

# Whitchurch Town Council

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## FULL COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES OF A FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
THURSDAY 17<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2020, VIA ZOOM COMMENCING 7.15pm.

### Present:

Cllrs Broders, Chesters, Cooper, Duffy, Gregory-Peake, Hamlyn, Hall, Haynes, Martin, McDonnell, Radford, Sinnott, Vasey.

### In attendance:

Zoë Dean – Acting Town Clerk  
Gillian Bailey – Locum Support Officer  
Harry Wright – Whitchurch Herald  
Cllr Gerald Deakin – Shropshire Council  
8 x members of the public

In line with the Council's meeting recording policy, the Chair advised that this meeting was being recorded. The Chair asked if anyone was recording the meeting. Cllr Hall requested permission to record.

### 134. Apologies

Cllr R Snell – technical difficulties

### 135. Declarations of Interest

There were not declarations of interest.

### 136. Mayor's Announcements

- a. The Civic Centre will be closed between 21<sup>st</sup> December – 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021. There are no room hires. This will save costs on building heating costs and allow staff to take accumulated holiday.
- b. Councillors are invited to an informal meeting with the appointed designer on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 10.30am
- c. Thank you to a generous local benefactor who has kindly donated £10,000 towards the refurbishment of Centre North East.
- d. At the request of family members, the memorial bench for Terry O'Neill will be placed in Spring with a small commemoration service.
- e. Thank you to all Councillors who are volunteers for their service throughout the year and to staff who have continued to work during what has been a very challenging time.
- f. Happy Christmas to all, I look forward to working with you in the New Year.

### 137. Minutes

After a proposal from Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Vasey, it was **WTC/140/2021 RESOLVED** to accept and sign the minutes from the Full Council meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2020 as an accurate record of that meeting.

### 138. Public Participation

After a proposal from Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Chesters, it was **WTC/141/2021 RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders for the purpose of public participation.

Initials .....

Two members of the public requested to speak:

**One**

Question: Why has the staffing budget been increased by over £18,000?

Response by Cllr Chesters: The budget is still under discussion this is one of the areas that will be reviewed.

Question: It seems incongruous that an item on Freedom of Information is being discussed in confidential.

Response by Acting Town Clerk: Councillors have received a confidential report for information that relates to the item on DPO Services. Some of this information is sensitive.

Cllr Duffy also advised that the report contained commercially sensitive information.

**Two**

The policing team have not been available for a few meetings. He has messaged Inspector Greenaway regarding this. It would be helpful if the police could provide a written statement or video recording could be available. Cllr Duffy advised that there is a written report for this meeting. It was agreed this could be forwarded and made public.

**139. Update from Local Policing Team**

- a. **Derelict buildings:** The old Herald printers and Horse and Jockey have now been made secure.
- b. **ASB Jubilee Park:** Following reports of ASB and smoking cannabis, foot patrols have been carried out including a stop search which proved positive which was dealt with formally.
- c. **Criminal damage to CCTV** adjacent to skate park: Full investigation undertaken. Due to lack of evidence this has now been filed pending further information.
- d. **ASB Tesco Car Park:** Regular patrols have taken place, drivers identified and one section 59 issued.
- e. **Licensing** checks are undertaken regularly.
- f. **Covid breaches:** SNT have attended and dealt with reports accordingly. Within Shropshire a patrol has been allocated to deal with Covid reports. Local policing team will deal with priority incidents.
- g. **Town Centre CCTV:** continuing problems with cameras resetting, out of focus images and the system freezing.
- h. **Campaigns:** NPCC Christmas Don't Drink and Drive
- i. **West Mercia Website:** can be used to report incidents with exactly the same response as 101.
- j. **Monthly Crime Advice:** Scam telephone calls.

Cllr Sinnott suggested that the Council may be able to undertake a civil prosecution in the case of the criminal damage to the CCTV.

**140. Shropshire Councillor's Report**

Cllr Deakin gave a report.

**Budget**

Shropshire Council is working on the budget 2020/21 this will be in balance with the use of some reserves.

Members are considering the budget for 2021/22. There is an option to increase the precept by 5%; 2% for social care and 3% for general funds. Shropshire Council is one of the lowest funded authorities in the country. If there is no increase, there is a risk central government will not increase its funding.

A final decision will be made in the new year.

**Local Plan**

All modifications to the first consultation have been made. There will be a further consultation in the new year for 7 weeks, then the plan will be sent to central government.

Initials .....

After a proposal by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Broders it was **WTC/142/2021 RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

**141. Accounts**

Following a proposal from Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn it was **WTC/143/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the Month 8 Accounts.

**142. Virement Report**

Following a proposal by Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn it was **WTC/144/2021 RESOLVED** to agree and sign the latest virement report.

**143. Correspondence**

a. Blackberry Fair have been turned down for two significant grants; organisers hope that Whitchurch Town Council will be able to continue their support.

Following a proposal from Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Vasey it was **WTC/145/2021 RESOLVED** to receive and note the contents of the letter from Blackberry Fair.

b. Hope House thanked the Council for the recent grant. Following a proposal by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Gregory-Peake, it was **WTC/146/2021 RESOLVED** to receive and note the contents of the letter from Hope House.

**144. Minutes from Committees**

a. Following a proposal from Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Haynes it was **WTC/147/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Parks & Public Realm Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

b. Following a proposal from Cllr Vasey, seconded by Cllr Gregory-Peake it was **WTC/148/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Culture & Civic Centre Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

c. Following a proposal from Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Martin, it was **WTC/149/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020

d. Following a proposal by Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Gregory-Peake it was **WTC/150/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020

e. Following a proposal by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn it was **WTC/151/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Cemetery Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2020.

Cllr Sinnott queried the quotes for work to trees. After a google search he believed that the trees belonged to Hill Valley. The Acting Town Clerk confirmed that the land registry search was still ongoing and that the works were becoming urgent.

f. Following a proposal by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Duffy it was **WTC/152/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Heritage Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

**145. Appointment of Members to Committees**

There were no nominations for the vacancy on the Parks & Public Realm Committee.

**146. Reports from Outside Bodies**

The following reports were received.

**Whitchurch Walkers**

Cllr Duffy reported that the walking festival had to be cancelled. walks were now taking place in small groups, including on New Years day. Over 220 hours of voluntary work on rights of way had been undertaken; a significant achievement considering work stopped between March and August. Sixty kissing gates have been replaced since 2011 and a new walking booklet has been issued. Cllr Hall gave the following reports.

**Waterways Trust**

Cllr Hall reported that although no meetings, group has been kept going by email.

**Chamber of Commerce**

Initials .....

Still operating. Scarecrows have been placed around the town, good work by Hilary Seward and Fiona Wilson in reviving town centre and keeping people shopping locally. The Chamber has also been supporting the work done by helping hands supporting vulnerable people in the community.

**147. Budget 2021/2022**

Cllr Chesters spoke on the challenges the Council faces in setting the budget for 2021/2020. Based on the draft report there is a £50,000 shortfall. The tax base has been reduced which will further impact the precept.

There are still good general reserves and there may be a surplus at the year end.

Councillors were asked for suggestions to reduce the budget. It would be helpful if these could be emailed to Alison prior the meeting.

Following a recommendation from Finance Committee, it was agreed to hold an Extraordinary meeting at 6pm on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021 for all councillors to discuss the budget in detail.

**148. Centre North East**

Council received a report detailing current projects.

In response to a question from Cllr Hall, the locum support officer confirmed that she had been advised that the figure in the report for the raked seating was £50,000. Cllr Hall advised that he had not seen a resolution on this.

In response to a question from Cllr Sinnott, the locum support officer confirmed that the last update on the lease for the Civic Centre she had received from Shropshire Council was that the stopping up order was still outstanding.

**149. Confidential Business**

Following a proposal from Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr McDonnell it was **WTC/153/2021 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.

It was confirmed that recording had stopped. Members confirmed they had stopped recorded and confirmed that no one was present for this section of the meeting.

**150. DPO Services**

Following a proposal by Cllr Haynes, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn it was **WTC/154/2021 RESOLVED** to appoint Telford & Wrekin Council's gold data protection service.

There were 4 abstentions.

**151. Grounds Maintenance Tender**

Following a proposal from Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Duffy, it was **WTC/155/2021 RESOLVED** to award the Grounds Maintenance contract to Contractor 8, subject to contract with an early break clause if the quality of work is not to the standard in the tender.

**152. Appointment of Temporary Staff**

Following a proposal by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Broders, it was **WTC/156/2021 RESOLVED** to appoint a temporary administration assistant.

Cllr Chesters left the meeting at 21:25 as he was feeling unwell.

**153. Recruitment**

Members considered the recruitment package as presented.

Following a proposal by Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Duffy, it was **WTC/157/2021 RESOLVED** to approve the recruitment package as recommended by the Personnel Committee.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21:36

Signed .....

Dated .....