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**CHIPPENHAM
TOWN COUNCIL**

Improving the quality of town life

FULL COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council held in the Town Hall on Wednesday 22 November 2023 at 7.00 pm.

COUNCILLORS:	Desna Allen	Liz Alstrom	Declan Baseley (Chair)
	James Bradbury	Matthew Bragg	Pete Cousins
	William Douglas	Robert Giles	Gemma Grimes
	Angie Litvak-Watson	Kathryn Macdermid	Conor Melvin (Vice-Chair)
	Nick Murry	Andy Phillips	David Poole
	Nic Puntis	John Scragg	Matthew Short
	George Simmonds	Adam Ward	Myla Watts
	Hayley Wilson		

OFFICERS:	Mark Smith, Chief Executive
	Nick Rees, Director of Resources
	Matt Kirby, Director of Community Services
	Heather Rae, Head of Democratic Services
	Gillian Ballinger, Head of Finance
	Michael Weeks, Democratic and Civic Officer

PUBLIC

PRESENT: There were six members of the public present

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were five written public questions, a copy of the questions are appended to these minutes at **APPENDIX A**. The responses were not part of the meeting but are appended to these minutes at **APPENDIX B**.

55. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Clare Cape due to another commitment and Councillor Jenny Budgell due to illness.

56. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Liz Alstrom declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 13, Memorandum of Understanding between Wiltshire Council, the Town Council and the Town Team/Chamber of Commerce, as a Wiltshire Council representative on the Town Team appointed by the Area Board.

57. MINUTES

The minutes from the meeting held on 27 September 2023 were proposed by Councillor David Poole, seconded by Councillor Pete Cousins and with all in favour, it was;

RESOLVED that:

The minutes from the meeting held on 27 September 2023 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

58. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- i. a) The Mayor highlighted the White Ribbon coffee morning on Friday 24th November to fundraise for the White Ribbon Charity.

b) The Mayor announced the recent Book and Bake sale raised £466.94 for the Mayor's chosen charity, Doorway. Another Book and Bake Sale would be held on Friday 15th of December in the Neeld Foyer to raise funds for Doorway. Councillors, Officers and residents were invited to join the event between 9.30am and 1pm to purchase refreshments, baked goods and either new or second hand books.
- ii. The list of engagements undertaken by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor since the last Council meeting held on Wednesday 27 September 2023 were noted.

59. **POLICE REPORT**

The Sergeant updated on the current policing priorities within the Chippenham area including community engagement, shoplifting, crime rates, mental health, anti-social and driving offences.

Councillors raised issues including drink spiking, drivers not slowing down at pedestrian crossings, speed awareness, thefts from vehicles and anti-social behaviour. The Sergeant updating on actions that had been taken and were ongoing to address these issues and highlighted the importance of locking vehicles and houses at night and reporting incidents so the police are aware and can investigate. It was noted that communication with residents is done mainly through social media and engagement events.

The Chair thanked the Sergeant for attending the meeting and answering Councillor questions.

RESOLVED that:

The report be noted.

60. **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

- a. **Amenities, Culture & Leisure Committee**
The minutes of the meetings held on 13 September and 01 November 2023 were presented by Councillor Declan Baseley with all matters resolved.

- b. **Planning, Environment & Transport Committee**
The draft minutes of the meetings held on 14 September, 05 October and 26 October 2023 were presented by Councillor Matthew Short with all matters resolved.
- c. **Strategy and Resources Committee**
The draft minutes of the meeting held on 06 September and 18 October 2023 were presented by Councillor Pete Cousins with all matters resolved.
- d. **Human Resources**
The draft minutes of the meeting held on 02 November 2023 were presented by Councillor Desna Allen with all matters resolved.

61. **COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM NOTES**

RESOLVED that:

The notes from the Community Safety Forum meeting held on 06 October 2023 were noted.

62. **YOUTH COUNCIL MINUTES**

RESOLVED that:

The notes from the Youth Council meetings held on 19 September and 17 October 2023 were noted.

63. **RIVER GREEN CORRIDOR OPTIONS**

The Director of Community Services presented the report regarding a request from the Town Centre Partnership Board on the views of the Town Council in relation to options for the River Green Corridor Project. Councillors were asked to consider whether they supported the principle of a scheme, and work between the Town Centre Partnership Board and the Environment Agency to define and further consult upon a scheme that responds positively to the findings of the One Plan which is viable and can be delivered within timescales. Councillors were also asked to consider which of the following three options for the scheme would be the preferred option based upon evidence provided:

- a) Replace the Radial Gate as it is at present
- b) Remove the Radial Gate with the channel upstream naturalised to create a wilder feel similar to that south of the town centre to maximise the ecological value
- c) Remove the Radial Gate and replace with a series of weirs to retain some amenity use while still providing some ecological improvement

The Chair welcomed the Chippenham Gate and River Avon Project Lead from the Environment Agency who was in attendance to answer any technical questions relating to the proposed options.

Councillors questioned the scheme options and commented on flood risk, environmental factors, consultation process, amenity use, funding availability and lack of detailed information in relation to cost-benefit analysis for each scheme option.

The Environment Agency representative confirmed that the current radial gate does not act as a flood defence but was installed to maintain an upstream water level. It was noted that whatever is there, has no impact downstream and does not regulate flow; the flow is always the same, the radial gate only regulates the water level. If the radial gate does not open and close as it should it causes an increased flood risk. There was a major incident in October caused by a storm where the gate had a tree stuck underneath it. This incident heightened the need to implement a project to prevent this happening again.

The next stage is to define a preferred option, this would be consulted on before the detailed design stage, there would then be further consultation including on construction impacts. The Environment Agency will keep people informed and the important role of Councillors to share the views of residents was acknowledged.

It was confirmed that no funding had been removed for any scheme, funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) will contribute a large amount towards the scheme and it is usual to source partnership funding to close the funding gap. It was noted that it may be easier to access certain funding sources related to environmental or amenity benefits with schemes b and c rather than the like-for-like replacement in option a.

The Chief Executive highlighted that within the timeline, the Town Council had this opportunity to express their preferred option as part of this process if they so wished.

Councillor Desna Allen proposed that Council move to vote on the report recommendations, with the majority against this proposal, the discussion continued.

Councillors raised flooding, residents' views, climate emergency, leaving the river in an improve ecological state, concern over water levels, lack of understanding of options in the One Plan consultation, additional consultation comments made relating to maintaining amenity use, and the need for more visuals and cost benefit analysis.

The Environment Agency representative confirmed there was ongoing consultation with stakeholders, whatever is implemented will have no impact downstream, the preferred option is a concept at this stage, all options had a good economic cost benefit ratio due to the current radial gate raising the flood risk and any implementation reducing this risk, more complex than stating which scheme is better. It was noted that a similar

scheme could be seen in Salisbury as works are almost complete.

Councillor Matthew Bragg put forward an amendment to the recommendations that:

“This council does not want a like for like replacement of the radial gate. This amendment would not support option a, but Councillors would still vote on options b and c”. This amendment was seconded by Councillor Desna Allen. Councillor Angie Litvak-Watson raised whether the amendment should be that the Council’s preference is not option a) but option b) or c) rather than choosing, Councillor Bragg did not support this suggested change to the amendment. A vote was taken and with the majority in favour, the amendment was supported.

Councillor Gemma Grimes proposed an amendment to the recommendations that:

“Council requests a further stage of consultation with the Town Council beyond just a single preferred option so there can be more information between now and the consultation to make a decision”. This amendment was seconded by Councillor Nick Murry, a vote was taken on the amendment and with the majority in favour, the amendment was supported.

Councillor Nick Murry raised a point of order to question whether the second amendment had overridden the need to choose between options b) and c). The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the amendment raised and read out did not refer to options b) and c) and taking them out. It stated, “Council requests a further stage of consultation with the Town Council beyond just a single preferred option so there can be more information between now and the consultation to make a decision”.

Councillor Gemma Grimes outlined the intention of the amendment was to request beyond a single option thereby not selecting a single option at this meeting. The Chief Executive noted that whilst this may have been the intention of the amendment, this was not explicit, the Chair supported the officer’s interpretation of the amendment and the Head of Democratic Services clarified that the first amendment made explicitly included voting on options b) and c) therefore the second amendment could not negate this.

Due to the time approaching 9pm, in accordance with Standing Order 15.7, the Chair proposed the extension of the meeting until 9.30pm, this was seconded by Councillor Nick Murry, and with the majority in favour the meeting continued.

Councillors voted on the recommendations including the substantive motions which were added by amendments and with the majority in favour, it was;

RESOLVED that:

- i) Council supported the principle of a scheme that will deliver amenity outputs alongside the works needed to address flood risk;

ii) Council agreed that the Town Centre Partnership Board partners work with the EA to define and further consult upon a scheme that responds positively to the consultation findings of the One Plan, which is viable and can be delivered within the timescales proposed;

iii) Council did not support option a), 'Replace the Radial Gate as it is at present'. The majority of Councillors abstained from option b), 'Remove the Radial Gate with the channel upstream naturalised to create a wilder feel similar to that south of the town centre to maximise the ecological value'. The majority of Councillors supported option c) 'Remove the Radial Gate and replace with a series of weirs to retain some amenity use while still providing some ecological improvement' as the Town Council's preferred scheme option.

iv) Notwithstanding the selection of option C as outlined in iii) above, Council requested a further stage of consultation with the Town Council beyond just a single preferred option so there can be more information between now and the consultation to make a decision.

64. **INVESTMENT ADVICE**

Cllr Angie Litvak-Watson left the meeting.

The Director of Resources presented the report regarding a proposal to engage a professional specialist investment firm to advise the Council on its investment strategy as recommended by the Strategy and Resources Committee on 18 October 2023.

Councillor David Poole raised concerns over the cost of the consultancy fees. Councillor George Simmonds supported the proposal noting the small proportion of the budget compared to the value of the Council's equity portfolio.

Councillor Gemma Grimes supported the proposal subject to the inclusion of ethical investments that can add benefit. The Director of Resources confirmed that if the proposal was supported there would be ongoing conversations and any amendment to the Investment Strategy would be a matter for Full Council. The difference in skills and expertise for treasury management and accountancy were highlighted.

With the majority in favour, it was;

RESOLVED that:

i) Council delegated authority to the Chief Executive to enter into an agreement for the engagement of a professional specialist investment advice firm on a 3-year retainer contract to provide investment advice to the Council;

ii) Council approved unbudgeted expenditure of up to £4,000 for this year (2023/24) and inclusion of £12,000 in next year's budget (2024/25).

65. **WILTSHIRE COUNCIL CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME**

The Director of Resources presented the report regarding a request from Wiltshire Council for a Town Council response on possible changes to Wiltshire Council's Tax Reduction Scheme.

The Director of Resources outlined the impact of these changes would result in changes to the tax base. There would be fewer people paying the precept and therefore the precept would be spread across a smaller tax base. If all options being proposed by Wiltshire Council are implemented, that would result in a 0.2% decrease in the number of houses paying precept which is a swing of 0.9%. Instead of the precept being diluted across a larger tax base, there would be the opposite effect and a greater impact than the percentage that the Council raises in precept to the typical Band D taxpayer.

Councillors considered the questions in the consultation and with the majority in favour, it was;

RESOLVED that:

Council delegated authority to the Chief Executive to complete Wiltshire Council's Tax Reduction Scheme consultation response on behalf of the Town Council with the responses below:

Question 7. Do you agree with the proposal to raise the maximum CTR entitlement up to 90% of the customer's council tax liability? - Yes

Question 8. Do you agree with the proposal to disregard Universal Credit income? - Yes

Question 9. Do you agree with the proposal to change the way in which the applicable amount for a customer in receipt of Universal Credit is calculated? - Yes

Question 10. Do you agree with the proposal to restrict CTR to the maximum liability of a Band D property? - Don't Know

Question 11. Do you agree with the proposal to change the way in which a new application for CTR can be accepted and maintained? - Don't Know

66. **STANLEY PARK DEPOT REPORT**

Due to the time approaching 9.30pm, in accordance with Standing Order 15.7, the Chair proposed the extension of the meeting until 9.45pm, this was seconded by Councillor Liz Alstrom, and with the majority in favour the

meeting continued.

The Director of Community Services presented the report requesting a further £20,000 in capital to complete the Stanley Park Depot project due to unforeseen circumstances following the groundwork starting an attenuation tank was discovered.

It was confirmed that the original contingency budget of £6,000 had been used.

With all in favour, it was;

RESOLVED that:

Council approved an additional £20,000 of Capital Expenditure to complete the build of the depot.

67. **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN WILTSHIRE COUNCIL, THE TOWN COUNCIL AND THE TOWN TEAM/CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT)**

Councillor Liz Alstrom declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 13, Memorandum of Understanding between Wiltshire Council, the Town Council and the Town Team/Chamber of Commerce, as a Wiltshire Council representative on the Town Team appointed by the Area Board.

The Head of Democratic Services presented the report outlining a request from Wiltshire Council to sign the Memorandum of Understanding which formalises working arrangements that were currently taking place between Wiltshire Council, the Town Council and the Town Team/Chamber of Commerce in relation to economic development within the town.

Councillor Liz Alstrom supported the role of the Town Team and the work being done on the quarters.

Councillor Gemma Grimes questioned the difference between the Town Team and the Chamber of Commerce. The Chief Executive confirmed that the town previously had a successful Chamber of Commerce, now the Town Team have started to work in partnership with the remainder of the Chamber.

It was noted that by signing this there would be no changes to staffing resources.

Councillor Andy Phillips left the meeting.

Councillors requested that officers investigate to ensure that the Memorandum is not legally binding and would support it subject to this being made clear, the Chief Executive would also run past the solicitor as a matter of good practice. With all in favour, it was;

RESOLVED that:

i) Councillors agreed to the Chief Executive signing the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the Town Council.

ii) Council decided to progress the Memorandum of Understanding with the wording at section 3.2 of the report subject to clarifying that the Memorandum is not legally binding.

iii) Following the meeting, the following wording was added to the Memorandum in accordance with the above resolutions:

“The Town Council’s current Corporate Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 comprises of six corporate strategic objectives;

- Provide and develop facilities and services that are accessible inclusive and promote health and well being.*
- Play and active role in the future development of the town through collaboration with partners, stakeholders and our community.*
- Help to create a future that is carbon neutral, environmentally sustainable and resilient to the impact of climate change.*
- Maintain and create opportunities to enhance our green spaces and provide a clean and safe environment.*
- Provide and develop facilities that promote Chippenham as an attractive and vibrant market town and celebrate its rich history, heritage and culture.*
- Maintain effective and efficient governance and management of resources.*

The aim is for this Corporate Strategic Plan to help drive the Council forward over the next four years, delivering the vision of ‘improving the quality of town life for present and future generations’.

Nothing in this MOU will be construed as creating a partnership or joint venture. No one Party shall represent itself as being the agent of the other Party and nor is any Party authorised to commit the other party to any arrangement with a third party.

This MoU is agreed in good faith by the Parties on the basis that it is a fair and honest statement of intentions. The Parties confirm that they do not intend by signing this MoU to enter into a legally binding relationship and in particular it has no validity as a binding contract under any law or legal system.”

68. URGENT ACTION FORM

RESOLVED that:

The urgent action form regarding a delegated decision made to move meeting dates to respond to the Local Plan Consultation was noted.

69. **COUNCILLOR'S FEEDBACK**

- i. There were no updates from Town Councillors on significant work they are involved with.
- ii. Councillor John Scragg updated on the activities of the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC), a copy of this statement is attached to the minutes.
- iii. Councillor Nic Puntis highlighted his role as a Wiltshire Councillor on the Board of Wessex Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (WRFCC) and encouraged Councillors to raise queries with him in relation to the river project and flooding.

Councillors Liz Alstrom and Kathryn Macdermid highlighted their roles as Wiltshire Councillor co-chairs of the Local Youth Network and updated that there would be a collaborative teen event planned in April.

Due to the time of the meeting approaching 9.45pm, no further items were considered and the Chair referred to the date of the next meeting.

70. **ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION**

This item was not considered due to time constraints.

71. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Full Council will be held at 7pm on Wednesday 10 January 2024.

The Chair closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm.

These minutes are subject to confirmation at the next meeting.

Signed on behalf of the Town Council as a true record of the meeting.

Signature

Date

Appendix

Public Questions - APPENDIX A

Public questions at Full Council on Wednesday 22 November 2023:

1. "I am writing to you as someone who has spent most of my life in Chippenham and the surrounding areas, as someone who has come to love rivers from learning to kayak on the River Avon through Chippenham, and as a now River Restoration professional.

Our rivers are in a critical state. Only 14 per cent of England's rivers are classified as being in "good" ecological status by the Environment Agency, and without substantial and bold change, that figure is predicted to drop to just 6 per cent by 2027. This includes the River Avon through Chippenham, which is failing to achieve good status. Recent public outrage regarding sewage pollution has shown just how much the public cares for our rivers and how much they are concerned about their health. This understanding of river issues, unfortunately, does not yet extend to the impacts caused by river modification, however, these are well researched and extensive. Weirs and other artificial river impoundments have a number of impacts, including:

- Habitat fragmentation: habitats which were once continuous become divided into separate fragments, restricting the movements of organisms such as fish;
- Degrading upstream habitat reaches by impounding and deepening flows: Deeper levels drown out natural features like riffles and reduce oxygenation of the channel. Slower flows also encourage sediment to settle on the riverbed, smothering gravels and the invertebrates and plants that live within them, both key parts of the food chain;
- Impounding water pollution for additional time between weirs: which, coupled with reduced oxygenation, increases its impacts.

Deeper sections of river caused by impoundments also pose additional barriers to supporting public access to our rivers. Access to blue spaces has proven mental and physical health benefits and shallower water allows greater interaction by the public with watercourses.

I understand from social media posts that there are a number of anglers who are concerned about the impacts that removal of the Radial Gate will have on the river, and I can understand that any changes to a current environment that has existed for some time will receive concern. Please be reassured that angling will still be possible following any removal of the radial gate, and that re-naturalisation of river channels has positive impacts on fish populations. Whilst some changes to fish populations may occur as a result of a switch to natural levels, this will result in healthier, more

resilient populations that are better adapted to the natural processes present in free-flowing river systems. Many of the angling clubs that I have worked with on similar projects have provided positive feedback from their members once changes post weir-removals had been seen. The question I regularly pose to organisations in similar positions, is, how can any man-made structure put into a river benefit the health of a river more than a naturally functioning system?

It is my belief that, at a time when our rivers are in such critical state, that the Council should be doing everything in its power to ensure that positive improvements are made to ensure that we have a healthy river for generations to come. Particularly, if the alternative is that public funds are to be spent at vast expense to maintain the poor condition of rivers. Many thanks for considering my statement.”

2. “The consultation provided the Council and Partnership board with some very clear messages as detailed below from the subsequent report

- 1 Commentary from the consultation with reference to the radial gate replacement

While 45% of respondents wanted the Radial Gate replaced it was clear from analysis of the free text questions this was not a support of the structure per se but rather of the higher water levels it maintained. It is clear that a sizeable number of responders (albeit a slight minority), were supportive of the aesthetic and recreational contribution the artificially maintained levels could provide.

- 2 Commentary reference use of the river frontage

The community would like there to be greater opportunities for making active use of the river frontage, especially the Island Park. Having kayaking access to the river was a consistent request as was outdoor performance space and play areas. This was strongly correlated to the request to maintain the green and natural character and making any changes in keeping to enhance and not radically change the area.

These conclusions are further supported by the free text comments in Appendix 3 where the vast majority of comments refer to maintaining the current water level and green space to provide both water based amenities as well as improved river bank access for all. There is also much concern noted that reducing the water level will cause the river to become a "dribble" particularly in summer.

Is the Council going to follow this clear message from the consultation or merely go for the cheapest option being proposed by the EA?”

3. “The Environment Agency carried out a test exercise on 9 October 2023 involving the controlled opening of the radial gate in order to evaluate the effects on water levels of a permanent removal of the gate. Whilst the EA have not made their findings of this exercise public to my knowledge, having visited the river upstream of the gate on the day of the exercise, the exercise had serious effects on the river levels with the river only inches deep in certain places.

Have the Council sought feedback from the Environment Agency on their findings from this exercise and if so, what information have the EA provided? If no feedback has been sought, do the Council intend to seek this from the EA before committing support to the EA's preferred re-naturalisation option?”

4. “On behalf of the Heritage Quarter group, I would like to confirm our support for the approval of the above Memorandum of Understanding.

As the Council is aware we are group of local businesses, organisations and volunteers operating under the existing Town Centre Partnership which has over 60 members across the town. During the last 12 months we have encouraged more and more businesses to engage with initiatives to improve the Town Centre and are already working successfully with Councillors and Officers for the good of Chippenham.

To continue this work and involve more businesses and volunteers it is now appropriate to formalise the operating arrangements and what is expected of the Town Centre Partnership. We believe that by encouraging community involvement a better understanding of the issues and potential improvements in the local areas can be shared and positive outcomes achieved.”

5. “I would like to ask Councillors to support the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding by the Chief Executive on behalf of the Town Council.

As set out in the report it is not introducing new work, it simply records those activities that are currently taking place.

As chair of the River and Rail Quarter it has been great to see the hard work and dedication by many in the Town Council, Wiltshire Council and Town Team, which in turn spreads the workload and enhances communication. The Town Team now has a strong base established over the last two years and I look forward to that being formalised by the signing of the memorandum of understanding.

The River and Rail Quarter which sits under the Town Team has 26 members. From Alliance Pharmaceuticals, Borough Lands/One Chippenham,

Doorway, Wessex Water, businesses, residents, churches, Olympiad, Swindon and Wiltshire History Centre all working together with the Chippenham and Wiltshire Councils to enhance our town. The leaflet produced last week now gives us the tools to grow the Quarter further, with a new local business added this week.”

Not Part of the Meeting - APPENDIX B

Responses to Public Questions - Full Council 22 November 2023

1. Thank you for your comments made at Full Council on 22 November 2023, these have been noted. The Town Council is being consulted on this matter and is not deciding the outcome but indicating a preferred option to be forwarded to the Town Centre Partnership Board.

Council resolved to support the principle of a scheme that will deliver amenity outputs alongside the works needed to address flood risk. Council agreed that the Town Centre Partnership Board partners work with the EA to define and further consult upon a scheme that responds positively to the consultation findings of the One Plan, which is viable and can be delivered within the timescales proposed. Council did not support option a), 'Replace the Radial Gate as it is at present'. The majority of Councillors abstained from option b), 'Remove the Radial Gate with the channel upstream naturalised to create a wilder feel similar to that south of the town centre to maximise the ecological value'. The majority of Councillors supported option c) 'Remove the Radial Gate and replace with a series of weirs to retain some amenity use while still providing some ecological improvement' as the Town Council's preferred scheme option.

Finally, Council requested a further stage of consultation with the Town Council beyond just a single preferred option so there can be more information between now and the consultation to make a decision.

2. Thank you for your comments made at Full Council on 22 November 2023, these have been noted. The Town Council is being consulted on this matter and is not deciding the outcome but indicating a preferred option to be forwarded to the Town Centre Partnership Board.

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4. Thank you for your comments made at Full Council on 22 November 2023, these have been noted. Council resolved to support the request from Wiltshire Council to sign the Memorandum of Understanding which formalises working arrangements that were currently taking place between Wiltshire Council, the Town Council and the Town Team/Chamber of Commerce in relation to economic development within the town. The relevant minute can be read in full in the minutes which will be published on the Town Council website under ‘Your Council’, ‘agendas and minutes’.
5. Thank you for your comments made at Full Council on 22 November 2023, these have been noted. Council resolved to support the request from Wiltshire Council to sign the Memorandum of Understanding which formalises working arrangements that were currently taking place between Wiltshire Council, the Town Council and the Town Team/Chamber of Commerce in relation to economic development within the town. The relevant minute can be read in full in the minutes which will be published on the Town Council website under ‘Your Council’, ‘agendas and minutes’.

Report by Cllr J R Scragg on WALC

I attended the WALC Annual General Meeting on 25th October 2025 which was held at Community First offices at Devizes. It was RESOLVED that Cllr John Scragg (Chippenham TC) be elected as chair for the ensuing year. And that Cllr Andrew Sadler-Smith (Cherhill PC) be elected as vice chair for the ensuing year. In attendance were Cllr Richard Clewer, leader of Wiltshire Council and Cllr Nick Botteril Cabinet Member – Finance, Development Management & Strategic Planning. WALC membership stands at 230 councils which represents 83% of the total in Wiltshire & Swindon.

I also attended and chaired an on-line meeting of the Executive Committee on 15th November 2023.

I also the National Assembly of NALC on 3rd October 2023 and the AGM on 24th October 2023 (also on line). I will be attending a meeting of the National Assembly at the LGA offices in Westminster on 29th November and this will be followed by a reception at the House of Lords which will also be attended by MPs and peers.

Other: the NALC AGM approved an increase in subscription fees from 7.71p to 7.94p per elector for each county. NALC made a trading loss of £12,799 in 2022/23 (not really material and available room reserves). Separately, the former NALC HQ in Gt Russell Street was sold for £2.75M (gross ie before cost of sale was paid for).

JR Scragg.

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