



## **MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING** **HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors: Pam Kirkham (Mayor), Stuart Bostock (Deputy Mayor), Penny Butterill, David Greaves, Peter Groves, David Marren, Andrew Martin, Arthur Moran, John Statham, Philip Staley, Carole Thomas and Stephanie Wedgwood with the Facilities Manager David Thomas and Samantha Roberts the Town Clerk.

Also Present: One member of the public and one member of the press.

### **21. PUBLIC FORUM**

**21.1** There were no representatives from the Police. The Clerk advised members that the Police Officers had issued an apology for not attending the virtual meetings of the Town Council. Unfortunately, the IT protection would not permit the downloading of zoom.

**21.2** Representations from members of the public.

There was representation from one member of the public, who spoke on behalf of market traders. He requested that the Town Council consider charging 50% rent until the main doors can reopen and footfall increases. The Mayor thanked the gentleman and advised that the Town Council would consider the request. The Clerk added that as a decision has been made on the reintroduction of rent charges, if a written request were received by the Clerk from at least 50% of members then the Town Council could reconsider its original decision of 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

**21.3** Representations from the public on planning applications – None.

**21.4** Questions submitted in advance in writing. - None

**22. APOLOGIES:** There were no apologies for absence

**ABSENT:** none

### **23. DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interests expressed.

### **24. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**24.1 Resolved:** That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020 be confirmed as a correct record, approved, and signed by the Mayor.

### **25. MAYOR'S REPORT**

The Mayor reported that due to the lockdown she had not yet been able to carry out any activities but had attended a virtual meeting of the Rotary Club and been accepted as an honorary member. She had also volunteered with Nantwich in Bloom earlier in the week assisting in preparing the planters in the town.

## **26. FINANCE REPORT**

The Clerk spoke to the report advising members that since writing the report advice had been received from the consultants DCK Accounting. Following the advice, the Clerk informed members that there would be some amendments to the recommendations she would be seeking from members to that contained within the written report. The Clerk sought support to transfer £283,000 from the Capital Reserves to the Revenue account for year end 2019/20 to ensure a credit balance on the yearend Balance Sheet, a reduction on the original report but based on the advice of the Consultants. The Clerk also sought support to transfer £62,356 during 2020/21 for the capital expenditure associated with the purchase of the Cherry Picker and floor improvements to the Peggy Killick room and Main Hall.

Councillor Marren in moving the recommendations provided some background information as to the reasons why the Capital funds had been protected in previous years. Councillor Moran supported the recommendation adding that he had always believed that some expenditure should have been capitalized originally. Councillor Moran asked how much funds would remain in the Capital Reserves and suggested that the Civic Hall extension should go ahead despite the current pandemic to help increase revenue once normal business can resume. The Clerk advised members that should the recommendations be approved there would be £585,887 remaining in the Capital Reserves which should cover the costs associated with the extension.

**Resolved:** It was resolved:

- a) To approve the transfer of £283,000 from the Capital Reserves to the Revenue Account for year ending 2019/20;
- b) To approve the transfer of £62,356 from Capital Reserves to the Revenue Account during 2020/21 for the purchase of the Cherry Picker and improvements to the Peggy Killick room and Main Hall.

## **27. 20/21 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

Members considered the previously circulated report detailing the current year spend with estimates assumed for the period 1 June to 30 June 2020. The Clerk reminded members that they had agreed to review the provision of grants and contributions to external organisations following the first quarter. The report contained recommendations for the provision of grants for organisations where they relied on the funds to cover salaries or delivered essential services during the pandemic.

Councillor Groves expressed his support on the recommendations relating to the Museum as he had been worried about their future. Councillor Moran asked about a reduced financial support for Nantwich in Bloom (NiB) which had incurred expenditure for the purchase of plants for the town. Councillor Bostock provided some advice on his understanding of NiB's financial position suggesting he believed that a reduced grant of £2,500 for 2020 should be sufficient.

Councillor Statham suggested there was a need for further consideration on the provision of grants and questioned whether a decision on all grants should be made. The Clerk advised

members that she would suggest the approval of the recommendations within the report relating to the Museum, Food Bank and Nantwich in Bloom, and consider further other grants on a month by month basis based on financial position of the Town Council and the needs of the external organisations.

Councillor Moran made comments relating to the income detailed within the report, particularly the Job Retention Scheme and to estimated income from the market rents from July. He stressed the importance of maintaining an income stream.

**Resolved:** It was resolved:

- a) To issue the grants for the Museum and Food Bank as detailed within the budget;
- b) To issue a reduced grant of between £2500-£3000 to NiB subject to confirmation of their expenditure;
- c) To review all other grants and contributions monthly, based on the Town Council finances and external organisation's needs.
- d) To note and approve the review of income and expenditure and the bank reconciliation as of 31 May 2020;
- e) To approve a reduced Christmas lights, switch on event for 2020.

## **28. ACCOUNTS AND PAYMENTS**

**Resolved:** That the schedule of payments be approved in accordance with the previous resolution of the Town Council to use the General Power of Competence, the total sums as follows:

- One Card = £2718.05
- Trading Account = £59,520.73

## **29. BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORTS**

Councillor Moran expressed his thanks to the Cheshire East Councillors who had worked with him on a 14-point response to Cheshire East's plans to introduce traffic management measures in the town to ensure social distancing from 15<sup>th</sup> June. He expressed his dismay at the borough council's decision to re-introduce parking charges at the same time with no consultation. He appreciated the need for revenue streams but believed that all towns should be treated the same and should have parking charges.

Councillor Groves supported Councillor Moran's comments, adding that since the 14-response had been received by Cheshire East a generic response had been provided and had been placed on the Town Council website.

Councillor Staley advised that he had been asked by a resident if Cheshire East were going to clean the pay machines on the car parks. Councillor Marren added that it was unlikely, as a cashless payment method had been introduced, but added additional issues with this introduction as some people were unable to use cashless payment methods. Councillor Groves added that there is an additional admin charge for the use of cashless payments. Members agreed that a letter of concern detailing the issues raised should be sent to Cheshire East.

**30. REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES**

The Mayor asked if ANSA would be able to assist NiB with the watering of planters this year. Councillor Marren asked if the town council would have some capacity to assist with the watering. The Facilities Manager advised that it would be July at the earliest when staff return to work before capacity could be considered.

**31. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Resolved:** It was resolved to exclude Press and public pursuant to the Public Bodies Admission to meetings Act 1960 as personal and financial details of individuals are likely to be discussed.

**32. STAFFING MATTERS**

Members considered the previously circulated report relating to annual leave.

**Resolved:** It was resolved to approve the recommendations contained within the report.

The meeting ended at 7.10pm

Signature of Chair :.....

Date :.....