

Whitchurch Town Council

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FULL COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 19th MARCH 2020

PRESENT

Cllrs: B. Duffy, A. Chesters, A. Hall, S. Hamlyn, J. Martin, S. Radford, J. Sinnott,
R. Shepherd and C. Gregory-Peake.

NOT PRESENT

Cllr: Mike Barker

IN ATTENDANCE

Shaun Jones –Locum Clerk

Harry Wright – Reporter, Whitchurch Herald

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

1. Apologies

Cllr Rose-Mary Snell – self isolating
Cllr Lee Broders – work commitment
Cllr Tony Neville – illness
Cllr Terry O'Neill – illness
Cllr Harvey Vasey – self isolating

2. Declarations of Interest None received.

3. Mayor's Announcements

Thanks to Councillors for help. COVID-19 is bringing everyone together – but social distancing of 2m observed this evening. Stay safe.

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

It was **WTC/180/1920 RESOLVED** to defer the following agenda items in order to expedite tonight's council business, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 19 & 24 plus add two additional matters to note to agenda item 20, f. Neighbourhood Help card and g. Delegate council powers to Officers. All in favour.

4. Minutes

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

It was **WTC/181/1920 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Council meeting held on **Thursday 20th February 2020** and sign as an accurate record of that meeting. All in favour.

Matter arising:

Minute 31. Cllr. Sinnott asked if a start date for Highline had been agreed.

Signed

5. Council Resolution Record

Deferred.

6. Public Participation

Deferred.

7. Update from Local Policing Team

Deferred.

8. BID Presentation

Deferred.

9. Shropshire Councillor's Report

Deferred.

10. Accounts

After a proposal from Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Martin,
It was **WTC/182/1920 RESOLVED** to accept the Month 11 accounts. The Mayor signed the accounts.

11. Minutes from Committees

- a. After a proposal from Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Duffy,
It was **WTC/183/1920 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Heritage Committee meeting held on 14th January 2020.
- b. After a proposal from Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Peake,
It was **WTC/184/1920 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Whitchurch JANE Cemetery meeting held on 22nd January 2020.
- c. After a proposal from Cllr Radford, seconded by Cllr Hall,
It was **WTC/185/1920 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Culture & Civic Centre Committee meeting held on 6th February 2020.
- d. After a proposal from Cllr Shepherd in, seconded by Cllr Martin,
It was **WTC/186/1920 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 13th February 2020.
- e. After a proposal from Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Shepherd,
It was **WTC/187/1920 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 13th February 2020.

12. Reports from Councillors on Outside Bodies

Deferred.

13. Elect Members to Committees

Deferred.

14. Motion 24 – Cllr Shepherd

Deferred

15. Motion 25 – Cllr Sinnott

Deferred

Signed

16. Museum Collection – Transfer of Title

After a proposal from Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Martin, It was **WTC/188/1920 RESOLVED** to formally transfer the title of the current museum collection to Whitchurch Museum & Archives, a Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) numbered 1177596 with 2 clauses to protect the collection should the CIO be dissolved – firstly title returned to Whitchurch Town Council or secondly Shropshire Museums would act as the collection’s “home of last resort”.

17. Place Plan Update

After a proposal from Cllr Shepherd, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn, It was **WTC/189/1920 RESOLVED** to add the community building known as Centre North East (NE) (currently subject to a live Community Asset Transfer (CAT) from Shropshire Council to Whitchurch Town Council proposal) to the list of Neighbourhood Projects in the Whitchurch Place Plan. Mark Barrow, Director of Place, Shropshire Council to be consulted on how this should be recorded.

18. Whitchurch Cemetery Memorial Fees

After a proposal from Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Chesters, It was **WTC/190/1920 RESOLVED** to approve the uplift in Whitchurch Cemetery memorial fees in a bid to achieve financial self-sufficiency and more in line with other local cemeteries.

19. Whitchurch Against Pointless Plastic

Deferred.

20. COVID-19 - Coronavirus

- a) After a proposal by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn it was **WTC/191/1920 RESOLVED** that scheduled Food & Drink Festival and Party in the Park events be cancelled or postponed due to the expected peak of coronavirus infections being estimated about 12 weeks hence.
Government advice will be followed and other bookings reviewed if emergency measures remain in place.
- b) After a proposal by Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Chesters it was **WTC/192/1920 RESOLVED** that an honest, straight forward and pragmatic view on hirers wishing to cancel bookings due to the coronavirus emergency be adopted. Deposits will be refunded or bookings moved forward in the calendar.
- c) Since the meeting agenda was published the Civic Centre has been closed, following government advice and our duty of care. Arrangements for administration staff to have a remote connection from home to council computers are underway. Facilities staff can progress outstanding maintenance work. The cemetery registrar may require access to burial records kept at the Civic Centre.
- d) After a proposal by Cllr Sinnott, seconded by Cllr Radford it was **WTC/193/1920 RESOLVED** that employment terms and conditions along with Government and National Association of Local Councils (NALC) stipulated guidelines are followed with coronavirus related staff absence.

Signed

- e) After a proposal by Cllr Shepherd, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn it was **WTC/194/1920 RESOLVED** that all council meetings scheduled in April and potentially May (Government advice being monitored) be cancelled. Extraordinary Council Meetings exempted.

An amendment proposed by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Sinnott that all scheduled meetings continue (with proper precautions) failed ahead of the above resolution.

- f) Members were referred to the Help Card included in this evenings meeting pack. Designed to assist those residents who are self-isolating from risk of coronavirus infection to identify any needs. Cllr Hall had also put forward some ideas to support vulnerable residents by email. St Alkmund Parish Church Council (PCC) has a list of willing volunteers. Cllr Martin requested a role for WTC co-ordinating with voluntary groups in the community (e.g. St Alkmund's led group) to provide support needed – be added to the Extraordinary Council Meeting agenda next week. After input from other members with their concerns on how such work would impact on council staff, now working from home Cllr Martin withdrew his request.

Cllr Hall suggested that members of Whitchurch Chamber of Trade have contact details published on social media. Cllr Hamlyn stated priorities for assistance should be discussed with council staff led by the Town Centre Manager to determine how best to support/stand behind the community.

Cllr Shepherd summarised that we follow government guidelines, communicate with St Alkmund PCC, assist with highlighting any gaps in coverage of community support and make suggestions.

- g) It was noted by members that an Extraordinary Council Meeting will be called by Cllr. Duffy to take place in one week to ensure council agrees on arrangements of delegation to officers in the period while council is not able to meet.

21. Confidential

After a proposal by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Chesters it was **WTC/195/1920 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.

All recordings were ceased.

22. Civic Centre Freehold

After a proposal by Cllr Sinnott, seconded by Cllr Shepherd it was **WTC/196/1920 RESOLVED** that to sell the ramp with the purchaser meeting our legal costs.

Further matters concerning the Draft Heads of Terms Agreement were considered.

Clause 6 outlines a lease back arrangement for the space occupied currently by the library and garage, members wish to clarify terms if a situation arose where the space became vacant. Members asked for an open and frank discussion with the Executive Director of Place at Shropshire Council to take place – with their comments made this evening as input in order to come to a form of words acceptable to both parties.

Clause 13 concerns access rights to the building –pedestrian and vehicular. After a proposal by Cllr Shepherd, seconded by Cllr Sinnott it was **WTC/197/1920 RESOLVED** that the updates proposed by WTC should be deleted and the original clause reinstated

Signed

23. Room Hire Working Group

The report and feedback from the Room Hire Working Group was not available. Cllr Duffy recalled the treatment of VAT (whether inclusive or exclusive) was one of the recommendations. All agreed to add to the agenda of the upcoming Extraordinary Council Meeting scheduled one week from today.

24. Equality & Diversity Training

Deferred.

25. Staffing Matter

Cllr Hamlyn read out a prepared statement.

Meeting closed at 9.03pm

Chairman

Date