



MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING **HELD ON 15th December 2022**

Present: Councillors: Peter Groves (Mayor), Stuart Bostock, Penny Butterill, Pam Kirkham, David Marren, Arthur Moran, John Statham and Carole Thomas with Samantha Roberts the Town Clerk, Sheryl Birtles the Deputy Town Clerk and David Thomas the Facilities Manager.

Also present: 2 members of the public, PC Marc Harley and PC Thomas Jennings.

99. PUBLIC FORUM

99.1 PC Marc Harley gave apologies from Inspector Smith who was unable to join the meeting and introduced PC Thomas Jennings who was new to the Nantwich team.

He reported that anti-social behaviour was at an all time low and that 'Operation Jingles' was now in force to ensure the town remains as safe as possible over the festive period. This includes a higher police presence, drugs dogs and a safety bus for the night time economy for anyone who may feel vulnerable.

PC Harley informed members that the Police were offering free training to licensees, food outlets and taxi companies in relation to safer streets.

Councillor Butterill thanked the Police for the speed monitor in Birchin Lane and asked if it could be repositioned back there in the future. Councillor Groves responded that there was also a need for this at Park Lane. PC Harley informed members that the speed device needed an upgrade and that they were also keen to acquire a new machine. Councillor Groves asked that Inspector Smith is made aware of the cost of the new machines and requested a meeting with him to discuss the funding of this.

PC Jennings informed members that some new funding was available that he was trying to source to allow for the purchase of a new speed indicator for the town but advised this was in the early stages and that he would keep the Council updated.

99.2 There were no representations from members of the public

99.3 There were no representations from the public on planning applications

99.4 The Clerk advised members that there had been two questions submitted in relation to Item 15 and that they would be discussed with the exclusion of press and public.

100. APOLOGIES

There were apologies of absence from Councillors Stephanie Wedgwood, Andrew Martin and David Greaves

ABSENT: none

101. DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillors David Marren and Penny Butterill declared they were members of the Southern Planning Committee.

102. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

102.1 **Resolved:** That the Minutes of the Council Meetings held on 17th November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record, approved, and signed by the Mayor.

102.2 **Resolved:** To receive and note the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 1st December 2022, and to accept and approve the recommendations contained within the minutes.

103. CASUAL VACANCY

The Mayor welcomed Mr Gary Poole, the sole applicant for the casual vacancy.

Mr Poole informed members that he was originally from the town, recently moving back he is keen to represent the Council to enhance the community and focus on creating a safe environment.

He commented that he had experience of working with Councils having been a Councillor in Islington, Chair of Licensing, Corporate Parenting and Planning and professionally he is a prison governor.

The Clerk provided ballot papers for each member to vote on the casual vacancy.

Resolved: The outcome of the ballot was to not elect Mr Poole which will now require the advertisement of the vacancy.

104. MAYOR'S REPORT

Councillor Groves reported that he had attended the Christmas lights switch on that he had thoroughly enjoyed and thanked David Thomas and the team for all their hard work.

He also informed members that he had done a collection at Morrisons and raised over £250 for his charities and taken part in the foodbank collection at Brine Leas where he had been delighted to see the generosity of the town.

105. PLANNING CONTROL

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

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

106. INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT

The Clerk referred to the previously circulated Interim Internal Audit which highlighted three small issues. The Clerk advised members that these items were not areas for concern and had been addressed as noted in the report.

Resolved: It was resolved to note the content of the second interim internal audit and support the actions by the Clerk to address the observations.

107. DRAFT BUDGET PROPOSAL

Members reviewed the previously circulated reports in relation to the 2023/24 budget. The Town Clerk highlighted that she had been working alongside the Finance Committee and reported that they had agreed unanimously that the precept could be decreased by 5%.

Councillor Moran supported the recommendations commenting that a decrease for residents would be welcome in the current economic climate.

Resolved: It was resolved to:

- a) Approve the budget for the coming year, noting that regular reviews will be undertaken.
- b) Approve the Planned Maintenance Programme.
- c) Note the current capital reserves held and approve the proposed spend from Capital during 2023/24.
- d) Approve the revenue reserve (ear-marked) proposals for 2023/24.
- e) Approve a precept reduction of 5% which equates to £912,336 or £145.29 from each Band D household (equivalent to £12.10 per month) for the year 2023/24.
- f) Approve the income proposals and rent charges for 2023/24.

108. CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CONSULTATION – DRAFT ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

The Clerk asked members to consider responding the Electric Vehicle consultation, Councillor Groves asked if we could respond asking for consideration to addressing residential street charging as the town has a number of streets with terraced properties and on-street parking.

Councillor Statham requested that the consultation is shared by the Town Council to enable residents to respond.

Resolved: It was resolved to share the consultation and respond asking for consideration towards residential street parking.

109. CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CONSULTATION – DRAFT CHESHIRE EAST PARTNERSHIP DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY

Members noted the previously circulate consultation details.

110. BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Councillor Moran advised members that Cheshire East Council's financial position isn't great and that it is expected that they will increase Council Tax by the maximum 5%.

Councillor Groves informed members of the sad passing of David Newton who had been a fellow Councillor for many years and had lived in Nantwich. He went on to also inform members that a new Go Too service had been agreed to cover the Wybunbury triangle which incorporates Bridgemere.

111. REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES

David Thomas reported that the Remembrance Day service had gone well and that the Council were looking forward to supporting events during 2023.

112. 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 or financial contract details are likely to be discussed.

113. EXTERNAL MARKET PROVISION

Members considered the previously circulated report in relation to supporting external markets.

Resolved: It was resolved to:

- a) Approve the outsourcing of the labour for erecting and dismantling the gazebos to a contractor
- b) Suspend standing orders relating to obtaining three quotes for the service as it is a bespoke requirement.

The meeting ended at 7.50pm

Signature of Chair :.....

Date :.....