



MINUTES OF THE VIRTUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27th April 2021

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

Also Present: Five members of the public and one member of the press

154. PUBLIC FORUM

154.1 Representatives from the Police.

PC Stonier and PC Harley both attended the meeting and responded to concerns by the public relating to recently Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) issues at Brookfield Park. PC Stonier offered support to the community with the development of a Friends of Brookfield Park, and advised members of the public to report all incidents either to the 101 number or on-line, and where there are cases of crime being committed to call 999.

PC Stonier also provided members with an update on the recently re-opening of licenced premises in the town, advising that there had been very few incidents reported because of the public houses re-opening.

PC Stonier informed members that they were hoping to purchase additional speed indicator devices which would aid in gaining more accurate data for speed enforcement. Councillor Moran in response advised that he was hoping to have clarification as to whether he was able to make use of his Cheshire East ward councillor budget to aid in the purchase of a speed indicator device.

Following a comment from Councillor Thomas relating to cyclists in the town the police agreed to review the signage and ask the PCSO's to monitor bicycle use in the town. PC Harley also confirmed that there were currently no regulations on the use of electric scooters following a question from Councillor Bostock.

154.2 Representations from members of the public.

A resident from the Brookfield Park area gave thanks to the Town Council for the support offered to date following the increase in anti-social behaviour at Brookfield Park. The resident supported the ideas and proposals to address the issues including the increase in littering. He thanked the police for their increase in patrolling the area and asked that they have a zero tolerance with ASB issues and to patrol the area during times when there is an increased risk of problems.

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

154.4 There were no questions submitted in advance in writing.

155. APOLOGIES: There were no apologies of absence.

ABSENT: none

156. DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillors Arthur Moran expressed an interest in agenda item 10, paragraph four of the report relating to ANSA, as Councillor Moran is a Director of ANSA

Councillor Moran and Councillor Thomas expressed a non-pecuniary interest in the planning application relating to St. Mary's Church.

Councillor Peter Groves expressed an interest in Planning application 21/0157N as a member of the Southern Planning Committee

157. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

157.1 Resolved: That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 4th March 2021 and the special meeting of the Council on 30th March 2021 be confirmed as a correct record, approved, and signed by the Mayor.

157.2 Resolved: To receive and note the minutes of the meeting of the Policy Committee held on 11th March 2021 and accept and approve the recommendations contained within the minutes.

157.3 Resolved: To receive and note the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 18th March 2021, and to accept and approve the recommendations contained within the minutes.

158. MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor informed members that she had only had the opportunity to attend the Drop off and Go at Brine Leas school on 27th March 2021, and she had the pleasure of presenting the Covid Hero awards during the Annual Town meeting on 15th April 2021.

159. PLANNING CONTROL

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

Resolved: It was resolved that the recommendations of the be reported to Cheshire East.

160. FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT/INTERNAL CONTROLS

Members considered the previously circulated draft documents. The Clerk advised members that the Financial Risk assessment must be reviewed each year to meeting internal audit requirements, and the attached document contained some minor amendments based on changes in working practices. The Clerk also advised members that the new proposed Statement of Internal Controls would strengthen and mitigate the risk further.

Councillor Marren suggested the detail in the risk assessment could be made clearer and agreed with a proposal by the Clerk that the current draft document should be approved, with the aim of the Finance Committee reviewing the document over the next six months to make any minor amendments for a clearer detailed risk assessment for adoption in the future.

Councillor Statham sought clarification relating to section 3.4 of the Statement of Internal Controls detailing the requirement of a Business Case for specific expenditure. The Clerk confirmed his understanding and advised that she would amend the wording to make it clearer to the reader.

Resolved: It was resolved to:

- a) Approve the Financial Risk Assessment for 2021/22
- b) Review of the risk assessment over the next six months by the Finance Committee;
- c) Approve the Statement of Internal Controls subject to the amendments to section 3.4, making the wording clearer as detailed above.

161. INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT

Members considered the previously circulated report from the internal auditor. The Clerk advised members that the third interim audit of the year had identified three recommendations, and the Clerk had provided comments to the recommendations for council to consider.

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

162. PUBLIC TOILETS

Members considered the previously circulated report containing proposals for the future maintenance of the public toilets at Market Street. The Clerk provided members with some background to the purpose of the review by a working group which resulted in the recommendations within the report for members to consider.

Councillor Moran supported and moved the recommendation to incorporate the opening/closing and cleaning of the toilets within the Town Ranger role and proposed an amendment to advertise and appoint a Town Ranger this financial year. Councillor Moran expressed his doubt on the success of a comfort scheme in the current climate due to COVID.

Councillor Statham in response agreed that Councillor Moran's point relating to the comfort scheme may be correct and suggested a review would identify if this were the case. Councillor Statham also supported the recommendation to carry out a survey on the future toilet provision at Snowhill which should include indicative costs with options.

In considering the recommendation relating to incorporating the duties of the public toilets within the Town Ranger role Councillor Statham stated that it was something supported by the working group when suggested by the Facilities Manager, however since the working group met, he had second thoughts on taking on extra staff due to the financial burden. Whilst he supported the duties being incorporated within the Town Ranger role, he believed the position should not be filled at present.

In response to member questions as to whether the maintenance of the toilets was in the job description of existing staff the Facilities Manager advised that it was due to capacity.

Councillor Marren sought the advice of the Town Clerk on the reason for needing to decide on the future maintenance of the toilets. The Clerk advised that since the retirement of the General Assistant Toilet attendant in December the existing staff had been able to cover the opening/closing and cleaning of the toilets due to the lockdown and reduced service provision at the council. However, as lockdown eases and normal business activities resume there will be a significant impact on the existing staff when they return to their substantive duties. Given the current timetable for the easing of lockdown the Civic Hall will hope to resume some normal activities in August with a full calendar of events booked from September onwards. Once the shift rotas are re-introduced the number of staff on day duty will also reduce, so the Clerk sought that a decision on the maintenance of the toilets is made and implemented before August/September.

In response Councillor Marren advised that he would support the three recommendations in the report and would second Councillor Moran's amendment to appoint a Town Ranger this financial year.

Councillor Bostock in support of the recommendations added that the Town Ranger would also be carrying out other duties within the town, including areas identified within the approved Corporate Plan.

In response Councillor Statham commented that Councillor Bostock had made good points and during better financial times he would support the implementation of actions within the plan.

Before members voted on the recommendations and amendments Councillor Statham requested a named vote.

Those in favour of Councillor Moran's amendment to recommendation 1 – Councillors Stuart Bostock, Phil Staley, David Marren, Stephanie Wedgwood, Arthur Moran, Carole Thomas and Penny Butterill.

Those against the amendment to recommendation 1 – Councillor John Statham

Those abstaining – Councillors Andrew Martin and Peter Groves.

All members voted in favour of recommendations 2 and 3.

Resolved: It was resolved:

- a) That the Council incorporate the opening/closing and cleaning of the Market Street toilets within the Town Ranger role, supported by the Markets Supervisor and Assistant, and to make an appointment to the position this financial year;
- b) That the Facilities Manager review the existing Comfort Scheme provision and promotion;
- c) A survey is carried out with all residents and key stakeholders, the result of which will determine a business case for or against additional public toilet provision at Snowhill.

163. LITTER ISSUES

Members considered the previously circulated report relating to increased issues of litter around the town over the last 12 months. The Clerk invited a representative from the Litter Action group to speak in their capacity as a volunteer on the group. The representative advised members that the group can spend as much as 100 hours per week litter picking covering an area from the lake up to the Stapeley Estate. It has been evident during the last 12 months that there has been a growing disregard for the beautiful town. There were issues of littering affecting the wildlife and young children with broken glass, and an increase in dog fouling. He advised that volunteers are feeling more and more disappointed and like unsung heroes.

Councillor Statham in thanking all volunteers for their efforts, suggested that many of the ideas were good, but the council needed to be realistic as to what could be achieved. He suggested that working with the schools, signage, joining the Keep Britain Tidy campaign, and promotional work could be quick wins and deliverable.

Councillor Wedgwood reminded members of the work by Deb Lindop and Liz Parkin on developing a Youth Council and asked for clarification on how the working group on litter action issues had come about. The Clerk confirmed that she had also been working with Dep Lindop and Liz Parkin on the development of a Youth Council, but it is a large project, with the proposal in the report to be a small-scale Youth committee containing a few elected members who would visit the high schools in the area to speak at established school youth councils. The Clerk also confirmed that she had held conversations with Councillors Groves and Statham as they sought support to address the problems raised by members of the public. The Clerk had agreed to bring a report to council with ideas and to seek support from Council. Councillor Groves provided some further background to the resulting report being considered.

Councillor Marren also thanked the volunteers for the work they do and suggested that the Council should contact Cheshire East to clarify their contract with ANSA on street cleansing. It is Cheshire East which has a duty to keep the town clean, and perhaps this contract should be revisited.

Resolved: It was resolved to:

- a) provide increased suitable signage around the town, working with CEC if signage were to be erected on their land.
- b) register with the Keep Britain Tidy and the Great British Spring Clean campaign between 28th May and 13th June 2021, assisting in promoting and coordinating volunteers including schools and businesses.
- c) Develop a short promotional video that can be shared highlighting the damage to wildlife;
- d) Run a campaign in conjunction with schools, litter groups, businesses, organisations.
- e) Contact Cheshire East Council about their contract with ANSA on street cleansing, seeking a review of their agreement.

164. PLASTIC REDUCTION POLICY

Members considered the recommendations of the Policy Committee to adopt the previously circulated draft policy. A representative of the Sustainable Nantwich Group was asked to speak in confirming his support for the policy. The representative thanked the Town Council for the support it has given the Sustainable Nantwich group, and supported the policy. He

went on to add that this is the start of the bigger issue on Climate Emergency and believed the Town Council could lead by example.

Resolved: It was resolved to approve the Plastic Reduction Policy

165. FLOODING ISSUES – ALLOTMENTS

The Clerk advised members that there was no decision being sought but officers wished to bring to the attention of council the issues of significant flooding during February of this year. A consultant had been engaged to develop initial proposals to address the flooding at both Wellington Road and Brookfield allotments. Further detailed proposals will be developed over the coming months where council will be asked to make decisions on proposed action. It is hoped that the landowners at Brookfield park allotment will assist with any associated costs. In addition, the Facilities Manager and Councillor Moran will be approaching the housing developers near Wellington Road to seek financial support to address the flooding problems on that site.

Resolved: It was resolved to note the report to date.

166. BARONY PARK MASTER PLAN

Councillor Moran sought a representative from the Town Council to join him on the steering group to develop plans for consultation on Barony Park, linked to achieving Green Flag status. Councillors Bostock, Wedgwood and Statham all expressed an interest to join the group. Councillor Moran advised that he would share the names and confirm with the councillors.

Resolved: That Councillor Moran will share details of Councillor Bostock, Wedgwood and Statham with the officer setting up the steering group.

167. BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Councillor Moran advised that Cheshire East Council will hold its last Cabinet meeting on 4th May 2021, following which CEC will move to the new committee system.

168. REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor Moran advised that The Gables is now up for sale.

The meeting ended at 9.20pm

Signature of Chair :.....

Date :.....