursue the need for better access from all parts of Bicester and the surrounding villages, parking, and guaranteed buses over time.

- Active Travel is part of the national agenda and the scheme from Kings End to the town centre in Bicester was one of Oxfordshire's first projects. Whilst we support the overall intention of Active Travel, we will continue to work to ensure that the needs of all are met, particularly in relation to their numbers. We are very aware that pedestrians in Bicester easily outnumber cyclists and their voice needs to be heard. Indeed, this was clear in the 'Traffic Survey' we carried out in the Causeway last autumn in our efforts to keep it open for light vehicles and give pedestrians priority.
- We have continued to work with others and East-West Rail to resolve issues relating to the London Road Crossing.
- We are delighted that thanks to residents Oxfordshire continues to have the best re-cycling rates in the country, and would congratulate everyone for their efforts in reducing, re-using and re-cycling items that would previously have gone to landfill sites.
- Car parking on many of our local estates is a very real problem often causing significant problems. We have worked with OCC officers on mitigations where possible with the introduction of parking restrictions in the more hazardous areas. However, we believe there is a solution in some areas of Bicester where Sanctuary Homes have empty garage sites. We have met with them to discuss the possible use of these sites for parking and will be taking this up with officers at CDC and OCC this year.
- Finally we would like to thank all staff members of our Bicester schools for their incredible response to the COVID crisis.....hopefully school life is now returning to something like 'normal'!

Report From Dan Sames, Leader Member for Clean and Green, Cherwell District Council

- One of a number of initiatives this year has been the introduction of civil parking enforcements in Cherwell, South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse.
- Waste collection crews have worked well throughout the pandemic. Cllr Sames personally thank the staff at Cherwell District Council for their hard work during this busy time. The introduction of a weekly food waste collection was introduced between the months of January and February to try and increase recycling and the 'pay for' garden waste serviced was also announced.
- Electric car charging points have been installed at the Claremont and Cattle Market car parks.
- Refurbishment of Castle Quay shopping centre in Banbury is well underway with a "state-of-the-art" eight screen cinema complex opening shortly.
- A business grant supporting the refurbishment of the Dove Cote in Bicester has been given.
- A draft Local Plan coming out this year.

- Two major new developments will be starting this year; the Business Park by Tesco and Wretchwick Green.
- A £6 million funding award from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The funding will enable Cherwell District Council to refit ten of its buildings, including its four leisure centres, three sports pavilions and museum, with air source heat pumps and other cleaner, greener improvements. This will help the council to slash the environmental impact of heating the buildings, cutting its overall carbon emissions by up to 25 per cent.

**41/22
23 Consideration of any written resolutions of which the Town Clerk has been given three days' notice**

RESOLVED that no written resolutions were received

**42/22
23 Public Questions and Comments**

RESOLVED that no members of the public were present.

**43/22
23 Date of Next Meeting**

To be confirmed.

Close of meeting : 07.23pm.

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Monday 22nd May 2023

Mayors Report

Chairman: Cllr Harry Knight

Contact: harry.knight@bicester.gov.uk

Phil Evans – Town Clerk

Contact: 01869 252915 phil.evans@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All Wards

1. Overview

During the period of March to April 2023 the following visits were made:

The Mayor and Consort Visits:

March

18th Banbury Town Council Civic Masquerade Themed Supper
23rd Catholic Church Anniversary Invitation
24th Help for Heroes event at the Highfield Social Club

April

23rd Mayors Charity St Georges Day Dinner

May

6th Garth Park Coronation Celebrations
7th The Kings Coronation, Launton Grange
7th Bicester Town Council Coronation Church Service

The Mayor on his own visited:

21st Cheque presentation to Nais House from Bicester Pride

The Deputy Mayor Visits:

May

13th Brackley Town Council Mayor Making

BTC06/2223
13th March 2023

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Monday 22nd May 2023

Bicester Feoffee Charity

Chairman: Councillor Harry Knight

Contact: harry.knight@bicester.gov.uk

Phil Evans – Town Clerk

Contact: 01869 252915 phil.evans@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All Wards

1. Overview

The charity, Bicester Feoffee helps to relieve residents within the area of Bicester, benefit who are in conditions of need, hardship, or distress by making grants of money or providing or paying for items, services or facilities.

A request from Mrs Pauline Liddington, an ex-Mayor of Bicester and Trustee of Bicester Feoffee Charity has been made to ask if the charity could re-appoint Mrs Diana Edwards who was a Councillor and Mayor of Bicester, as a Trustee for the ensuing 4 years.

2. Recommendation

Council is asked to **AGREE** to the above and appoint Mrs Diana Edwards as a Trustee of the Bicester Feoffee charity for the ensuing 4 years.

BTC01/2324
22nd May 2023