

15th May 2024

Minutes of the proceedings of the adjourned **FIFTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING** of **WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL** held this day in the **MAIN HALL, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM**, from 7.30pm to 8.32pm

PRESENT:

Chairman: Cllr R Comber (Mayor)

Cllrs: B Alvi, A Betteridge, R Bishop-Firth, B Callender, S Cornish, P Cunnington, W Dixon, A Domingue, A Fraser, M Fumagalli, M Gee, S Gurney, C Jamthe, A Jones, T Lack, K Malvern, M Malvern, A Mather, A Medhurst, N Nagella, H Richards, I Shepherd-Dubey and L Timlin

IN ATTENDANCE:

Katy Hughes – Town Clerk

Lisa Davison – Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)

David Dunham – Mayor's Attendant

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 9)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr A Croy.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 10)

There were no declarations of interest.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS (Agenda Item 11)

It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr L Timlin and the following was

**RESOLVED
30832**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Council Meeting held on 9th April 2024 (pages 16948 to 16953) be accepted as a true and correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

Members briefly discussion the process of co-option at the previous meeting.

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS (Agenda Item 12)

- a) Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey gave a brief report on the draft minutes of the recent meeting of the Planning and Transportation Committee held on 23rd April.
- b) It was proposed by Cllr N Nagella and seconded by Cllr A Betteridge and the following was

**RESOLVED
30833**

that the approved minutes of the proceedings of the Planning and Transport Committee meeting held on 19th March (pages 16942 to 16947, circulated with the April council agenda) be adopted.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

- c) Cllr M Gee gave a brief report on the draft minutes of the recent meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee held on 30th April. Cllr M Gee noted

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that the committee had considered the council's internal controls and no areas of concern were raised.

MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS (Agenda Item 13)

- a) Mayor Comber reported that the town council's annual newsletter is currently being distributed. Any member who is outside the town boundary and will not receive a delivered copy can collect one from the Town Clerk.

Mayor Comber reported on an invitation from Wokingham Borough Council to attend a consultation event on the draft borough vision. Cllr A Domingue reported on a discussion relating to the vision at a recent meeting of the Borough Parish Liaison Forum. Members expressed disappointment that only two representatives could attend, though it was noted that a number of other members had been invited as representatives of other community groups. Following discussion, Cllrs S Cornish and H Richards volunteered to attend the event.

Mayor Comber reminded members of upcoming events, including:

- Annual Town Meeting on Saturday in the REME Room at 11am, with a market stall running from 10am until 2pm. Additionally, the Diamond Jubilee Room will be open and the council's civic regalia will be on display for International Museum Day.
- Fun Day at Langborough Recreation Ground on Saturday 25th May, 10am to 4pm. The Arts and Culture Officer has circulated information to members who have volunteered to support the event. Cllr R Comber encouraged members to attend what is a very popular, fun, family event.
- Party in the Park on Saturday 1st June from 3 – 9pm in Elms Field. This event is run on the town council's behalf by Yes Events, but any member wishing to, can gather feedback from attendees.

Mayor Comber reminded members to review the Declarations of Pecuniary Interest and, where appropriate, provide an updated copy to the Town Clerk.

Mayor Comber reported on his first Mayoral engagement, for the opening of a new Children's Nursery on Rectory Road.

The Town Clerk reported that the July council meeting date may be moved to bring it within the school term time. Further details to be circulated.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC (Agenda Item 14)

No questions had been received.

ATTENDANCE REGISTER (Agenda Item 15)

The Attendance Chart extracted from the Attendance Register of Members at Council and Committee meetings for the past year was received.

Cllr S Gurney queried her record and asked the Town Clerk to investigate.

CHAIR INITIALS _____



LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda Item 16)

It was proposed by Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey and seconded by Cllr L Timlin and it was

**RESOLVED
30834**

that Cllr M Gee be appointed leader of the Council for the Municipal Year 2024-25.

A vote was taken and this was unanimous.

**STANDING COMMITTEES – MEMBERSHIP (Agenda Item 17)
(a) AMENITIES COMMITTEE**

MEMBERSHIP

The Town Clerk announced the following Councillors nominated for Membership of the Amenities Committee for the ensuing year. This committee has delegated authority in accordance with Standing Order 18.3a and shall consist of no more than nine members;

Cllrs R Bishop-Firth, S Cornish, A Fraser, M Fumagalli, T Lack, C Jamthe, M Malvern, A Medhurst, and N Nagella

CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR

It was proposed by Cllr M Malvern and seconded Cllr R Bishop-Firth and it was

**RESOLVED
30835**

that Cllr Lack be elected as Chair of the Amenities Committee for the ensuing year.

The Town Clerk asked for a vote to be taken. 23 members voted in favour, one member abstained.

It was proposed by Cllr S Cornish and seconded by Cllr N Nagella and it was

**RESOLVED
30836**

that Cllr M Malvern be elected as Vice Chair of the Amenities Committee for the ensuing year.

The Town Clerk asked for a vote to be taken. 23 members voted in favour, one member abstained.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Comber duly announced that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Amenities Committee for the ensuing year would be Cllrs T Lack and M Malvern respectively, and that members would be Cllrs R Bishop-Firth, S Cornish, A Fraser, M Fumagalli, T Lack, C Jamthe, M Malvern, A Medhurst and N Nagella.

(b) PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

The Town Clerk announced the following Councillors nominated for Membership of the Planning & Transportation Committee for the ensuing year. This committee has delegated authority in accordance with Standing Order 18.3b and shall consist of no more than nine members;

CHAIR INITIALS _____



Cllrs B Alvi, A Betteridge, A Croy, W Dixon, C Jamthe, N Nagella, H Richards, I Shepherd-Dubey and L Timlin.

CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR

**RESOLVED
30837**

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

that Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey be elected as Chair of the Planning and Transportation Committee for the ensuing year.

The Town Clerk asked for a vote to be taken which was unanimous.

**RESOLVED
30838**

It was proposed by Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey and seconded by Cllr B Alvi and it was

that Cllr Nagella be elected as Vice Chair of the Planning and Transportation Committee for the ensuing year.

The Town Clerk asked for a vote to be taken which was unanimous.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Comber duly announced that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning and Transportation Committee for the ensuing year would be Cllrs I Shepherd-Dubey and N Nagella respectively, and that members would be Cllrs B Alvi, A Betteridge, A Croy, W Dixon, C Jamthe, N Nagella, H Richards, I Shepherd-Dubey and L Timlin.

(c) FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

The Town Clerk announced the following Councillors nominated for Membership of the Finance & Personnel Committee for the ensuing year. This committee has delegated authority in accordance with Standing Order 18.3c and shall consist of no more than nine members;

Cllrs B Alvi, B Callender, R Comber, M Gee, S Gurney, T Lack, K Malvern, H Richards and I Shepherd-Dubey

CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR

**RESOLVED
30839**

It was proposed by Cllr B Alvi and seconded by Cllr T Lack and it was

that Cllr M Gee be elected as Chair of the Finance & Personnel Committee for the ensuing year.

The Town Clerk asked for a vote to be taken which was unanimous.

**RESOLVED
30840**

It was proposed by Cllr K Malvern and seconded by Cllr H Richards and it was

that Cllr B Alvi be elected as Vice Chair of the Finance & Personnel Committee for the ensuing year.

The Town Clerk asked for a vote to be taken on the committee membership and the Vice -Chair role. The vote was taken and it was unanimous.

CHAIR INITIALS _____



ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Comber duly announced that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Finance & Personnel Committee for the ensuing year would be Cllrs M Gee and B Alvi respectively, and that members would be Cllrs B Alvi, B Callender, R Comber, M Gee, S Gurney, T Lack, K Malvern, H Richards and I Shepherd-Dubey

(d) CIVIC COMMITTEE

The Town Clerk announced the following Councillors nominated for Membership of the Civic Committee for the ensuing year. This committee has delegated authority in accordance with Standing Order 18.3d and shall consist of no more than nine members;

Cllrs A Betteridge, R Bishop-Firth, P Cunnington, W Dixon, S Gurney, A Jones, K Malvern, A Mather and T Lack.

CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR

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

**RESOLVED
30841**

that Cllr K Malvern be elected as Chair of the Civic Committee for the ensuing year.

The Town Clerk asked for a vote to be taken. 23 members voted in favour, one member abstained.

It was proposed by Cllr W Dixon and seconded by Cllr S Gurney and it was

**RESOLVED
30842**

that Cllr A Jones be elected as Vice Chair of the Civic Committee for the ensuing year.

The Town Clerk asked for a vote to be taken on the committee membership and the Vice -Chair role. The vote was taken and it was unanimous.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Comber duly announced that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Civic Committee for the ensuing year would be Cllr K Malvern and Cllr A Jones respectively, and that member would be Cllrs A Betteridge, R Bishop-Firth, P Cunnington, W Dixon, S Gurney, A Jones, K Malvern, A Mather and T Lack.

(e) ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE

The Town Clerk announced the following Councillors nominated for Membership of the Arts & Culture Committee for the ensuing year. This committee has delegated authority in accordance with Standing Order 18.3e and shall consist of no more than nine members;

Cllr B Callender, S Cornish, P Cunnington, A Domingue, M Fumagalli, A Fraser, M Gee, A Jones and M Malvern.

CHAIR INITIALS _____



CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR

**RESOLVED
30843**

It was proposed by Cllr A Domingue and seconded by Cllr M Gee and it was that Cllr B Callender be elected as Chair of the Arts & Culture Committee for the ensuing year.

The Town Clerk asked for a vote to be taken. 23 members voted in favour, one member abstained.

**RESOLVED
30844**

It was proposed by Cllr M Malvern and seconded by Cllr A Jones and it was that Cllr Domingue be elected as Vice Chair of the Arts & Culture Committee for the ensuing year.

The Town Clerk asked for a vote to be taken on the committee membership and the Vice -Chair role. The vote was taken. 23 members voted in favour, one member abstained.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mayor Comber duly announced that the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Arts & Culture Committee for the ensuing year would be Cllr Callender and Domingue respectively, and that members would be Cllrs B Callender, S Cornish, P Cunnington, A Domingue, M Fumagalli, A Fraser, M Gee, A Jones and M Malvern.

EMERGENCY COMMITTEE (Agenda item 18)

The Mayor reported on a proposal for the Emergency Committee membership to be the same as the Finance and Personnel Committee, being the Chairs of all other committees. It was noted that the Emergency Committee had not met during the 2023-24 council year.

**RESOLVED
30845**

It was proposed by Cllr M Gee and seconded by Cllr B Callender and it was

that the membership of the Emergency Committee for 2024-25 be the same as the membership for the Finance and Personnel Committee for the 2024-25 municipal year.

STRATEGY WORKING PARTY (Agenda Item 19)

The Town Clerk announced the following Councillors nominated for Membership of the Strategy Working Party for the ensuing year:

Cllr R Comber, A Croy, A Domingue, M Gee, M Malvern, A Medhurst and L Timlin.

**RESOLVED
30846**

Mayor Comber asked for a vote to be taken on the working party membership. A vote was taken. 23 members voted in favour, one member abstained.

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COUNCIL REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES (Agenda Item 20)

Emmbrook Village Hall Management Committee (2)	Cllr K Malvern
Wokingham Borough/Parish Liaison Forum	Cllr A Domingue, Cllr S Cornish.
Wokingham Citizens Advice	Cllr R Comber
Keep Mobile	Cllr S Gurney
Wokingham Lions (May Fayre & Winter Carnival)	Cllr R Comber
Wokingham Job Support	Cllr S Cornish
Link Visiting Scheme	Cllr M Gee
First Days Children's Charity	Cllr H Richards

It was proposed by Cllr L Timlin and seconded by Cllr S Gurney and it was

**RESOLVED
30847**

to approve the above members to represent the town council on outside bodies during the 2024-25 municipal year.

AUDIT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024 (Agenda Item 21)

(a) The Internal Auditor's report dated 29 April 2024 and the Annual Internal Audit Report (AGAR page 3) for the financial year ended 31st March 2024 were received and noted.

(b) The review of the effectiveness of the internal audit performed by the council for the year ended 31st March 2024 was received and noted.

(c) It was proposed by Cllr B Callender and seconded by Cllr T Lack and it was

**RESOLVED
30848**

that Mrs Claire Connell be appointed as the Internal Auditor for the town council for 2024-25 financial year.

ANNUAL RETURN 2023-24 (Agenda Item 22)

(a) Mayor Comber read each item of the Annual Governance Statement for 2023-24 (section 1 AGAR page 4). It was proposed by Cllr M Gee and seconded by Cllr B Alvi and the following was

**RESOLVED
30849**

that, to the best of members' knowledge and belief, with respect to each accounting statement for the year ended 31st March 2024, the response to each item was 'Yes'.

(b) Mayor Comber introduced the accounting statement for the 2023-24 financial year and referred members' attention to the restatement of staffing costs and other costs for the 2022-2023 financial year.

It was proposed by Cllr M Gee and seconded by Cllr B Alvi and the following was

**RESOLVED
30850**

that members approved the Annual Accounting Statements 2023-24 (Section 2, AGAR page 5) for the year ended 31st March 2024, including the restated staffing and other costs for the financial year ended 31st March 2023.

CHAIR INITIALS _____



(c) Mayor Comber introduced the Annual Return Variance Review which accompanies the Annual Return to the External Auditor. It was proposed by Cllr T Lack and seconded by Cllr H Richards and it was

that the Annual Return Variance Review be approved.

**RESOLVED
30851**

(d) Members received and noted for information a full copy of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31st March 2024 and noted the commencement date for the period for the exercise of public rights as Monday 10th June 2024.

The Mayor thanked everyone and closed the meeting.

CHAIR

CHAIR INITIALS _____

