

Didcot Town Council

Finance and General Purposes Committee

22nd July 2024 at 7.45pm

All Saints Room, Didcot Civic Hall



Minutes

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

Present:

Councillor T Worgan (Chair)
Councillor G Roberts (Deputy Chair)
Councillor G Ryall
Councillor J Loder
Councillor D Aragao
Councillor N Hards

Officers:

Mrs J Wheeler – Town Clerk (TC)
Mrs L Blake – Deputy Town Clerk (DC)

Emma Northwood – Representative from Air IT

26. To receive apologies

No apologies were received. Cllr J Broadbent was absent.

27. To receive declarations of interests. Members are reminded to declare any interests they may have on any item on this agenda in accordance with Didcot Town Council's code of conduct

No declarations were made.

28. To agree the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2024

The Chair paged through the minutes. It was proposed by Cllr J Loder, seconded by Cllr G Ryall, and RESOLVED to approve the minutes as an accurate record and note them as such. The vote was unanimous.

29. Questions on the Minutes as to the progress of any item

There were no questions.

30. To review and approve the financial reports for May 2024

The Town Clerk explained that Officers were still waiting on the results of several s106 applications to the District Council. These amount to approximately £130,000. Officers have had to provide a lot more detailed information than anticipated.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr G Ryall, and RESOLVED to approve the financial reports for May 2024. The vote was unanimous.

31. To note the expenditure on the Splash Pad

The Committee noted the expenditure of £484,619 to date. The project is still within budget and on course to open at the end of July 2024.

32. To note the appointment of DCK Accounting Solutions to perform the VAT partial exemption calculations for 2023-2024

The Committee noted the appointment of DCK Accounting Solutions to perform the VAT partial exemption calculations for the 2023-2024 financial year. The cost will be £465 + vat.

33. To approve a quote of £1,300 for pitch marking using a robot and GPS system

The Committee considered the report which explained that only two members of the outdoor team are currently trained to carry out the initial pitch marking. Other members could learn but this would take time.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to approve the quote for the initial pitch marking for this year using a robot and GPS system, at a cost of £1,300, on the condition that a report be presented to the Environment and Climate Committee on carrying out this work in future, in house. All members agreed.

This cost would come from cost centre 307/4041 'Grounds Maintenance'.

34. To review the progress report

The Committee reviewed the report.

No communication has been received from Restore. It was decided that the Town Clerk would write to Restore again regarding the use of the allotment spaces.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan to suspend Standing Orders to allow Emma Northwood, the representative from Air IT, to address the Committee on the potential cyber protection quote. All members agreed.

Emma Northwood presented Air IT's quote for Endpoint cyber security to the Committee and explained the various safety aspects included, such as 24/7 support and additional training for staff and Councillors. She explained that Sentinel One offers additional security to Anti-Virus systems, and this software encrypts and quarantines threats before they are exposed. The software would continually learn from the users of the devices.

Emma then invited questions from the members.

Cllr G Ryall expressed his concerns regarding false positives, for example, should the Council undertake a task which is normally carried out once a year, would the software consider this a threat? Emma explained that the work would be 'flagged' and held, but the 'human element' would enable the work to be released.

Cllr G Ryall enquired about the Security Operation Centre (SOC) – is this subcontracted, or managed 'in house'? Emma explained that the SOC is managed

'in house' during regular working hours and managed by a company in the USA during out of hours.

This led Cllr G Ryall to ask if the training would be carried out on the Town Council's devices, or with data being sent to USA? Emma could not answer this question but would update the Committee when she confirmed the answer.

Cllr G Ryall asked if Air IT recognises the difference between companies and Councils, as the threat profile can be very different. Would training be more appropriate? Emma explained that the software would stop the threat at the entry point, giving added security, whilst Air IT would offer training to staff and Councillors to help recognise threats.

Cllr D Aragao asked if another company could manage the Sentinel One software. Emma confirmed that they could.

Cllr J Loder asked if routine updates and downloads would be flagged as threats. Would the software be able to identify periodic updates? Emma confirmed that the software would need time to learn.

Cllr N Hards explained that the Town Council routinely received communication from people with no connection to the Council. Would these communications be blocked? Emma confirmed they would not.

Cllr T Worgan asked why should the Town Council choose Air IT over any competitors for this cyber security? Emma explained that Air IT have been working with Didcot Town Council for several years and understands the Town Council's needs.

Members thanked Emma Northwood for the presentation, and she left the meeting. Standing Orders were re-instated.

35. Exclusion of the press and public

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.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan to consider agenda item 11 – to review the cyber protection quote, first. All members agreed.

36. To review the cyber protection quote

The Councillors were wary of taking on new software due to the recent Cloud Strike issue and the huge impact this has had on everyday activities and the world's economy. The staff were asked to explore all options open to the Council and to look at software used by other similar-size Town Councils.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr G Ryall, and **RESOLVED** to not accept the quote for the Sentinel protection at this time until further research was carried out. The vote was unanimous.

37. To note the confidential minutes of the CCTV meeting held on 6th June 2024

The Committee noted the minutes.

Cllr N Hards asked that the District Council be made aware of the incorrect spelling of Edmonds Park.

38. To clarify the CCTV proposals from SODC and possible procurement path

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr N Hards, and RESOLVED to approve the cost of the two additional CCTV cameras at a cost of approximately £13,700 (+ VAT). The vote was unanimous.

Most of the cost would be taken from cost centre EMR 351 (£13,405 remaining).

39. To consider the appointment of Infrastructure Managed Services Ltd being “re-branded” as Sherwood Maintenance Ltd

The Committee noted the reports and considered the recommendations from the Town Clerk. It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr J Loder and RESOLVED to write to both companies following legal advice.

Vote: IN FAVOUR: 5, AGAINST: 0, ABSTENTIONS: 1.

For the remainder of this year, it was agreed that the outdoor team would attempt to carry out as much of the cutting of the verges as they are confident to do. The hire of equipment would be needed to enable the team to do this, and costs would be made available to members as soon as they are received.

This would be reviewed again at the end of 2024.

40. To review the contract renewal proposal for the office telephones

The Committee reviewed the proposal. It was proposed by Cllr J Loder, seconded by Cllr T Worgan, and RESOLVED to enter a 12-month contract for the office telephones and investigate other options during this time. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting closed at 9.17pm.

Signed: _____ (Chair)

Date: _____