

Whitchurch Town Council

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FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of a meeting of Whitchurch Town Council held on:
THURSDAY 18th FEBRUARY 2021 commencing at 7.15pm.

Held online via Zoom due to Coronavirus Government Guidance

Present:

Cllrs: L Broders, A Chesters, A Cooper, B Duffy, S Hamlyn, A Hall, M Haynes, J Martin, W McDonnell, S Radford, R Shepherd, J Sinnott.

In attendance:

Zoë Dean – Acting Town Clerk
Gillian Bailey – Locum Support Officer
Cllr G Dakin – Shropshire Council
Harry Wright – Whitchurch Herald
6 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.

177. Apologies

There were no apologies received prior to the meeting.

178. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

179. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor advised that at a lobbying meeting on the 9th of February 2021 with MP Owen Patterson she had raised the issue of access to the Southbound Platform at Whitchurch Station.

180. Minutes

It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr McDonnell and **WTC/177/2021 RESOLVED** to confirm and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 21st January 2021.

181. Public Participation

It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr McDonnell and **WTC/178/2021 RESOLVED** to suspend Standing Orders for the purpose of public participation.

182. Update from Local Policing Team

The Chair read a written report received from the local policing team. Summarised below.

- RTC's: 2 reported both slight injuries.

- Mobile Patrols: SNT have been carrying out regular mobile patrols within your area, including foot patrols of the town centre and visiting all supermarkets and public houses.
- Suspicious Circumstances: 1 x report males trying vehicle doors.
- Highways Incidents: 1 report on A41 of oil spillage, 1 report of sink hole on Talbot Street, 1 report of loose sheep on the A49, Several reports of ice on the A49
- Covid Breaches: Numerous Covid breaches.
- Anti-Social Behaviour: 1 x report of youth knocking on doors on St Johns Street, 1 x report of youths at the rear of the Archibald, 1 x report of youths in vehicles in the bottom church carpark.
- Theft: 1 x report of theft of scaffolding.
- SNT Inspector: Claire Greenaway has now returned to SNT as an Inspector (3155).

183. Shropshire Councillors Report

Cllr Dakin gave the following report:

- Council tax will be set by Shropshire Council at the meeting 25.2.21. It is likely it will be an increase of between 2 – 4%
- Highways: there are 5,000 km of roads to be maintained within Shropshire. Two years ago £5m from the budget of £20m was re-allocated by Shropshire Council to social care. This year central government has cut the highways budget by £5m, giving a total of 50% reduction in budget for highways. Shropshire Council is lobbying government for an increase in allocated funds.
- Work can now begin on the new medical centre at Pauls Moss. The development will include 74 one and two bedroom extra care homes.
- In response to a question Cllrs Dakin was not able to confirm recent reports regarding increases in Shropshire Councillor allowances.
- In response to a question Cllr Dakin confirmed that there was no time scale for works to commence on Pauls Moss.

It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Haynes and **WTC/179/2021 RESOLVED** to reinstate Standing Orders.

184. Accounts

It was proposed by Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Martin and **WTC/180/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the Month 10 accounts as presented.

185. Minutes from Committees

To receive minutes from the following Committees:

- a) It was proposed by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Haynes and **WTC/181/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Parks & Public Realm Committee held 3rd December 2020.
- b) It was proposed by Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Radford and **WTC/182/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Cultural & Civic Centre Committee held 3rd December 2020.
Cllr Duffy noted that the 'Whitchurch Have Your Say' Facebook group referred to in item 73 is a private group.
- c) It was proposed by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr McDonnell and **WTC/183/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Heritage Committee held 1st December 2020.

d) It was proposed by Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Radford and **WTC/184/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Personnel Committee held on 10th December 2020.

In response to a query from Cllr Sinnott (item 46a) the Clerk confirmed that there had been no change in the Locum Support Officers working hours and that the item was to correct an earlier procedural error.

e) It was proposed by Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Martin and **WTC/185/2021 RESOLVED** to accept the minutes of the Finance Committee held on 14th January 2021.

186. Correspondence

Members received a letter of thanks from a resident for their work in the town including, the parks, hanging baskets and Christmas lights.

187. Reports from Outside Bodies

Whitchurch Walkers: Cllr Duffy reported that the walking festival will be going ahead this year though it will be scaled back.

188. Policy Renewal

It was proposed by Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Duffy and **WTC/186/2021 RESOLVED** that a working group be set up to review Council policies.

It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn and **WTC/187/2021 RESOLVED** to appoint Cllrs Duffy, Hamlyn, Radford and Sinnott to the working group.

189. Motion 30

Cllr Hall withdrew his motion.

190. Recommendation from Parks and Public Realm Committee P&PR/56/2021

Officers have been advised by contractors that the conifers in Jubilee Park along the fence line backing onto Joyce Way are not root firm, this combined with their height pose a potential safety risk. The Clerk confirmed that the latest tree survey did not include these trees. The Clerk advised that the decision was needed to allow the work to take place before nesting season. Quotes have been received to either top or to fell the trees.

Following a lengthy discussion, Cllr Shepherd proposed that the resolution be amended to remove the trees entirely, the amendment was seconded by Cllr Chesters and it was **WTC/188/2021 RESOLVED** to fell the conifers at a total cost of £3,100.

191. Cemetery Trees

Members received a copy of the 2020 tree survey highlighting work to be undertaken to three trees and a Holly bush. The Acting Town Clerk advised that this work was urgent and needed to be undertaken prior to the commencement of nesting season on 01/03/21. The Acting Town Clerk advised that she had discussed the boundary query with Hill Valley Golf Club and had viewed the boundary from Hill Valley side and was able to confirm that the trees identified were within the boundary of the cemetery.

It was proposed by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr Duffy and **WTC/189/2021 RESOLVED** to appoint Newman Landscapes to undertake work as required to the three trees T211, T212, T214 and holly hedge G210 at a total cost of £1,700 + VAT.

192. Gifted Tree for Jubilee Park

Members expressed their gratitude to Nobridge Nurseries for their proposal to plant a cherry tree in Jubilee Park in memory of Cllr Terry O'Neill.

Cllr Hamlyn has talked to one of Terrys' good friends who suggested suitable wording.

It was proposed by Cllr Hamlyn, seconded by Cllr Duffy and **WTC/190/2021 RESOLVED** that the plaque read '*In fond memory of Cllr Terry O'Neill who loved this special place*'.

193. Replacement Street Lighting Columns

The majority of the upgrade to LED has been completed. There are 32 old columns which cannot be converted and will need replacement, 3 are now beyond repair.

It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Chesters, and **WTC/191/2021 RESOLVED** to replace street lighting columns as follows, Worthington Street No 145, Westbrook Av No78, Elizabeth St No 160 at a total cost of £6,530.40 from allocated CIL funds.

194. Civic Centre Freehold

Councillors received a written report. The Stopping Up Order to the front of the Civic Centre is still outstanding; Shropshire Council has offered a contribution of £5,000 towards work required to the walkway at the rear of the Civic Centre.

Members agreed that the rear walkway was the responsibility of Shropshire Council and that all repairs should be undertaken prior to Whitchurch Council taking the freehold for the Civic Centre.

It was proposed by Cllr Martin, seconded by Cllr McDonnell and **WTC/192/2021 RESOLVED** to write to Shropshire Council to point out their responsibilities as landlords and request that any outstanding issues be resolved prior to the transfer of the freehold.

195. Project Update

Councillors received a written report:

1. Centre North East: Work is continuing on feasibility and costings.

2. Grounds Maintenance Contract: A draft service level agreement has been drawn up:
It was proposed by Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Duffy, and **WTC/193/2021 RESOLVED** to delegate preparation of the service level agreement to the Parks & Public Realm Committee.

3. Civic Centre: Work is ongoing on the freehold lease, surrender of raised platform and bar/lounge refurbishment proposals.

4. Play Equipment / Play Areas: Awaiting installation date for youth pod and bike, installation of inclusive play equipment postponed until results from play area questionnaire.

5. Other projects: Awaiting further discussions with Shropshire Council regarding Whitchurch Country Park and Sherry Mill Hill Car Park.

It proposed by Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Haynes and **WTC/194/2021 RESOLVED** to appoint Cllr Hall and Cllr Cooper to a working group with Zoë Dean as lead officer. It was agreed that Helen Dainty from Shropshire Council and representatives from the Beechtree and local schools should be involved in the working group.

196. Confidential Business

It was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Hamlyn and **WTC/195/2021 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.**

The Clerk confirmed that all recording had stopped.

197. Personnel Committee Recommendation

Cllr Hamlyn gave a verbal update on the recruitment process for the Chief Officer. There had been five applications, two had the relevant qualifications and were selected for interview. One candidate withdrew on the day. The panel were not able to make a recommendation to appoint.

The Personnel Committee recommended that the recruitment process continue.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Duffy, seconded by Cllr Shepherd and **WTC/196/2021 RESOLVED** to continue the process for recruitment to the post of Chief Officer.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20:58

Signed

Dated