

## Council Meeting

Monday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2024 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:

A Jones (Mayor)	C Jennings (Leader)
J Loder (Deputy Mayor)	K Morrison (Deputy Leader)
S Cole	D Macdonald
D Guerra Aragao	G Roberts
L Hislop	D Rouane
S Nohre	T Worgan
J Broadbent	G Ryall
Z Mohammed	A Hudson
A Macdonald	

Officers:

Janet Wheeler - Town Clerk  
Lucy Blake – Deputy Town Clerk

### 22. To receive apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs N Hards, O Glover, M Khan and H Macdonald.

### 23. To receive declarations of interests

There were no declarations.

### 24. To approve and adopt the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 14th May 2024 and to include questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item

Cllr D Macdonald queried the order in which decisions were recorded at the meeting (minute 231).

It was proposed by Cllr A Jones, seconded by Cllr G Ryall, and RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14th May 2024, subject to the amendment of the order at minute 231. The vote was unanimous.

**25. 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 8th May, and 4th June 2024 (to be approved by Committee). There were three recommendations:

**Minute 276:** To agree in principle to set up a Flood Resilience Working Group – subject to a full proposal and terms of reference.

It was proposed by Cllr D Rouane, seconded by Cllr S Cole, and RESOLVED to set up a Flood Resilience Working Group, in principle. The vote was unanimous.

**Minute 5:** To include a Neighbourhood Plan for Didcot in the terms of reference for the Planning and Development Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr D Rouane, seconded by Cllr C Jennings, and RESOLVED to include a Neighbourhood Plan for Didcot in the terms of reference for the Planning and Development Committee. The vote was unanimous.

**Minute 18:** To agree in principle two Neighbourhood Plan Working Groups – subject to a full proposal and terms of reference (one group would cover the Didcot Parish plan and the other would engage with neighbouring parishes and gather interest in a joint plan).

It was proposed by Cllr D Rouane and seconded by Cllr C Jennings to agree the two working groups in principle.

Vote: **IN FAVOUR:** 11, **AGAINST:** 0, **ABSTENTIONS:** 6.

**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 20<sup>TH</sup> May 2024 and 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (to be approved by Committee). There were two recommendations:

**Minute 9:** To review the effectiveness of the internal audit – and decision to retain Accounting Solutions Ltd for 2024-2025.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to retain Accounting Solutions Ltd for 2024-2025. The vote was unanimous.

**Minute 15:** To receive and adopt the unaudited financial statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to receive and adopt the unaudited financial statements for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The vote was unanimous.

**c) Environment & Climate Committee**

It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts, seconded by Cllr J Broadbent, and RESOLVED to receive the Minutes for the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024 (to be approved by Committee). There was one recommendation:

**Minute 10:** To note the quote to turf the outside of the new pavilion at Edmonds Park at a cost of £7,500 + vat. The contractor is the New Lawn Company. This has been fast tracked to allow the grass to settle as soon as possible.

It was proposed by Cllr G Roberts, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and RESOLVED to accept the cost of £7,500 from the New Lawn Company, to lay the turf at the new pavilion. The vote was unanimous.

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

It was proposed by Cllr C Jennings, seconded by Cllr D Macdonald, and RESOLVED to receive the minutes for the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024 (to be approved by Committee). There were three recommendations:

**Minute 9:** To approve a Long Service Recognition scheme.

It was proposed by Cllr C Jennings, seconded by Cllr D Macdonald, and RESOLVED to approve the Long Service Recognition scheme. The vote was unanimous.

**Minute 10:** To approve a Policy to ban pets as prizes.

It was proposed by Cllr C Jennings, seconded by Cllr T Worgan, and RESOLVED to approve the policy. The vote was unanimous.

**Minute 12:** To approve the Ladygrove Fishing Association Agreement.

Cllr J Broadbent excused himself from the meeting at this point, due to being a member of the Fishing Association's Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr C Jennings, seconded by Cllr K Morrison, and RESOLVED to approve the Ladygrove Fishing Association Agreement. The vote was unanimous.

Cllr J Broadbent returned to the meeting.

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

It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr D Rouane, and RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024 (to be approved by Committee). There was one recommendation:

**Minute 13:** To approve the purchase of two induction hobs and ovens from Cater-Kwik for the Civic Hall, at a cost of £7,761.98 + VAT.

It was proposed by Cllr K Morrison, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to approve the purchase of the two induction hobs at a cost of £7,761.98 + VAT. The vote was unanimous.

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

Both reports were noted by the Council.

### **27. To receive and adopt the fixed asset register for 2023-2024**

Councillors noted that the only significant change to the register was the inclusion of the new Community and Sport Pavilion at Edmonds Park. The Splash Pad will be an addition to the register for 2024-2025.

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to receive and adopt the fixed asset register for 2023-2024. The vote was unanimous.

### **28. To receive and approve the final internal audit report for 2023-2024**

It was noted that the internal audit report identified only two small recommendations, which were already being addressed. G Ryall thanked the staff for their work. It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr G Ryall, and RESOLVED to receive and approve the final internal audit report for 2023-2024. The vote was unanimous.

### **29. To approve the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2023-2024**

- **Section one – Approval of the Annual Governance Statement 2023-2024**

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to approve section one – Approval of the Annual Governance Statement 2023-2024. The vote was unanimous.

- **Section two – Approval of the Accounting Statements 2023-2024**

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to approve section two – Approval of the Accounting Statements 2023-2024. The vote was unanimous.

- **Notice of Public Rights**

It was proposed by Cllr T Worgan, seconded by Cllr G Roberts, and RESOLVED to approve the Notice of Public Rights. The vote was unanimous.

The Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) was approved.

### **30. To receive nominations and make appointments to working groups, external bodies and organisations (deferred from the Annual Meeting)**

It was proposed by Cllr C Jennings that the members of these working groups, external bodies and organisations, remain the same. However, there were some agreed amendments:

- Allotments - Cllr G Roberts would take the position of Chair of the Allotment Liaison Group, with Cllr A Hudson taking the post of Councillor representative for the Cockcroft allotment site.
- Didcot Arts and Community Association – Cllr D Rouane would fill this vacancy.
- UKAEA - Cllr K Morrison confirmed that she had vacated her place on this Liaison Committee due to a conflict with her working there. Cllr C Jennings would take her place.
- OALC – Cllr C Jennings would replace Cllr K Morrison on this.

Members of the Fleet Meadow Community Trust would remain the same. All members agreed.

### **31. To consider two motions:**

**Motion one:** Proposed by Cllr D Macdonald re: Right to Grow scheme.

Cllr D Macdonald spoke on her motion to allow the community more space to grow food on due to the cost-of-living crisis. She spoke on producing a map of all Council owned land suitable for community cultivation. It was hoped this initiative would be taken up by the District Council also.

All members expressed support for this scheme, but concerns were raised regarding potential usage agreements, insurance complications and liability over the protection of food.

It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald, seconded by Cllr L Hislop, and RESOLVED to approve this scheme in principle, subject to further work being undertaken by the Environment and Climate Committee and possibly the Finance and General Purposes Committee. The vote was unanimous.

**Motion two:** Proposed by Cllr S Nohre re: creation of a Working Group to investigate the formation of a Youth Council.

Cllr S Nohre spoke on her motion of the creation of a Working Group to work on the potential formation of a Youth Council. All members expressed their support on this and confirmed that there is the desire in some young people to get involved and participate in decision making.

It was proposed by Cllr S Nohre, seconded by Cllr G Ryall, and RESOLVED to approve the formation of a Working Group to investigate the formation of a Youth Council. The vote was unanimous.

**32. 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.

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

Cllr C Jennings explained that there had not been any meetings with the Didcot Garden Town Project since the last full Council meeting, although a meeting has been arranged for 15<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

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

***Q. At the full Council meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2024, it was resolved to provide free period products in all town council owned facilities. Is there an update on this? (Cllr L Hislop)***

Cllr C Jennings explained that he did not have an update to hand but would investigate. The Town Clerk explained that investigations were underway as to how this could be managed.

***Q. At the last meeting of full Council it was decided to fly the Pride Flag during June. Has the flag been put up? (Cllr D Rouane)***

The Leader confirmed that the Pride flag will be flying, if it wasn't already.

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.

**35. To approve the recommendation from the Personnel and Administration Committee and the Finance and General Purposes Committee to employ a full time Estate Administrator**

It was proposed by Cllr C Jennings, seconded by Cllr A Hudson, and RESOLVED to employ a new full time Estate Administrator to help with the extra work. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed:

(Mayor)

Date: