

23rd September 2024

Minutes of the proceedings of the **CIVIC COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in **the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham** from 19:30 to 21:02pm.

PRESENT

Chair: Cllr K Malvern (Chair)

Councillors: S Gurney, A Jones (Vice-Chair) and T Lack.

IN ATTENDANCE

Civic Officer

Mayor's Attendant David Dunham

Town Clerk

Town Mayor Cllr Rob Comber

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllrs A Betteridge, R Bishop-Firth, and P Cunnington.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

Cllr A Jones asked for it to be noted that he is a member of the Wokingham Lions Club and Wokingham Society.

Cllr K Malvern asked for it to be noted he is a member of Wokingham Society.

Cllr R Comber asked for it to be noted he is an Honorary Lion member.

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 T Lack and seconded by Cllr A Jones and it was

**RESOLVED
30915**

that the Minutes of the Civic Committee meeting held on 17th June 2024 (pages 16996 to 17000), 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 3rd June 2024 was received and noted.

a) Application of UV film to Town Hall windows to protect its historical items from further damage and preserve for the future.

Officers have now met with Conservation Officer and UV samples are in Place in the Council Chamber, as suggested by him, for further discussion. See agenda item 10 noting a request for additional funds due to increased costs.

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

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A request was made to the Finance and Personnel Committee 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.

A decision was made at the Finance and Personnel meeting on 21st November 2023 to move £8000 from general reserves into an earmarked reserves so that this doesn't have to be considered again in this term of the council.

To consider options in due course.

c) Beating the Bounds Walk

A request was made to the Finance and Personnel Committee for £4,000, to offer to the Wokingham Lions Club to manage and co-ordinate this.

A decision was made at the Finance and Personnel meeting on 21st November 2023 to support this financial request and for it to be taken from general reserves.

See agenda item 7.

d) Consider opportunities at Remembrance to make the wreath laying ceremony more visible to a wider audience

At the June civic meeting, a proposal was made by the Wreath Laying Working Party to incorporate the wreath laying into the Church Service at All Saints to widen the number of people seeing this.

The Civic Officer met with Rev Hannah Higginson in July, together with the Parade Marshal and the Macebearer to outline how this would work, and full details will now be incorporated into this year's plans.

Cllr S Gurney joined the meeting at 19.41pm

The Mayor suggested that, in due course, it would be good to make the service a multi-faith one, if it were possible. The Civic Officer shared that the idea of a multi-faith Church service has been raised previously and even discussed with local ministers. Churches Together in Wokingham representatives have made it clear in the past that they welcome all faiths and no faiths into their Churches, but WTC needs to be mindful that they are all constrained by their own rules and national guidance when considering others taking part.

Councillors understood that moving towards a multi-faith service may not be simple, but they remained keen to explore this further in future years.

e) Consider request for a plaque from Wokingham Lions Club

Following the minutes from the March civic meeting, the Civic Officer advised the Lions Club of the trial plan to include the wreath laying ceremony in the Church service this year, and that the civic committee will reflect on this new approach after Remembrance this year, whilst also taking into account their request for a plaque.

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To revisit again following Remembrance and then update Wokingham Lions Club accordingly.

COMMITTEE'S BUDGET (Agenda Item 6)

A report on the Committee's budget expenditure to 31st August 2024 was received and noted.

BEATING THE BOUNDS (Agenda item 7)

The committee received the Civic Officer's report, which included feedback from Councillors about the event, and information from the Wokingham Lions Club about their costs etc.

WTC were informed that 330 had pre-registered for the event, and a further 22 registered on the day. It was recorded that 243 people took part in the walk but it was apparent that a number of people also started from their own homes which means the number of people who took part was higher.

Councillors discussed and agreed that it was a well-attended event, and much positive feedback was received, with many discovering new parts of our town on the walk.

Whilst Councillors understood that there would be a surplus (after the deduction of costs) from the event, that the Wokingham Lions would include in their funds to allocate to local charities, the surplus left available for this purpose was much higher than expected.

Although the intention was for this to be a 'one-off' event, Councillors discussed and shared the view that it could be well received at the start of the Town Council's four-yearly cycles in the first year with incoming new Councillors and also when there are any boundary changes. The Town Clerk advised that a small boundary change is imminent for 2027.

It was agreed that if this event is repeated, it would:

- need to be delivered by the Wokingham Lions again, as WTC do not have the resource capacity
- require significant support from the Councillors on the day to support with the marshalling

The Town Clerk advised that WTC may be able to store beating posts etc if required to be used again, and she and the Civic Officer would confirm this, together with ascertaining from the Wokingham Lions how much money they would be looking to request from WTC to fund this event in the future.

ACTION: Civic Officer and Town Clerk

HERITAGE OPEN DAY FEEDBACK (Agenda Item 8)

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

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- a) The event was well-attended, and attracted lots of visitors throughout the day
- b) A lot of positive feedback was received from people visiting
- c) The 1939 fire engine was a big attraction and very popular
- d) Our local historians learnt some valuable new information for their own local history knowledge and were able to share lots of theirs with others
- e) This popular event was supported by 6 Councillors at the Town Hall this year, and 2 Councillors supporting activities at Howard Palmer Gardens. This was much lower than in previous years, and as a result was resourced by more staff than usual. The Town Clerk expressed that this was disappointing as this is a popular event with our residents which requires a significant amount of support to ensure it runs smoothly throughout the day.

ACTION: Civic Officer

10 YEARS SINCE REME LEFT WOKINGHAM (Agenda Item 9)

The Civic Committee noted that the REME is keen to mark this anniversary in locations where they have freedom of the town, i.e. Wokingham, Bordon and Lenham, which has been brought to WTC's attention via one of its Councillors.

The Town Clerk has contacted the REME Corps Secretary to get an indication of their thoughts and is awaiting a reply.

BUDGET REQUESTS FOR 2025-2026 (Agenda Item 10)

The committee discussed information on the following to consider requesting additional funding for 2025-2026 and the following was agreed:

- a) UV window film – to request an additional £4000 from F&P to cover the increased costs for this work.
- b) Future app updates – to request £1000 from F&P to cover unplanned required system updates.
- c) Christmas Music Costs – to request an additional £500 from F&P to include the payment of a fee to performers.
- d) REME anniversary – no request to be made. Discussions on this were deferred until further information is received.

ACTION: Civic Officer

INFORMATION ITEMS (Agenda Item 11)

The following information was received and noted:

- a) A new Mini-Mayor, Celia Chandler, was appointed from Evendons School and joined the Mayor officially for the first time at Heritage Open Day on 14 September.
- b) A student intern worked with the Civic Officer and Arts & Culture Officer from 8 July for 140 hours through the summer offering support and ideas for the community engagement part of the Museum Accreditation work. Their input, knowledge and skills were really valued and utilised, particularly in the delivery of themed open days in August. They enjoyed the opportunity and reaffirmed the view of the Civic Officer and the Arts & Culture Officer that the Museum

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Accreditation ambition together with its associated engagement work requires significantly more resource than WTC currently has to give to it.

c) Civic Award process:

- A proposed new date for the Civic Award selection meeting is Friday 13 December at midday, if suitable for the Chair, Vice-Chair and Cllr Gurney to attend. This was confirmed suitable. It was noted that Cllr Dixon had also expressed an interest, and the Vice-Chair offered his place to him, if required. The Civic Officer will liaise accordingly.
- Roger Ilett has advised he wishes to step down from the committee. The new Citizen Advice CEO has not responded to a request to join the committee. Therefore, the Civic Officer will seek two new representatives based on the recommendation made at the June civic meeting.

ACTION: Civic Officer

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. However, it was suggested by the Civic Officer that Councillors begin to help sharing information about the Civic Award process to encourage nominations.
- c) It was noted that the next meeting will be on Monday 25th November.

ACTION: Civic Officer

CHAIR'S SIGNATURE _____

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____

