



MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING **HELD ON 10th December 2020.**

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

Also Present: One member of the press

95. PUBLIC FORUM

95.1 There were no representatives from the police present.

95.2 Representations from members of the public.

Jane Emery from the Nantwich Foodbank spoke to members informing the Town Council of the increasing level of Nantwich residents struggling and being defined by the Rowntree Foundation as living in deprivation. Jane asked if any of the Town Council members were interested in working with the Foodbank, they would be very welcome. Councillor Groves suggested that contact could be made with Deb Lindop from Cheshire East, who may be able to assist with advice on further support for the Foodbank and the clients they serve.

95.3 Representations from the public on planning applications – None.

95.4 Questions submitted in advance in writing – None.

96. APOLOGIES: There were no apologies for absence

ABSENT: none

97. DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Arthur Moran expressed a personal interest in Agenda Item 7. Planning Control, planning application no. 20/5225N, and Councillor Groves expressed an interest in planning application no. 20/4927N

98. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

98.1 Resolved: That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 5th November 2020 be confirmed as a correct record, approved, and signed by the Mayor.

98.2 Resolved: To receive and note the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 29th October 2020 and 26th November 2020, and to accept and approve the recommendations contained within the minutes.

99. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor's report on her list of engagements since the last meeting was received.

Sun 8th Nov	Nantwich Memorial Service 10.30am Civic Hall
Sun 8th Nov	Willaston Memorial Service 1.15pm Willaston War memorial
Wed 11 th Nov	Wreath laying, Armistice Day
Thurs 19 th Nov	Zoom meeting with Morrison's Community Support
Thurs 19 th Nov	Town Christmas lights switch on
Thurs 26 Nov	CAT Radio interview, a Christmas message
Sat 28th Nov	Food bank collection Brine Leas School 10-1pm
Mon 7th Dec	Knutsford Mayor Making Ceremony 7pm on Zoom
Wed 9 th Dec	Zoom meeting with Morrison's Community Support

100. CCTV PROVISION – NANTWICH

Members considered the previously circulated report following support of a motion by Councillor Wedgwood at the previous meeting to consider additional CCTV provision in the town. The report detailed options for additional provision with Stuart Hobson, CCTV manager from Cheshire East also in attendance to respond to questions.

One of the options included a redeployable CCTV camera, and Councillor Statham asked Mr Hobson how clear the images were with these cameras. Mr Hobson confirmed that the cameras were excellent quality, and the images very clear. Councillor Groves confirmed the good quality of the cameras. Councillor Thomas questioned the benefit of a redeployable camera as images are recorded after an incident

Councillor Marren asked how times could the council move the camera before a charge was made by Cheshire East, and whether the camera would remain in Nantwich or shared with other towns. Mr Hobson confirmed that Cheshire East would relocate a camera four times during a year free of charge, adding that any camera purchase by the Town Council would remain in the town.

The Clerk reminded members that an additional £7500 has already been accounted for in the draft budget to be considered later in the meeting for a fixed camera at Love Lane, and any decision made on a redeployable camera would require additional funding. Mr Hobson suggested that to aid members in their decision on a redeployable camera he would be happy to loan an existing camera to the town council for use.

Resolved: It was resolved:

- a) To consider the funding of a fixed camera at Love Lane during the draft budget proposals;
- b) To accept the offer for the use of a redeployable camera from Cheshire East to aid in a future decision on a purchase.
- c) To approve the renewal of the agreement with Cheshire East for the provision of the existing CCTV cameras in the town on a three-year contract at £24,822.84 plus VAT.

101. PLANNING CONTROL

Resolved: It was resolved that the recommendations of the Clerk be approved, and the observations reported to Cheshire East.

102. ANNUAL RETURN 2019/20 – REPORT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

Members considered the previously circulated report of the External Auditor noting that in their opinion the information in section 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. The Clerk advised members that she had posted the conclusion of the audit on the website and notice boards as required by legislation. The Clerk also asked members to note the additional comments of the external auditor advising Council to ensure that action is taken to address the areas of concern raised by the internal auditor in a timely manner.

Resolved: It was resolved to note the report of the External Auditor and advice to address the areas of concern raised by the internal auditor in a timely manner.

103. DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSALS 2021/22

Members considered the previous circulated report detailing the draft proposals for the 2021/22 budget and precept recommendations of the Finance Committee. The Clerk read to the report advising members that the Finance Committee had considered two draft budgets based on resuming normal business mid-way through 2021/22, and a budget based on worst case scenario (the same as 2020). The budget based on a worst-case scenario had seen a significant reduction to expenditure during 2021, but also a reduction on income, which would have a positive impact on the general reserves' balances.

The Clerk also advised members that the draft budget does not take into consideration a VAT charge awaited from HMRC which could be significant, and it does not include additional capital funds needed for the planned maintenance programme. She reminded members of the importance of retaining an acceptable level of general reserves following advice by the internal auditor and external auditor.

Councillor Statham expressed concern relating to the cost control and believed enough work had not been carried out to reduce costs and as a result he could not support the budget proposals. He added that he believed that he had found an additional £100,000 of potential savings on expenditure.

Councillor Moran suggested that any member who could not support the draft budget would have to come up with an alternative, questioning those members who are not resident within Nantwich and their right to oppose the budget. He reminded members of the facts that impact on the budget, a reduced Council Tax base having a £26,000 negative impact, an unknown VAT bill, and the need to retain General Reserves equal to 3-6 months of expenditure as advised by auditors. He added that these are extraordinary times, with no real income at the Civic Hall since February.

In response Councillor Statham stated that it was up to members to scrutinise the budget and suggested that members to review the draft proposals again before making a decision. Councillor Bostock asked when the precept level needs to be reported to Cheshire East. The Clerk advised that Cheshire East require the confirmed precept by 15 January 2021.

Councillor Marren suggested that further savings could potentially be made, however this would only help with the requirement to hold 3-6 months general reserves, as the current budget proposals do not meet this requirement. For this reason, he would be recommending the acceptance of the proposed budget and precept, suggesting a lack of confidence in the Clerk by those members who do not support it.

Resolved: It was resolved to:

- a) Approve the budget for the coming year, noting that regular reviews will be undertaken; and
- b) Note the current capital reserves held and approve the proposed spend from Capital during 2021/22;
- c) Approve the revenue reserve proposals for 2021/22;
- d) Approve a precept of £932,373.00 which equates to an amount of £174.79 from each Band D household (equivalent to £14.56 per month or £3.36 per week).

104. DRAFT CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN CONSULTATION RESPONSES.

Members considered the recommendations of the working group to address the consultation responses within the draft Corporate Strategic Plan. The Clerk advised members that the working group had supported the Clerk comments in some areas and had made recommendations for amendments in other areas.

Resolved: It was resolved to approve the recommendations of the working group to amend the Corporate Strategic Plan and adopt.

105. LOCAL TRANSPORT AND PARKING PLANS – CHESHIRE EAST CONSULTATION

Members considered the membership of a working group to prepare a response to the Cheshire East consultation on local transport and parking plans.

Resolved: It was resolved that Councillors Peter Groves, Arthur Moran, Stuart Bostock and John Statham would work with the Town Clerk to prepare a response to the consultation.

106. BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Councillor Moran informed members that Cheshire East had approved the move to a committee system from May 2021 at its meeting on 19 November 2020, and on 1 December £2.2m capital funds were approved for the traveller site.

Councillor Marren informed members that Cheshire East were currently consulting on its draft Budget for 2021. He suggested that members should take time to respond to the consultation, making comments relating to issues around double taxation.

107. REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

There were no reports from representatives.

The meeting ended at 7.45pm

Signature of Chair :.....

Date :.....