



# whitchurch town council

MINUTES: FULL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING, WEDNESDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2024

## MINUTES OF THE FULL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY 2024

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### PRESENT

Councillors: J. De-Wyrall C. Doyle A. Hall R. Hall A. Hotchkiss  
A. Jackson J. Morris M. Phipps M Ridgway

Proper Officer: Mike McDonald

**IN ATTENDANCE:** P. Mullock – Shropshire Councillor (W/North) 4 Members of the Public

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The meeting was held at Bargates Hall, Whitchurch, whilst the Civic Centre is currently closed.

Councillor A. Hall opened the meeting at 7.15pm and welcomed those attending.

#### 1. Standing Item: Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Ebbs and Purt.

#### 2. Standing Item: 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.

#### 3. Standing Item: Mayor and Member Update

17<sup>th</sup> January Shropshire Council Cabinet Meeting  
9<sup>th</sup> February Bradbury Care Centre – launch of Interactive Table (WTC grant-related)

**Members:** R. Hall: Attended Whitchurch Waterways Trust Meeting (24<sup>th</sup> January) regarding Whitchurch Country Park

#### 4. Standing Item: Minutes

- a) The Minutes of the Full Town Council Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023 were unanimously agreed and signed as an accurate record of that meeting. Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr R. Hall
- b) The Minutes of the Extraordinary Full Town Council Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 were unanimously agreed and signed as an accurate record of that meeting. Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr De-Wyrall

## 5. Standing Item: Public Participation

It was resolved that Standing Orders were suspended (Proposed Cllr R. Hall, seconded Cllr Phipps – all in favour), 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.

*(Key: MoP = Member of the Public; SC = Shropshire Council; WTC = Whitchurch Town Council).*

*MoP #1 – Questioned an assurance at SC Cabinet Meeting (17<sup>th</sup> January) that Whitchurch Civic Centre would be included in SC Capital Scheme (SC Cabinet Member) – yet excluded in SC Cabinet Meeting Papers (21<sup>st</sup> February). Position of WTC questioned re Civic Centre considering new temporary premises and referencing “future years” in a recent press statement.*

*MoP#2 – Spoke to create further awareness of the “Save Our Civic” initiative and forthcoming event on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February.*

*MoP#3 – Asked if minutes of the SC Civic Centre Working Group would be published.*

*Shropshire Councillor, Peggy Mullock, confirmed that SC Civic Centre Working Group had met and would chase SC for public update. Undertook to clarify the position re Cabinet Meeting / Capital Scheme and report back to next WTC Meeting. Progress at Swimming Pool and Medical Centre (Pauls Moss) noted.*

*Cllr A. Hall referred to recent WTC public messaging regarding new temporary premises – WTC position remains unchanged and we continue to participate in the SC Civic Centre Working Group. The Town Council continues to call for significant public consultation to assess Community ‘need’ (current and anticipated) and create appropriate solutions for consideration by SC. It was reiterated that the Town Council are a tenant of Shropshire Council, who are owners and Corporate Landlord of the Civic Centre ‘complex’; WTC’s new temporary premises (short-term lease) is for operational stability and driven by a desire to provide community spaces for meetings / activities as previously noted. The reference to “future years” indicated that the Civic Centre situation will not necessarily be a ‘short term fix’, and indicated a commitment to continue to develop an appropriate community offering in the temporary site and elsewhere. The continued ‘passion’ of the Whitchurch community in support of the Civic Centre was especially recognised.*

There being no further items, Standing Orders were reinstated. Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr R. Hall – all in favour

## 6. Governance Matters: Committee, Working and Advisory Chair Reports and Minutes

- a) In the absence of the Committee Chair, the Minutes of the PARKS & PUBLIC REALM Committee Meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> January were received and noted (including the recommendation tabled as item 8 on this agenda), pending approval by the Committee at their next meeting. Proposed Cllr De-Wyrall, seconded Cllr Ridgway – all in favour.
- b) Cllr R. Hall gave a brief overview of the OVERSIGHT Committee Meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> February. The Minutes of the meeting were received and noted, pending approval by the Committee at their next meeting. Proposed Cllr R. Hall, seconded Cllr Phipps – all in favour.
- c) Cllr R. Hall gave a brief overview of the PERSONNEL Committee Meeting of 8<sup>th</sup> February. The Minutes of the meeting were received and noted, pending approval by the Committee at their next meeting. Proposed Cllr R. Hall, seconded Cllr Phipps – all in favour.
- d) It was noted that the meeting of the CULTURE & CIVIC Committee (25<sup>th</sup> January) was cancelled due to the current Civic Centre position and any items brought to Full Council if necessary.

## **7. Co-option of Councillor – West Ward**

The applicant in attendance gave a brief overview of their experience (including voluntary roles) / skills and potential benefit to the Town Council. The sole applicant met criteria to serve as a Town Councillor (confirmed by the Proper Officer). Following consideration, it was **unanimously resolved** to welcome Anthony Gilmore as a Town Councillor for the remainder of the current Council term. Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr R. Hall.  
**WTC/FC/37/2324**

*The 'Declaration of Acceptance of Office' was signed and witnessed by the Proper Officer and Cllr Gilmore joined the meeting at that point. The Proper Officer will complete formalities as a follow-up.*

## **8. Parks & Public Realm Matters: Recommendation WTC/PPR/11a/2324**

Following consideration, it was **unanimously resolved** to approve the use of CiL monies for the provision of an additional streetlight in Thompson Drive, following a resident request and Committee recommendation (£3,455 net). Proposed Cllr Morris, seconded Cllr De-Wyrall. **WTC/FC/38/2324**

## **9. Correspondence received from resident: Grindley Brook Pedestrian Crossing**

Correspondence received via Helen Morgan MP was noted. It was further noted that Shropshire Council Traffic Engineering Team were actively considering this correspondence. Upon receipt, the Proper Officer also flagged the matter with SC Councillors for Whitchurch. It was suggested that enhanced signage for the nearby underpass may be beneficial, which will be followed up by Shropshire Councillor (North) Peggy Mullock (in attendance and acknowledging request).

## **10. Event: Summer 2024**

Following consideration, it was agreed to establish a Working Group of all Councillors in attendance, together with appropriate third parties. The matter will be followed up at the forthcoming Culture & Civic Committee Meeting to be held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

## **11. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS**

To resolve that under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting because of the likely disclosure of private and confidential information or staff matters. For this section, the Council resolves itself into Committee, per s1 (6) of the Act. Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr A. Hotchkiss – all in favour.

## **12. Heritage Centre: Premises**

After consideration, it was agreed that the matter should be delegated to the Culture & Civic Committee for further scrutiny and recommendation, as appropriate.

## **13. Grounds Maintenance Contract – Award of Contract 2024**

After consideration, and feedback from members of the Parks & Public Realm Committee, it was **unanimously resolved** to award the 2024 Seasonal Park/large Open Space Mowing contract to the existing contractor SP Mowing at £10,500 with a revised mowing schedule outlined at quotation stage. The award is made under provision for preferred suppliers (Financial Regulations 11.1 (d) 2023, WTC/FC/ACM/2324). Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr De-Wyrall. **WTC/FC/39C/2324**

#### 14. Legal Matters: Premises

- a) It was noted that the commercial lease negotiated with Chase Enterprises Ltd, 2 Station Road Whitchurch, considered and approved under WTC/EFC/36C/2324 (subject to scrutiny by WTC Crisis Management Group <sup>i</sup> and Oversight Committee) was recently executed under seal (15<sup>th</sup> February 2024). Term – 5 years (3-year break), £2,500 per month.
- b) After consideration, it was **unanimously resolved** to assign a budget of £20,000 from reserves to cover any additional costs to be directly incurred by Whitchurch Town Council in relation to infrastructure needs. This budget incorporates an amount previously put aside for Electrical repairs in the Civic Centre (WTC/CC/03/2324). Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr Phipps. **WTC/FC/40C/2324**
- c) It was acknowledged that cost of the majority of infrastructure works to prepare the new temporary premises for occupation were being met by Chase Enterprises Ltd, to WTC specification – delegated to the Proper Officer under reference to the Crisis Management Group.
- d) The Meeting of the SC Working Group of 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024 was noted and a brief update received pending receipt of meeting notes and related action points. Other matters discussed and separately noted for future action.
- e) The Proper Officer gave a brief update on a meeting with DVSA representatives on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 (PO and Helen Morgan MP) to follow up on recent reports of their ‘withdrawal’ from Whitchurch negotiation. Separately noted for future action.

#### 15. Trust Matters: CJ Berrington Trust & Frank Greaves Trust – Annual Accounts

Meeting as Trustees of each Charitable Trust, it was **unanimously resolved** to approve Annual Accounts for the Financial Year to 31/3/23 as presented. The Accounts were signed by the Chair and Proper Officer / RFO. The aims and objectives of each Trust were noted for future activity and distribution, as appropriate. Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr Phipps. **WTC/FC/41C/2324**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.35pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

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

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

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<sup>i</sup> Established under WTC/FC/25-28/2324