

Whitchurch Town Council

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FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of a meeting of Whitchurch Town Council held on Thursday 18th March 2021, held via Zoom due to Coronavirus Government Guidance, commencing at 7:15pm.

Present:

Cllrs: A Chesters, A Cooper, B Duffy (Chair), S Hamlyn, A Hall, M Haynes, J Martin, W McDonnell, S Radford, J Sinnott.

In Attendance:

Gillian Bailey – Locum Support Officer (Clerk to this meeting)

Harry Wright – Whitchurch Herald

Anna Shore

5 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.

198. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Cllr R Snell – unwell

Cllr L Broders – work commitment

Cllr Gregory-Peake – family commitment

Cllr G Dakin.

199. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Ordinary or Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in relation to the agenda items in this meeting.

200. Mayors Announcements

The Mayor advised that she had attended a meeting of the Local Area Committee and raised the issue of access to the southbound platform with James Willcox (Shropshire Council). She has also raised this in a meeting with MP Owen Patterson.

The Mayor suggested that the Council formally write to Shropshire Council and Owen Patterson requesting support to resolve this issue.

201. Minutes

Cllr Sinnott queried resolution WTC/188/2021 as he believed that it had been agreed to only remove trees which were dangerous; all of the trees have been removed.

Cllr Hall asked for an amendment to resolution WTC/194/2021 to update Helen Dainty to read Helen Williams.

It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Sinnott and **WTC/197/2021 RESOLVED** to confirm and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 18th February 2021.

202. Public Participation

It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn and **WTC/198/2021 RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders to allow any members of the public to address the meeting.

Nick Saxby addressed the meeting: Shropshire Climate Action Partnership are encouraging groups to track their environmental footprint. This could be a community group, class or a group of colleagues. Information is collated by one group member to be shared with the partnership. Useful tools include: <https://zero.giki.earth/> more information is available at <https://zerocarbonschropshire.org/>

Cllr Hamlyn thanked Mr Saxby. 2021 is an important year for climate change with COP26 (UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties) taking place in Glasgow in November. He suggested that a future Whitchurch Council meeting considers what action the council can take towards a goal of zero carbon.

203. Update from Local Policing Team

Council received a written report summarised as:

PC Debs Wheeler will be leaving her current position to start a new role at Shrewsbury on 1st April 2021.

- Suspicious Circumstance: report of door to door selling.
- Covid Breaches: numerous reports of a covid breach have been received
- RTC's: 2 none injury RTC's reported, 1 on the A41 Chester roundabout and 1 on the Tilstock roundabout
- Concern for safety: report of homeless person with dog living in tent, SNT have assisted in getting accommodation and the homeless person and dog have been housed.
- ASB: 2 reports of ASB of youth's gathering playing football. Highways: report of tree blocking one lane outside the rear entrance of SJT.
- Vehicle nuisance: report of a scrambler being ridden anti socially within Sedgford.
- Theft: 1 report of theft of mini digger and trailer, mile bank
- Burglary: 1 report of a burglary on Shakespeare way
- Mobile Patrols: SNT have been carrying out regular mobile patrols within your area
- Covid Patrols: SNT have been carrying out regular of local parks and have been visiting all supermarkets and carried out walk throughs of the stores all customers and staff wearing masks and social distancing.

Cllr Hall asked that the clerk respond to the report to thank Debs for her hard work and support in the town.

204. Shropshire Councillors Report

Apologies have been received from Cllr Dakin in line with pre-election guidance.

It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Sinnott and **WTC/199/2021 RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

205. Accounts

It was proposed by Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn and **WTC/200/2021 RESOLVED** to receive Month 11 Balance Sheets and Income & Expenditure Reports as presented.

206. Minutes from Committees

The Council received the following minutes from Committees.

In response to a question from Cllr Sinnott, the Locum Clerk reminded members that the position of Cemetery Clerk was still vacant.

- a) It was proposed by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Duffy and **WTC/201/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Cemetery (JANE) Committee held on 2nd December 2020.
- b) It was proposed by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Haynes and **WTC/202/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Parks & Public Realm Committee held on 4th February 2021.
- c) It was proposed by Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Duffy and **WTC/203/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Cultural & Civic Centre Committee held on 4th February 2021.
- d) It was proposed by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr McDonnell and **WTC/204/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Heritage Committee held on 9th February 2021.
- e) It was proposed by Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Duffy and **WTC/205/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 11th February 2021.

207. Reports from Outside Bodies

Cllr Hamlyn reported that he had attended a meeting of the Samuel Higginson Trust.

Cllr Hall attended an initial meeting of the group set up to consider youth service provision.

208. Co-option

Members received a presentation from Anna Shore. Members of the public left the meeting to allow a confidential vote.

It was **WTC/206/2021 RESOLVED** to co-opt Anna Shore to the vacancy on Whitchurch Town Council.

Members of the public returned to the meeting.

209. Committee Vacancies

- a) Following a nomination by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Haynes it was **WTC/207/2021 RESOLVED** to appoint Anna Shore to the Parks & Public Realm Committee
- b) Following a nomination by Cllr McDonnell, seconded by Cllr Duffy it was **WTC/208/2021 RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr McDonnell to the Cemetery (JANE) Committee.

210. Recommendation from Culture and Civic Centre Committee

It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn and **WTC/209/2021 RESOLVED** to approve a recommendation to update the stage electrics with an LED system and the installation of ex-demonstration LED lighting within budget EMR 316.

211. Civic Centre Freehold

Members discussed the challenges experienced in the ongoing negotiations to obtain the freehold for the Civic Centre from Shropshire Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Duffy and **WTC/210/2021 RESOLVED** to invite senior officers to a meeting to discuss how to progress the Civic Centre freehold.

212. Whitchurch BID Feasibility Report

It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn and **WTC/211/2021 RESOLVED** to receive the recent Whitchurch BID Feasibility Report from the Mosaic Partnership.

213. Doubtful Debts

Members received a report and corresponding documents. The internal auditor has recommended that provision is made in the accounts for doubtful debts so these are not included in the balance sheet as income. Council is asked to consider the reports and agree action.

£12,000 of those invoices identified as doubtful relate to Shropshire Council's use of the hub within the Civic Centre for previous financial years. Whitchurch Town Council has been advised by a senior officer that these would not be paid as there was no agreement in place. Members made the following points:

- Negotiations were ongoing over a long period of time, there were delays in responses, the officer declined to sign the agreement.
- Shropshire Council has had the benefit of use, whether or not there was an agreement in place.

It was suggested that this outstanding debt should be included in the list of items to be discussed with senior Shropshire Council officers. See WTC/210/2021.

It was proposed by Cllr Sinnott, seconded by Cllr Hall and **WTC/212/2021 RESOLVED** to allocate £12,000 to doubtful debts and to write off the remaining £709.20.

214. Virement Report

It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Chesters and **WTC/213/2021 RESOLVED** to accept and sign the virement report as received.

215. Audit Action Plan

Work has been done on evidencing progress made and outstanding actions in relation to recommendations made by the internal auditor and DCK Beavers. The Chair thanked staff for the amount of work undertaken to put this together. The action plan will be regularly reviewed by the Finance Committee.

Cllr Hall stated that there were some inaccuracies and that he would forward information by email.

It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn and **WTC/214/2021 RESOLVED** to receive the Audit Action Plan and note the progress made to date.

216. Service Contract Review

Cllr Sinnott suggested that the terms of reference for the Finance Committee are updated to include review of service contracts.

It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Sinnott and **WTC/215/2021 RESOLVED** to receive the Service Contract Review document and renewal information.

217. Town Council Website

Members discussed the report presented to them.

- a) It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn and **WTC/216/2021 RESOLVED** to develop of a WCAG2.1AA compliant website at a budget not to exceed £3,000.

- b) It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Chesters and **WTC/217/2021 RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Radford and Cllr Hamlyn to review proposals and identify a preferred supplier and scope.

218. Bar Lounge Project

Members considered the detailed report presented to them. Following a discussion.

- a) It was proposed by Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Duffy and **WTC/218/2021 RESOLVED** to increase the budget for the bar lounge project to £40,000.
- b) It was proposed by Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Duffy and **WTC/219/2021 RESOLVED** to accept Shropshire Council's terms and conditions in relation to the project.
- c) It was proposed by Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Duffy and **WTC/220/2021 RESOLVED** allocate £10,000 from the general purpose fund to the budget for the Bar Lounge project.
- d) It was proposed by Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Duffy and **WTC/221/2021 RESOLVED** to commission a quantity surveyor to prepare pre-tender budget estimates at a cost of £300.

219. Confidential Business

It was **WTC/222/2021 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.

220. Grounds Maintenance SLA

It was **WTC/223/2021 RESOLVED** to approve the Grounds Maintenance SLA and accompanying report from the solicitor.

221. Project Update

Members received a verbal update.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21:23

Signed

Date: