

Church Stretton Town Council

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM REMOTE MEETING PLATFORM ON TUESDAY 16th FEBRUARY 2021 at 7.00 p.m.

Those present: *Councillors:* Cllr L Antill, Cllr S Baker, Cllr M Braid, Cllr C Carson, Cllr N Carter, 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 Finance Officer), (Mrs H Merrett (Admin Officer)
Unitary Councillors: Cllr L Chapman
Members of the Public: 1

20.106 **WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed Councillors to the meeting.

20.107 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES**

Miss R Gwilliam (Amenities Officer)

20.108 **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 26th June 2012). **NONE**

20.109 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

None received.

20.110 **TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES taken at the Town Council Meeting held on 19th January 2021**

The Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 19th January 2021 had been circulated. Amendments to items 20.098 and 20.101 had been made. Proposed by Cllr Claytonsmith, seconded by Cllr Carter and

RESOLVED (unanimously) to confirm and adopt the amended Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 19th January 2021 as correct, and these were duly signed by the Chairman as a true record.

20.111 **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS/COUNCILLORS**

Planning, Heritage and Conservation Committee

The minutes of the Planning, Heritage and Conservation Committee meeting held on 9th February 2021 had already been circulated.

Proposed by Cllr Hickman, seconded by Cllr Walker and

RESOLVED (unanimously) to receive the Minutes of the Planning, Heritage and Conservation Committee Meeting held on 9th February 2021 and to confirm and accept the resolutions and recommendations contained therein.

Shropshire Council Draft Local Plan Regulation 19

Councillors noted the issues raised at the Planning Committee meeting on 9th February in relation to the withdrawal of Snatchfields from the proposed sites for development but that Shropshire Council had reallocated the 70 properties to windfall requiring the quota to be met from other areas. There were also concerns over the failure to include the recent boundary developments within the Local Plan map. These concerns would be shared with Shropshire Council.

Proposed by Cllr Wilks, seconded by Cllr Walker and

RESOLVED (12 in favour, 1 abstention) to submit to Shropshire Council raising the points of concern.

20.112 **FINANCIAL MATTERS**

a) VAT Review

The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) had forwarded the Reviews to all Councillors and noted that 7 of the 13 Councillors had responded. Following checks by the RFO, it was agreed that sufficient understanding of the issues had been achieved.

Councillors discussed the impact on the Council's VAT position of the cricket and football teams using the facilities.

Proposed by Cllr Wilks, seconded by Cllr Baker and

RESOLVED (unanimously) to allow the cricket and football teams to use the pitches and pavilion for free for the 2019-20 year as a goodwill gesture due to Covid.

Councillors discussed the position of the Pavilion in relation to its ownership by the Council and its location within the Trust and Charity.

Proposed by Cllr Antill, seconded by Cllr Chapman and

RESOLVED (unanimously) to donate the Pavilion to the Brooksbury Charity subject to approval by the Charities Commission

b) VAT Consultant retainer fee

Following Council agreement to approach the Council's VAT consultants for ongoing advice and support the RFO had received advice of the retainer fee involved. An annual cost of £200 is proposed to provide telephone and email advice.

Proposed by Cllr Hickman, seconded by Cllr Luff and

RESOLVED (unanimously) to approve payment of £200 per annum to the VAT consultant

c) Challenge to AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return)

The Locum Town clerk updated Councillors on the challenge and advised that attempts are being made to address and resolve this as quickly as possible. Councillors were advised that an Extraordinary meeting of the Council would be scheduled for Tuesday 2nd March at 7pm to introduce papers and resolution to resolve. The opportunity would be presented for members of the public to raise questions.

Following this meeting the scheduled AF&GP Committee meeting would be held.

d) RFO Priorities

The Locum Town Clerk advised Councillors of the priorities within the financial area of the Council which the RFO would concentrate on. In the meantime, any requests or queries from Councillors should be addressed to the Locum Clerk.

20.113 **COUNCIL MEETINGS UP TO 6th MAY**

Councillors noted that current Government legislation only permits meetings to be held remotely up to 6th May. Preparations need to be considered to hold meetings in person thereafter unless the legislation is changed. Councillors discussed the merits of holding an Annual Assembly on Thursday 22nd April and agreed that this should proceed and be held online using the Zoom platform. The Council meeting would take place on Tuesday 20th April.

It was proposed to cancel the Economic Development Committee meetings on 23rd February and 27th April, Amenities, Finance & General Purpose Committee meeting on 4th May, Planning Heritage & Conservation Committee meeting on 18th May.

The pre-election "purdah" will start on 15th March. Government guidelines would be provided on how the election would be conducted. Councillors considered whether meetings could be held after the start of "purdah" and the Locum Town Clerk confirmed he would clarify the situation.

20.114 **APPROVAL OF CSTC ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21**

Councillors noted that questions from the public on this report will need to be submitted either by email or phone before the Annual Meeting. These questions would be heard after each section of

the Report.

Amendments to the report have been submitted to Cllr Welch and he requested any further amendments by 19th February. He will then circulate the amended report to all Councillors as Stretton Focus wish to have this report submitted to them before the March 1st deadline for the April edition.

20.115 COMMUNICATION TASK GROUP AND COUNCIL

Following the establishment of this task group in November 2020 Councillors were advised by Cllr Hickman of the findings of a review of the Council's website and its support process. A number of areas were identified as requiring attention and Councillors discussed options on how these could be addressed. The RFO agreed to identify the requirements around securing third party quotes to provide external support.

Councillors recognised that following the election new members to the Council would require training. Councillors noted that whilst there are training courses scheduled specifically for new Councillors, educational support was also available in printed material from NALC.

20.116 AMENITIES REPORT

In the absence of the Amenities officer the Locum Town Clerk advised Councillors of the latest key developments. Arrangements are being made to undertake a full Health and Safety Review. Monitoring of the Market in the Square has identified the requirement of both stallholders and members of the public to wear proper protection and where non-compliance is identified actions will be taken to address.

20.117 UNITARY AND PARISH WARD MATTERS

a) Report from Unitary Councillors

Cllr Chapman advised Councillors that following the introduction of the pre-election period Shropshire Council would make no policy decisions until the election and formation of the new Council.

Councillors noted recent developments in the COVID infection rates. Concerns were raised over the main Easthope Road car park and its use for the vaccination programme at the surgery. These would be taken up with Shropshire Council.

Councillors noted recent developments in the roads work programme around the Strettons and the poor quality of repairs.

b) Parish Ward Issues

The Locum Town Clerk advised Councillors of recent developments on the All Stretton Play Area and that feedback is awaited from the Community on the desired improvements.

The Locum Town Clerk advised Councillors that a request had been received from the All Stretton Village Society for financial support towards the maintenance of the defibrillator at the Village Hall. Recognising that the Town Council supports the defibrillator at the Pavilion in the Town, a proposal would be submitted to a future Council meeting covering the three defibrillators across the Strettons. The proposed survey for the Town Park was reviewed by Councillors. Councillors noted that the cost of £384.00 for undertaking this survey incorporated future possible surveys.

Proposed by Cllr Morris, seconded by Cllr Antill and

RESOLVED (unanimously) to pay for and distribute the amended Survey Monkey of the Town Park.

c) Road Closures/Works

Councillors noted the planned works at Watling Street South, Church Stretton and Farm Lane, All Stretton.

20.118 CORRESPONDENCE

None

20.119 FORTHCOMING EVENTS

i. Amenities, Finance & General Purposes Committee: 2nd March 2021 at 8pm

- ii. *Planning, Conservation and Heritage Committee: 9th March 2021 at 7pm*
iii. *Council Meeting: 16th March 2021 at 7pm*

The Chairman declared the Public meeting ended at 8.30pm.

20.120 **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) **Recruitment of Town Clerk**

Councillors reviewed the proposed options to advertise the position and associated costs.
Proposed by Cllr Walker, seconded by Cllr Carson and

RESOLVED (unanimously) to advertise the position through SALC to all Shropshire Councils and more widely through NALC Gold Package and through the Express & Star Option A Package a total cost of £795.00 + VAT.

b) **Person Specification**

Councillors reviewed the Specification details for the Town Clerk role.
Proposed by Cllr Carson, seconded by Cllr Braid and

RESOLVED (unanimously) to approve the specification details.

c) **Job Description**

Councillors reviewed the contents of the job description. The RFO identified a number of amendments required in relation to the Finance section and these would be forwarded to Cllr Welch for adjustment.

d) **Recruitment Panel**

Councillors considered the composition of the panel. In addition to Cllrs Welch, Clayton-Smith and Walker, Cllr Chapman would be included as a panel member.

Meeting ended at 9.07pm.