



Serving Our Community

**ANNUAL MEETING
GREATER WILLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF MEETING
17th May 2022**

.....
IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Henfrey, Councillor Smith, Councillor Elgie
Councillor Berry, Councillor Tinsley, Councillor Hales, Councillor Jordan
Emma McCann Deputy Town Clerk
Helen Cogdon, Town Clerk
.....

1. WELCOME

Councillor Henfrey welcomed everyone to Greater Wellington Town Council’s Annual Meeting.

COOPTED COUNCILLORS’ ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Co-opted Councillor members read, signed and returned their Acceptance of Office papers to the Town Clerk who witnessed their signature. Councillor Stephen Jackson, Councillor Pauline Savage, Councillor Dorothy Hales and Councillor Ursula McArdle.

2. PAST MAYOR PRESENTATION

Councillor Henfrey presented Councillor Tinsley with a Past Mayor’s Medal for his eight years of service for Greater Wellington Town Council.
Councillor Tinsley said this is a great honour and thanked Town Council members for the acknowledgement.

3. ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR

Helen Cogdon said there had been discussions over the last few months regarding dividing the Mayoral duties.

This would mean;
a person to conduct the ceremonial duties and another person to chair the Council meetings. This was agreed.

Councillor Tinsley nominated Councillor Henfrey.

Councillor Smith seconded the nomination.

No further nominations received.

Resolved 1. That Councillor Henfrey is appointed as the Ceremonial Town Mayor.

Councillor Henfrey nominated Councillor Smith
Councillor Berry seconded the nomination.

Signed by the Chairman.....
14th June 2022

Resolved 2. That Councillor Smith chairs the Town Council meetings.

The Clerk said that as members have chosen to remain with the Mayoral roles Councillor Smith will chair the meetings and be referred to as Deputy Mayor.

Declaration of Acceptance of office by the Town Mayor

After reading the Declaration of Acceptance of Office Councillor Henfrey passed the signed and dated forms to Helen Cogdon, Town Clerk who witnessed the signature.

Declaration of Acceptance of office by the Deputy Town Mayor

After reading the Declaration of Acceptance of Office Councillor Smith passed the signed and dated forms to Helen Cogdon, Town Clerk who witnessed the signature.

4. ELECTION OF GWTC CHAIRPERSON

Resolved 1. To retain a GWTC Town Mayor.

5. ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.

As the Mayors post has been retained the Deputy Chair position is now redundant. If the Mayor and Deputy are absent the GWTC meeting will be chaired by a Councillor chosen from those attending to act as Mayor for the meeting.

6. APPROVAL OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received

7. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS ANNUAL MEETING 14th MAY 2021 (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)

In order to facilitate business, the minutes of the last Annual Meeting had been ratified at the next available meeting on the 8th June 2021.

The minutes of the 14th May 2021 as printed and circulated were approved and taken as a true record.

Proposed Councillor Tinsley

Seconded Councillor Henfrey

8. TO APPROVE THE STRUCTURE, COMPOSITION AND DELEGATED POWERS OF THE COUNCIL

i) To approve Steering Groups if and when required

Councillor Smith said this approach had been effective in previous years and suggested it continues.

Oakenshaw Neighbourhood Plan is now endorsed.

Councillor Tinsley is the council's representative on the NP Steering group.

Proposed Councillor Henfrey

Seconded Councillor Elgie

Resolved 1. To establish Steering Groups if and when required to develop projects.

ii) To appoint a Staffing Sub Committee

Resolved 1. To appoint a Staffing Sub Committee. Consisting of Councillor Smith, Berry, Jackson, D Hales and Henfrey.

Councillor Berry said she was experienced in employment law.

The terms of reference are to be agreed but the committee will make recommendations to full Council if and when required following consultations.

Signed by the Chairman.....

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- iii) To appoint the Willington and Tow Law Three Towns Partnership Board Representative
 The Clerk said Willington and Tow Law parish council's have an annual rotating voting position on the AAP board and the responsibility this year lies with Tow Law.
 Councillor Elgie was selected
 Proposed by Councillor Tinsley
 Seconded by Councillor Henfrey
Resolved 1. That Councillor Elgie is the AAP G.W.T.C representative
2. That Helen Cogdon informs the AAP Coordinator.

9. TO APPROVE THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2021/22

Internal audit had been completed and the statement of accounts finalised. The Clerk gave a verbal statement of accounts.

Saying that she had worked with the accountant to produce the draft accounts.

Financial highlights for the year ending 31 March 2021 are as follows;

The year was affected by Covid 19 and as a result with the exception of the Community Covid Response project the usual community activities were curtailed or cancelled.

The major year on year changes contained within the accounts were;

The year saw the end of Covid restrictions and a return to the office. The restricted activities of the

previous year make year on year comparisons difficult but the following short report attempts to highlight some of the major changes in the accounts during the year.

1) The Covid response expenses and grants of the previous year were not needed in the current year.

2) The major expense during the year was £45820 on the building refurbishment. The previous year's accounts showed £7187 for repairs and maintenance. Nothing is shown this year as all expenditure is accounted for under the building refurbishment scheme.

3) IT expenditure on new systems shows £4952 spent on hardware and £5607 spent on training, licences, backup support and maintenance.

4) Increased post covid community activity saw Community Fund expenditure rise from £1500 to £2866.

5) Halloween activities and the pantomime also returned post covid.

6) The accounts show £9072 in both income and expenditure for the Willing To Bloom Nursery Plants.

7) Council tax payments of £945 appear in the accounts for the first time having

Signed by the Chairman.....
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previously been included in the rent paid to the landlord. This will however be refunded.

The information contained therein is summarised in the Annual Return and will be submitted as part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)
The Clerk said the accounts were a true record of income and expenditure and recommended that the accounts are approved.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor Elgie

Resolved 1. That the draft accounts represent a true record of income and expenditure.

10. CONSIDERATION OF THE 2021/2022 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

i) Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2021/2022 (appendix 2)

The Clerk said it is the Councils responsibility to ensure that there is a sound system of internal control when dealing with financial matters and the arrangements for the preparation of the accounting statements included within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. AGAR.

We can confirm that we have taken measures to address items 1 – 9 within the Annual Governance Statement

This was approved.

Proposed by Councillor Berry

Seconded by Councillor Smith

Resolved 1. that the Annual Governance Statement supports the council's Financial Regulations policy.

ii) Section 1 Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22 (appendix 3)

The Clerk said during the financial year ended 31 March 2022, the Councils internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2021/22 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table.

Listed are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions.

With reference to Items A – O in all significant respects, the control objectives have been achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

This was approved.

Proposed Councillor Smith

Seconded Councillor Henfrey

Resolved 1. That the annual internal audit evidences that the required controls and procedures are in place to ensure effective financial management.

iii) Section 2 Accounting Statements 2021/22 (appendix4)

The Clerk said that for the year ended 31 March 2022 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance

Signed by the Chairman.....

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and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners’ Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

This was approved.

Proposed by Councillor Smith

Seconded by Councillor Jordan

Resolved 1. That the Annual Return submission process is implemented in accordance with timescale agreed with the auditor Mazars. The submission by email date is 30th June 2022. The deadline by which the unaudited AGAR must be approved and published is also 30th June 2022

The financial information will be available to residents for the exercise of their public rights, by appointment on the 1st July 2021 for thirty working days.

2. The deadline for publishing audited accounts and Notice of completion 30th September 2022.

3. Unaudited Accounts are approved at this meeting and published within the Annual Report.

4. Final audited accounts will be added to the Council Website.

iv) To endorse the Financial Regulations Annual Review (appendix 5)

The Financial Regulations Policy has been made available to Members and no comments have been received.

The Clerk said she has increased tendering requirements to £25,000 last year this is now contained in the new model Standing Orders.

Members are requested to endorse the Financial Regulations Policy and an annual review in May each year.

Proposed by Councillor Smith

Seconded by Councillor Elgie

Resolved 1. That the Financial Regulations provide appropriate guidelines for the management of the Councils business and financial matters.

v) To appoint the Responsible Financial Officer

Resolved 1. That Helen Cogdon is the Responsible Financial Officer

Proposed by Councillor Smith

Seconded by Councillor Berry

vi) To approve the continuation of cheque signatories and the Town Clerks delegated powers for expenditure up to £500

Proposed by Councillor Tinsley

Seconded by Councillor Henfrey

Resolved 1. That the existing cheque signatories remain the same, namely Councillor Tinsley, Councillor Henfrey, Councillor Elgie, Councillor Smith and Helen Cogdon. New members will be added to the account.

New Members will need to submit the necessary paperwork to the Co Operative Bank and supporting identity evidence to proceed.

2. That the Town Clerks delegated powers for expenditure up to £500 are approved and contained within Standing Orders.

3. To continue with the two signatories per cheque rule.

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vii) To appoint an Internal Auditor

Geoff Siddle has been the Internal Auditor for a number of years and provided a robust financial service.

The Clerk proposed that he is retained for 2022/2023.

Proposed by Councillor Henfrey

Seconded by Councillor Smith

Resolved 1. That Geoff Siddle continues to be the Town Council's Internal Auditor.

11. TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL RISK ASSESMENT REPORT (appendix 6)

Helen Cogdon reported on the Risk Management Statement which is reviewed on an annual basis to inform the council's insurance policy. The Insurance Policy is renewed in 1st June each year. The Council uses Zurich Municipal for insurance cover.

This year's quotation is £1,588.94.

The cover is from 1st June 2022 to 31st May 2023.

This was approved.

Proposed by Councillor Berry

Seconded by Councillor Henfrey

i) To approve the Town Clerks delegated powers to update insurance policies when necessary.

Helen Cogdon asked for approval to continue with the delegated powers to update the insurance policies when necessary.

Proposed by Councillor Tinsley

Seconded by Councillor Henfrey

Resolved 1. That the Risk Management Statement provides an accurate and appropriate assessment of risk

2. That Zurich Municipal provides the Town Council insurance policy 2022-2023.

3. That the Town Clerk has delegated powers and continues to update the insurance cover required as and when necessary

12. TO APPROVE THE STANDING ORDERS ANNUAL REVIEW (appendix7)

The Clerk said CDALC have advised that NALC have made changes to their Model Standing Orders which are altered at paragraphs 18c and 18f. The changes are around contracts of >£25,000.

c. A public contract regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015

with an estimated value in excess of £25,000 but less than the relevant thresholds referred to in standing order 18(f) is subject to the "light touch" arrangements under Regulations 109-114 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 unless it proposes to use an existing list of approved suppliers (framework agreement).

- f. Where the value of a contract is likely to exceed the threshold specified by the Office of Government Commerce from time to time, the Council must consider whether the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 apply to the contract and, if either of those Regulations apply, the Council must comply**

Signed by the Chairman.....

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with procurement rules. NALC's procurement guidance contains further details.

The Standing Orders policy has been made available to members and no comments for amendments have been received.

Members are requested to endorse the standing orders policy in May each year.

Proposed by Councillor Tinsley

Seconded by Councillor Smith

Resolved 1. That the changes stated above will be contained within GWTC Standing Orders.

2. Unless affected by changes in statutory powers that the Standing Orders will continue to be subject to an annual review.

12. TO APPROVE COUNCIL POLICIES

The Clerk said that the annual audit and review of council policies had been undertaken.

The documents have been circulated to members and hard copies given in Induction Packs.

Councillor Berry Declared an Interest as she is now working with County Durham Citizens Advice. No other comments had been received.

- Protocol for member/officer relations
- Code of Conduct
- Anti-fraud and Corruption
- Equal Opportunities
- Complaints Procedure
- Community Engagement
- Public Participation Policy
- Policy on Reserves and Restricted Funds
- Publication Scheme
- Freedom of Information Charging Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Councillor and Employee Expenses
- General Data Protection Regulations
- Allotment Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Home Working Policy
- The Personal Use of Social Media Policy
- Attendance Management Policy
- Flexible Working Policy
- Flexitime Policy
- Annual Leave Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Dismissal Policy

After due consideration and discussion, all existing policies due for their annual review were approved.

It was noted that a hard copy of the Attendance Management Policy had been provided.

Signed by the Chairman.....

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Staffing policies were approved in principle subject to recommendations and consultation from the new Staffing committee to full Council.

Proposed by Councillor

Seconded by Councillor Henfrey

Resolved 1. To approve the annual review of the policies identified and as described above.

14. TO APPROVE THE ANNUAL REPORT

Proposed Councillor Henfrey

Seconded Councillor Elgie

Resolved 1. That the 2021/22 Annual Report is approved

15. TO APPROVE THE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2021/2022 (APPENDIX 8)

Resolved 1. To meet the second Tuesday of the month.

2. To have a recess in January and August

3. To approve the draft timetable of meetings and to meet at 6pm.

Proposed by Councillor Tinsley

Seconded by Councillor Henfrey

16. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Town Council 8th June 2022 at 6.00pm

Annual Parish Meeting 16th May 2023 at 6.00pm

Annual Meeting 16th May 2023 at 6.30pm

Signed by the Chairman.....
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