

## **Cherwell District Council**

### **Council**

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, Oxon OX15 4AA, on 22 May 2024 at 6.30 pm

Present:

Councillor Dr Chukwudi Okeke (Chairman)  
Councillor Dorothy Walker (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Tom Beckett  
Councillor Rebecca Biegel  
Councillor Gordon Blakeway  
Councillor Chris Brant  
Councillor Besmira Brasha  
Councillor John Broad  
Councillor Mark Cherry  
Councillor Becky Clarke MBE  
Councillor Jean Conway  
Councillor Grace Conway-Murray  
Councillor Gemma Coton  
Councillor Nick Cotter  
Councillor Dr Isabel Creed  
Councillor Andrew Crichton  
Councillor Donna Ford  
Councillor Ian Harwood  
Councillor David Hingley  
Councillor Matt Hodgson  
Councillor Frank Ideh  
Councillor Harry Knight  
Councillor Simon Lytton  
Councillor Kieron Mallon  
Councillor Nicholas Mawer  
Councillor Fiona Mawson  
Councillor Andrew McHugh  
Councillor Lesley McLean  
Councillor Ian Middleton  
Councillor Julian Nedelcu  
Councillor Rob Parkinson  
Councillor Lynne Parsons  
Councillor Rob Pattenden  
Councillor Chris Pruden  
Councillor Edward Fraser Reeves  
Councillor David Rogers  
Councillor Alisa Russell  
Councillor Les Sibley  
Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill  
Councillor Dom Vaitkus  
Councillor Linda Ward  
Councillor Amanda Watkins

Councillor John Willett  
Councillor Douglas Webb  
Councillor Barry Wood  
Councillor Sean Woodcock

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Phil Chapman  
Councillor Nigel Simpson

Officers:

Gordon Stewart, Chief Executive  
Ian Boll, Corporate Director Communities  
Stephen Hinds, Corporate Director Resources  
Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance & S151 Officer  
Shiraz Sheikh, Assistant Director Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer  
Natasha Clark, Governance and Elections Manager

## 1 **Welcome**

The Chairman welcomed councillors, past Chairman, former councillors, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Mrs Miranda Markham, and her husband, guests and officers to the Annual Council meeting.

The Chairman welcomed newly elected councillors, Councillor Gordon Blakeway, Councillor Dom Vaitkus, Councillor Dr Kerrie Thornhill, Councillor Rob Parkinson, Councillor John Willett, Councillor Frank Ideh, Councillor Chirs Brant, Councillor David Rogers, Councillor Grace Conway-Murray and Councillor Linda Ward and congratulated them and all other councillors who were returned at the recent election. The newly elected councillors each introduced themselves to Council.

## 2 **Declarations of Interest**

11. Making of the Deddington Neighbourhood Plan.  
Councillor David Rogers, Declaration, as one of the architects of the Plan.

## 3 **Communications**

### **Former Councillors**

On behalf of Council, the Chair extended paid tribute and thanked those councillors who stood down or were not re-elected at the May elections for their service to the council, their wards and the district.

### **Annual Council**

By convention, the minutes of Committees, questions, petitions and motions were not considered at Annual Council. These would be included on the agenda of the next scheduled Council meeting on Monday 15 July.

### **Process for Appointments**

The Chairman reminded Council of the process for voting on appointments for any position to be filled by the Council, as set out in the Constitution.

### **Members' Pigeon Holes**

Members were reminded to check their pigeon hole and take any post.

## **4 Election of Chairman for the Municipal Year 2024/2025**

It was proposed by Councillor Woodcock and seconded by Councillor Hodgson, that Councillor Dr Okeke be appointed as Chairman of Cherwell District Council for the municipal year 2024/2025. There were no other nominations.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That Councillor Dr Okeke be appointed Chairman of Cherwell District Council for the Municipal Year 2024/2025.

(Councillor Sibley, outgoing Chairman chaired the meeting until Councillor Okeke was appointed)

## **5 Investiture of Chairman**

Councillor Dr Okeke made, and signed, the required Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Councillor Dr Okeke addressed Council thanking Members for the honor of appointing him as Chairman, a role he would embrace. The Chairman advised that his partner, Sandra, would be his consort and announced that he would raise funds for Oxfordshire Mind during his term of office.

## **6 Vote of Thanks to Immediate Past Chairman**

The Chairman paid tribute to Councillor Sibley for the two years he had served as Chairman of the Council. Councillor Sibley was an outstanding Chairman, who had carried out his role passionately and steadfastly.

Councillor Sibley dedicated a lot of time and effort in raising money for his chosen charity, Alexandra House of Joy. He raised over £20,000 during his two years of chairmanship which

As Vice-Chairman, it had been very helpful learning from Councillor Sibley. One of the many things the incoming Chairman had learned from Councillor Sibley was reminding Councillors to speak through the Chairman.

Group Leaders, Councillor Hingley, Councillor Woodcock, Councillor Reeves and Councillor Middleton, and other Members, paid tribute to Councillor for his two-year tenure as Chairman.

The Chairman presented Councillor Sibley with his past Chairman's badge and a gift as a token of appreciation for his term of office.

## 7 **Past Chairman's response**

Councillor Sibley thanked Group Leaders and Members for their kind words and addressed Council.

Councillor Sibley congratulated Cllr Dr Okeke on his appointment and wished him and his consort, his wife Sandra, all the best for the forthcoming year.

Councillor Sibley thanked Members for their goodwill and confidence in appointing him as Chairman for a second term and hoped Members and residents considered he has fulfilled the duties required. Councillor Sibley also thanked the council's management and staff for their support and guidance and paid particular tribute to his PA. Councillor Sibley also extended his thanks to Councillor Okeke for his support as Vice-Chair during his term of office.

Councillor Sibley highlighted that he and his consort, his wife Mary, had enjoyed their role as ambassadors for Cherwell District Council visiting many places and meeting many people. Another highlight had been attending events along with members of the "Oxfordshire chain gang" and thanked them for their friendship and support.

One of his duties as Chairman was to raise funds and awareness of his nominated charity, Alexandra House of Joy. Councillor Sibley presented the founders of the charity, Ian and Rachel Scott-Hunter and presented them with a cheque for £20,000 raised over the past year

Councillor Sibley thanked his consort, his wife, for the wonderful support she had given him in his role as Chairman and presented her with flowers as a token of his appreciation.

## 8 **Election of Vice-Chairman for the Municipal Year 2024/2025**

It was proposed by Councillor Hingley and seconded by Councillor McLean, that Councillor Walker be appointed as Vice-Chairman of Cherwell District Council for the municipal year 2024/2025. There were no other nominations.

**Resolved**

- (1) That Councillor Walker be appointed Vice-Chairman of Cherwell District Council for the Municipal Year 2024/2025.

## 9 Investiture of Vice-Chairman

Councillor Walker, having made and signed the required Declaration of Acceptance of Office was invested with the Vice-Chairman's Chain.

Councillor Walker addressed Council and thanked Members for her appointment.

## 10 Minutes of Council

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 11 Annual Council Business Report 2024/2025

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report to note the results of the 2 May 2024 district elections and to consider the appointments and allocation of seats on Committees for municipal year 2024/25 in accordance with the duty under Section 15 Local Government Housing Act 1989, to ensure that this reflects the political make-up of the Council following the elections. The political representation of members on committees needed to be considered on an annual basis.

The Chairman referred to recommendation 1.3 which related to the Leader of the Council and invited Councillor Wood to address the meeting.

Councillor Wood addressed Council and tendered his resignation as Leader of the Council. Councillor Wood had been Leader since his appointment at the Annual Meeting in 2004 and reported on his highlights as Leader. The Leader also paid respect and tribute to the Chief Executive Officers at the council over the past 20 years. Councillor Wood expressed his gratitude for the support of the Leader's PA who had been in post for the duration of his time as Leader. Councillor Wood, above all, thanked his wife for her support.

On behalf of Council, the Chairman thanked Councillor Wood for his service to the district, our residents and the council as Leader over the past 20 years.

Group Leaders, Councillor Reeves, Councillor Hingley, Councillor Woodcock, Councillor Middleton and Councillor Sibley paid tribute and extended their gratitude to Councillor Wood for his service as Leader.

Councillor Wood having resigned, it was necessary for Council to appoint a Leader. It was proposed by Councillor Lytton and seconded by Councillor

Cotter that Councillor Hingley be appointed Leader of Cherwell District Council.

There being no further nominations, Councillor Hingley was duly appointed Leader of the Council.

The Chairman invited the Leader to report on his Deputy Leader, Executive members and Portfolio Holder allocations for 2024/2025. The Leader advised Councillor Lesley McLean was his Deputy leader and Portfolio Holders as follows:

- Councillor David Hingley – Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Leadership
- Councillor Lesley Mclean – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources
- Councillor Chris Brant, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
- Councillor Jean Conway, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development Management
- Councillor Rob Parkinson – Portfolio Holder for Regulatory
- Councillor Rob Pattenden – Portfolio Holder for Healthy Communities
- Councillor Chris Pruden – Portfolio Holder for Housing
- Councillor Ian Middleton – Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services
- Councillor Tom Beckett – Portfolio Holder for Greener Services

The Chairman led Council through the remaining recommendations and invited the Leader, and Group Leaders as required, to advise of nominations to outside bodies and working groups with appointments as set out in the resolutions.

### Resolved

- (1) That the results of the District Elections held on 2 May 2024 be noted.

Ward	Elected	Party
Adderbury, Bloxham and Bodicote	Gordon Blakeway	Liberal Democrat
Banbury Calthorpe and Easington	Kieron Mallon	Conservative
Banbury Cross and Neithrop	Matt Hodgson	Labour
Banbury Grimsbury and Hightown	Dom Vaitkus	Labour
Banbury Hardwick	Kerrie Thornhill	Labour
Banbury Ruscote	Mark Cherry	Labour
Bicester East	Rob Parkinson	Liberal Democrat
Bicester North and Caversfield	John Willett	Liberal Democrat
Bicester South and Ambrosden	Frank Ideh	Liberal Democrat
Bicester West	Les Sibley	Independent
Cropredy, Sibfords and	Chris Brant	Liberal Democrat

Wroxton		
Deddington	David Rogers	Conservative
Fringford and Heyfords	Grace Conway-Murray	Liberal Democrat
Kidlington East	Linda Ward	Green
Kidlington West	Dorothy Walker	Liberal Democrat
Launton and Otmoor	Alisa Russell	Liberal Democrats

- (2) That the constitution of Political Groups and notification of Group Leaders which has been notified in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.
- Liberal Democrat (17 Members, all Liberal Democrat party members)
    - Group Leader: Councillor David Hingley
  - Labour (13 Members, all Labour & co-operative party members)
    - Group Leader: Councillor Sean Woodcock
  - Conservative (11 Members, all Conservative Group members)
    - Group Leader: Councillor Eddie Reeves
  - Green / Independent<sup>1</sup> (5 Members, comprising 4 Green members and 1 Independent Member)
    - Group Leader: Councillor Ian Middleton
  - Independent (2 Members, comprising 2 Independent Members)
    - Group Leader: Councillor Les Sibley
- (3) That Councillor Hingley be appointed Leader of the Council.
- (4) That the appointment of the Deputy Leader of the Council, the membership of the Executive and Executive portfolios for the municipal year 2024/2025 be noted.

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>
David Hingley (leader)	Strategic Leadership
Chris Brant	Corporate Services
Lesley McLean (deputy leader)	Finance and Resources
Jean Conway	Planning and Development Management
Chris Pruden	Housing
Rob Pattenden	Healthy Communities
Tom Beckett	Greener Communities
Ian Middleton	Neighbourhood Services
Rob Parkinson	Regulatory

- (5) That the allocation of seats on committees that are subject to the political balance requirements be agreed (Annex to the Minutes, as set out in the Minute Book).
- (6) That members (and where appropriate, substitute members) be appointed to serve on each of the Committees as set out below in

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<sup>1</sup> Name of Group to be confirmed

accordance the nominations made by political groups (Annex to the Minutes, as set out in the Minute Book).

- (7) That Councillor Walker be appointed as Cherwell District Council's representative to the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the municipal year 2024/2025.
- (8) That Councillor Rob Pattenden be appointed as Cherwell District Council's appointed representative and Councillor David Hingley be appointed as Cherwell District Council's substitute to the Health and Wellbeing Board for the municipal year 2024/2025.
- (9) That Councillor Rob Parkinson be appointed as Cherwell District Council's appointed representative and Councillor David Hingley be appointed as Cherwell District Council's substitute to the Police and Crime Commissioner Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2024/2025.
- (10) That Councillor David Hingley be appointed as Cherwell District Council's representative and Councillor Lesley McLean be appointed as Cherwell District Council's substitute to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership for the municipal year 2024/2025.
- (11) That Councillors Besmira Brasha, John Broad and Barry Wood be appointed as Cherwell District Council's representatives to the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2024/2025.
- (12) That Executive members be appointed as Cherwell District Council's representative and substitute to each of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership advisory sub-groups as set out below:

Advisory Group	Representative	Named Substitute
FOP Housing Advisory Subgroup	Councillor Chris Pruden	Councillor David Hingley
FOP Infrastructure Advisory Subgroup rep & named sub	Councillor Lesley McLean	Councillor David Hingley
FOP Environment Advisory Subgroup rep & named sub	Councillor Tom Beckett	Councillor David Hingley
FOP Planning Advisory Subgroup rep & name sub	Councillor Jean Conway	Councillor Lesley Mclean

- (13) That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make changes required to the Constitution as a result of the changes referred to in this report.



The Assistant Director Planning and Development submitted a report to seek the making of the Deddington Neighbourhood Plan following the successful referendum and the recommendation of the Corporate Director - Communities.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the referendum result of 2 May 2024 where 93% of those who voted were in favour of the Deddington Neighbourhood Plan, which was above the required 50%, be noted.
- (2) That the Deddington Neighbourhood Plan be formally made so that it continues to have effect as part of the statutory Development Plan for Cherwell District.
- (3) That the Assistant Director – Planning and Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Planning, be authorised to issue and publicise a Decision Statement.

13 **Polling District and Polling Places Review 2024**

The Monitoring Officer & Assistant Director Law and Governance submitted a report to endorse the plans for a statutory review of polling districts and polling places within the administrative boundary of Cherwell District Council.

**Resolved**

- (1) That the proposed timetable for the review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations in the Cherwell district be endorsed.
- (2) That an informal cross-party Polling Place and District Boundary Review working with 9 members (3 Liberal Democrat, 2 Labour, 2 Conservative, 1 Green/Independent and 1 Independent) reflecting the political make-up of the Council and authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer & Assistant Director Law and Governance to finalise the membership in consultation with Group Leaders.

14 **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 7.45 pm

Chairman:

Date:

