

Minutes of the Bicester Town Council

A meeting of the **Bicester Town Council** was held on **Monday 13th October 2025** on the Rise of the Annual Town Meeting at the **Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS.**

Present:

Cllr Alisa Russell (Chair)
Cllr Paul Wheatley (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Tom Beckett
Cllr Donna Ford
Cllr Harry Knight
Cllr Damien Maguire
Cllr Les Sibley
Cllr Jim Webb
Cllr John Willett

In Attendance:

Phil Evans, Town Clerk
Maria Galic, Civic and Democratic
Isobel May, Event and Marketing

Representatives from:

Cllr Sean Gaul (OCC)
Gargi Holland (OCC)
Jacqui Cox (OCC)
Julia Harrington (CDC)
Member of the public
Rory O'Riley (OSRFI)
Steve Harley (OSRFI)
Tim Snazell (OCC)

44/ Apologies for Absence

2526 RESOLVED that Apologies were received from Cllr Nick Cotter, Cllr Dan Hallett, Cllr Rachel Mallows and Cllr Nick Mawer.

45/ Declarations of Interests

2526 RESOLVED that declarations of interest were received from Cherwell District Councillors.
Cllr Tom Beckett, Cllr Donna Ford, Cllr Harry Knight, Cllr Chris Pruden, Cllr Alisa Russell, Cllr Les Sibley and Cllr John Willett

46/ Public Session

2526 RESOLVED that Cllr Sean Gaul was present.
OCC Councillor highlighted the following:

- Local government of the organisation element – Discussions are ongoing regarding the number of councillors under the proposed single unitary model. Should this model proceed, it will be based on existing boundaries.
- Home to school transport – A high volume of applications has caused delays beyond the 20-day processing target. Residents affected are advised to contact Cllr Sean Gaul.

- High needs overspend – Current expenditure exceeds government allocations. The Council awaits further guidance from central government; if overspends are carried forward, several councils' risk financial insolvency.
- Congestion charge – Implemented to reduce traffic congestion and encourage active travel.

Cllrs raised the following with the OCC Cllr:

- Congestion charge – Suggested that charges be limited to just city centre residents, who have greater access to public transport, encourage those in the centre to use the public transport. Those in the surrounding villages have limited access to public transport.
- Recycling centres – Concern that reducing opening days may increase fly-tipping, with associated costs falling on Cherwell District Council (CDC). OCC will raise these concerns with the cabinet and have a meeting with BTC Cllrs to discuss further.
- Cycling in sheep street – Consultation process was insufficiently communicated to residents.
- Works on sheep street – Current works are having a severe negative impact on the town centre.

47/ A41 (Siemens access to Vendee Drive roundabout) cycle route

2526 RESOLVED that a presentation was **RECEIVED** from OCC and Cllrs **COMMENTED** the following:

- Request for comparison of travel times between all three proposed paths. OCC confirmed these factors are part of their physical constraints review.
- Cllrs expressed concern about potential loss of trees and habitat; OCC stated this depends on the outcome of their environmental assessment.
- Inquiry made about linking project funds to Oxford Road improvements for better town centre connectivity. OCC confirmed related works would come from separate funding sources.
- Question raised on whether the path is intended for Bicester residents or Siemens employees, how will OCC monitor this to get results. Safety concerns highlighted near the park and ride area, which needs to be looked at.

48/ Movement & Place Plan for Bicester and Mid Cherwell

2526 RESOLVED that a presentation was **RECEIVED** from OCC and Cllrs **COMMENTED** the following:

- Support expressed for improved connectivity; requested clarity on links to Oxford Road and Graven Hill.
- Plan expected to be adopted in late January, with actions divided into short-, medium-, and long-term goals.
- Questions raised regarding the potential impact on residents.
- Emphasis placed on maintaining some provision for car usage.

49/ Market Square Update Presentation

2526 RESOLVED that a presentation was **RECEIVED** from CDC and Cllrs **COMMENTED** the following:

- Requested a copy of the presentation.
- Supported the Crown Walk mural but noted that bin storage will not eliminate odour issues.

- Expressed concern that new benches and blocks near Sainsbury's may encourage anti-social behaviour.
- Highlighted the need to prevent unauthorised vehicle access outside Sainsbury's; CDC is enforcing lease terms to ensure bollards function and additional signage is installed.
- Sought clarification on how access to the Market Square service lane will be restricted to authorised vehicles.

50/ Oxfordshire Strategic Rail Freight Interchange

2526 RESOLVED that a presentation was **RECEIVED** from OSRFI and Cllrs **COMMENTED** the following:

- Cllrs raised concerns regarding the potential use of existing Chiltern lines, associated pollution, noise levels, and the nature of employment opportunities to be created. OSRFI responded that rail freight is more environmentally sustainable than road freight, with a minimum of four trains per day—potentially increasing to twelve—and no operations between 1:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. Employment opportunities are expected to cover a wide range of skill levels.

51/ Date of Next Meeting

2526 Monday 12th January 2026 – 7pm, The Chamber Room, Garth House

CLOSE OF MEETING:
21:07hrs

Additional agenda items from this meeting will be deferred to the next Full Council Meeting, in accordance with Standing Orders, as the meeting extended beyond 21:00 hours.