

## Minutes of the Bicester Town Council

A meeting of the **Bicester Town Council** was held on **Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2026** at **19:00 hrs** at **The Chamber Room, Bicester Town Council, The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester, Oxon OX26 6PS.**

### Present:

Cllr Paul Wheatley (Chair)  
Cllr Rachel Mallows  
Cllr Donna Ford  
Cllr Chris Pruden  
Cllr Harry Knight  
Cllr Les Sibley  
Cllr Nick Mawer  
Cllr John Willett  
Cllr Jim Webb

### In Attendance:

Paul Canning – Deputy Town Clerk  
Chloe Challinger - Administrator

### Representatives from:

Cllr Sean Gaul (OCC)  
Public Present

### 11/ Apologies for Absence

**2627 RESOLVED** that apologies for absence were received from Cllr Tom Beckett, Cllr Alisa Russell, Cllr Damien Maguire, Cllr Dan Hallett and Cllr Les Sibley.

### 12/ Declarations of Interest

**2627 RESOLVED** Declarations of interest were not received from attending councillors.

### 13/ Public Session

**2627 RESOLVED** that members of the public were present.

### 14/ CDC Update

**2627 RESOLVED** that CDC provided the following updates.

- Annual meeting on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May to confirm further updates.
- Recent elections from Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May resulted in the Liberal Democrats gaining seats, with one councillor moving to independent, non-aligned.
- Twenty seats are Conservative, Eight seats to Labour, Six seats to Reform alongside two seats non-aligned Independent and four seats to Green.

### 15/ OCC Update

**2627 RESOLVED** that OCC provided the following updates.

- Councillor representative from Oxford County Council provided a written report on the Oxfordshire County Council, including the resignation of the current leader, Cllr Liz Lethman.
- There has been an interim leader appointed of the County Council - Deputy

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Signed .....

Dated .....

Leader Neill Forser until confirmation of new leader.

- The new Liberal Democrat leader has been elected - Cllr Tim Beard, but are awaiting confirmation, subject to a confirmatory vote on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May.
- Discussion on the potential impact of the government's decision on Oxfordshire's future, including the possibility of a greater Oxford proposal.
- It was noted that there is the need for significant work to aggregate and transfer services if the County Council's footprint is broken up - services including Children's services, adult social care, and highways being impacted requiring them to be handed over safely, competently, responsibly.
- Consideration for a motorised underpass is under discussion. This is off the back of very successful campaigning.
- Post elections there will be a new authority. The new authorities will operate as a shadow authority to the original authorities for one year, CDC and OCC will exist, even though the new shadow authority has been created.
- May 2028 the original authorities will just cease to exist, and the new authorities will carry on.

#### 16/ Minutes of Town Council Meeting

**2627 RESOLVED** that Council **APPROVED** the **MINUTES** and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following meeting and are to be signed at the next Town Council Meeting post amendments:

- **BTC02/2526 – Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025.**

#### 17/ Mayors Report

**2627 RESOLVED** that the Committee **NOTED** the Mayors report for 2025/2026.

#### 18/ Reports from the Town Council 2025-2026

**2627 RESOLVED** that the Committee **NOTED** the Reports from the Town Council Chairs for committee meetings 2025/2026.

#### Environment Committee Report:

Supporting local clubs and sports:

- The Bistro Rugby Club, we've improved the fencing to go around there, which improves safety for the players and spectators.
- The football pitches, with demand remaining high managed to produce a high availability at a better standard than most of the councils around here.
- Requirement to address the capacity shortages with football, resulting in the planning of the upcoming replacement of Whitelands 3G pitch, which is mentioned already, subject to leases.
- Negotiated the lease on an area of land within the town, which we could use as overflow to provide more availability, particularly in support of additional adult games, which we've been short of in the past.
- Implementing multiple mini projects around the town, including hard and soft landscaping to protect the town from visiting unauthorised visitors.
- Launch and Wall has been fixed. Heritage planning was required resulting in a delay as there were requirements to make sure it met the correct standards.
- Main gate repairs at The Garth have been completed.
- Investments in play areas - 62 play areas managed by Bicester Town Council. A

two-tier system is in place, with regular maintenance and repairs carried out to reduce high expenditure.

- New approach implemented to target individual bits of equipment within individual parks, so residents should see more improvements, faster.
- The Town Council have allocated more to the maintenance budget - £95,000.
- Langford Super Park. Constitutes the merging of three sites into one, but budget allocations with prevent this from being actioned this year, however, is still under review due to the unlocking of micro-forests and increased biodiversity; improving the environment and well-being for local residents.
- In 2019 we passed the climate emergency motion and have successfully cut our carbon footprint, by introducing LED and time-based lighting, reducing our electricity bill considerably.
- Electric vehicles being introduced is still requiring uptake, but we have to end this year. Delays are due to the previous vehicles still be fit for purpose and therefore wasteful to scrap them early. The aim is to have three electric vehicles.
- Remembering loved ones. Due to a shortage of space and problems of bringing the new cemetery online, there have been discussions about the possibility of a memorial wall. Details and the integration with officers and the funeral directors require review and further consideration.
- Looking to streamline our work by absorbing the allotments working committee into the main environment committee.
- Environment Committee lead has requested to step down as the chair of Environment.

#### **Policy Committee Report:**

- Due to absence of personnel, this has reduced capacity in moving forward with closing any new leases.
- Personnel policies, one to ten, the flag flying policy, the mayor's events policy, and vexatious complaints policy have been reviewed.
- The scribe finance system was discussed, however have asked for it to be brought back for review at a later meeting, allowing for the finance committee to look at. Due to cancellations of meetings within finance through lack of quorum, this is still requiring review; which will be followed up post meeting.
- Whiteland grounds leases are a priority to be sorted.
- The lease for St Edmunds Park, is being processed so should signed quickly as this was approved in principle by Policy Committee last February.

#### **19/ Consideration of any written resolutions**

**2627 RESOLVED** that there were no written resolutions received of which the Town Clerk has been given three days' notice and the Committee have **NOTED**.

#### **20/ Public Questions and comments**

**2627 RESOLVED** that there were no questions or comments raised by members of the public present.

#### **21/ Date of Next Meeting:**

**2627 Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2026 – The Chamber Room, The Garth House**

**Close of meeting: 19:25 hrs**