

25th November 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 20:26pm.

PRESENT

Chair: Cllr K Malvern (Chair)

Councillors: S Gurney, A Jones (Vice-Chair), A Betteridge, R Bishop-Firth and P Cunnington.

IN ATTENDANCE

Civic Officer

Mayor's Attendant David Dunham

Town Clerk

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllrs T Lack, W Dixon and R Comber

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.

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 K Malvern and seconded by Cllr A Jones and it was

**RESOLVED
30957**

that the Minutes of the Civic Committee meeting held on 23rd September 2024 (pages 17054 to 17058), 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 18th November 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.

The Town Clerk reported that we are still awaiting a visit from the Heritage Officer to view the UV film on the windows and to offer a steer on next steps. There is an item in the F&P pack next week for additional budget as costs are coming in more expensive. We will report back on this if it is included.

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

To consider options in due course.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



c) Beating the Bounds Walk

The Lions have confirmed that they will store the event items and we can come back to them at a future date and request another event per the Council's decision.

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

Covered under Item 7.

e) Consider request for a plaque from Wokingham Lions Club

The Town Clerk offered an update on a conversation between the former Civic Officer and Wokingham Lions on this matter.

f) Consider how to make the Remembrance Service more multi-faith

This will be a future consideration.

g) Ten years since REME left Wokingham

Covered under Item 8.

Cllr Gurney asked if the Mayoral Chain replacement item should be removed from the Monitoring Report as no action is likely during current term. Town Clerk agreed to remove the item as there is an Earmarked Reserve line for this.

ACTION: Civic Officer

COMMITTEE'S BUDGET (Agenda Item 6)

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

The Town Clerk noted that there is an expenditure on computer software update which was due to a required update for Wokingham History app. This is likely to be needed in future years and there is now a budget request for this for 2025-26.

The Town Clerk also drew attention to the budget line for Christmas Music and the need for a discussion around this. The event this year is booked for the 7th December and is being run for the second year by Morearts. Morearts have indicated their intention to cease operations at the end of this financial year.

Morearts will therefore not be available to run the event in 2025. As this will be the new Civic Officer's first year organising events like Heritage Day (now later in September) and Remembrance to plan for in November plus REME commemorations (see Item 8) proposed in October, the Town Clerk flagged up that he is unlikely to have the capacity to organise the Christmas Music event as well.

Members discussed the following:

- Could an organisation obtain a Culture and Community Grant to organise an event? The Town Clerk agreed that the venue could be made available, for example to the Mayor's Charity, to run a fundraising event, but there would be very limited Civic Officer capacity to get involved.
- Should the event be passed to the Arts and Culture Committee? There was broad agreement with this approach.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



- Members discussed the background of the event. It was noted that:
 - The event had changed format and audience demographic over the years
 - A single-event Christmas music and singalong is now being delivered.
 - The event is run as a fundraiser for the Mayor's Charity, and the Town Clerk shared that last year around £200-250 was raised.
 - Tickets are limited to around 75 attendees and that whilst a bigger venue was considered, it was agreed that, as a free event, it should not compete with other festive fundraising concerts held at this time.
 - Approaching other charities to run the event could potentially conflict with its existing role as a fundraiser for the Mayor's Charity, who will change each year.
 - Should the council focus on collating and sharing the details of other local Christmas events in the town area, and promoting these instead, rather than running its own?

Following discussion, it was agreed that the event should be offered to the Arts and Culture Committee to run. The Town Clerk will liaise with the A&C Officer to add this to a future committee agenda for discussion.

ACTION: Town Clerk

REMEMBRANCE 2024 FEEDBACK (Agenda item 7)

Cllr Dixon, in giving his apologies asked for his feedback to be included as follows:

'I would like to pass on how well I personally felt the Remembrance event was planned and executed and the feeling that the attendance/ visibility was much better.'

The committee reviewed the feedback gathered after the event with the following additional notes and comments:

- Thanks to the Mayor's attendant for his work in making the event more inclusive.
- The event worked well, including the wreath laying in the main service rather than having the two elements separate.
- Positive that those watching the parade could see the wreaths
- Some seating issues in the church which could be reviewed for next year
- Consider whether to read out wreath laying organisations before or as they are laid
- Choir music finished before the completion of the wreath laying, which lasted 10 minutes.
- Consider whether the sermon element of the service could be focussed around an individual named on the war memorial?
- Parade return to the town hall was well attended
- Behaviour and discipline of the unformed groups was exceptional
- Consider ways to ensure the Mayor's thanks to the various groups involved, at the end of the parade when returning to the town hall, are well received

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



- Images of the wreaths at the altar shared on social media were very powerful
- The 11am events outside the town hall on the Sunday and on Armistice Day were well attended.
- Consider reaching out again to other community groups for inclusion in the event

Cllr Jones commended the Mayor's Attendant for organising a ceremony to bring wreaths back to the Town Hall with dignity, reflecting those that lost their lives for this country.

The committee discussed and noted Cllr Croy's recent article in Wokingham Today, which was included with other feedback in the agenda pack.

Chair was passed a card with the Poppy Appeal total to date which was £82,309.36. Chair commended progression from last year.

The Town Clerk asked for a steer on whether the Working Group for changes to the wreath laying wishes to meet again to review those changes for next year while the memories are fresh. Members supported this suggestion. It was therefore agreed that the Civic Officer will schedule a meeting for Cllrs Jones and Betteridge plus the Mayor's Attendant and the Honorary Parade Marshal, to review the wreath laying feedback and propose any changes for next year.

ACTION: Civic Officer and Town Clerk

MAINTAINING LINKS WITH REME (Agenda Item 8)

The chair invited the Town Clerk to give Committee an update on REME.

The Town Clerk confirmed a meeting took place with Retired Major Wright-Rivers of the REME association after remembrance to talk through their request for marking the 10th anniversary of the garrison leaving the town. The Town Clerk reported a request for an event in October 2025, during half-term, to mark the anniversary, plus some opportunities to display Wokingham related items from the REME museum at our Museum open days.

An event could include local ACF groups and dignitaries, with drill demonstrations in Market Place, and would finish with refreshments in the town hall.

No budget is requested but could be covered by Civic Receptions as it is not expected to be a costly event. REME will also contribute to costs.

Cllr Betteridge noted the active REME veterans' association in the area. He asked if we have any contacts with the Military Wives Choir. The Town Clerk offered to contact Arborfield and Newland Parish Council to see if they have a contact.

Civic will report further when the event details start to firm up.

ACTION: Town Clerk and Civic Officer

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



INFORMATION ITEMS (Agenda Item 9)

- a) A representative from The Wokingham Lions has advised that they have managed to store the beating posts etc. and shared the following: *I suspect that the Lions would be happy to organise another Beating the Bounds on the same terms as this year. It currently looks like the applications for the autumn walk will be significantly down on the normal level which is not surprising as we mailed our normal walkers and perhaps they did Beating the Bounds as an alternative. Receiving a fee for the Beating the Bounds would therefore offset the reduced income from the Autumn Walk.*
- b) Civic Award process:
- Nick Fellows, Chief Officer at Wokingham Volunteer Centre will join the selection committee in place of Roger Ilett (former District Scout Charman) as Roger has advised he wishes to step down.
 - The President of the Wokingham Lions Club, Andy Goffin will join the selection committee in place of the CEO of Citizen Advice as the new CEO has not responded to a request to join the committee.
 - Philip Bell, Chief Exec at Involve, will join the selection committee as a new member in place of the editor of the Wokingham Today paper as the new editor has not responded to a request to join the committee.
 - Cllrs attending the selection meeting are Cllr K Malvern, Cllr W Dixon, Cllr S Gurney and Cllr R Comber.

Town Clerk further noted that Awards Selection meeting is on Friday 13th December with nomination deadline of 29th November.

Concerns were raised about the timing of the meeting and a possible clash with a funeral expected to be attended by some on the panel.

Meeting is booked for one hour and there are 11 nominations to date.

Civic to investigate starting meeting earlier e.g. 11.30am.

ACTION: Civic Officer

COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 10)

- 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) Cllr Jones asked for the Poppy Appeal total to be publicised.
- d) It was noted that the next meeting will be on Monday 13th January.

ACTION: Civic Officer

CHAIR'S SIGNATURE _____

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



CHAIR'S INITIALS _____

Civic Committee 25/11/2024

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