

# Church Stretton Town Council

## MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM REMOTE MEETING PLATFORM ON TUESDAY 16<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2020 at 7.00 p.m.

**Those present:** *Councillors:* Cllr L Antill, Cllr S Baker, Cllr M Braid, Cllr N Carter, Cllr C Carson, Cllr L Chapman, Cllr H Claytonsmith, Cllr H Luff, Cllr M Morris, Cllr R Hickman, Cllr M Walker, Cllr B Welch, Cllr D Wilks.  
*Officers:* Mr. C. Maclean (Locum Town Clerk), Miss B. Clarke (Responsible Financial Officer), Mr. M. Turner (Amenities and Services Officer)  
*Unitary Councillors:*  
*Members of the Public:* 10

### 20.001 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the first meeting to be held remotely.

### 20.002 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Mr. D. Chetwood (Town Clerk)

### 20.003 DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

To declare any disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter to be discussed at the meeting and which is not included in the register of interests (in accordance with the new code of Conduct adopted by Church Stretton Town Council on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2012). **NONE**

### 20.004 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

One resident spoke on behalf of the All Stretton Village Society and noted the recent challenging events presented to the Town Council and residents. Expressions of appreciation were expressed on the efforts to address the problems created by the influx of visitors, their parking and subsequent actions in failing to maintain social distancing and care about the environment but concerns were shared that the situation should not be allowed to reoccur. Surveys had been conducted of local residents with nearly all responses similar in terms of concern.

Residents noted the challenges presented to the town as a result of the large number of vehicles turned away from the Carding Mill Valley car parks and the lack of police resources to monitor and deal with situations.

One resident advised that she was currently monitoring and documenting events with the material to be used in a BBC Panorama documentary on the impact of the pandemic. She enquired on the responsibility for the road to Carding Mill Valley and was advised that this lies with Shropshire Council and not Church Stretton Town Council.

The resident requested sight of the Risk Assessment that was undertaken to reflect the temporary use of Richard Robinson Field as an overflow car park along with details of the associated insurance cover.

Cllr Welch advised residents that the use of Richard Robinson Field was for that one day and that the field had been locked overnight as normal to prevent access to joyriders. In light of the conditions the following day there was no perceived need to repeat the process and the following day a field away from the residential streets had been made available as overflow car parking by a local landowner.

### 20.005 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES taken at the Town Council Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020 had been circulated.  
Proposed by Cllr Carson, seconded by Cllr Claytonsmith and

**RESOLVED (unanimously) to confirm and adopt the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020 as correct, and these were duly signed by the Chairman as a true record.**

**20.006 FINANCIAL MATTERS**a) ***Year End Accounts***

The RFO reported that the accounts for the Council and Charities are with the Internal Auditor and are currently being reviewed. Current expectation is that these should be returned by end July.  
NOTED

b) ***Future Financial Reporting***

Following the provision by the RFO of future financial reporting options between monthly and quarterly Councillors were advised that of the 10 responses received there is an even split of views. Further consideration to be given to achieving clear result and introduction of reports.

c) ***Services at Risk Reserves***

Councillors noted the advice provided by the RFO that the Council is required to provide more transparency over the allocation of funds in reserve for what are deemed at risk services. To address audit concerns, the RFO split the current reserve evenly between the Library and the Leisure Centre. Councillors considered the history behind the establishment of this reserve and purpose and there was some discussion over the selection criteria and continued requirement.

Councillors considered the papers presented to Council by Cllrs Baker and Welch on proposals for the split and future allocation. Cllr Baker proposed an even 50/50 split between the Library and Leisure Centre with a 5 yearly review. Proposed by Cllr Baker, seconded by Cllr Carter and following a vote 4 Councillors voted for the Resolution and 6 voted against. Resolution subsequently falls.

Councillors considered Cllr Welch's proposal and subsequently proposed amendment that the split be made between the Library and General Reserves. Proposed by Cllr Welch, seconded by Cllr Braid and following a vote 6 Councillors voted for the Resolution and 7 Councillors voted against. Resolution subsequently falls.

Councillors agreed to defer to next meeting with consideration to be given to submission of a revised paper based on Councillor Baker's proposal.

**20.007 COVID UPDATE**

Cllr Chapman advised Councillors of the attempts to address the concerns and anger of residents over the parking issues and lack of social distancing which occurred during the Bank Holiday weekend. This followed the partial opening up of Carding Mill Valley car park resulting in excessive number of vehicles parking within the area's residential streets.

Meetings were ongoing between Shropshire Council, Church Stretton Town Council, National Trust, AONB and the Police with a focus on achieving solutions to prevent a reoccurrence.

Councillors agreed on the importance of defined responsibilities and clear communications. The proposal that advanced warning signs of car park availability was noted and agreed as being key to achieving a parking solution.

Cllr Walker expressed concerns that the next key time of risk is the August Bank Holiday and advanced plans in place would be key. NOTED

**20.008 MARKET**

The ASO reported that the three essential traders operating from Easthope Road car park had relocated back to the Square following Shropshire Council's announcement that car park charging was being reintroduced. No current capacity to increase number of traders due to social distancing requirements. NOTED

Cllr Chapman enquired of the practicality of using the coach park whilst it is not in use and it was agreed that an approach to Shropshire Council might be merited. Cllr Chapman to make enquiries.

**20.009 PROJECTS**

The Locum Clerk noted with Councillors the current list of projects within the Council. Delays in progressing these were due to the pandemic and requirement to divert resources to addressing the impact. Further work is required on the list to ensure it details all work required.

The Locum Clerk advised Councillors that a future update would be provided with priorities set.

NOTED

20.010 **PLANNING**

a) **Local Plan**

Councillors noted the report provided by Cllr Claytonsmith and the delays in progress being advised by Shropshire Council due to COVID. Council waits to hear on the proposed sites for development. NOTED

b) **Planning Applications**

Councillors noted the report provided by Cllr Claytonsmith and the progress which continues to be made in responding to planning applications. NOTED

20.011 **HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY UPDATE REPORT**

Councillors noted the report provided by Cllr Claytonsmith and the current status in interpreting the data obtained from the survey. The report and results are awaited from Shropshire Council who have agreed to assist with the analysis and' interpretation. NOTED

Cllr Hickman noted that there is another survey linked to the businesses with workers from outside the area. Cllr Claytonsmith advised that 11 responses had been received and findings will be shared.

20.012 **COMMUNITY LED PLAN**

Councillors noted the report provided by Cllr Claytonsmith and the delays being created due to the current situation. Virtual meetings of the remaining members of the group are being held in an effort to maintain momentum and achieve some levels of completion. Open community meetings will not be possible under current circumstances. NOTED

20.013 **CIC/VISIT CHURCH STRETTON/'CHURCHSTRETTON.CO.UK' WEBSITE**

Councillors noted the report provided by Visit Church Stretton group and their progress in establishing a new tourism group for Church Stretton. It was also noted that start-up funding was being made available by the Walking Festival and the request to the Council to provide match funding of £1,500 to assist in the development of the new website. Proposed by Cllr Welch, seconded by Cllr Hickman and

**RESOLVED (12 in favour, 1 abstain) to provide a grant of £1,500 to Visit Church Stretton Group to help develop the new website.**

20.014 **GREEN SPACES**

a) **Town Park**

Councillors noted Cllr Walker's efforts to obtain contact with Highways England to discuss opportunity for car park access off the A49 into the Park.

Councillors also noted that clarification over the ownership and scope of the charity covering the Park is also required.

Councillors agreed to the concept of a Task and Finish Group to oversee developments on clarification of the parking and ownership. NOTED

b) **Richard Robinson Field**

Update awaited following the enquiries being made by the RFO on the ownership aspects to this land and the other trusts. NOTED.

c) **Coppice Leasowes**

The ASO advised that school pupils were planning to make visits to the site to undertake nature projects.

Work would be undertaken to address the damage caused by a group using part of the site as a BMX track. NOTED

d) **Wetlands Trust**

Cllr Welch advised of efforts being made by the Trust to acquire the land currently on offer. An appeal for funds is currently ongoing. NOTED

**20.015 UNITARY AND PARISH WARD ISSUES****a) Report from Unitary Councillors**

Cllr Chapman reported that Shropshire Council's Cabinet meetings now being held virtually. Two recovery task force groups have been established to cover the County. One is dealing with economic impact and recovery and chaired by Cllr Nutting with the other focused on social recovery and chaired by Cllr Chapman.

Actions to address the local situation involve temporary arrangements to improve social distancing. The recent discussions with Shropshire Council did not include the temporary traffic lights which came with similar surprise to those of local residents. These arrangements are experimental and can be changed to reflect changing circumstances. Pavements are being widened by virtue of cones being placed at the roadside and removal of some parking places.

Consultations are being held with traders.

**b) Parish Ward Issues**

None reported.

**c) Road Closures/Works**

The planned works on Ludlow Road were noted.

**20.016 CORRESPONDENCE**

Cllr Luff advised Councillors of an approach by the Church Stretton Army Cadet Force seeking a grant of £200 to assist with the redecoration of their premises. The work undertaken by the Force in the community was noted and all Councillors agreed that this was a good opportunity to provide support.

**RESOLVED (unanimously) to provide a grant of £200 to Church Stretton Army Cadet Force.**

**20.017 FORTHCOMING EVENTS****a) Dates of next meetings:**

*i) Amenities, Finance & General Purposes Committee: 14<sup>th</sup> July at 7pm (to be reviewed)*

*ii) Council Meeting: 28<sup>th</sup> July at 7pm (subsequently changed to 11<sup>th</sup> August at 7pm)*

These meetings taking place are subject to the guidance to be received from the Government and the National Association of Local Councils.

**20.018 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

**Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 S1(2), it is RESOLVED (unanimously) that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is in the public interest that the public and press are excluded from these items.**

**a) Staff Matters**

Cllr Welch advised Councillors of recent discussions with the Town Clerk and his efforts to recover from illness. The Town Clerk had provided written consent to a medical review and representatives of the Council were currently identifying a suitable consultant.