



## **MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING** **HELD ON 17<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

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

Also present: 14 representatives from Nantwich in Bloom and one member of the press.

### **89. PUBLIC FORUM**

89.1 There were no representations from the police

89.2 There were no representations from members of the public

89.3 There were no representations from the public on planning applications

89.4 There were no questions submitted in writing in advance.

### **90. APOLOGIES**

There were apologies of absence from Councillors Stephanie Wedgwood and Pam Kirkham

**ABSENT:** none

### **91. DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

The Mayor Councillor Peter Groves expressed a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7, Planning Applications, for application 22/4381N on the grounds that he knew the applicants.

### **92. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

92.1 **Resolved:** That the Minutes of the Council Meetings held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022 be confirmed as a correct record, approved, and signed by the Mayor.

92.2 **Resolved:** To receive and note the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022, and to accept and approve the recommendations contained within the minutes.

### **93. NORTHWEST IN BLOOM**

The Mayor welcomed the representatives from Nantwich in Bloom, congratulating them on their 12 successive Gold award received from Northwest in Bloom during a ceremony they attended on 20 October. In addition, long-standing member Tom Deans was awarded an outstanding service award for his dedication to Nantwich in Bloom for over 35 years. The Mayor in presenting the awards stated that without the commitment of Nantwich in Bloom volunteers the town would not be as attractive as it is. In receiving the award Sue Sherwood paid thanks to Mark Betteley, Sheryl Birtles, the Town Council and ANSA for their support once again. Sue also gave recognition to the other voluntary groups that have assisted including the litter groups, Sustainable Nantwich and Nantwich Partnership.

**Resolved:** It was resolved to congratulate Nantwich in Bloom and Tom Dean on their deserved awards and thank all members of Nantwich in Bloom for their continued dedication and support to Nantwich.

Councillor Andrew Martin joined the meeting at 6.45pm.

#### **94. MAYOR'S REPORT**

Councillor Peter Groves reported that he'd had a great few weeks enjoying the many events he had attended including presenting certificates for the Nantwich in Bloom awards, the Food Festival awards evening, his Civic Service and the launch of the Poppy appeal, stating the crown of poppies was amazing. He had also attended two Players shows and attended the airman's memorial service with Councillor Moran. Councillor Groves commented on the attendance at the Tree of Light evening and Remembrance Day Service.

Councillor Groves invited Councillor Moran to comment on the Remembrance Service. Councillor Moran expressed thanks to the team at Nantwich Town Council particularly David Thomas for the work put in to delivering the event both in the lead up and on the day. Councillor Moran commented on the recognition of the conflict in Ukraine during the Remembrance Day service with a Ukrainian child laying a wreath.

#### **95. PLANNING CONTROL**

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

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

#### **96. CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE**

Before speaking on the report, the Town Clerk presented a short video on the Civility and Respect Pledge which showed representatives from the leading organisations promoting the pledge including the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and One Voice Wales (OVW).

Following the video, the Clerk advised that in signing up to the pledge it would require a commitment by the town council to commit to eight pledges. However, the council are already meeting five of the eight pledges with three remaining pledges relating to actions in the event of the council experiencing issues.

In response and in support of the ethos of the pledge Councillor Marren stated he would like to think that the council had always been respectful, but raised concerns relating to the Code of Conduct, particularly as Cheshire East had recently approved the new Code of Conduct. He suggested that the code of conduct could be used by some as a tool to bully others and he hoped that when the town council consider the new code of conduct it will be debated in detail.

Councillor Moran moved to approve the recommendation in the report to sign up to the Pledge adding that 14-18 November is anti-bullying week for young people to highlight ways to address bullying. Councillor Moran added that Cheshire East had approved the new code of conduct and it will be recommended that town and parish councils should adopt it. Councillor Moran said that during the consideration of the code of conduct members shared their experiences of abuse from the public and as a result some will not stand again. Councillor Moran stated that councillors should lead by example.

Councillor Martin supported Councillor Moran and seconded the recommendation but noted that there is a careful balance between banter and bullying.

Councillor Statham in response and support of comments already made pointed out that social media is a cause for concern relating to bullying and unfortunately the pledge does not cover members of the public but agreed that councillors should lead by example. Councillor Statham also commented that it would be good for councillors around the country to have an input on the lobbying to government relating to sanctions as he had noticed the video had not included town or parish councillors. Councillor Statham also stressed the importance of being able to have strong debate during meetings.

In response Councillor Moran reassured Councillor Statham that at Cheshire East there was certain strong debate during meetings.

**Resolved:** That the Town Council agree to sign the Civility and Respect Pledge

#### **97. LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY CLAIM 2022/23**

The Clerk advised members that an agreement had been reached by the National Joint Council that all employees covered under the national agreement would receive a flat rate payment of £1,925 on their scale point with effect from April 2022. There will also be one additional day leave (pro rata) for all permanent staff from April 2023.

The Clerk informed members that the amendment to the salaries had been made for November salaries for all staff. She also advised that this could have an effect on the current budget as there had only been a 2.5% increase included within the budget. However, she suggested that the impact may not be as significant as the council had carried two permanent vacancies for a few months.

**Resolved:** It was resolved to note and support the pay award for 2022/23.

#### **98. BOROUGH COUNCILLORS REPORTS**

Councillor Moran advised members that following the budget statement from the Government it has been confirmed that local authorities will be able to raise the council tax by as much as 5% without having to have a referendum, up from 3%. He also advised that it is believed that 95% of all councils are likely to do this.

#### **99. REPORTS OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Councillor Statham reported that he had attended the Museum meeting last week and wanted to share with members the news that this year it is expected that the museum will have welcomed over 900 children to the museum in the last 12 months. If you compare this to the £7k grant provided by the council, it is value for money.

The meeting ended at 7.25pm

Signature of Chair :.....

Date :.....