MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 20th OCTOBER 2016

PRESENT
Clrs: M. McDonald (Mayor), T Neville (Deputy Mayor), A. Chesters, J. Ebbs, T. Harris, J. McAuley, T. O'Neill, M. Rigley, J. Sinnott, B. Slater and C Smith.

IN ATTENDANCE
Zoë Dean – Acting Town Clerk
Cllr Peggy Mullock – Shropshire Council
Nicki Young – Shropshire Council
Barrie White – Whitchurch Herald
Katrina Gilman – West Mercia Police

The Mayor opened the meeting with a minute’s silence to remember former Councillor Lester Stones who had passed away. The Mayor also expressed sympathy to Cllr Tom Biggins on the loss of his father.

1. Apologies
Cllr J. Bache – No reason given
Cllr B. Duffy – Another commitment

2. Declarations of Interest
There were none.

3. Minutes
After a proposal from Cllr McDonald, seconded by Cllr Neville. It was WTC/78/1617 RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 15th September 2016 and sign as an accurate record of that meeting.

4. Matters Arising
There were none.

5. Mayor’s Announcements
The Mayor had attended the opening of the new outdoor fitness equipment in Jubilee Park, the public march in support of Richmond House Surgery, Blackberry Fair and Zac’s Miracle Fundraiser at Tesco.

6. Public Participation
After a proposal from Cllr McDonald, seconded by Cllr O’Neill, It was WTC/79/1617 RESOLVED to suspend standing orders.

7. Presentation by West Mercia Police
Katrina Gilman informed members about Hate Crime Awareness Week, and a yearlong campaign to raise awareness of this issue in the local community. The Mayor signed the pledge. The Town Council endorsed the Civic Centre as a location for a window sticker.

8. Shropshire Councillor’s Report
Cllr Mullock noted that the consultation regarding BT telephone boxes had been released. Leaders of both Shropshire and Telford Councils had joined together to contact Jeremy Hunt regarding the health issue. Richmond Surgery is due to open on 1st November with one of the original GPs.

After a proposal from Cllr McDonald, seconded by Cllr O’Neill, It was WTC/80/1617 RESOLVED to reinstate standing orders.

9. Correspondence
Letter of thanks from Whitchurch Girl-Guiding thanking the Council for grant support received.
Members noted the letter received from Church Stretton Town Council, the Mayor was waiting for an update.

10. Whitchurch Walkers
Members noted that the Whitchurch Walkers’ information board is to be sited in the Bullring.

11. Outstanding Council Resolutions
(a) Civic Centre Freehold – minutes from this meeting were to be received in the confidential section.
(b) Skateboard Park – funding application ongoing.
(c) Training for Finance & Resources Committee – Chairman of Finance reported that budget training had been received but was poorly attended by members. VAT training is to take place on 23/11/16.
(d) Increased Town Centre Signage – ongoing
(e) Letting Heritage Craft Units – ongoing
(f) Town Crier – check the previous Finance & Resources Minutes
(g) DBS Check – it was thought that volunteers did not have to pay the fee
(h) VAT – ongoing

12. Accounts
The Chairman of Finance noted the accounts were running as planned.
After a proposal from Cllr McDonald, seconded by Cllr Smith, It was WTC/81/1617 RESOLVED to accept the accounts as presented.

13. Minutes from Committees
Chairman Cllr O’Neill noted the key points from the Parks & Open Spaces Committee Minutes held on 22nd September 2016. Winter planting is now underway. Nobridge had planted 5,000 additional bulbs in the park free of charge. Nobridge had also donated 284 rose bushes for the Harry Richards Garden. The broken exercise equipment had been repaired.
After a proposal from Cllr O’Neill, seconded by Cllr Neville, It was WTC/82/1617 RECOMMENDED to accept the minutes as presented.

Estates, Markets & Public Realm Committee Minutes held on 29th September 2016.
The committee agreed to recommend Securasound for the Christmas lights contract. The Council asked for the minutes to be taken out of draft form before accepting them.

Strategic Marketing & Events Committee Minutes held on 29th September 2016.
The Council asked for the minutes to be taken out of draft form before accepting them.
Extraordinary Finance & Resources Committee Minutes held on 13th October 2016.
Chairman Cllr Chesters noted that a comprehensive asset register had been produced with one minor update. There is no money remaining in grants. Very comprehensive budget training had taken place but was sparsely attended by members. Christmas lights would be slightly over-budget. Cllr Rigley asked for new Financial Risk Assessment document to be attached to the minutes.

After a proposal from Cllr Chesters, seconded by Cllr Harris,
It was WTC/83/1617 RECOMMENDED to accept the minutes as presented.

Cllr Chesters commended the Acting Town Clerk for the speed and accuracy in which minutes had been produced.

14. Co-Option of a Councillors
A request for co-option had been received from Mr R. Hewson for the vacancy in West Ward.

After a proposal from Cllr McDonald, seconded by Cllr Chesters,
It was WTC/84/1617 RESOLVED to take closed vote.

The result of the closed vote was as follows: 6 votes for / 5 votes against.

After a proposal from Cllr McDonald, seconded by Cllr Slater,
It was WTC/85/1617 RESOLVED to accept Mr Hewson as a councillor.

Cllr Harris left the meeting at 8pm.

15. Report from members on outside organisations
Cllr Ebbs noted that the re-enactment group had taken part in a successful visit to Crewe.

16. Council committees
After a proposal from Cllr McDonald, seconded by Cllr Sinnott,
It was WTC/86/1617 RESOLVED to place the named councillors on the following committees:
Cllr McAuley – Estates, Markets & Public Realm, Strategic Marketing & Events and Finance & Resources.
Cllr Smith – Strategic Marketing & Events

It was agreed to wait until the other council vacancies had been filled in order to offer remaining committee places to new councillors.

17. Setting up a Civic Centre working party
Cllr Smith noted that the marketing plan for the Civic Centre was quite a big project and therefore required a separate working group. Cllr Sinnott noted that there was already a list of approved actions.

After a proposal from Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Slater
It was WTC/87/1617 RESOLVED to set up a working party.

18. Lilly’s Lunches
Members asked whether the Council was required to investigate the building’s terms of use for running a business from the premises. Members also noted that a contract would be required.

After a proposal from Cllr McDonald, seconded by Cllr Smith,
It was WTC/88/1617 RESOLVED to defer the decision to the appropriate sub-committee.
19. Standing Orders
   After a proposal from Cllr Sinnott, seconded by Cllr Ebbs,
   It was WTC/89/1617 RESOLVED to replace the word "obtained" with "sought" in
   Standing Orders for Contracts [paragraph 4].

20. Budget 2017/2018
   Cllr Chester informed members that the budgets from committees were progressing.
   The Omegas software can manage this easily. Cllr Chester noted that an updated
   budgetary request from Whitchurch Cemetery Board was required.

21. Asset Register
   After a proposal from Cllr Sinnott, seconded by Cllr Smith,
   It was WTC/90/1617 RESOLVED to approve the Asset Register (1 abstention).

22. Financial Risk Assessment
   Council noted that the document was excellent.
   After a proposal from Cllr McDonald, seconded by Cllr Chester,
   It was WTC/91/1617 RESOLVED to accept the document on the proviso that it is kept
   with the minutes.

23. SALC Membership
   Council noted that members can partake in SALC training courses without having to be
   members.
   After a proposal from Cllr McDonald, seconded by Rigley,
   It was WTC/92/1617 RESOLVED not to progress membership.

24. Bus Routes
   Cllr McAuley had received feedback from shoppers that many rural villages had trouble
   getting into town and that residents had complained. Council noted that a community bus
   was provided by North Salop Wheelers.

25. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS
   After a proposal from Cllr McDonald, seconded by Cllr Chester,
   It was WTC/93/1617 RESOLVED that, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions
   to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded for the following items on the
   grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information or staff matters.

There being further business the meeting closed at 8.55pm

Chairman...........................................

Date...................................................
Whitchurch Town Council

Financial Risk Assessment

This document has been produced to enable the Town Council to assess the risks that it faces and satisfy itself that it has taken adequate steps with control systems to minimise risks. This will enable the Council to make the required declaration in its return to the external auditors. The Risk Assessment document is to be reviewed annually.

FINANCES

Risk: Accounting errors due to lack of financial control

Procedures to address risk:

1. Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) to be confirmed annual at the Annual Council Meeting.
2. All financial documents to be held in the Town Council Offices, e.g. cheque books, paying in books, invoices, receipts, bank statements, VAT reclaim papers, electronic accounting system (Omega).
3. Back-up of computerised system on central server system. Disks/memory sticks to be stored in the safe.
4. Cheques to be written and entered into the accounting system.
5. Cheque number to be written on invoices paid.
6. Invoices to be filed sequentially.
7. Cash and cheques to be entered into the computerised system upon receipt and banked as soon as reasonably practicable.
8. Receipts to be issued for all monies received by the Town Council, except items received via BACS.
9. Bank statements to be reconciled with the computerised system weekly.
10. VAT to be reclaimed quarterly.

Risk: Budget overspend

Procedures to address risk:

1. Budget to be prepared by the RFO annually in November to determine the budget for the following financial year and to be resolved by Full Council to determine the precept.
2. Budget to actual income and expenditure to be reviewed annually.
3. All invoices to be scrutinised to ensure payment is as quotation provided.
4. Town Clerk to seek competitive quotations for all major purchases and works in line with Best Value Practice and as set out in Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.
5. Contracts of Employment and salaries of the employees to be reviewed annually in line with NJC (National Joint Council) salary scale recommendations.

Risk: Loss of funds due to misappropriation of public money

Procedures to address risk:

1. All accounts for payment to be authorised at a Council meeting and noted in the minutes unless the expenditure relates to addressing an urgent health, safety or security risk, such expenditure being delegated to the Town Clerk under Standing Orders.
2. All expenditure necessary to maintain the normal administrative working environment does not require authorisation.
3. All expenditure to be ratified at each Full Council meeting and recorded in the minutes except for salary payments which are considered a personal transaction and not for the public domain (except as a staff salary total for annual audit).
4. All cheques to be signed by two councillors authorised by Bank Mandate and cheque stubs to be initialled by those same two councillors.
5. The two signatories to initial the corresponding invoice in the stamp provided. Councillors authorised to sign cheques normally consist of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Chairmen of Committees or other Council nominated councillors.
6. No member of staff is authorised to sign cheques.
7. Town Clerk to maintain a Register of Interests of all councillors. Councillors to advise the Town Clerk of any changes to those interests as and when they occur as set out in the Code of Conduct.
8. Year End Accounts to be prepared by the RFO for circulation to the Town Council following the financial year end on 31st March.
9. Appointment of Independent Internal Auditor to be reviewed annually at the Annual Council Meeting in May of each year.
10. The Council has its accounts audited each year by external auditors appointed by the Audit Commission.
11. Records of petty cash to be kept and reconciled into accounts on a regular basis.

INSURANCE

Risk: Under insurance of Town Council assets

Procedures to address risk:

1. Insurance cover to be reviewed annually to ensure adequate cover is maintained and value for money achieved.
2. High value properties are initially inspected by Insurance Company and reviewed by Insurance Company every seven years.
3. Asset Register to be maintained by the Town Clerk and updated at the time assets are added to or removed and to be presented as part of the Annual Accounts.
4. Internal Auditor to review arrangements annually.

Risk: Liability to the Public to provide a duty of care

Procedures to address risk:

1. Public Liability covered to £10 million or as required by Shropshire Council.
2. Council employees regularly undertake visual inspections of the condition of the Town Council's assets to ensure Health & Safety obligations are met and that appropriate action if taken to minimise any risk of injury to third parties.
3. Health & Safety checks to be carried out on the play areas every week and on all other street furniture monthly in order to monitor and identify risks to the Health & Safety of the public using the items. Records of checks and any action taken to be retained in the Council Offices.
4. Annual RoSPA inspections of the play to take place annually in June and findings to be reported to Full Council.
5. Risk Assessments to be reviewed annually.
6. RFO to carry out regular assessment of the banking procedures in line with the Banking Practices Risk Assessment.

Risk: Compensation claim from employee for malpractice or injury

Procedures to address risk:
1. Contracts of Employment issued to employees within two months of commencement of employment (but subject to probationary period where appropriate).
2. Job descriptions of employees to be reviewed annually.
3. Employee Development Reviews to be carried out annually.
4. Matters relating to employees to be discussed in confidence (public and press to leave the meeting room) and minutes recorded as confidential.
5. Appropriate training to be provided for all identified training needs necessary to carry out the role effectively.
6. Appropriate equipment to be provided to ensure that employees can carry out their roles safely and effectively.

Signature of Town Clerk: ......................................

Date:

Signature of Chairman: ......................................

Date: