

## Council Meeting

Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 7.30pm

Main Hall, Didcot Civic Hall



## DRAFT Minutes

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

### PRESENT

Councillors:

|                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| A Jones (Mayor)        | K Morrison (Deputy Leader) |
| J Loder (Deputy Mayor) | D Macdonald                |
| S Cole                 | G Roberts                  |
| S Nohre                | D Rouane                   |
| J Broadbent            | T Worgan                   |
| A Macdonald            | A Hudson                   |
| N Hards                | O Glover                   |
| M Khan                 | G Ryall                    |
| H Macdonald            | L Hislop                   |
| D Aragao               | Z Mohammed                 |

Officers:

Janet Wheeler – Town Clerk  
Lucy Blake – Deputy Town Clerk

### 50. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr C Jennings.

### 51. To receive declarations of interests

Cllr D Rouane declared an interest on item 12, Didcot Garden Town Project and the report from the Council's representative and would therefore not participate in the discussions on this item.

No other declarations were made.

### 52. To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024, and the Extraordinary Council Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, and to include questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item

Cllr H Macdonald objected to the approval of the minutes from the meeting held on 2nd September 2024, proposing an amendment to include the fourteen questions

raised in an email by Cllr M Khan and the verbal responses provided by Cllr D Rouane concerning the Neighbourhood Plan proposal, to ensure an accurate public record.

Members discussed and debated the proposal. Cllr A Jones enquired if there was a seconder for the amendment; none was forthcoming, resulting in the proposal's failure.

Subsequently, it was proposed by Cllr A Jones, and seconded by Cllr G Ryall, to approve the minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024 Full Council meeting.

Vote: **IN FAVOUR: 17, AGAINST: 1, ABSTENTIONS: 2.**

The motion to approve the minutes of the Full Council meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> September was RESOLVED.

Members reviewed the accuracy of the minutes from the Extraordinary meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024. It was proposed by Cllr D Rouane and seconded by Cllr T Worgan to accept the amended draft minutes as supplied by Cllr K Morrison, and circulated with the agenda, prior to the meeting.

Members discussed and debated the proposed amendments. Cllr O Glover reiterated that, for any members still unclear on the meeting details, the recording remained available for review (until the minutes are officially approved), as previously noted by the Town Clerk.

As the proposer, Cllr D Rouane summarised the discussion, emphasising that the amendments were necessary for the purpose of clarity. Cllr A Jones called for a vote to approve the amended minutes.

Vote: **IN FAVOUR: 11, AGAINST: 8, ABSTENTIONS: 1.**

The motion to approve the amended minutes of the Extraordinary meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024, was RESOLVED.

### **53. 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 D Rouane, seconded by Cllr A Hudson, and RESOLVED to receive the Minutes for the meetings held on 28<sup>th</sup> August (inc Appendix 1), 18<sup>th</sup> September, and 8<sup>th</sup> October 2024 (to be approved by Committee).

The vote was unanimous, with one abstention.

#### **b) Finance and General Purposes Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr G Ryall, and RESOLVED to receive the Minutes for the meetings held on 30<sup>th</sup> September and 21<sup>st</sup> October 2024 (to be approved by Committee).

The vote was unanimous. Cllr T Worgan thanked all Grant Aid applicants, on behalf of the Finance and General Purposes Committee for their presentations.

There were two recommendations:

**Minute 80:** To approve two virements - £3,000 to cost centre 103/4210 Civic Functions and £10,000 to 150/4701 Grant Aid.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr J Broadbent, and **RESOLVED** to approve the virement of these funds to enable the Council to hold a VE Day event and to add additional funds to the Grant Aid budget. The vote was unanimous.

**Minute 88:** To purchase the HR380 Ransomes Out Front Rider Rotary – this would be covered in the confidential part of the meeting.

#### **c) Environment & Climate Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts, seconded by Cllr A Macdonald, and **RESOLVED** to receive the Minutes for the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (to be approved by Committee). The vote was unanimous.

There was one recommendation:

**Minute 31:** To approve the allotment rental charges for the 2026-2027 financial year.

Cllr M Khan declared an interest in this item as an allotment tenant and abstained from participating in the vote.

It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts, seconded by Cllr A Macdonald, and **RESOLVED** to approve the allotment rental charges for the 2026-2027 financial year at £50 per 5 pole plot. The vote was unanimous with one abstention.

#### **d) Personnel and Administration Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr J Loder, seconded by Cllr G Ryall, and **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes for the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024 (to be approved by Committee). The vote was unanimous.

There were three recommendations:

**Minute 34:** To approve the Social Media Policy.

It was proposed by Cllr J Loder, seconded by Cllr D Macdonald, and **RESOLVED** to approve the Social Media Policy. The vote was unanimous.

**Minute 35:** To approve the DTC Dignity at Work (Bullying and Harassment) Policy to include Sexual Harassment (incorporating measures from The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023

Cllr M Khan stated that all Cllrs and staff members should agree to this amended policy.

It was proposed by Cllr J Loder, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and RESOLVED to approve the Dignity at Work – Sexual and General Harassment Policy. The vote was unanimous.

**Minute 36:** To approve a new date for the next meeting of the P&A Committee – from 2<sup>nd</sup> December to 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

It was proposed by Cllr J Loder, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and RESOLVED to approve the new date for the meeting. The vote was unanimous with one abstention.

#### **e) Property & Facilities Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr A Hudson, and RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (to be approved by Committee). The vote was unanimous.

There were no recommendations.

#### **54. To receive the Mayor's Report and the Deputy Mayor's report**

Both reports were noted by the Council.

#### **55. To note the conclusion of the 2023-2024 Annual Governance Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and RESOLVED to accept the conclusion of the 2023-2024 Annual Governance Accountability Return. The vote was unanimous.

#### **56. To note the general insurance renewal of approx. £27,285 inc IPT**

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and RESOLVED to note the renewal price. The vote was unanimous.

#### **57. To elect a new Leader – and potentially a new Deputy Leader if required**

Nominations were called for the Leader of the Town Council. It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan and seconded by Cllr O Glover, to nominate Cllr K Morrison.

A second nomination was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald and seconded by Cllr A Hudson, to elect Cllr M Khan as Leader.

The vote was:

- Cllr K Morrison – IN FAVOUR = **12 votes**
- Cllr M Khan – IN FAVOUR = **8 votes**

**It was RESOLVED to elect Cllr K Morrison as Leader of the Council for the remainder of the 2024-2025 year.**

Nominations were called for the position of Deputy Leader of the Council.

It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, and seconded by Cllr D Rouane, to nominate Cllr T Worgan as Deputy Leader.

A second nomination was proposed by Cllr A Hudson and seconded by Cllr M Khan, to elect Cllr D Macdonald as Deputy Leader.

The vote was:

- Cllr T Worgan – IN FAVOUR = **12 votes**
- Cllr D Macdonald – IN FAVOUR = **8 votes**

**It was RESOLVED to elect Cllr T Worgan as Deputy Leader of the Council for the remainder of the 2024-2025 year.**

**58. To elect a nominee to act as the second trustee to represent DTC for the Hagbourne Charities** – *(these positions are currently taken by Cllr C Jennings and Cllr O Glover, but Cllr O Glover will be stepping down in the Spring)*

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr D Rouane, and RESOLVED to elect Cllr K Morrison as the second trustee to represent DTC for the Hagbourne Charities. The decision was unanimous.

**59. There were no motions**

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

There were no communications for this meeting.

**61. Didcot Garden Town Project and the report of the Council's Representative on the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board**

Cllr D Rouane left the meeting during the discussion of this item.

Cllr M Khan expressed appreciation for the written report provided by the new Leader but noted a lack of progress on key initiatives. Cllr K Morrison acknowledged the frustration but assured that she would collaborate with DGT to advance these items.

Cllr D Rouane rejoined the meeting.

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

***Q. Congratulations on becoming the new Leader. Can you advise on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan? (Cllr L Hislop)***

The Leader thanked Cllr L Hislop. As the Chair of both the NHPWGs Cllr K Morrison explained that she will be visiting with some of the interested parishes to answer any questions they might have. These include Western Valley, Appleford and Sutton Courtenay.

***Q. Congratulations again on your new position. Recently Cllrs and staff have received emails putting forward arguments and criticism of officers. Bearing in mind the Council has approved and accepted the new Dignity at Work Policy, will these emails now cease? (Cllr J Broadbent)***

The Leader thanked Cllr J Broadbent. She explained that she has written to the Cllr in question and has reminded them of their duties as per the Councillors Code of Conduct and asked for these emails to stop. This will be monitored.

***Q. Does the Leader share the same views of the CEO of CloudHQ, according to the BBC, on Didcot having the potential to become an extension to Slough? (Cllr G Ryall)***

Cllr K Morrison stated that she hasn't seen this article but the Deputy Leader, Cllr T Worgan, disagreed.

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

**64. F&GP Minute 88 – To approve the purchase of the HR380 Ransomes Out Front Rider Rotary at a cost of £31,920 + VAT including a part exchange**

Cllr T Worgan explained that this was approved at the F&GP meeting but requires ratification from full Council due to the cost.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr J Broadbent, and **RESOLVED** to approve the purchase of the new machine with a part exchange, at a cost of £31,920 + VAT, to allow the outdoor team to cut some of the grass verges in Didcot. The vote was unanimous with one abstention.

**65. To discuss the quotes on security**

Following an incident at the Civic Hall involving a group of young people intimidating staff and gaining unauthorised access to the roof, security for the Town Council's facilities has been investigated. While all elected members agreed that additional security measures are needed to ensure the safety of staff and users of the buildings, they felt that further information is required to enable them to make an informed decision.

It was proposed by Cllr M Khan, seconded by Cllr T Worgan, and **RESOLVED** to instruct the Property and Facilities Committee to investigate this matter further and include it as a consideration for the budget setting process. The vote was unanimous.

**66. To note the NJC Pay award for 2024 backdated until April 2024**

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr G Ryall, and **RESOLVED** to officially note the NJC pay award for 2024.

The meeting closed at 20:24

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Mayor)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_