

Mayor-making and Annual Meeting

Tuesday 4th May 2021 at 7.30pm

Online at zoom.us (or via your device app)



Minutes

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

PRESENT

Councillors:

P Davies	M McNeill
A Dearlove	J Moody
J Durman	D Rouane
P Giesberg (joined later)	A Sandiford
E Hards	P Siggers
V Haval	A Thompson
A Hudson	M Walsh (joined later)
M Khan	C Wilson
A Macdonald	
D Macdonald	

Officers:

Janet Wheeler - Town Clerk;
Mr Robert Harris – Outside Services Manager
Mr Nicholas White – Property & Facilities Manager

One member of the public attended remotely.

The out-going Mayor – Cllr Eleanor Hards – opened the Mayor-Making and Annual Meeting of the Council with a two minutes silence to commemorate the death of HRH Prince Philip the Duke of Edinburgh.

1. Election of the Town Mayor for 2021/2022 and signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

In accordance with Standing Orders, Council had agreed on 01 March 2021 that Cllr M Khan should become Mayor Designate for 2021/2022.

It was proposed Cllr E Hards and seconded by Cllr C Wilson to confirm the nomination of Cllr M Khan. There were no further nominations.

It was RESOLVED to elect Cllr M Khan as Mayor for 2021/2022.

Cllr M Khan read out and signed the declaration of acceptance of office and assumed the role of Chair. Cllr E Hards will be presented with the past Mayor's Badge when appropriate.

2. Election of the Deputy Town Mayor for 2021/2022 and signing of the Declaration of Acceptance of Office

There was one nomination for the position of Deputy Town Mayor: Cllr P Siggers: proposed by Cllr A. Macdonald and seconded by Cllr A Hudson.

It was RESOLVED to elect Cllr P Siggers as Deputy Mayor for 2021/2022.

Cllr P Siggers read out and signed the declaration of acceptance of office and assumed the role of Deputy Mayor.

3. Election of the Leader of the Council for 2021/2022

Nominations were called for. It was proposed by Cllr C Wilson; seconded by Cllr J Moody to nominate Cllr D Macdonald.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr D Macdonald be elected as Leader of the Council for 2021/2022.

4. Election of Deputy Leader of the Council for 2021/2022

Nominations were called for. There was one nomination for the position of Deputy Leader:

- 1) Cllr E Hards: proposed by Cllr D Macdonald; seconded by Cllr P Siggers.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr E Hards be elected as Deputy Leader of the Council for 2021/2022.

5. To receive apologies

There were no apologies but Cllr M Mallows was absent for this meeting.

6. To receive declarations of interests

There were no declarations.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow for:

- **Review of the 2020/2021 year from the outgoing Mayor – Cllr E Hards**
Cllr E Hards spoke of the limited opportunities to represent the Council in the community during this year of the covid pandemic. She thanked those organisations who invited her to their online events. She stated that this was a productive year for Didcot Town Council. She extended her best wishes to the incoming Mayor.

- **Speech from the incoming Mayor and confirmation of charities**

Cllr M Khan gave thanks for the leadership and dedication of the outgoing Mayor. Cllr M Khan also stated what a great honour it was to be appointed the Mayor of Didcot. He has been living in Didcot for seven years and never thought he would be a Councillor, let alone the Mayor. He is also the first Asian Mayor to be elected which is a tribute to the growing diversity in the town. Cllr M Khan named his two charities. The first is a local charity, Play2Give and the second is to pay for research into combating coeliac disease – a condition which afflicts one of his daughters. Cllr M Khan's wife will accompany him to events throughout the mayoral year.

Standing Orders were re-instated. Cllr P Giesberg joined the meeting.

7. To appoint the new Property and Facilities Committee as a replacement for the Civic Hall Management Committee

It was proposed by Cllr P Siggers and seconded by Cllr E Hards and RESOLVED to approve this new standing Committee of the Council.

8. To review the Scheme of Delegation to Committees under Standing Orders 100-112 and to employees under Standing Orders Section 4 and 5

It was proposed by Cllr D Macdonald and seconded by Cllr E Hards and RESOLVED to approve the Scheme of Delegation to Committees. The Town Clerk reminded Councillors that the individual Terms of Reference would be reviewed by each standing Committee at their first meeting of the civic year.

9. To defer nominations to existing Committees to the Extra Ordinary Meeting on 10th May 2021 but (in accordance with Standing Order 105) to receive nominations of Chair and Vice Chair subject to their election at the first meeting of the Committee

The following was noted from the current Chairs and Vice Chairs:

- Cllr D Macdonald will stand down as Chair of the Environment & Climate Committee
- Cllr A Dearlove will stand down as Chair of the Planning & Development Committee
- Cllr M Khan will stand down as Chair of the Personnel and Administration Committee

The following temporary appointments were proposed by Cllr D Macdonald and seconded by Cllr A Hudson – for the first meeting of each Standing Committee only:

Finance and General Purposes Committee

Chair: Cllr J Moody; Vice Chair: Cllr P Siggers

Environment and Climate Committee

Chair: Cllr A Macdonald; Vice Chair: Cllr C Wilson

Planning and Development Committee

Chair: Cllr A Dearlove; Vice Chair: Cllr E Hards

Personnel and Administration Committee

Chair: Cllr D Macdonald; Vice Chair: Cllr E Hards

Property & Facilities Committee

Chair: Cllr P Siggers; Vice Chair: Cllr J Moody

It was RESOLVED to appoint these positions for the first meeting of each standing Committee.

10. To receive a motion from Cllr P Davies regarding the resumption of physical Council meetings

Cllr P Davies spoke regarding his agenda item. The Councillor spoke of the situation where virtual meetings will not be allowed after 7th May 2021. He also spoke of the restrictions on face to face gatherings for those from more than two households. These restrictions affect the next seven meetings of Committees and it will be very difficult to continue the business of the Council in a way which also protects the health of Members and Officers.

He referred to the proposed amendment from Cllr D Macdonald which suggested continuing the meetings of the Committees as virtual working groups – or advisory groups. The decisions would then be ratified by a brief physical meeting of the Council Chairs at a distance and either inside or outside depending on the relaxation of covid rules.

Cllr P Davies was willing to accept the proposed amendment. Cllr D Macdonald spoke to the amendment and read out her proposal. The proposal would allow wide public participation and maximise Councillor participation.

The following was proposed:

1. To convert all standing Committees to temporary working parties where they can meet remotely and make recommendations either to full Council or delegated to the Town Clerk.
2. The temporary working parties will follow the same schedule of meetings and be open to the public.
3. The temporary working parties will follow the same schedule of delegation and terms of reference.
4. Our current standing orders can remain unchanged but note Section 5 SO 120 to 124 covers the delegation to the Town Clerk.

-
5. Urgent matters only to be delegated to the Town Clerk when they cannot wait for the next Council meeting. The Town Clerk will follow the recommendations of the working parties (Committees).
 6. The Extra-Ordinary meeting on 10th May is held remotely for safety. The Chairs and Vice Chairs will be re-appointed at their first meeting. Each Committee should have Liberal Democrat, Conservative and Independent Councillors as members.
 7. Full Council to physically meet at a distance in the Ladygrove Room. This could be a combination from the Chairs of the five standing Committees, a representative of the Liberal Democrat Party and of the Conservative Party, Independent Councillors involved in the working party being considered and the Mayor to a maximum of 6 people. The member of staff can join from the office remotely.
 8. This procedure to be reviewed after three months.

Cllr M Khan spoke to suspend Standing Order 73 that no Councillor speak more than once unless it is to make a new point.

Cllr A Thompson was concerned that Cllr P Davies original motion had not been seconded. He stated that this needed to be seconded before Cllr D Macdonald's amendment could be debated. Cllr E Hards seconded the original motion. She spoke about this unprecedented situation which has affected timings for proposals and the difficulties of proposing meetings in a marquee which is open to the elements. It could be reviewed in three months or when restrictions are lifted.

Cllr D Macdonald formally moved her amendment which was seconded by Cllr P Davies.

The amendment was debated. It was clarified that the Extra Ordinary meeting on 10th May 2021 will be held remotely. There was question on the legality but safety was considered the best option. A smaller number would come together face to face to ratify the decisions made remotely.

It was agreed that the review period could be shorter than three months. Cllr P Davies wished to add the following words to point 8 – “unless covid restrictions are removed.” Cllr P Davies also said that point 7 – the smaller group - would only need to meet physically if the covid restrictions were retained after the 21st June. Our full Council meeting on 28th June could therefore take place as normal.

It was clarified that the meeting in point 7 would cover the decisions taken at the Extra Ordinary meeting on 10th May 2021. It was noted that working groups must have decisions ratified.

Cllr J Durman proposed an amendment to review on the 21st June 2021. Cllr A Hudson seconded this. The vote on Cllr J Durman's amendment was not upheld.

Cllr E Hards proposed an amendment to review at the full Council meeting on 28th June 2021. This was seconded by Cllr J Moody. It was pointed out that this would necessitate a remote meeting on the 28th before a face to face meeting could be held . Cllr E Hards and Cllr J Moody withdrew this amendment.

Cllr P Giesberg suggested an alternative amendment “for provisions stay in place until 21st June unless the covid restrictions are lifted”. Cllr J Durman seconded this amendment.

The Town Clerk suggested the words for point 8:

8.The arrangements will remain in place until 21st June 2021 or until the covid restrictions are lifted.

This wording was accepted.

VOTE: 16 in favour; 1 against; 1 abstention

It was agreed that Cllr A Dearlove would chair the first meeting of the Planning Committee (as a working group) as it was on 12th May – two days after the Extra Ordinary Council. It was suggested that the decisions on the planning applications for this meeting could be delegated to the Town Clerk on this occasion.

Cllr P Davies wanted to add the words “Extra Ordinary Council to physically meet ...” in point seven rather than “Full Council to physically meet ...” This was seconded by Cllr D Macdonald.

VOTE: 16 in favour; 2 abstentions

The meeting closed at 8.48pm.

Signed:

(Mayor)

Date: