



whitchurch town council

MINUTES: OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING, 2ND OCTOBER 2024

MINUTES - OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2ND OCTOBER 2024

PRESENT

Councillors: G. Ebbs A. Hall R. Hall J. Morris
Proper Officer: Mike McDonald Finance Officer: Charlie Burdock

IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillors: J. De-Wyrall A. Hotchkiss Public: 0 x Members of the Public

The meeting was opened at 7.00pm by Committee Chairman, Cllr R. Hall

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Phipps for this meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

A declaration of interest was tabled by Cllr R. Hall in relation to a grant application under Agenda Item 9 for this meeting. It was noted that Cllr R. Hall would not participate in the discussion or vote for this application, with the singular item chaired by the Vice Chair.

No other declarations of Councillors' Disclosure of Ordinary or Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in relation to the agenda items in this meeting were received.

3. Minutes

After a proposal by Cllr A. Hall, seconded by Cllr Morris, the minutes of the Oversight Committee Meeting held on 3rd July 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record of that meeting.

4. Public Participation

It was resolved that Standing Orders were suspended (Proposed Cllr R. Hall, seconded Cllr Ebbs – all in favour), whilst members of the public were invited to make representations, ask questions, and give evidence in respect of business being transacted at the meeting and about any other matter for which the Council has a responsibility.

No questions or comments were raised by Members of the Public, including non-Committee WTC Members.

There being no further items, Standing Orders were reinstated. Proposed Cllr R. Hall, seconded Cllr Ebbs – all in favour

5. Conclusion of Audit – Financial Year ending 31st March 2024

It was noted that the “Notice of Conclusion of Audit” was published by the Responsible Financial Officer on 14th August 2024, following receipt of External Auditor opinion and certificate of the same date [PKF Littlejohn LLP].

The “except for” element of the External Auditor’s limited assurance review was also noted, having been separately progressed with WTC accountants [DCK Accounting Solutions].

6. Financial Management Information (Months 3, 4 and 5) 2024-25

FMI (Balance Sheet and Income & Expenditure Reports) for Months 3, 4 and 5 (June to August 2024 inclusive) were received, considered and noted.

The Committee also noted that a Debtor Analysis would be presented at the next Committee Meeting, aligned to the Council’s Income Collection & Debt Recovery Policy (WTC/FC/43c/2324, April 2024), Financial Regulations (WTC/FC/ACM/09/2425, May 2024) and Oversight Committee Terms of Reference (WTC/FC/ACM/05/2425, May 2024).

7. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

Following a proposal from Cllr Ebbs, seconded by Cllr A. Hall, it was RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of private and confidential information or staff matters. At the Chair’s discretion, non-WTC Members were allowed to remain for the Confidential Business session of the meeting.

8. WTC-maintained Trust Funds – Consideration of position (WTC Full Council 17th July 2024 (11) refers¹)

The Committee acknowledged the ongoing difficulties in accessing historic records to enable this action to be completed to a satisfactory level, providing absolute certainty in recommendation/s to Full Council. Mindful that records will be accessible in the near future, and under delegated powers within the Oversight Committee Terms of Reference (WTC/FC/ACM/05/2425, May 2025), it was unanimously **resolved** to establish a Task and Finish Group, should this be needed and consisting of Oversight Committee Members, to expedite this work in between Oversight Committee Meetings to enable a report to Full Council soonest. Proposed Cllr Ebbs, seconded Cllr Morris, all in favour. **WTC/O/03/2425.**

9. Small Community Grants 2024/25 – Round 1 Applications

The Committee considered and determined Grant Applications totalling £12,374, taking into consideration recommendations received from the Council’s Responsible Financial Officer and aligned to delegated powers defined in Oversight Committee Terms of Reference (WTC/FC/ACM/05/2425, May 2024) recognising the Declaration of Interest from Cllr R. Hall in relation to one of the applications:

a. Item Chaired by Cllr A. Hall:

- i. It was unanimously **resolved** to retrospectively acknowledge the grant £500 awarded to Whitchurch Waterways Trust (July), due to timing of their event. Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr Ebbs. **WTC/O/04/2425**

- ii. It was **resolved** (to the exclusion of Cllr R. Hall) to offer support to the organisation (£400), noted separately and progressed by the Proper Officer. Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr Ebbs. **WTC/O/05/2425**

- b. Cllr R. Hall resumed the Chair for the remainder of the meeting. It was unanimously **resolved** to award grants to a further 7 organisations, totalling £5,500 and noted separately by the Proper Officer. Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr Morris. **WTC/O/06/2425**

The Proper Officer will progress the grant awards with each organisation and release public information accordingly, once the organisations concerned have been informed.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.41pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

Chair: _____

Date: _____

ⁱ FC, 17 July 2024 (11): "Following consideration, it was agreed to undertake a review of Trust Funds held for the benefit of Whitchurch residents, which may include distribution of interest received or capital amounts, dependant on individual Will Trust Deeds / objectives. The matter to be referred to the next Oversight Committee, alongside a Proper Officer overview, for scrutiny, consideration and recommendation to Full Council. Projects tackling loneliness and mental health/wellbeing were particularly cited as relevant. The Proper Officer, as Responsible Finance Officer, confirmed current return on investment with CCLA (Public Sector Deposit Account) of 5.20% pa for all Trust Funds (Berrington, Graves & Richards), reinvested cumulatively."