

OLNEY TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of Olney Town Council held via MS Teams Monday 20th July 2020 at 7.00pm

Present: Jeremy Rawlings, Deirdre Bethune, Stephen Clark, Paul Collins, Desmond Eley, Joanne Eley, Peter Geary, Graham Harrison, Malcolm Messenger, Dr Sally Pezaro, Colin Rodden.

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

Cllr Rawlings notified everybody that the meeting was being recorded to assist with the production of accurate minutes.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Tennant, Cllr Whitworth

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 discuss the opening of the public toilets at the Market Place and the Recreation Grounds East Street.

This is being discussed as part of the 'Olney is Open' initiative which was delegated to Cllr Rawlings and Town Clerk. Both sought and received 2 tenders for the cleaning of the Market Place and the Recreational Ground toilets.

One of the tenders was chosen, however a number of other Councillors have raised the issue about the ongoing costs of the contract and whether the Council should be bearing these costs.

Cllr Rawlings pointed out that the Market traders (Thursday and Farmer's) have said that the one thing that Olney Town Council could do is to open the toilets. Town Clerk added

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that in a recent meeting regarding the Bathing Steps and the anti-social behaviour issues; the general consensus was that opening the toilets may assist with one of the problems being that the fields are being used as toilets.

This is to be a short term contract (as short-term as the Covid situation goes on for).

The total cost after speaking with a number of companies was on average, £20 per hour (£700 per week).

OTC are getting no assistance from MKC or central government financially at all for the ongoing cleaning of the toilets.

Insurance advice at the time of the meeting advised that cleaning of the toilets was recommended 3 – 4 times daily with a 3 hour gap in between cleans.

OTC to wait for recommendations from NALC with regards to insurance.

The budget for 20/21 has not taken into account this potential expenditure of £38,000 per year. OTC will take a significant hit with the loss of rental income at The Olney Centre due to its current closure. Unlike many community halls and because our centre is owned by a precepting authority, we have not been offered the retail, hospitality and leisure grant. Effectively we are getting no help financially from MKC or central government.

Resolved: Delegated to Cllr Rawlings, Cllr D Eley and Town Clerk.

The toilets will re-open subject to insurance and recommendations coming from NALC, until the OTC meeting on September 7th. At this point the viability of them continuing to be open will be reassessed. A modified Council budget and public opinions will be taken into account.

A revised spend of £5000 will be added into the budget to take account of the expenditure up until September.

OTC will write to our MP stating that we require some funding to open the facilities in Olney otherwise we will not be able to continue providing this service.

To provide clear lines of communication (social media etc.) to the public by stating how much this is costing, advising that we will be reviewing in September and that the withdrawal of these facilities may have to take place due to high expenditure costs and no external financial support.

Prior to September 7th meeting a poll will go out on the Facebook page, alongside the reassessed budget, to assess opinions of Olney residents.

There will be an article in August 2020 Phonebox.

Next Meeting: Monday 10th August 2020