



MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING **HELD ON 14th January 2021.**

PRESENT: Councillors: Pam Kirkham (Mayor), Stuart Bostock (Deputy Mayor), Penny Butterill, David Greaves, Peter Groves, David Marren, Andrew Martin, Arthur Moran, 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 and five members of the public.

108. PUBLIC FORUM

108.1 There were no representatives from the police present.

108.2 Representations from members of the public.

108.3 Representations from the public on planning applications.

The Clerk advised members that correspondence had been received from a neighbouring property to the planning application 20/5749N, The Gables, Marsh Lane. The correspondence received informed the town council that the residents had not been consulted on the proposals, and only one neighbour of five had been consulted.

108.4 Questions submitted in advance in writing.

There were questions received in advance of the meeting from two members of the public. Both members of the public were present during the meeting. Both members of the public were invited to read out their statement. One member read out his statement and the other was read out by the Clerk upon a request from the resident who issued it.

The first member of the public questions related to the budget and precept of the town council for 2021. The gentleman asked why the town council had the highest precept in Cheshire East, comparing it to Congleton, Knutsford, Sandbach, Alsager and Macclesfield. He also asked the town council to consider the issue of double taxation where services have been taken over by the town council from Cheshire East.

The Clerk read out the second residents' letter which also related to the town councils' budget and precept for 2021. The resident asked the town council to review its income and expenditure of the Civic Hall, asking why measures had not been put in place to address the cost of the service. The resident also referred to the transferring of services from Cheshire East and double taxation, suggesting that the town council should not take on any further services until this can be addressed.

The Mayor thanked the residents advising them that a response to the questions would be provided in due course.

109. APOLOGIES: There were apologies of absence from Councillor Philip Staley.

ABSENT: none

110. DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Arthur Moran expressed a personal interest in Agenda Item 6. Planning Control, planning application no. 20/5749N as he knew the architect.

111. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

111.1 Resolved: That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 10th December 2020 be confirmed as a correct record, approved, and signed by the Mayor (subject to the amendments requested by Councillor John Statham and supported by Councillor Marren and Councillor Moran).

111.2 Resolved: To receive and note the minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held on 12th November 2020.

112. MAYOR'S REPORT

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

Thurs 17 th Dec	Mayor's radio interview – CAT Radio
Fri 18 th Dec	Nantwich Civic Hall – Christmas wishes to staff.
Fri 18 th Dec	The Wingate Centre Christmas raffle, Morrisons.
Sun 20 th Dec	St. Mary's Parish Church Carol Service
Sun 20 th Dec	Midnight Mass, St. Mary's Church
Thurs 24 th Dec	Christmas radio message

The Mayor informed members that she had also presented the winner of the Christmas card design.

113. PLANNING CONTROL

Members considered the planning applications and supported the recommendations of the Clerk. In addition, members asked that the Clerk highlight to Cheshire East that four properties neighbouring planning application 20/5749N had not been consulted on the proposals.

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

114. INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT

Members considered the previous circulated report of the internal auditor. The Clerk advised members that the second interim audit of the year had identified three recommendations, and the Clerk had provided comments to the recommendations for council to consider. Councillor Marren welcomed the good report and asked for clarity on one of the recommendations relating cash income at the market. The Clerk and Facilities Manager advised that there is currently no reconciliation between the amount of income due on a

market day to the amount of income received. A new procedure was being developed to address this.

Resolved: It was resolved to note the interim internal audit report and approve the actions by the Clerk to address the recommendations.

115. TOWN CENTRE BENCHES

Members considered the issues relating to the town square benches and the lack of social distancing. The Clerk advised members that since issuing the agenda an alternative option is has also been considered by officers. The Clerk suggested that council could also choose to place signage in the square reminding residents to social distance, and place signs on the benches preventing more than one or two people sitting on a bench, depending on the size of the bench. The Clerk also advised members that she had been in communication with the local police who had confirmed that they would increase their visibility in the town over the coming weekend.

Councillor Martin suggested that as there may be elderly people who would need to sit then this option suggested by the Clerk would be a better option. Councillor Moran also supported this alternative suggestion by the Clerk, providing members with an update on current COVID figures in Cheshire East, and confirming that he had also received several emails concerning the lack of social distancing. Councillor Groves in support of the suggestion added that he had received emails of concern from both sides of the argument. Councillor Groves welcomed the increased visibility of the police in the town. Councillor Bostock added his support to the suggestion together with the increased visibility of the police.

Councillor Thomas suggested that rather than removing all benches, some could be removed to increase the spacing between the remaining benches. In response Councillor Statham and Wedgwood supported the suggestion of increased signage but to review the effectiveness of the signs before considering removing some of the benches. Councillor Wedgwood added that the public should take some responsibility for their actions.

In response to a question from Councillor Thomas about the use of CCTV Councillor Marren confirmed that the CCTV is monitored and feedback given to the police where issues are identified.

Resolved: It was resolved to place signage in the square reminding people to social distance, and to place signs on the benches to reduce the number of people who can sit on one bench at a time, and to review the effectiveness.

116. NOTICE OF MOTION

116.1 Councillor John Statham – Sought support from council to introduce a petitions policy, the idea of which he had from Knutsford Town Council. Councillor Statham added that such a policy would be similar to those for National Government. He believed it would provide another tool for residents to communication with the council. Councillor Marren in supporting the idea suggested the Clerk could do some research and bring proposals back to a future meeting. Several members voiced their support for the idea including Councillors Bostock, Groves and Moran.

116.2 Councillor Arthur Moran – Sought support from council to consider a notice of motion recently supported at a Cheshire East Council meeting to introduce a 20mph speed limit

where appropriate, not a blanket measure. This would be through the review of the Speed Management Strategy which is scheduled to take place in 2021 and the points raised both for and against will be considered during the review process. Councillor Marren in support of the principle advised members that this was an amendment to the original notice of motion and suggested that any support of a scheme would need to be enforceable by the police. Councillor Butterill in seconding the motion gave an example of an area in need of such a scheme on Birch Lane. Councillor Statham supported Councillor Marren's comments for the need to follow the same resolution of Cheshire East.

Councillor Moran confirmed his support to mirror Cheshire East's resolution.

Resolved: It was resolved to support resident groups who wish to introduce 20mph limits in their residential areas in line with Cheshire East's Speed Management Strategy, to be reviewed in 2021 and will incorporate consideration of 20mph areas where appropriate

117. CHESHIRE EAST – PLACE DIRECTORATE ENGAGEMENT

The Clerk spoke to the report advising members that the content is for information but sought guidance from council on possible future topics for discussion.

Following a suggestion from Councillor Marren all members agreed that the issue of Double Taxation should be a future topic for discussion with Cheshire East. Councillor Marren had highlighted this issue on several occasions previously and given the issue has not been highlighted by members of the public it was important that a resolution to the issue is sought. Following a question from Councillor Statham about the process to engage further about the matter the Clerk suggested that she could seek support from other town and parish councils with a similar issue, and she could also write to Cheshire East to seek a meeting to discuss the issue.

Resolved: It was resolved that Double Taxation be a future topic for discussion with Cheshire East, and the Clerk would seek support from neighbouring town and parish councils and write to Cheshire East to arrange a meeting for early discussions.

Councillor David Greaves left the meeting at 7.53pm

118. BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORTS

There were no Borough Councillor reports.

119. REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor John Statham informed members that he had attended a recent meeting of the Food Festival Committee and the issue of town council financial support in 2021 had been discussed. Councillor Bostock added that the committee whilst in a health financial position at the moment, did have concerns about the financial support on offer particularly if the festival had to take on a new smaller approach in 2021. Councillor Statham also advised members that the festival committee also had concerns around the health and safety aspect of delivering the festival in line with COVID regulations at the time of the event.

Councillor Bostock asked if Cheshire East members were aware of the planting plans for the Barony following the improvements as the Nantwich in Bloom group had been asking, and

Councillor Statham asked for an update on the skate park at the Barony. Councillor Moran advised that he would make enquiries.

120. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved: It was resolved to exclude the 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.

121. MARKET STREET TOILETS.

Members considered the previously circulated information and following a request from members for further information it was agreed to defer a decision to a future meeting once the additional information is available.

Resolved: It was resolved to defer a decision to a future meeting of the council once additional information is available.

The meeting ended at 8.25pm

Signature of Chair :.....

Date :.....