Didcot Town Council

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| **Ordinary meeting of Council**  Monday 4th October 2019 at 7.30pm  Ladygrove Room, Didcot Civic Hall  **Minutes** |

Didcot Town Council

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| **Council Meeting**  Monday 5th September 2022 at 7.30pm  Main Hall, Didcot Civic Hall  **Minutes** |



Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a true and correct record by the next meeting of the Council.

## **PRESENT**

Councillors:

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| P Siggers (Mayor)  A Macdonald (Deputy Mayor)  D Chandran  P Davies  A Dearlove  E Hards  V Haval  A Hudson | M Khan (Leader)  D Macdonald (Deputy Leader)  M McNeill  M Mallows  J Moody  D Rouane  M Walsh  C Wilson |

Officers:

# Janet Wheeler - Town Clerk

**Public participation**

**55. To receive apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs P Giesberg, A Sandiford, A Thompson, J Durman and B Service.

**56. To receive declarations of interests**

No declarations were made.

**57. To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council meeting held on 27th June 2022 and the Extra Ordinary Council meeting held on 18th July 2022 and to include questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item. To receive the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 23rd March 2022.**

The Mayor paged through the minutes for amendments and questions. On Minute 13 – Recommendation of Investment Policy – Cllr E Hards requested a change to the text to read: “Cllr E Hards asked for clarification whether”. This amendment was approved.

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr D Macdonald and RESOLVED to approve the minutes Council meeting held on 27th June 2022 with this amendment.

The minutes of the Extra Ordinary Council meeting held on 18th July 2022 were considered. A later version of these minutes was circulated to Councillors to detail amendments from Cllr D Rouane and Cllr V Haval. At minute 47 the following was added:

“Cllr D Rouane asked to make a personal statement following a question by Cllr J Durman about whether Cllr Rouane had used his position as Leader of SODC to influence the review. Cllr Rouane stated that he had not taken part in the review of electoral arrangements at SODC as it would be improper of him to do so.”

At minute 52, Cllr V Haval asked to be added as the member who asked the question.

Cllr M Khan accepted these amendments.

On page 3.5 Minute 46 – Cllr E Hards said that the wording on the five point bullet points differed from the version agreed at the Committee meetings. It was agreed to replace these in the signed version.

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr D Macdonald and RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Extra Ordinary Council meeting held on 18th July 2022 with these amendments.

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr D Macdonald and RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 23rd March 2022.

**58. To receive the Committee minutes and decisions taken under delegated authority and to consider recommendations of Committees to Council in accordance with Standing Orders 95 – 112**

**a) Planning and Development Committee**It was proposed by Cllr E Hards and seconded by Cllr A Dearlove and RESOLVED to receive the Minutes for the meeting held on 22nd June 2022, 13th July 2022 and 3rd August 2022 (to be approved at Committee). Cllr P Davies asked why the minutes from the last Traffic Advisory Group had not been circulated. It was agreed to circulate these again. There were no recommendations.

**b) Finance and General Purposes Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to receive the Minutes for the meeting held on 25th July 2022 and 22nd August 2022 (to be approved at Committee). The vote was unanimous.

There were several recommendations:

**Minute 42:** **To approve the budget timetable for the 2023 – 2024 financial year.**  This budget timetable was unanimously approved.

**Minute 45:** **To approve Cllr M Khan as the initial signatory for the CIO application to manage Fleet Meadow Community Centre**. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr E Hards and RESOLVED to approve Cllr M Khan as the main signatory. This vote was unanimous.

**Minute 49: To approve a nominal sum to be made available as a loan to the new tenants of Willowbrook Leisure Centre.** It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr D Chandran and RESOLVED to approve a nominal loan of £10,000 to the successful new tenant at Willowbrook Leisure Centre. It was noted that the Town Council had made a significant investment into this facility. The vote was unanimous.

**Minute 56: To approve the amended section of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2021 – 2022.** It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to approve the amendments on Section 2 of the AGAR. The amendment was in Box 2 (the precept was corrected from £1,114,053 to the current precept figure of £1,144,053) and Box 3 (total other receipts which was amended from £338,946 to £308,946). The balances in the Box 7 were not affected by these amendments. The vote was unanimous.

**Minute 58: To approve the appointment of Pete Cooper and DCK Accounting Solutions to produce a business plan in support of the loan to build the new pavilion at Edmonds Park – and to produce a medium term finance plan**. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to appoint Pete Cooper and DCK for both projects at a cost of £6,050. There were two abstentions.

**Minute 60: To consider ending the grass cutting contract and the grant from OCC:** Cllr J Moody gave the Council the background to this recommendation. DTC currently receive £13,424 from OCC for the grass cutting contract but the cost last year was £30,438. There has been no increase in the agency fee for many years but the contract costs have continued to rise. After some debate, it was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to write to OCC and invite them to come back with a better proposal or agree to end the contract. The vote was unanimous.

**c) Environment & Climate Committee**

The meeting of the Environment & Climate Committee was postponed to allow the Extra Ordinary Council meeting to take place on 18th July 2022.

**d) Personnel and Administration Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr D Macdonald and RESOLVED to receive the minutes for the meeting held on 1st August 2022. The vote was unanimous.

There was one recommendation:

**Minute 21: To approve the Safeguarding Policy for children and vulnerable adults.** It was proposed by Cllr M Khan and seconded by Cllr D Macdonald and RESOLVED to approve this policy with the discussed amendments at 2.1; 6.2 and 6.4. Cllr M Mallows requested that all the characteristics of the Equality Act, Section 4 were added to the policy (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). The vote was unanimous.

**e) Property & Facilities Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr M Khan and RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 27th July 2022. The vote was unanimous. There were no recommendations.

**59. To receive the Mayor’s Report and the Deputy Mayor’s report**

Both reports were noted by the Council.

**60. To approve an amendment to the Terms of Reference for the Planning & Development Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr E Hards and seconded by Cllr A Dearlove and RESOLVED to amend the Terms of Reference to include “*considering and responding to licensing consultations and other consultations”* to allow the Planning & Development Committee to respond within the time frames and report to full Council. The vote was unanimous.

**61.To receive such communications as the Leader of the Council may wish to bring before Council and to consider the recommendation of the Leader on how such communications should be dealt with.**

There were no communications for this meeting.

**62. To consider motions in the order in which they have been notified:**

There were two motions to be considered:

**Motion One proposed by Cllr E Hards; seconded by Cllr A Dearlove:** *Didcot Town Council objects to the rigid timescales imposed by SODC for responding to some planning consultations. This has been an issue with amendments, particularly in the case of one specific site. The response to one amendment had to be decided via email and a second one taken as a late entry (received the day of the meeting) under correspondence. In neither case was it possible to alert the public to the fact that the item was under consideration. This is totally undemocratic.*

*We recognise that the District Council operates under guidelines laid down by the Government but where applicants choose to submit amendments some flexibility should be allowed to permit proper consideration by Committee so the public are not disadvantaged. We call on the District Council to provide sufficient time to enable town and parish councils to function democratically.*

There was some debate and the feeling was that the problem was getting worse. The vote IN FAVOUR was unanimous.

**63. Didcot Garden Town Project and the report of the Council’s representative on the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board**

Cllr M Khan said with regret that very little is happening. Cllr Khan makes a point of attending all the meetings. The Didcot Garden Town status was confirmed in 2017 but five years later there is not a lot to show in terms of completed projects. The original list of sixty projects has been reduced down to around twenty.

Cllr M Khan also spoke of the Oxford 2050 collaboration which resulted in the five Councils at the table failing to reach an agreement. This scheme is no longer being progressed.

**64. Questions to the Leader concerning the business of the Council in accordance with Standing Order 58**

Q: *“Is there any finance training planned for Councillors? This is relevant when the Town Council is planning to spend large sums on projects?* (Cllr A Dearlove)

**A:** The Leader stated that there is always training provided if requested. The last Finance training was poorly attended but there will be another one very soon.

Q: “*Can the Leader tell me where to go to resolve signage problems to the station and parking problems in Bowmont Water?* (Cllr P Davies)

**A:** The Leader suggested that these issues could be raised with the Traffic Advisory Group (TAG) and OCC Highways.

**65. Exclusion of the press and public**

**RESOLVED:** pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 to exclude the press and public from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**66. To review the land at Ladygrove East and the possible asset transfer**

SODC have been in contact about finalising the details of the S106 agreement for the possible ownership of the public open space at the development site at Ladygrove East. The Town Council was asked to review potential management costs. It was AGREED that more detail was needed before the Town Council could commit to these figures and this item should then go to the Environment and Climate Committee. The meeting closed at 20.33pm.

Signed: (Mayor) Date: