

20th November 2023

Minutes of the proceedings of the **CIVIC COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in **the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham** from 19:30 to 20:50pm.

PRESENT

Chair: Cllr A Mather (Chair)

Councillors: A Betteridge, P Cunnington, W Dixon, A Jones (Vice-Chair), M Lucey and K Malvern.

IN ATTENDANCE

Civic Officer

Mayor's Attendant

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr R Bishop-Firth and M Gee.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)

No questions were received.

CIVIC COMMITTEE MINUTES (Agenda Item 4)

It was proposed by Cllr A Mather and seconded by Cllr P Cunnington and it was

**RESOLVED
30745**

that the Minutes of the Civic Committee meeting held on 18th September 2023 (pages 16823 to 16827), be received as a true and correct record and that they be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Monitoring Report dated 14th November 2023 was received and noted.

a) Purchase new badge and ribbon for Mini-Mayor

This has been ordered and estimated delivery is 21 November.

b) To consider the purchase of a new mayoral badge and chain of office at some point in the near future.

A request has been made to F&P to put aside £2,000 per year, over the next 5 years for the provision of purchasing a new mayoral chain and badge of office. Civic is waiting for a decision to be made from F&P.

c) Beating the Bounds walk

A request has been made to F&P for £4,000, to offer to Wokingham Lions Club to manage and co-ordinate this. Civic is waiting for a decision to be made from F&P.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



d) Wokingham Remembers Website

A request has been made to F&P for £1,500 as a one-off cost to take on the ownership and hosting of the website, to preserve its history. Civic is waiting for a decision to be made from F&P.

COMMITTEE'S BUDGET (Agenda Item 6)

A report on the Committee's budget expenditure to 31st October 2023 was received and noted.

Members, also on F&P, shared that in order to support Councillor's understanding, the F&P committee has introduced a final column to show end of year out-turn, i.e. are we expecting to spend all of the money in each budget line to make it clearer for Councillors to know what is committed to. Members agreed that if this could be rolled out on a committee level, they would find this helpful.

Civic Officer to pass on this request to F&P.

ACTION: Civic Officer

COUNCIL'S UPDATED VISION AND PRINCIPLES (Agenda item 7)

Councillors were in support of the revised principles and recognised they are not very different from the previous ones. However, there were a couple of queries about some of the wording used (where it is highlighted below) which they believed could have been written a little more positively.

Mission statement:

Wokingham Town Council embraces our past, celebrates our present and builds for our future.

Principles:

Being sustainable

Working to reduce our negative impact on our local environment and use our financial resources and physical assets as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Involving everyone

Striving to ensure the council's events, activities and democratic processes are open, accessible and welcoming to everyone in our community.

Fostering Town Pride

Protecting, enhancing and celebrating what's good about our council, our community, our town and our heritage. We will learn from our past, acknowledge where there's room for improvement, and prepare for the future.

Enriching community

Creating and supporting opportunities to bring our community together and help it to thrive.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



The Civic Officer confirmed that the principles have now been agreed and adopted at Full Council, and therefore changes cannot be made. However, comments will be passed to strategy to note.

Councillors asked for a suggestion to be passed back to the Strategy working party; to ask them, that when they are producing a document of this type, which represents all of the Council's aims, would it be possible for a draft copy of this to be circulated to all Councillors to seek their comments and feedback. This way, the working party could take into account the wider views of the Council to consider as a whole, before agreeing and presenting a final proposal at Full Council.

ACTION: Civic Officer

REMEMBRANCE ACTIVITIES FEEDBACK (Agenda Item 8)

The committee received a note of some feedback shared by different people attending on the day, which was all positive and no suggestions for improvement were received, prior to the civic meeting.

Councillors recognised that Remembrance Sunday is a major event in the Council calendar and they thanked the Civic Officer for delivering a superb event, which they were proud to take part in.

The chair invited any additional feedback about the day so it can be considered in future planning and the following was shared:

Comments and suggestions included the following:

- If there is an opportunity to make the wreath laying ceremony more visible to a wider audience for more people to take part and to watch, ideally outside, it would be good to achieve.
 - There is a missed opportunity for all the people attending, to observe and take part in the wreath laying ceremony.
- Introduce a temporary structure to place outside to lay the wreaths around, before going to Church.
- Reserve the space, where the Christmas tree, stands, for a temporary structure in November.
- Introducing a temporary structure could build momentum and support, which could add weight to making a proposal for a permanent memorial to be placed outside.
- The danger of introducing a temporary structure could trigger some negative comments from the public
- Consider placing wreaths around the Poppy mosaic which is in the pavement of the Market Place, where the two minute silence is held, and where the current temporary is placed.
- Arrange for a permanent plaque to be placed on the wall of the Town Hall.
- Livestream the wreath laying ceremony and put a screen up outside
- The hymns in the Church service felt a little dated.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



The Civic Officer shared that the concept of raising awareness of there being a war memorial inside the Town Hall has been discussed many times at the civic committee previously, and it is challenging to address.

It was proposed by Cllr W Dixon and seconded by Cllr A Mather and it was

**RESOLVED
30746**

To bring forward ideas for the next meeting to say what we could do, with regards to involving more people in the wreath laying ceremony and within that for the Civic Officer to advise Councillors what has been proposed before, to support further discussions.

The Chairman suggested that members give all of this some thought and send any ideas to the Civic Officer as soon as possible to be collated into a report in preparation for the next civic meeting for further discussion.

The Civic Officer was asked about the timescales. Advice was given that any significant and achievable change to the proceedings for Remembrance Sunday would need to be agreed at least by the end of the June meeting next year.

COUNCILLORS PHOTOGRAPHS ON TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE (Agenda Item 9)

The Committee received the Civic Officer's report, noting a request from Councillors to discuss this.

It was proposed by Cllr A Betteridge and seconded by Cllr A Mather and it was

**RESOLVED
30747**

That in line with the decision made regarding the Council's group photograph being taken, the same approach should be taken for individual photos as well, in that if Councillors are not comfortable wearing a Councillor robe, it would not be mandatory to do so.

Councillors were all in agreement that Councillor photographs should continue to be taken by an appointed photographer for consistency, and not for individuals to submit their own.

It was agreed that photographs of current Councillors would not be changed, to avoid any unnecessary costs.

PARADES (Agenda Item 10)

The Committee received the Civic Officer's report, following a request at the previous meeting to explore further opportunities for Councillors to parade.

It should be noted, it was clarified at the meeting that the original request for this discussion was to look for opportunities for Councillors to wear their robes and be more visible in public, but this does not necessarily need to be in the form of a parade.

Councillors discussed several occasions at which Councillors could take part or be present at, and they were particularly keen that they should have a presence where the Town Council has provided financial contributions to an event.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



The Civic Officer was asked to enquire with Wokingham Lions to explore options about how Councillors could support the Winter Carnival at either end of the day, perhaps to stand either side of the stage.

The Civic Officer advised that Councillors wear their robes at the Council's Heritage Open Day already. Other events that were considered were Party in the Park, the Fireworks and the Beating of the Bounds event if this is supported.

It was suggested that Councillors may like to be selective about which events they attend in robes, and it would be good to ensure there is a purpose. They wouldn't want to dilute the impact of Councillors being present at events.

The Chair suggested that this discussion is revisited again to further discuss which events would be practical to attend.

ACTION: Civic Officer

INFORMATION ITEMS (Agenda Item 11)

The following was noted:

- a) The repairs on the main mayoral chain are now complete.
- b) The mayoral chain box is now being refurbished.
- c) The silver plaque on the Mace rest has undergone some repairs, see attached.
- d) 5 different groups have visited for a Town Hall talk since the last civic meeting, including 3 brownie groups and 1 year 3 group (a total of 11 groups have visited this year)
- e) Details of the Christmas Music event on Saturday 9 December have now been co-ordinated and agreed by Morearts, and it is currently being marketed.
- f) The Wokingham Poppy Appeal has raised in excess of £74,293.25.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 12)

There were no information items.

- a) No information was raised by members.
- b) No information was identified for marketing purposes.

CHAIR'S SIGNATURE _____

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____

