

Whitchurch Town Council

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FULL COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 16th JULY 2020

Held online via Zoom due to Coronavirus Government Guidance

PRESENT

Cllrs: B. Duffy, L. Broders, A. Chesters, S. Hamlyn, A. Hall, J. Martin, S. Radford, J. Sinnott, R. Shepherd, R. Snell and H. Vasey.

NOT PRESENT

Cllr Mike Barker

IN ATTENDANCE

Shropshire Councillor Gerald Dakin

Nicola Young – Town Clerk

Zoë Dean – Town Centre Manager/Assistant Town Clerk

Harry Wright – Journalist, Whitchurch Herald

9 members of the public.

In line with the Council's Meeting Recording Policy, the Chairman asked if anyone was recording the meeting, Cllr Hall declared that he was recording the meeting.

24. Apologies

Cllr Gregory-Peake – work commitment

25. Declarations of Interest

None received.

26. Mayor's Announcements

Following the sad loss of Cllr Terry O'Neill, the Mayor informed the meeting that Whitchurch Town Council had received messages of condolence from Shrewsbury Town Council, Market Drayton Town Council, and the local Policing Team. The Mayor noted that a well-liked member of Whitchurch Town Council had been lost. A one-minute silence was held to remember Cllr O'Neill. The O'Neill family were collecting donations for a memorial bench which would be discussed in more detail in September. Cllr Duffy would represent the Town Council at Cllr O'Neill's funeral on 17th July 2020, where the hearse would slow down, en-route, in front of the Civic Centre at 1.45pm for mourners to pay tribute.

27. Minutes

Cllr Hall asked a question about the election of new members to the Cultural & Civic Centre Committee during the last meeting, which he believed disadvantaged Cllr Sinnott from joining the committee.

The Mayor of Whitchurch clarified Standing Orders and made the following statement:
Standing Orders paragraph 22. Voting on Appointments

Where more than two persons have been nominated for any position to be filled by the Council and of the votes given there is not an absolute majority in favour of one person, the name of the person having the least number of votes shall be struck off the list and a fresh vote taken, and so on until a majority of votes is given in favour of one person.

There were 2 places to be filled.

3 people were nominated for two places on the committee

Voting took place separately for each individual nomination in the order they were nominated, and the vote announced after each vote and voting summed up at the end.

Cllr Sinnott gained 2 votes, Cllr Snell gained 4 votes, Cllr Gregory -Peake gained 5 votes.

Therefore, there were majorities in favour of two people, and in accordance with Standing Orders paragraph 22, the Cllr with the least number of votes, i.e. Cllr Sinnott, was eliminated and the two remaining Cllrs were elected as there were two places available

NALC's solicitor provided legal advice to confirm that the way vote was carried out was a perfectly reasonable approach and that votes for each candidate has been clearly shown, which is the essential requirement. Standing Orders were followed. No one disputed the number of votes stated for each candidate at the time."

Following a proposal from Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Broders,

It was **WTC/27/2021 RESOLVED** to accept and sign the minutes as an accurate record of the Full Council meeting held on 18th June 2020.

8: For. 2: Against. 1 abstention.

28. Public Participation

After a proposal from Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Hall,

It was **WTC/28/2021 RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to allow any members of the public to address the meeting.

29. Update from Local Policing Team

None present, unable to join Zoom meetings.

30. Shropshire Councillor's Report

Shropshire Councillor Gerald Dakin reported to the meeting that Shropshire Council was financially sound despite recent news. The pandemic had cost Shropshire Council approximately £35M, through loss of income and Council Tax. However, £18M had already been received in grants. Shropshire Council hoped to qualify for a further grant from the government, but it would not cover loss of achievable income which is why car parks were chargeable again from 14th July 2020.

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A local business owner drew the Town Council's attention to the Whitchurch Town Centre road closure which had seen the shop's takings drop significantly as a direct result. There had also been issues with deliveries, where drivers are moving the barriers and reversing down the High Street. They stated that there were no deliveries on weekends and asked for what is best for the town, suggesting opening Monday – Friday mornings and creating public refuge spots by removing parking spaces. Closure from Friday lunchtime until Sunday evening was suggested as an alternative, and the Council was urged to take steps to alter the road closure.

After a proposal from Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Martin,
It was **WTC/29/2021 RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

31. Applications to Become Town Councillors

Mr Gregory Ebbs made a short presentation to Council on his suitability for the vacancy.
Mr Mitchell Haynes made a short presentation to Council on his suitability for the vacancy.

Members briefly went into private session in order to vote on the appointment.
Mitchell Haynes received the majority of votes and was duly welcomed onto the Council.

Cllr Duffy congratulated Cllr Haynes on his appointment, noting that there was a second vacancy coming in September where Mr Ebbs would be welcome to reapply.

32. Internal Audit

After a proposal from Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Martin,
It was **WTC/30/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the Internal Audit as read.

33. Annual Accounts

After a proposal from Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Martin,
It was **WTC/31/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the Annual Accounts 2019/2020.

34. Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) – Section 1

After a proposal from Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Martin,
It was **WTC/32/2021 RESOLVED** that the Clerk sign the AGAR Section 1 for 2019/2020.

35. Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) – Section 2

After a proposal from Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Martin,
It was **WTC/33/2021 RESOLVED** that the Clerk sign the AGAR Section 2 for 2019/2020.

36. Accounts

After a proposal from Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn,
It was **WTC/34/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the Month 3 Accounts, noting the funds available as £475,893.

37. Minutes from Committees

- a. After a proposal from Cllr Shepherd, seconded by Cllr Martin,
It was **WTC/35/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 1st October 2020.
- b. After a proposal from Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Duffy,
It was **WTC/36/2020 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Whitchurch JANE Cemetery meeting held on 4th March 2020.
- c. After a proposal from Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Shepherd,
It was **WTC/37/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 12th March 2020.
- d. After a proposal from Cllr Radford, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn,
It was **WTC/38/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Parks & Public Realm Committee meeting held on 4th June 2020.
- e. After a proposal from Cllr Vasey, seconded by Cllr Duffy,
It was **WTC/39/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Cultural & Civic Centre Committee meeting held on 4th June 2020.
- f. After a proposal from Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Martin,

It was **WTC/40/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 11th June 2020. Cllr Hall abstained from the vote.

38. Elect Members to Committees

- a. After a proposal from Cllr Vasey, seconded by Cllr Hall,
It was **WTC/41/2021 RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Haynes to the Parks & Public Realm Committee.
After a proposal from Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Broders,
It was **WTC/42/2021 RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Hall to the Parks & Public Realm Committee.
- b. Heritage Committee meets every other month in the daytime – no one came forward.
- c. The Mayor urged members to join the Cemetery Committee, that Whitchurch Town Council holds a 90% share. No-one came forward to join the Cemetery JANE Committee.
- d. After a proposal from Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Duffy,
It was **WTC/43/2021 RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Haynes to the Planning Committee.

39. Local Energy Bill [Cllr Hamlyn]

After a proposal from Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Martin,
It was **WTC/44/2021 RESOLVED** To support the Local Energy Bill.

40. Motion 24 – [Cllr Shepherd]

Cllr Shepherd introduced the motion for Whitchurch Town Council to set up a Task and Finish Group which was seconded by Cllr Hamlyn.
It was **WTC/45/2021 RESOLVED** to set up a Task and Finish Group.

41. Grounds Maintenance Tender

The Mayor thanked the Working Group. It was noted that a 'Get Out Clause' would be included in the contract, not the tender. The Clerk asked for dates to be provided to complete the covering letter. Members debated the timeframe for the tender submission date. Cllr Sinnott left the meeting at this point.

- a. After a proposal from Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn,
It was **WTC/46/2021 RESOLVED** that all submissions should be received by 7th August 2020, being advertised from 17/07/20 (three weeks).

After a proposal from Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Martin,
It was **WTC/47/2021 RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Radford to the Working Group, with Cllr Martin opening the envelopes with the Town Clerk on 10/08/2020.

It was noted that the Clerk would undertake the evaluation process with two councillors to assess the top three applications. The meeting would be held on 20th August 2020, with the agenda issued on 14/08/20.

42. Annual Meeting

Council noted that the Government had disapplied the legal requirement to hold the Annual Meeting in 2020 due to the Coronavirus and this can be left until May 2021.

After a proposal from Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn,

It was **WTC/48/2021 RESOLVED** to not hold an Annual Meeting in the Council year 2020-2021.

2 abstentions.

43. Bar Lounge - Designer

Following a proposal from Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Vasey,
It was **WTC/49/2021 RESOLVED** to set aside £1,500 to obtain interior design quotes for the Bar Lounge.

44. Room Hire Working Group

After a proposal from Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn,
It was **WTC/50/2021 RESOLVED** to reduce the 2019/2020 room hire rates by 20% (to include VAT). Members noted that this needed marketing with a good news Press Release.

45. Cemetery Tree Quotes

After a proposal from Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Martin,
It was **WTC/51/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the report as presented, appointing Greenman to undertake the work to the trees in the Cemetery.

46. Closure of Green End and High Street

The Town Centre Manager updated Council on recent findings and feedback from the Town Centre businesses regarding the road closure to aid social distancing, which had been both positive and negative. Shropshire Council had provided advice and is now implementing a new government-backed Pavement Permit Scheme. If Whitchurch wished to continue with the closure Shropshire Council had offered to purchase planters to make entrances look more attractive and inviting.

After a proposal from Cllr Martin, seconded by Hamlyn,
It was **WTC/52/2021 RESOLVED** that the Town Council requests Shropshire Council to reopen the road. 7: For. 3 Abstentions.

47. CCTV Tender Documents

Following a proposal from Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Martin,
It was **WTC/53/2021 RESOLVED** to appoint Cllrs Hall, Haynes and Sinnott to a CCTV Working Group.

48. Confidential Business

After a proposal from Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn,
It was **WTC/54/2021 RESOLVED** 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.

49. Independent Review Minute

After a proposal from Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Sinnott,
It was **WTC/55/2021 RESOLVED** that Council agree to DCK Accounting Solutions' quotation to undertake the Grounds Maintenance Review for a negotiable rate of £3,000.

50. Employment Matters

This is a Standing Item. There were no matters to be reported.

Meeting closed at 10.11pm.

Chairman

Date