

# Whitchurch Town Council

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## ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 5<sup>th</sup> MAY 2022

#### PRESENT

Cllrs: A. Hall (Chair), R. Hall, A. Hotchkiss, A. Jackson, P. Lea, M. Phipps, P. Sample,  
M. Ridgway, G. Sullivan, J. Thornton

#### IN ATTENDANCE

D. Newman – Whitchurch Herald

Proper Officer: Mike McDonald

Councillor A Hall opened the meeting at 7.15pm

#### 1. To elect the Town Mayor (Chairman of the Council)

After a nomination by Cllr Phipps, seconded by Cllr Ridgway it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr A Hall as Town Mayor for the 2022/2023 Civic Year  
**WTC/FC/ACM/01/2223**

#### 2. To receive the elected Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr A Hall read and signed the Declaration of Office and resumed the Chair

#### 3. To elect the Deputy Town Mayor (Vice Chairman of the Council)

After a nomination by Cllr Hotchkiss, seconded by Cllr Sullivan, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to elect Cllr R Hall as Deputy Town Mayor for the 2022/23 Civic Year  
**WTC/FC/ACM/02/2224**

#### 4. To receive the elected Deputy Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Cllr R Hall read and signed the Declaration of Office

#### 5. Apologies

Cllr G Ebbs – abroad

Cllr P Busby – no apology received

#### 6. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of Councillors' Disclosure of Ordinary or Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in relation to the agenda items in this meeting were received

## 7. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021 were agreed and signed as an accurate record of that meeting. Proposed Cllr R Hall, seconded Cllr Sullivan.

## 8. Public Participation

Standing Orders were suspended by the Mayor, whilst members of the public were invited to make representations, ask questions and give evidence in respect of business being transacted at the meeting and about any other matter for which the Council has a responsibility.

*Summary of points raised:*

*Mr Simon Hamlyn:* Congratulated Cllr A Hall and asked him to outline his 3 main priorities  
*Cllr A Hall:*

1. To return the Council to stability with a forward-thinking approach
2. To operate with openness and transparency
3. To restore integrity

*Mr David Pritchard:* How was the Council dealing with issues around the Cemetery upkeep  
*Cllr A Hall:* This is a matter of priority, with action ongoing with representatives of the contractor; Cllr A Hall also acknowledged the efforts of "We Are Whitchurch" voluntary group for their efforts

*Cllr J Thornton:* Confirmed ongoing actions, with Parks & Public Realm Committee oversight  
*Cllr P Sample:* Asked if any responses regarding prospective resolution had been received  
*Cllr A Hall:* Gave an assurance that the Council were taking the matter very seriously, were taking appropriate steps to resolve, but bound by confidentiality

There being no further questions, Standing Orders were reinstated.

## 9. Committees

Cllr Thornton introduced the agenda item and outlined the rationale for a re-organisation of the Council's Committee Structure, Membership and Meeting Dates. After consideration and proposal by Cllr Thornton, seconded by Cllr Sullivan it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to adopt the recommendations outlined below.

**WTC/FC/ACM/03/2223**

<b>WTC COMMITTEES:</b>	
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>
<b>CULTURE &amp; CIVIC</b>	Cllrs Busby, R. Hall, Jackson, Phipps, Sample, Vacancy x 2
<b>PARKS &amp; PUBLIC REALM</b>	Cllrs Ebbs, Hotchkiss, Lea, Ridgway, Sullivan, Thornton, Vacancy x1
<b>PERSONNEL</b>	Cllrs A. Hall, R. Hall, Jackson, Phipps, Thornton

<b>WTC ADVISORY COMMITTEES: WTC COUNCILLOR ONLY</b>	
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>
<b>FINANCE</b>	Cllrs A. Hall, R. Hall, Jackson, Phipps, Thornton

<b>WTC ADVISORY COMMITTEES: INCLUDING EXTERNAL CO-OPTION</b>	
<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>
<b>CEMETERY</b>	Cllrs Hotchkiss, Ridgway, Sullivan, Vacancy x2 Marbury Council representative x1 Residents x2
<b>HERITAGE</b>	Cllrs Busby, Ebbs, Lea, Sample, Sullivan Dr Judith Hoyle (Whitchurch Heritage Centre) Residents x2

### 2022 / 2023 WTC MEETING DATES:

<b>DATE</b>	<b>Parks &amp; Public Realm 7PM</b>	<b>Culture &amp; Civic 8PM</b>	<b>FULL COUNCIL 7.15PM</b>
<b>June 2022</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> June		16 <sup>th</sup> June
<b>July 2022</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> July		21 <sup>st</sup> July
<b>August 2022</b>			18 <sup>th</sup> August
<b>September 2022</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> September		15 <sup>th</sup> September
<b>October 2022</b>			20 <sup>th</sup> October
<b>November 2022</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> November		17 <sup>th</sup> November
<b>December 2022</b>			15 <sup>th</sup> December
<b>January 2023</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> January		19 <sup>th</sup> January
<b>February 2023</b>			16 <sup>th</sup> February
<b>March 2023</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> March		16 <sup>th</sup> March
<b>April 2023</b>			20 <sup>th</sup> April
<b>ANNUAL TOWN MEETING: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023, 6.00PM</b>			
<b>ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING: 11<sup>th</sup> May 2023, 7.15PM</b>			

### 10. Appointment of representatives to outside bodies

It was agreed to appoint representatives to outside bodies as follows, with a second representative to cover, if necessary:

<b>Outside Body</b>	<b>Cllr Representation</b>	
<b>Town Twinning</b>	Sullivan	Hotchkiss
<b>Whitchurch Business Group</b>	TBC	TBC
<b>Whitchurch Waterways Trust</b>	Sullivan	Hotchkiss
<b>Whitchurch Fairtrade Town Group</b>	TBC	TBC
<b>Queensway Playing Fields Association</b>	Lea	Jackson
<b>Beechtree Community Centre</b>	A Hall	R Hall
<b>Whitchurch Walkers (affiliated membership)</b>	Thornton	Ridgway
<b>Higginson Charities and Whitchurch Relief in Need</b>	TBC	TBC

It was agreed to carry over consideration to some memberships to allow time to clarify requirements of individual organisations, to be brought to a future meeting when clarified.

## 11. Reports from Officers of the Council

### Proper Officer, Mike McDonald

The Proper Officer thanked Council for his appointment and referenced a backlog of issues, which were receiving urgent attention. A review of systems, and processes, was also in progress, which may necessitate Committee or Council involvement at a future date.

It was also reported that good progress was being made with an initial “action plan” and positive outcomes were anticipated. Acknowledgement of the help received from Cllrs Thornton and R Hall was given, particularly in relation to clearing some backlogged items.

Mr McDonald also noted the positive reactions and support from the staff team – especially Facilities Manager, Morris Clive and Finance Officer, Charlie Burdock.

## 12. Annual Accounts

- a) It was noted that the Accounts for the Financial Year 2021/2 are in preparation for final approval at a later meeting
- b) It was also noted that an extension granted by the External Auditor for the submission of the Annual Return to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022

## 13. Payments / Grant requests

- a) After a proposal by Cllr Thornton, seconded by Cllr Sullivan, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to approve the schedule of regular payments, as presented  
**WTC/FC/ACM/04/2223**
- b) After a proposal by Cllr Thornton, seconded by Cllr Sullivan, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Grant Applications would be presented to Full Council for approval, following consideration and recommendation from the newly established Finance Advisory Committee  
**WTC/FC/ACM/05/2223**

## 14. Civic Recognition

Cllr A Hall spoke of the long service and commitment to the Council by former Councillor, Alan Chesters. Following a proposal by Cllr A Hall, seconded by Cllr Sullivan, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** that an appropriate offer of a town honour be offered in recognition of the town’s gratitude. The nature of the honour to be determined upon acceptance.

**WTC/FC/ACM/06/2223**

## 15. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS

It was resolved that under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press was excluded for the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of private and confidential information or staff matters.

**16. Chairman’s Briefing**

Cllr A Hall reaffirmed his belief that we now have a forward-thinking, united Town Council, which has welcomed new Councillors, a newly appointed Proper Officer and has a committed staff team. Everyone shared the desire for an environment that recognised equality, diversity, and celebrated achievement, in which everyone should have a voice.

There are no additional confidential minutes for this meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.58pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

WTC DRAFT