

# Church Stretton Town Council

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AMENITIES, FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD VIA REMOTE MEETING PLATFORM ON TUESDAY 8<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020 at 7.00 p.m.

**Those present:** *Councillors:* Cllr M Walker, Cllr B Welch, Cllr M Braid, Cllr H Claytonsmith, Cllr M Morris and Cllr C Carson

*Officers:* Mr. C Maclean (Locum Town Clerk), Miss. B. Clarke (Deputy Clerk and RFO), Mr M Turner (Amenities and Services Officer)

*Guests:*

*Other:*

AF&GP 449 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  
Cllr S Baker, Mr D Chetwood (Town Clerk)

AF&GP 450 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**  
Proposed by Cllr Welch, seconded by Cllr Morris and

**RESOLVED (unanimously) that the minutes of the Meeting of the Amenities, Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2020 shall be taken as read and signed as a true record by the Chairman.**

AF&GP 451 **DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**  
None indicated

AF&GP 452 **DISPENSATIONS**  
In pursuance of the Localism Act 2011, s31(4), (and in accordance with Council Policy 1.5 (13.54b)), in order for Members to participate and vote during consideration of the 2021/2022 precept, the following dispensations were requested. Not required.

AF&GP 453 **FINANCIAL**

453.1 **Future Reporting**

The RFO advised that preparations to implement the financial reporting process had been delayed due to efforts to address the queries being raised by the consultants undertaking the VAT review. The previous year end had not yet been closed down in order to deal with any financial adjustments required.

Effort to address the backlog were expected to be completed by end of October.

Feedback from Councillors on the reporting frequency had identified that reporting of the Charities should be six monthly. For the Council requirements, these were yet to be clear and the decision would go with the majority.

453.2 **2021/2022 Budget Process Including Negotiation with Shropshire Council on Library and Leisure Centre**

Councillors discussed the timeline for budget preparations and the detail required to enable the decision in December on what is required for the next financial year. The Locum Clerk or Deputy Clerk/RFO to advise Councillors of the timeline.

Councillors were advised that consideration of the projects and requirements for the next financial year can commence in anticipation of the meetings.

Councillors discussed the paper submitted by Cllr Welch on the negotiation with Shropshire Council in relation to the Library and the Leisure Centre. No request has been received to date from Shropshire Council in relation to financial support, although there is an expectation that revised numbers will be submitted prior to any request.

No contact has been received to date from Shropshire Council in relation to the Leisure Centre. Following the takeover of the Centre by Shropshire Council in April 2020, there was an expectation of a full year's performance review prior to any discussions, but with the Centre closure during the lockdown period, it is expected that the period of review would be extended.

Cllr Baker's proposal to extend the two-year review period by the Town Council over its commitment to the financial reserves to four years can only be further discussed on the expiry of the six-month period following the initial resolution.

AF&GP 454

### **FINANCIAL**

The RFO advised that the renewal premium had been paid.

A meeting has been scheduled with the Insurance Broker to review the policy and level of cover.

AF&GP 455

### **PROJECTS**

#### **455.1 General Update**

The Locum Clerk advised Councillors that a substantive list of the Council's projects requires to be compiled and will be submitted to Councillors. The list currently maintained requires review and additional projects added to ensure appropriate prioritisation can be set.

#### **455.2 Streetlights Review**

The Locum Clerk advised Councillors that contact had been made with Prysmium, the Council's current lighting partner. The Council's inventory has been reviewed and updated. Contact also being sought with the Risk Assessors who work with Shropshire Council.

Consideration being given to the level of funding required and the timescale the change programme will require.

AF&GP 456

### **PROPERTIES AND AMENITIES**

#### **456.1 General Update**

The ASO apologised for not providing a written update, but work pressures prevented this and a verbal summary would be provided.

The planned meeting with Cllr Braid to review the Pavilion had not taken place.

The increased amount of dog mess across Russell's Meadow and Richard Robinson Field was noted with concern.

The football and cricket club were up and running. Requests had been received for use of the showers within the Pavilion, but these were currently being declined due to COVID-19.

Cars were noted to be parking in the field by those watching the sport activities and these would be discouraged.

The Chair of the Magpies football club had contacted the ASO expressing concerns over some of their kit being removed over the fenced cage behind the Pavilion. The issue was being expressed as a problem with the Council but the Councillors agreed that serious consideration was required before committing any further funds in this area. Cllr Braid suggested the use of CCTV cameras, but time and resources would be required to review the footage. Councillors suggested that this could be something they could undertake. Cllr Walker suggested that the Council could consider the reintroduction of a town warden.

The mountain bike track that had been created in Coppice Leasowes has been dealt with.

Two trees were noted to be down in Rectory Field which required attention. Incidents of overnight camping and parking had been observed and new signs would be erected. A request has been received from the Scout Association to undertake scouting activities in Rectory Field. Numbers would be contained to 15 at a time with 5 to 6 leaders present. Insurance and Risk Assessment aspects had been covered and it was evident that the Association were aware of their responsibilities. It was agreed that this event could take place.

There would be no firework display this year as it was considered difficult to manage in terms of public attendance.

The recent Stretton Players event in public was noted to have gone well. Other groups are considering similar options.

Remembrance activities will be scaled down. ASO working with Royal British Legion on a workable solution.

A number of organisations were looking to use the Market Square. Evidence of robust Risk Assessments and Insurance Cover were required to ensure these could take place. Cllr Welch advised of the publicity following the recent incident of Campervans parking in the Rectory Field car park and the notices placed on the vehicles. Advice was given on Radio Shropshire that this was an unfortunate incident and lessons had been learnt. It was agreed that notices should not be placed under windscreens of vehicles.

Within the Park, it was noted that the clubs had returned but that no public access was being permitted and the equipment was not available for hire. Some incidents of vandalism were being observed.

#### 456.2 **Key Projects**

The ASO advised Councillors that tree work had been held in abeyance due to the COVID-19 situation. It was noted that the work needs to be done. The ASO advised that a budget allocation of £10,000 would allow the work to be undertaken without individual reference to AF&GP Committee or Council.

Proposed by Cllr Welch, seconded by Cllr Claytonsmith and

**RESOLVED (unanimously) to allocate a budget of £10,000 be allocated to address the tree works.**

The ASO advised of the Outdoor Team activities. All members have been engaged with activities. It was agreed that the Mayor write individual letters of appreciation to the team to thank them for their effort. It was also noted that Rachel Adams had undertaken a huge workload to address issues from the residents and this should also be recognised. Repairs on the SHI flat roof are currently subject to quotes awaited from contractors.

#### 456.3 **Social Distancing Measures in SHI and Pavilion**

The ASO advised that appropriate measures are in place to cover activities.

#### 456.4 **Church Stretton Consolidated Charities**

The Chairman advised that this item would be covered later in the Agenda.

#### AF&GP 457 **SHI**

##### 457.1 **Roof Repairs**

The ASO advised that quotes are being obtained from contractors to complete the required repairs.

##### 457.2 **Events**

Councillors noted the report provided by Cllr Walker on latest developments.

**AF&GP 458      Small Market Towns Recovery Fund**

Cllr Welch advised Councillors that a grant of £5,000 had been granted to the Town Council. A short timescale has been provided to implement the changes. Focus is on providing picnic tables, finger posts and leaflet dispensers.

The Visit Church Stretton group are commissioning four short videos to promote the area.

Timeline to use the funds is short.

Councillors discussed the possibilities of using the surplus brochures situated in the office as a result of not being able to distribute due to COVID-19. Discussion was held on the best method of re-using these. The Outdoor team would be used to distribute brochures to local businesses.

Cllr Morris noted recent unruly events within the town with young people kicking bollards out of place. The situation had been exacerbated by Shropshire Council not ensuring the bollards remained in place. Cllr Welch advised that the Police were aware and that he was liaising with Cllr Chapman on how this could be addressed.

**AF&GP 459      CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

**Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 S1(2). to resolve to exclude Public and Press due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted under this item.**

**459.1      Staffing**

Miss Morris is on long-term absence from her role as Assistant to the Clerk. This has placed some pressure on the other members of the team. Options to address this gap are being assessed, along with consideration of overall team resource.

**459.2      Financial**

The RFO advised Councillors of developments in the review of the VAT situation which is targeted to be completed by end September. Advice to date shows liabilities to HMRC. Following discussions with the Consultants and the Internal Auditor, it has been proposed that two reserves be set aside to cover these liabilities. Further research is required to clarify the amount to be set aside for the work relating to the Pavilion.

Proposed by Cllr Welch, seconded by Cllr Walker and

**RESOLVED (unanimously) that the Council set aside two reserves, one to address the liability identified and confirmed and the second to cover a potential amount in relation to the calculations ongoing on the Pavilion.**

**459.3      Consolidated Charities**

Cllr Walker advised of recent developments on the Charities' premises in Lutwyche Road.

**AF&GP 460      DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Meeting set for Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 7pm.

..... Chairman 9.00 pm