



MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING **HELD ON 4th February 2021.**

PRESENT: Councillors: Pam Kirkham (Mayor), Stuart Bostock (Deputy Mayor), Penny Butterill, David Greaves, Peter Groves, 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 three members of the public.

122. PUBLIC FORUM

122.1 There were no representatives from the police present.

122.2 Representations from members of the public.

A resident made reference to a report recently considered by the Finance Committee relating to Budget/Precept comparisons with neighbouring town councils. The resident thanked the Clerk for the work carried out in the report. The resident made reference to the resolutions following the Finance Committee meeting and supported the actions by the council to improve the budget setting process, particularly the introduction of workshops for members. The resident suggested a deeper analysis with Knutsford, Alsager and Sandbach Town Council, but confirmed he would communicate with the Clerk further.

122.3 There were no representations from the public on planning applications.

122.4 There were no questions submitted in advance in writing.

123. APOLOGIES: There were apologies of absence from Councillors Philip Staley and David Marren

ABSENT: none

124. DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillors Arthur Moran, Andrew Martin, Peter Groves and Penny Butterill expressed a personal interest in Agenda Item 6. Planning Control, planning application no. 20/5225N as the applicant was from Cheshire East and all members were Cheshire East members.

125. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

125.1 Resolved: That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 14th January 2021 be confirmed as a correct record, approved, and signed by the Mayor.

125.2 Resolved: To receive and note the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 21st January 2021 and accept and approve the recommendations contained within the minutes.

126. MAYOR'S REPORT

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

Wed 27th Jan
Sun 24th Jan

Holocaust Memorial Day 2021
Laying of wreath at the airman's grave

127. PLANNING CONTROL

Members considered the planning applications and supported the recommendations of the Clerk.

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

128. DRAFT EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK/Employment CONTRACT

Members considered the previous circulated report together with draft documents. The Clerk aware that concerns had been raised relating to consultation through trade unions advised members that she had sought advice from the HR consultants on this matter, who had confirmed that as the terms and conditions of existing staff would be replicated within the new version then there was not a requirement for consultation. If individual members of staff did have questions relating to the documents, then they could be responded to before signing the documents.

Councillor Statham questioned the removal of the section relating to the laying off of staff, and suggested this section would have provided more security for staff and given the town council additional options should it be faced with a similar situation of a pandemic in the future but without financial government support. The Clerk provided Councillor Statham with the background and request from the Staffing Committee to investigate if other local government organisations included this section within their terms and conditions. The Clerk confirmed that the HR consultants had advised that the section provided additional security for staff, but members of the committee had been concerned that it would worry staff.

Resolved: It was resolved to approve the employee handbook and updated employment contract.

129. APPRAISAL POLICY

Members considered the previously circulated report with the draft policy. Councillor Moran welcomed the introduction of an appraisal system as it was an important tool for training and development which could be reviewed on a regular basis. The Clerk confirmed that the appraisal policy would allow for mid-year reviews with staff. In supporting the policy Councillor Greaves believed the document was comprehensive and gave all parties the opportunity to express views. Councillor Bostock welcomed the opportunity for incremental reviews with staff throughout the year.

Resolved: It was resolved:

- a) to approve the Appraisal process for introduction in Spring 2021;
- b) That the Clerk's appraisal will be carried out by the Mayor and Chair of the Staffing Committee.

130. BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Councillor Moran informed members that he had attended the Cabinet meeting the previous Tuesday to approve the Council Tax for 2021/22 which would include 3% ringfenced for Social Care.

Councillor Groves asked if Councillor Moran had any further information relating to S106 funds linked to the Kingsbourne housing development. Councillor Moran believed that there was £750k in S106 funds identified for Nantwich town improvements which would be triggered by the completion of 400 properties, and at the moment he believed that approximately 228 were not occupied.

131. REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor Moran informed members that he and the Mayor had been attending the United Churches Charity meetings, and in the last two meetings the charity had donated £5,000 for laptops to support children in education and remote learning, and a further £5,000 to Malbank school for laptops.

Councillor Wedgwood asked Councillor Moran if he had an update on the progress for the skate park. Councillor Moran believed that the plans were being finalised, but he will check on progress for an update.

132. 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.

133. STAFFING REVIEW.

Members considered the previously circulated report following a staffing review and the recommendations contained. Following a discussion on the recommendations Councillor Groves proposed an amendment to the recommendations which was seconded and voted upon, but was not supported.

Resolved: It was resolved to approve the recommendations of the report.

The meeting ended at 7.40pm

Signature of Chair :.....

Date :.....