



whitchurch town council

MINUTES: FULL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING, WEDNESDAY 16TH OCTOBER 2024

MINUTES OF THE FULL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16TH OCTOBER 2024

PRESENT

Councillors: J. De-Wyrall C. Doyle G. Ebbs A. Gilmore A. Hall
A. Hotchkiss A. Jackson P. Lea J. Morris M. Phipps
C. Purt M. Ridgway G. Sullivan

Proper Officer: Mike McDonald

IN ATTENDANCE: Gerald Dakin (SC) Peggy Mullock (SC) 0 Members of the Public

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

1. Standing Item: Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr R. Hall for this meeting.

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

18th July 2024	Elmhurst Nursing Home – official opening of the new “Elizabeth Room”
11th August 2024	Mayor of Shrewsbury “Afternoon Tea” (Quarry Park), with Cllr R. Hall
13th August 2024	Shropshire Council Whitchurch Civic Centre Working Group with Proper Officer
13th August 2024	Whitchurch Town Twinning Association Meeting
16th August 2024	Phone Clinic, High Street, Whitchurch – official opening
1st September 2024	Whitchurch Canal Festival
4th September 2024	Whitchurch Town Twinning Association Meeting
6th September 2024	Smooth, Corsa House, Whitchurch with Cllr Ebbs
10th September 2024	Shropshire Council Whitchurch Civic Centre Working Group with Proper Officer
11th September 2024	"Save Our Civic" Group Public Meeting
11th September 2024	Sir John Talbots School – new Astro Pitch official handover
13th September 2024	Whitchurch Garden Club Charity Coffee Morning (Whitchurch Friday Market)
20th September 2024	BBC Radio Shropshire “Make a Difference” Awards
27th September 2024	Macmillan Coffee Morning (Whitchurch Friday Market)
4th October 2024	Presentation to Midlands Air Ambulance Presentation (Whitchurch Friday Market)
5th October 2024	Blackberry Fair with Proper Officer and Brian Welti, High Sherriff of Shropshire
6th October 2024	Harvest Festival, St Alkmund' Church
8th October 2024	Shropshire Council Whitchurch Civic Centre Working Group with Proper Officer
8th October 2024	Whitchurch Waterways Trust meeting with Cllr Hotchkiss
8th October 2024	Whitchurch Town Twinning Association Meeting
13 October 2024	Whitchurch Whippets Foot Race re-enactment (Prees Heath to St Alkmund's Church)

- Samuel Higginson Almshouses Charity Trust site meeting
- 6 weekly sessions at Sir John Talbots delivering WTC “Thriving Children and Families” Project
- Correspondence with SC regarding non-delivery of conditions attached to the Talbot Manor development Planning Approval (namely Claypit Street / London Road highways improvements - 29/09212/ENF refers) – no action by Shropshire Council elected representatives

Members: Included above

4. Standing Item: Minutes

The Minutes of the Full Town Council Meeting held on 17th July 2024 were unanimously agreed and signed as an accurate record of that meeting. Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr Morris.

5. Minutes: Responses from Shropshire Councillors for Whitchurch from FC 17th July 2024

The Proper Officer reported that no satisfactory response had been received to questions submitted to Shropshire Councillors, in their absence from the Full Council Meeting of 17th July 2024 (questions submitted 18th July with several subsequent prompts):

Extract, FC Minutes (17th July 2024, item 5):

“In the absence of Shropshire Councillors, several questions have been forwarded for written response:

- 1) *Regarding the recruitment and establishment numbers at the Clayton Health Centre (Pauls Moss)*
- 2) *Regarding arrangements to hold Shropshire Council contractor to account for verge/open space maintenance.*
- 3) *Regarding replacement and suggested traffic management signage in the Town Centre.”*

An email received from SC Gerald Dakin on 16th October 2024 was circulated for information (and an extract appended to these minutes for the record). It was noted that this did not address the points raised.

The Chairman expressed the disappointment of Whitchurch Town Council that these matters remained outstanding and gave Shropshire Councillors present the opportunity to respond in the Public Participation session of the meeting.

6. Standing Item: Public Participation

It was resolved that Standing Orders were suspended (Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr Ebbs – 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).

SC Peggy Mullock: Unaware of the response sent by SC Dakin, undertook to chase Shropshire Council Officers and others for further responses, citing this for the delays experienced.

Several WTC Councillors also raised clearance drains and ditches, particularly in relation to increased episodes of flooding (areas cited) – SC Peggy Mullock undertook to raise the matter with appropriate Shropshire Council departments.

Cllr Jackson raised potential Japanese Knotweed outbreaks on SC land – noted by SC Peggy Mullock, who undertook to progress with appropriate Shropshire Council departments [from item 8 on this agenda].

An opportunity was given to discuss/update the current financial situation of Shropshire Council – SC Peggy Mullock reported that there was nothing further to add from recent public statements.

WTC asked that SC Leader, Lezley Picton, be invited to the next Whitchurch Town Council Meeting (18th December 2024) – the Proper Officer undertook to issue this invite.

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

7. Policing Matter: PCSO Graeme Baines

The recent retirement of PCSO Graeme Baines (Whitchurch SNT) was noted and all thanked him for his 18 years' service to the town. It was agreed that the Proper Officer will write to him to this effect.

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

- a) Cllr Jackson gave a brief overview of the PARKS & PUBLIC REALM Committee Meeting of 18th September 2024. The Minutes of the meeting were received and noted, pending approval by the Committee at their next meeting. Proposed Cllr Jackson, seconded Cllr De-Wyrall – all in favour.
- b) Cllr Phipps gave a brief overview of the AMENITIES & EVENTS Committee Meeting of 25th September 2024 and highlighted items on this meeting's Agenda. The Minutes of the meeting were received and noted, pending approval by the Committee at their next meeting. Proposed Cllr Phipps, seconded Cllr Ebbs – all in favour.
- c) In the absence of the Committee Chair, Cllr A. Hall (Committee Deputy Chair) gave a brief overview of the OVERSIGHT Committee Meeting of 2nd October 2024 and highlighted items on this meeting's Agenda. The Minutes of the meeting were received and noted, pending approval by the Committee at their next meeting. Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr Ebbs – all in favour.

9. Oversight Committee: Conclusion of Audit – Financial Year ending 31st March 2024

Following consideration, it was **unanimously resolved** to note and accept the "Conclusion of Audit" (FY ending 31/3/24) and the "Expect For" item, as noted in the recent Oversight Meeting (2nd October 2024 – item 5). Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr Morris. **WTC/FC/24/2425**

10. Oversight Committee: Small Community Grants 2024/25 – Round 1 Awards

Full Council specifically noted the awards granted by the Oversight Committee in their recent meeting (2nd October 2024 – item 9, **WTC/O/04-06/2425**).

Procedural Note: Cllr De-Wyrall (Oversight Committee non-member) questioned decision making processes / procedures for the award of grants. The Proper Officer and Chairman highlighted the establishment of WTC Committees, Committee Membership, Terms of Reference and other governance instruments agreed at the Annual Council Meeting on 15th May 2024 (WTC/FC/ACM/03-07 & 09/2425 refers), which defines the decision-making process and delegated powers. The "Good Councillors Guide 2024", recent published by the National Association of Local Councils and included on this Agenda (item 18) was also referenced to clarify distinctions in roles within local Town & Parish Councils (including delegation to Committees).

11. Governance Matters: Annual Appointment of Internal Auditor

Following consideration, it was **unanimously resolved** to confirm the ongoing appointment of JDH Business Services as Internal Auditor for Whitchurch Town Council until the next periodic review. Proposed Cllr Ebbs, seconded Cllr Jackson. **WTC/FC/25/2425**

12. Governance Matters: Risk Register 2024/25

Following consideration, it was **unanimously resolved** to approve the Risk Register 2024/25 revision, as presented. Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr Phipps. **WTC/FC/26/2425**

13. Financial Matters: Supplier Approval

Following consideration, it was **unanimously resolved** approve the following:

LITE Ltd under Financial Regulations 5.10 - 5.13 (et al) and Scheme of Delegation, for the testing, installation and removal of Christmas Light displays and associated activity in relation to the Christmas Light Switch-on 2024 (total £9,310 net), included in WTC Financial Budget 2024/25.

Proposed Cllr Phipps, seconded Cllr A. Hall. **WTC/FC/27/2425**

14. 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 Phipps – all in favour.

15. Financial Matters: Supplier Approval – Streetlight Electricity Supplier (Sensitive/Contractual)

Following a presentation from the Proper Officer, and consideration, it was **unanimously resolved** to approve a change of supplier from Scottish Power to West Mercia Energy with immediate effect, to take advantage of proposed cost savings (indicative £4-5K per annum based on quotes received). Proposed Cllr Sullivan, seconded Cllr Purt. **WTC/FC/28C/24254**

16. Motion – Cllr A. Hall: Proposed Event 2025

Following a presentation by Cllr A. Hall and the Proper Officer, and consideration (including supplier provisions in Financial Regulations 5.10 - 5.13 (et al)), it was **unanimously resolved** to use WTC Reserves as catalytic funding for a new Event in late Spring / early Summer 2025. Use of Reserves restricted to the ‘base’ costs of the proposed event (£20,750 net), with other costs subject to further negotiation, off-set against any event income. The Proper Officer will progress contractual arrangements and the event will be publicly announced, once confirmed. Proposed Cllr A. Hall, seconded Cllr Ebbs. **WTC/FC/29C/2425**

17. SC Whitchurch Civic Centre Working Group / Premises – Councillor Update (Sensitive)

Councillors were appraised of recent developments by the Chairman and Proper Officer, separately noted.

Cllr Hotchkiss left the meeting at 8.38pm

18. The Good Councillors Guide (NALC) 2024: Periodic Recirculation

Receipt and circulation of the current revision of the “Good Councillors Guide” was noted, including its alignment to other WTC Policy Documents (as referenced in item 10 in this meeting) and the Council’s Civility & Respect Pledge (adopted 21/10/2022 – **WTC/FC/34/2223**).

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.50pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting:

Chair: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX 1 – ITEM 5: EXTRACT FROM EMAIL (16TH OCTOBER 2024), SC GERALD DAKIN:

QUESTION 1 – [a and b from original questions submitted] – Clayton Health Centre:

“We have sought advice from Shropshire Council’s Statutory Scrutiny Officer and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In answering your query, we have begun by clarifying the remit of Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees (HOSCs). Their role is set out by government as to:

- Contribute constructively to the development of health services, ensuring that the interests of the community are represented. They provide a unique perspective and vital intelligence for policymakers by highlighting potential risks and ensuring that public concerns are voiced.*
- When substantial changes to health services are proposed, commissioners and providers are required to consult with HOSCs. This ensures that the views of the local community are considered in decision-making processes.*
- HOSCs expect to see evidence of how NHS commissioners and providers have engaged with the community in developing plans. They also ensure that equalities issues are considered, ensuring that all community members are fairly represented.*

These principles guide HOSCs in their role to scrutinise and influence the development and delivery of health services at a strategic level, ensuring that they meet the needs of the local community effectively. Therefore, the HOSC does not typically focus on areas such as the recruitment of GPs and other primary care staff at specific practices as these are specific local matters as opposed to issues affecting a wider geographic area.

The HOSC sets its programme based on topics prioritised by the committee members, considering factors such as the scope and scale of the issues including the communities and geographic areas affected, levels of impact and risk, issues raised by regulators, patient outcomes and experience, and substantial changes to services. Matters related to the staffing at Pauls Moss have not been brought to the attention of the committee for potential inclusion in our work programme. If they had been, they would have needed to consider the appropriate destination for those questions and would have directed them there.

To secure an answer to your questions we would therefore recommend raising these questions with the practice, the North Shropshire Primary Care Network (PCN) and the Integrated Care Board (ICB). Should there be ongoing issues and concerns, you are welcome to share them with the HOSC for consideration for inclusion in their work programme. However, please note that this does not guarantee that they will address the topic.

We have included the relevant contact details below:

North Shropshire PCN north.shropshire.pcn@nhs.net

ICB- NHS Shropshire Telford and Wrekin stw.generalenquiries@nhs.net or 01952 580300”

QUESTION 1 – [c and d from original questions submitted] – Clayton Health Centre:

“Practice Manager to respond”

QUESTION 2 [from original questions submitted] – Scrutiny of Highways Contractor performance:

“Information to be provided”

QUESTION 3 [from original questions submitted] – Misleading, missing or confusing street signage (Town Centre and peripheral areas):

No response