

# OLNEY TOWN COUNCIL



**Minutes of the meeting of Olney Town Council held via MS Teams Monday 5th October 2020 at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Cllrs Jeremy Rawlings, Stephen Clark, Paul Collins, Desmond Eley, Joanne Eley, Peter Geary, Graham Harrison, Chris Tennant.

**In attendance:** Andrea Vincent (Town Clerk), Sarah Kennedy (Deputy Town Clerk)

## **Public Forum**

**Cllr Rawlings read the remaining public representations from Septembers OTC meeting. At the September meeting the 15 minute limit on reading out the public representations was reached hence the below letters have been carried over to this meeting.**

1) 2nd September 2020. Traffic level and speed on Drift Way

Data from September 2018 SID installed at the East end of Drift Way. The data above shows that less than 10% of all vehicles were travelling below the 30mph speed limit at the time of the last assessment. Nearly 31% were travelling at speeds in excess of 50mph. Nearly 2.5% were travelling between 60 and 80mph.

Since these measurements were taken, the Sainsbury's store has been built, there has been an additional footpath constructed that completes the pedestrian link from Drift Way to Wellingborough Road.

This has created a welcome pedestrian route to the new store which is well used by shoppers and parents taking their children to the nearby school, as well as providing a link between the Lavendon Road estate and the schools.

Whilst the mandatory speed limit on Drift Way is 30mph, it's not immediately obvious to drivers. I feel that there would be better compliance of the 30mph limit if drivers were made more aware that Drift Way is in fact subject to the 30mph maximum.

This could be achieved with painted signs on the road, with restricting paint markings or repeater signage fitted to the lamp posts. All of these options are relatively inexpensive to implement and would not impede the flow of heavy traffic to the industrial estate nor emergency vehicles. They would however serve as a reminder to drivers to keep their speed to the legal limit.

If this fails to achieve the required result, then average speed cameras could be deployed similar to those in other local villages. With the addition of the new housing estates at Aspreys, Lavendon Road, and the new supermarket, the volume of traffic will only increase further.

Now is the time to act to get this under control before hundreds more cars are introduced to our town. Olney Town Council are already in possession of the Speed Indicator Devices.

Can these please be installed on Drift way prior to any other remedial works, and the results of the assessment be published?

**Signed:** Cllr J Rawlings, 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020

**Resolved:** Cllr Rawlings agreed to pass the letter over to be discussed at the next Recs & Services meeting (19th October).

2) 2nd September 2020. Olney Toilets

Please could this be read out at 7 Sept Council Meeting, including my name?

I am writing this email in anticipation of the subject of the toilets being discussed, as to whether or not they should remain open, although I suspect as the discussed poll of public opinion hasn't taken place the toilets will remain open, at least for now. No agenda has yet appeared (22.48 Wed. 2 Sept).

I realise that the use of community funding was not approved, though council changed the rules last December for the community grant to grant the museum (unanimously), £15,000 split over 3 years. There are ways of funding the cleaning of the toilets and keeping the towns people happy. I understand that the current contractor can and does do the job in less than the time allotted, and that you have received congratulations over the cleanliness of all the toilets. Why not discuss this with the contractor and see if the hours could be cut.

I also assume that you have applied to Milton Keynes Council for Covid funds with the toilets in mind.

Could you also let it be known to the public how much money was being paid for cleaning the toilets prior to Covid so that we can work out how much might be added to the precept particularly for the toilets. Admittedly £18 added to the precept is a lot but surely being able to go is important to many. Old and young.

**Resolved:** Cllr Rawlings highlighted that the issues raised in the letter were addressed on the September 7th OTC meeting. Cllr Collins pointed out that the letter is factually incorrect in that the opening statement referencing £15,000.00 being paid to the museum is not the case. Cllr Collins added that the purpose of the funding over a 3 year period was to support local community groups in bringing forward small projects for the Amazing Grace 250 celebration.

3) 3rd September 2020. Public Conveniences

I'm writing in on behalf of the countless number of residents whom have asked me to do so many do not have access to computers to email and many are unable to write a letter to send in

They wish their concerns to be heard as do I regarding the public conveniences albeit no decision has been made

Many residents have medical conditions, and it is vital they have access to the toilets on the square so understandably they are anxious after learning a poll went out which did not fully explain the situation regarding the future of this facility

Many residents all of whom shop locally are not able to simply go home for the toilet when one needs to 'go' one needs to 'go'!

I had a gentleman email me deeply concerned as his elderly father lives in Olney and he takes his father shopping in the town and always has need to use the public conveniences he stressed 'if' they were to close it would mean he would have to incur costs to travel with his father for shopping elsewhere and would not be able to continue to shop locally this is just one example of many residents' feelings

Whilst everyone is of the understanding it is the cost involved in cleaning which could necessitate a close as not sustainable as the figure quoted too great, I urge the council to seek alternative options because there are ways around this

Olney and its residents need this facility and their concerns to be listened to and taken on board before any decision is made

I wish this to be read out at the meeting and my name given

**Resolved:** Cllr Rawlings pointed out that the majority of the letters concerns have now been addressed and the toilets are remaining open.

4) 3rd September. Olney Library from representatives of Folio.

We are concerned about the continued closure of Olney Library and have been asked by residents of Olney on numerous occasions for information regarding plans to open their library. To this end, we have contacted the Library Development Officer on 12th August 2020 at Milton Keynes Library who replied that "There is no date for the opening up of the 4 remaining libraries (namely Olney, Woburn Sands, the Mobile and Central Milton Keynes)." We have also recently received on 2nd Sept 2020 an email from the Library Volunteer Co-ordinator in which she states the current situation where "libraries at Bletchley, Kingston, Westcroft, Wolverton and Newport Pagnell have been recently opened with reduced hours and restricted services to ensure the safety of visitors. Other library sites remain closed, including Central Milton Keynes Library, for the moment."

Folio have worked extremely hard during the past four years to keep Olney Library at the heart of the community by increasing the footfall, by raising awareness of the services the library provides and by setting up and running activities, clubs, talks and school visits. We believe that the continued closure of Olney Library will threaten the results achieved by Folio over this long period.

Folio would like to ask for the support of Olney Town Council and Olney Councillors to work with Milton Keynes Libraries and Milton Keynes Council in order to make plans to reopen Olney Library in the next phase.

**Resolved:** Cllr Geary highlighted that the Covid-19 situation has significantly changed since the above letter was received (3rd September). Although OTC want Olney Library to be open as soon as possible, but this needs to fit within the reality of the

situation. Cllr Rawlings added that although a separate entity from OTC, the reopening of the library has the full support of OTC.

**1. Apologies for absence**

Cllrs Colin Rodden and Messenger

**2. Declarations of interests on items on the agenda**

*NB During the meeting if it becomes apparent that you have an interest in an item being discussed this must be declared immediately.*

**Resolved:** None

**3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28th August and 7th September 2020**

**Resolved:** Approved.

**4. To discuss the OTC hosting of the annual Remembrance Sunday Commemoration 8<sup>th</sup> November in the Market Place.**

**Resolved:** Cllr Rawlings proposed to reserve the Market Place for the RBL in anticipation that 'something' will be organised for the 8th November that complies with the current Covid-19 restrictions at that time, and to understand that things may change between now and November 8th. To approach TOG with a view to transmitting the commemorations live. The final decision to be made on 2nd November at the next OTC meeting.

Cllr Tennant seconded the proposal. The proposal was passed.

**5. To receive IT support and hardware contract tenders.**

The Town Clerk had distributed 2 tender applications from IT firms to all Cllrs prior to the meeting. Cllr Rawlings explained that we are awaiting for a 3rd tender document to be submitted.

Cllr J Eley asked when the cut-off date was for submission of the tender. The Town Clerk explained that there was a cut-off date, however due to the niche requirements of the tender, we have had little interest, and therefore she was willing to wait for the 3rd tender to be submitted for comparison.

The Town Clerk added that our current IT provider does not feel that they have the current facility and back-up in their office to support this kind of a contract, which is why they have not put in a bid.

Cllr Collins requested that we gain customer references in addition to the information already provided.

**Resolved:** To await the 3rd tender application and for the item to go onto the Finance Committee agenda at the Finance Meeting on Monday 12th October 2020.

#### **6. To submit up to date declarations of interest to the Clerk for Council Records**

**Resolved:** Cllr Rawlings reminded Cllrs that this needs to be completed annually and can Cllrs submit declarations as soon as possible using the template that the Town Clerk has provided.

#### **7. To review the statement of expenditure.**

**Resolved:** This item was deferred as the expenditure report on the PowerPoint presentation was in reference to August 2020 and not September 2020 in error. Cllr Collins suggested that we review September and October at the November OTC meeting.

#### **8. To receive the Town Clerks report**

**Budget –** to be discussed at the scheduled Finance meeting Monday 12th October. It is envisaged that we will have to adjust the budget because of the changed income/expenditure due to Covid-19.

**AGAR –** has now been submitted with the external auditor.

**Staff** – all staff are working to capacity. Regular 1:1s are taking place and notes are recorded on file. As of 28th September a part-time self-employed cleaner has been employed for the outside toilets.

**The Olney Centre** – The risk assessment is now in place. The deep clean and fogging has taken place. Several weddings are booked. However we need to urgently address the offer that we have. We have had one wedding that was booked at The Olney Centre, which has now transferred to MK as the clients preferred the look and feel of the venue on offer. The Olney Centre requires a ‘revamp’ to make the venue more appealing to prospective weddings enquiries. The Town Clerk will put forward a proposal to Recs & Services and for the OTC November meeting for consideration.

**The pre-school** representative from OTC will be Cllr J Eley.

The Town Clerk highlighted that the centre is now open for bookings, as long as groups can conform to the current Covid-19 guidance.

**Landscaping** – work has begun on the hedgerows. Winter bedding plants will be planted w/c 12th October. Christmas lights are being safety checked this week. There are still considerable demands to the teams’ time around town and a lot of work with regards to trees and bushes. The toilet blocks will be repainted in October and November.

**Allotments** – the invoices for 2020/21 have now been issued. Some payment has continued to be by cheque and cash despite request for BACS only.

**The Markets** are taking place whilst still maintaining social distancing regulations.

Thursday traders have requested a market on Sunday 13th December. A poll has been set up and there hasn’t been a lot of response, so it may not take place. There is a farmers market taking place on 6th December.

**Public Toilets** – remain open. A contractor has been engaged and they are thoroughly cleaned each day at closure.

**Cemetery** – damaged graves have now been repaired.

**Complaints** – we have an outstanding FOI request which is being dealt with together with the ICO.

The Thursday market traders complained about an incident of overnight. The cars remained on the Market Place on the Thursday morning hindering set up and customer access to stalls. New signs have been ordered to be placed around the Market Place.

A thank-you from a Farmers Market trader for the efficient set-up and organisation has been received.

The Groundsmen received a thankyou from an Olney resident with regards to quick response to a mowing request.

**Resolved: Noted**

**9. To receive reports from Chairs of Committees and Councillors who represent OTC at external meetings.**

**Cllr Tennant – ODG**

Cllr Tennant summarised a few of points from the recent ODG meeting.

There are 2 significant government consultations taking place at the moment about changes to how housing methodology is calculated. A white paper published titled 'Planning for the Future' has been reviewed.

There has also recently been significant changes that have taken place to the **Use Class Order**. All of which were discussed at the recent ODG meeting.

There was also an update on the planned and ongoing review of the Olney Neighbourhood Plan at this meeting.

Also discussed was the progress on a number of the site allocations and the ongoing implementation of neighbourhood policies, and which policies in part will be subject to a modifications review going forward.

A number of Development Group projects were discussed now that Section 106 funding from various developments around town is expected. Further reporting on these will take place at the next ODG meeting. Cllr Tennant pointed out that this is a good opportunity to take on a number of refurbishment projects across play areas in the town. This will jointly be discussed with the Recs and Services Committee.

Ongoing discussions with Taylor Wimpey and Vistry were discussed about the brief and specifications for the new community hall /changing room facility proposed at the new 250 house development at Yardley Road.

**Resolved:** ODG will liaise with Recs& Services and bring back to OTC for review.

### **Cllr D Eley – Recs & Services**

There will be a Recs & Services meeting in 2 weeks' time.

Market Stall Rents and Cemetery Charges etc. Whilst addressing the overspending in previous years, it was realised that OTC's rents and charges had not been increased for a number of years and had fallen below what was being charged by other councils. It was resolved by full council over a year ago to review full charges and test them against other parishes and councils and to introduce increases, where appropriate, in stages.

Relatively small increases were applied in April 2020. They are still below what is being charged by other councils.

Discussions have been evident on social media regarding Market Stall rents increases and they are as discussed; relatively small increases, as necessary.

**Ex-Football Club Lease** – The ex-Football Club working group consists of Cllr D Eley and Cllr Collins. Cllr D Eley advised that progress on the lease has stalled. The solicitor at Garrard & Allen who was dealing with the lease, has now left the firm. The solicitor that has taken over has displayed a lack of knowledge on the draft lease and the current status. Leaving OTC with a serious concern regarding the solicitor's performance.

**Design procurement of play areas** – MKC, in a response to an OTC enquiry regarding the Whirley Pit design, provided a design budget for Johnson's Field. In the details provided MKC suggested a method of funding which included not only the Whirley Pits Section 106 funds but other Section 106 funds (which are not on the current spreadsheet), which suggested that there may be other funds readily available from previous developments. Clarity is required with regards to which funds are available now and what we are to expect in the future.

**Resolved:** OTC office to gain clarity from MKC as to what Section 106 funds are available. Once the information is received we can liaise with the Development Committee as to what play areas require attention and progress procurement.

Cllr Clark requested that the play area in Dagnell Road be discussed at the Recs & Services meeting

**Colts Football** – have requested a discounted rate due to Covid-19 impacts on their club and a request to pay their annual invoice in quarterly instalments.

**Resolved:** To be discussed at the next Recs & Services meeting

**Additional dog bins** – have been requested around town from residents. This item will be discussed at the Recs & Services meeting. Prices of bins are currently being researched.

**Charity Pitch** – The Colts have requested that flood lights are erected on the Charity Pitch. Cllr D Eley questioned which committee this item should go through. Cllr Tennant and Cllr Rawlings were confident that this would require planning permission. There were concerns about the lights impacting residents in Timpsons Row.

Cllr Geary added that as landlords, OTC would have to agree to the application pre submitting to MKC.

**Resolved:** Item to be discussed at Recs & Services then brought to the full council meeting in November.

Town Clerk to circulate the documents received from the Colts prior to the meeting on 19th October.

**Cllr Collins – Finance** The major area of concern at the upcoming Finance meeting (12th October) will be the operation of The Olney Centre and how we deal with this moving forward.

**Cllr Collins - C&N Museum** – open now 2 days a week and has been volunteer run. The paid staff will be on a phased return to work with a view to a full return to work from 1st November.

Volunteers at the C&N Museum have been awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service this year, but it is now likely that there will be a very low key ceremony for the official award presentation.

**10. To consider exclusion of Public and Press Representatives pursuant to the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 on the basis that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by the confidential nature of the business to be contracted.**

**Resolved:** Cllr Rawlings proposed the above, Cllr Harrison seconded the proposal. The vote was unanimously in favour. The public part of the meeting concluded.

**11. To discuss a report from the HR Committee**

**Resolved:** Report noted and actions agreed unanimously.

**The next Olney Town Meeting is scheduled for 2nd November 2020 @ 7.00pm**