

Minutes of the Bicester Town Council

A meeting of the **Bicester Town Council** was held on **Monday 20th November 2023** at **19:00 hrs** at the **The Council Chamber, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS**.

Present:

Cllr Harry Knight (Chairman)
 Cllr Damien Maguire (Vice-Chairman)
 Cllr Tom Beckett
 Cllr Nick Cotter
 Cllr Dan Hallett
 Cllr Sam Holland
 Cllr Rachel Mallows
 Cllr Nicholas Mawer
 Cllr Christopher Pruden
 Cllr Alisa Russell
 Cllr Les Sibley
 Cllr Jim Webb
 Cllr Paul Wheatley

In Attendance:

Phil Evans – Town Clerk
 Julie Trinder – Administration Officer – Civic and Democratic
 Cllr Michael Waine – Oxfordshire County Council

A one minutes silence was held in memory of the late Lord Brian Cotter.

27/ Apologies for Absence

2324 RESOLVED that apologies were received from Cllr Donna Ford.

28/ Declarations of Interest

2324 RESOLVED that declarations of interest were received from Cllr Tom Beckett, Cllr Christopher Pruden and Cllr Les Sibley as Cherwell District Councillors and Cllr Les Sibley as Oxfordshire County Council Councillor.

29/ Public Session

2324 RESOLVED that no members of the public were present.

30/ Minutes of the Town Council Meeting

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **CONFIRMED** the minutes and resolutions of:

BTC04/2324 – 21st August 2023

BTC04A/2324 – SPECIAL – 25th September 2023

31/ Minutes of the Environment Committee Meeting

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **CONFIRMED** the minutes and resolutions of:

ENV02/2324 – 18th July 2023

32/ Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting**2324 RESOLVED** that Councillors **CONFIRMED** the minutes and resolutions of:**FIN02/2324 – 8th August 2023****33/ Minutes of the Planning Committee Meetings****2324 RESOLVED** that Councillors **CONFIRMED** the minutes and resolutions of:**PL04/2324 – 8th August 2023****PL03/2324 – 4th July 2023** were omitted from the agenda pack and will come back to the next Bicester Town Council meeting on the 15th January 2024.**34/ Minutes of the Policy Committee Meeting****2324 RESOLVED** that Councillors **CONFIRMED** the minutes and resolutions of:**POL02/2324 – 14th August 2023****35/ Questions on Working Parties and Other Groups****2324 RESOLVED** that Councillors **CONFIRMED** the minutes and resolutions of:**BTAG02/2324 – 27th July 2023****EWP03/2324 – 13th September 2023****PER02/2324 – 12th July 2023** to be approved with the following alteration; Cllr Rachel Mallows appearing twice in the attendance list.**36/ Report from Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District****2324 Councillors****RESOLVED** that:

Cllr Michael Waine reported:

- The 20 mph speed limit proposal for Bicester was due to be advertised in the latest edition of the Garth Gazette, however, due to Oxfordshire County Council, this has now been delayed until the Spring edition.
- A review on barriers on cycle paths is underway to ensure the convenience and accessibility for cyclists. There is however, no mention of pedestrians in the review but this now been raised.
- A report came out badly with failings in services offered to children with special educational needs and disabilities across Oxfordshire.
- Permanent parking holders and speed cameras requested for Lambourne Crescent and Church Street.
- Manorsfield Road repairs and Causeway development have been delayed for another year.
- The growth of graffiti in Bicester a concern.

Cllr Les Sibley reported:

- The crossing outside the Esso Garage on the Oxford Road still a concern, and request that safety barriers be installed as a matter of urgency. Cherwell District Council aware of the land issues with in this area which are causing delays in the improved footpath and cycleway.

Cllr Nicholas Mawer reported:

- Bicester Town Council has now consulted and submitted comments regarding the Local Plan.
- Cherwell District Council offices moving to Castle Quay in Banbury centre.
- Recruitment of replacement Chief Executive for Cherwell District Council now underway.
- Sanctuary Affordable Housing Limited are building 90 housing units on Southam Road delivering 100% affordable housing.

37/ Mayors Report

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **NOTED** the Mayors Report.

38/ Bicester Food Bank

2324 Bicester Foodbank unable to attend this meeting and will attend meeting taking place on January 15th 2024.

39/ Proposed Changes to Bicester Wards

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors discussed the Proposed Changes to Bicester Wards and that comments in preparation for next steps.

40/ The Bicester School

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **NOTED** the report and suggested the vacancy be advertised in the next edition of the Garth Gazette.

41/ Conclusion of Audit 2022/23 Accounts

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors:

- **RECEIVED** the report of the external auditor
- **NOTED** that Finance Committee has undertaken an initial review of the effectiveness of internal controls and;
- **NOTED** the care with which the AGAR should be considered and minuted in the future.

42/ Independence and Competence of the Internal Auditor

2324 RESOLVED that Councillors **NOTED** and **APPROVED** the recommendations of the Finance Committee. At its meeting held on 10 October 2023 the Finance Committee resolved to make the following recommendations to Full Council, that:

- Annually, the agenda for the first meeting of Council following Mayor Making includes the appointment of the Internal Auditor as a standing item;
- In advance of each of the above meetings the Finance Committee considers the independence and competence of the putative internal auditor;

- The ongoing appointment of Mulberry & Co as the Council's internal auditor for the financial year 2023/24 be confirmed; and
- Mulberry & Co also be appointed for the financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26 in order to take advantage of a three-year fixed fee offer.

43/ Date of Next Meeting
2324 Monday 15th January 2024 – 7pm, The Chamber Room, Garth House.

Close of meeting: 8.16pm.