

ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held in Ellesmere Town Hall on Monday 4th December, 2017 at 7.15pm.

PRESENT: Town Mayor (Chair): Cllr R Hartley
Councillors: B Reincke, Mrs J Clayton, G Elner, J Frost, P Goulbourne, Mrs M Lagoyianni, Mrs E Peers, I Ward, Mrs A Wignall and Mrs J Williams

Town Clerk: Mandy Evans
Assistant Clerk: Phil Smith

Unitary Councillor: 1
Members of the Public: 4
Press: 1
Police: 0
Guests: 0

Public Question Time The following questions/issues were put to the Council:

- (i) A resident referred to the dangers of speeding traffic along Brownlow Road following a hit and run incident in which a boy was knocked off his bike, and a further incident when a car collided with parked vehicles. It was felt that something needed to be done to slow traffic down and stop Brownlow Road being used as a 'rat run', and a number of suggestions were put forward.
- (ii) Further to the question at the last meeting regarding the closure of the Community Nursing Home, a resident reported that he had raised the issue with Owen Paterson, MP. Mr Paterson was going to arrange a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Clinical Commissioning Group to discuss this, and it was hoped that interested parties (including the Town Council) would get together to see if the decision to close the Nursing Home could be reversed.
- (iii) A resident from Berwyn View referred to the objection the Council's Planning & Infrastructure Committee had made to his planning application for a log cabin in his front garden to run his business from. He addressed some of the concerns of the Committee and provided more information about the application.

159/17 **To Receive Apologies and Reason for Absence.**

None.

160/17 **Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests in Items on the Agenda**

None.

161/17 **Grant Dispensations**

None received.

162/17

Response to Public Questions

(i) The Mayor stated that this was a Shropshire Council Highways issue, and the Town Clerk would forward the correspondence from the resident of Brownlow Road to them. Members were very concerned about the recent traffic incidents in Brownlow Road, and it was felt that there needed to be a meeting with Shropshire Council to look at what could be done to make the street safer, and to look at wider traffic issues in that part of town relating to the Trimley 'pinch-point'. It was also something that the Planning & Infrastructure Committee could consider including in the Road Safety Policy.

(ii) The Mayor stated that Ellesmere Community Nursing Home would be discussed later in the meeting at item 11 on the agenda.

(iii) Cllr G Elner, Chair of the Planning & Infrastructure Committee, advised the resident that the comments of the Committee on the planning application were based on the facts that they had before them, and that part of the concerns related to lack of information about the proposed business use. He advised the resident to submit the information he had provided tonight to the Shropshire Council Planning Officer, so that it could be considered during the decision-making process. Ultimately, it was Shropshire Council who would decide on whether to approve the application and the weight they would give to the Town Council's comments.

163/17

Co-option to Casual Vacancy

The Town Clerk reported that following the resignation of Councillor B Adams, confirmation had been received from Shropshire Council that no request had been made to hold a by-election. Therefore, a casual vacancy for co-option had been advertised, and two letters of interest from eligible persons had been received. The letters had been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting, and after careful consideration of the applications, it was:

RESOLVED – that Mr David Lunn be co-opted to fill the casual vacancy on the Council.

164/17

Police Matters.

The Town Clerk read out the Police report for November 2017.

A total of 12 crimes recorded as follows:

- 3 Assaults
- 2 Theft
- 2 Burglary
- 1 Affray
- 1 Drunk & Disorderly
- 1 Having a Bladed Article in Public
- 1 Drug Offence
- 1 Malicious Communication

Of those above, three related to the same incident. Officers were actively pursuing enquiries in 9 of those offences. The Winter Festival event went well, with no incidents reported to the Police.

165/17

Shropshire Council Report

Shropshire Cllr Mrs A Hartley reported on the following matters:

- The Council's Children's Services (including Looked after Children) had been judged as 'good' following a recent Ofsted inspection. This was a very pleasing outcome, as many other Councils' children's services were not rated as highly, and it confirmed that vulnerable children in Shropshire were getting a good service;
- There were enormous pressures on the budget, particularly on children's services and adult social care. The Leader and Deputy Leader had met with the Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government to put the case for additional funding, and Shropshire was working with other County Councils to lobby Government for more help in providing statutory services. The budget would be discussed by the Cabinet at its next few meetings.
- As part of proposals for the future commissioning of Youth Services, the £3k allocated to the Local Joint Committee (LJC), which was currently used to support 'Ramped-Up', would be axed. She had called a meeting of LJC representatives on 7 December at 6.30pm at the Town Hall to consider the situation. In response to a question about who had decided to cut the Youth budget for Ellesmere, Cllr Mrs Hartley advised that each town was assessed on criteria that then determined its share of the funding available. Members expressed concern that more and more services seemed to be getting concentrated in the main towns, and that greater focus needed to be given to the rural areas that didn't have the infrastructure of larger urban places.

166/17

Minutes

It was moved by Cllr I Ward, seconded by Cllr P Goulbourne and

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Town Council meeting on the 6 November, 2017 be approved and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.

167/17

Planning & Infrastructure Committee

The draft minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Infrastructure Committee held on 27 November 2017 were received for information.

In relation to the suggested changes to the Ellesmere Annual Place Plan, the Town Clerk suggested that the "Additional Burial Land" should be taken out of the document as there was available land at the Cemetery for a further 25 years. Members agreed that the Trimpey 'pinch point' should be retained in the Plan, and that Shropshire Highways be made aware that they need to consider the dangers of that road before any application comes forward for housing development at Station Road.

RESOLVED - that the suggested changes to the Ellesmere Annual Place Plan, and the amendments referred to above, be approved.

168/17

Clerk's Report

The Clerk's report on correspondence circulated since the last meeting and future meetings/events, including the Youth Commissioning Funding meeting on 7 December 2017 referred to earlier by Shropshire Councillor Mrs A Hartley, was received.

The report was noted.

169/17

Ellesmere Community Nursing Home

There was a discussion about the recent closure of the Nursing Home, and whether the Council should have known about it sooner. The Mayor reported that it had closed very quickly, and the Town Clerk added that the Trustees had not made the Council aware of the financial problems, and perhaps they should have started a conversation at the time the Library moved into the ground floor of the building. The Mayor stated his understanding that the Clinical Commissioning Group was only paying half the cost of the beds they commissioned at the Nursing Home, leaving the Trustees to rely on charitable donations and reserves to make up the shortfall. Councillor P Goulbourne added that the loss of a bed and a drop in donations contributed to making the business unviable.

The Mayor stated that there was little more that could be done now regarding the Nursing Home, but that it was important to try and ensure that the building was re-used and retained for community use. It was believed that Ellesmere Medical Centre was in discussions with the Trustees for use of part of the upper floors of the building.

The situation was noted.

170/17

Tree Safety Report

Further to the information given at the last meeting, The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council had been advised that some ash trees at Birch Road Recreation Area would need to be checked again in a couple of years' time to make sure they were not affected by ash dieback. Advice had also been received that the wooden walkway around the Birch Road pond needed to be inspected, and this information would be forwarded to Shropshire Wildlife Trust who managed the Pond.

The report was noted.

171/17

Town Council Land & Buildings

(i) Cricket Club Land and Birch Road Recreation Area

The Town Clerk reported that a response had now been received from Severn Trent Water (STW) regarding the flooding problems and the clearance of the overgrown watercourse into which the Mere culvert drains. STW believed that responsibility for the watercourse would fall on Shropshire Council. This information would be forwarded to Shropshire Council's Flood and Water Management Team.

(ii) Ellesmere Joint Parishes Burial Committee

The Town Clerk read out an Internal Audit report regarding the current arrangements for the Joint Parishes Burial Committee. The 'Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England Practitioners Guide' made clear that authorities operating joint committees must include the appropriate share of income, expenditure, assets, liabilities and opening & closing balances in their year-end accounts. Also, as Joint Committees were not bodies corporate, they could not own assets, hold bank accounts in their name, have employees or enter into any form of contract. The Auditor concluded that the Town and Rural Councils should immediately commence a project aiming for new arrangements to be in place by 1 April 2018.

The report included the recommended actions that were needed to rectify the situation, including a new constitution, transfer of JBC bank account, employee, assets and legal contracts to the lead authority, and a number of changes to accounting practices.

In response to questions, the Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Council would be the lead authority for managing all accounting, legal and administrative requirements for the JBC. In terms of the membership of the Joint Committee, this would be subject to the new constitution – but it could remain broadly the same as now.

It was moved by Councillor G Elner, seconded by Cllr J Frost and

RESOLVED -

(a) that from 1 April 2018 the current arrangements for the Joint Parishes Burial Committee will cease, and that the Town Council then becomes the lead authority managing all accounting, legal and administrative requirements for the JBC in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Town Council;

(b) that a new constitution be in place from 1 April 2018 that will incorporate all the new arrangements, with Ellesmere Town Council as lead authority;

(c) that the implementation of the remaining actions recommended by the Internal Auditor be approved.

(Councillor I Ward asked for his abstention from voting to be recorded as a member of the Ellesmere Rural Parish Council).

172/17

General Data Protection Regulations

The Town Clerk reported that, at the recent SALC training event about preparing for these new Regulations, Councils had been advised to appoint a Data Protection Officer. The Clerk could undertake this role, but there would be a cost of £1800 for the necessary training. Peninsula, the Council's employment/health & safety advisors, had been approached to see whether they could provide this service – and a response was awaited.

Members felt that it was preferable to have an external person/provider to carry out the Data Protection Officer role.

Correspondence**(i) Items for consideration**

The following items of correspondence had been circulated and were noted:

Severn Trent Water – Road Closure on Scotland Street, Ellesmere on 28 January 2018

Police & Crime Commissioner Funding for CCTV – any bids for funding would need to be 50% match funded. The Town Clerk advised that she would speak to the local Police about whether there was a need for any new/additional CCTV cameras in the town.

Business Rates on Public Conveniences – proposal from NALC to lobby for business rates relief for public toilets.

During the discussion, Cllr Mrs A Wignall referred to the need for more toilets provision in the town centre, particularly for elderly people. It was agreed that the Chamber of Commerce be asked to consider a scheme for local businesses/shops to make their toilets available for public use.

(ii) Other Correspondence received after the Agenda being sent out.

NALC newsletter and response to Select Committee Inquiry into Brexit and Local Government - noted.

Ellesmere Town Improvements - Ellesmere Chamber of Commerce had asked the Town Council to support the proposed black and gold colour scheme for street furniture/public realm in the town centre that was being either refurbished by Shropshire Council or erected as part of the S106 Public Realm projects that the Chamber had successfully bid for – eg: cast iron flower planters. It was believed that the black and gold colour scheme presented a more ordered identity to visitor and resident alike.

Following a discussion about the merits of the different colour schemes for street furniture, it was

RESOLVED – that the black and gold colour scheme for town centre street furniture be endorsed.

SALC Draft Protocol – Councillor/Clerk Relations – it was AGREED that the Town Clerk produce a draft document based on the SALC template for consideration for adoption at the next meeting on 2 January 2018.

Campaign for 20mph speed limits in Shropshire – summary of discussion and conclusions of a public meeting on 25 November 2017. Noted.

Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group – latest news and updates. Noted.

NALC Grants and Funding Bulletin – noted.

Lakelands Academy – the Academy were seeking the Council's non-financial support for their funding bid to construct a full size floodlit all-weather pitch for both school and community use. **AGREED** – that the Council sends comments of support for Lakelands Academy's funding bid for an all-weather pitch, which would provide enhanced community leisure and sports facilities as well as helping improve the physical and mental health of children and young people.

Planning

Planning Application for Consideration

17/05512/VAR - Variation of condition 2 attached to planning permission 07/01212 to allow change of design to plot 7 – Land at rear of Sheraton House, St John's Hill, Ellesmere

There were no documents/plans of the application available to view on the Shropshire Council Planning Portal, and it was **AGREED** to defer consideration of the application to either the Planning & Infrastructure Committee or the next Town Council meeting if there was still time to respond.

175/17

Finance

(i) Payments for October 2017

The payments made during October 2017 had been circulated with the Agenda. It was moved by Cllr Mrs A Wignall, seconded by Cllr Mrs E Peers and

RESOLVED – that the payments for October, 2017 be approved, confirmed and signed as a true copy.

(ii) General Reserve Policy

A copy of the proposed Policy had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. In response to a question regarding the implementation of the Policy on the Town Council's finances, the Town Clerk advised that the figures for the reserves and balances would be included in the Clerks report for the next month to be considered in the near future. There were rules that the Council had to adhere to in terms of minimum and maximum amounts of reserves.

RESOLVED – that the General Reserve Policy be approved.

(iii) Scheme of Delegation

A copy of the updated Scheme of Delegation to reflect the new Committee structure etc. had been circulated with the papers for the meeting. Some suggested changes to the format/layout of the document were made by Cllr Mrs A Wignall.

RESOLVED - that the Scheme of Delegation be approved, with suggestions for changes to the layout/format to be forwarded to the Town Clerk.

(iv) Interim Audit

The Town Clerk reported that the Interim Audit had taken place on 29 November 2017. Noted.

(v) Pop-up Marquees

The Town Clerk reported that four of the Pop-up Marquees previously stored at the Market Hall were now located at the Town Hall. It was proposed that they be made available for hire. Members discussed the terms and conditions for hirers, and it was:

RESOLVED – that the charge for the hire of a pop-up marquee be £25 per day, and that the conditions of hire include the hirer being responsible for providing insurance cover and being liable for any damage.

The Town Clerk added that the Service Level Agreement between All Together Ellesmere and the Town Council would be amended to reflect that the new arrangements regarding the pop-up marquees.

(vi) External Auditor

The Town Clerk reported that PKF Littlejohn LLP had been appointed as external auditors for Shropshire local authorities for the 2017-22 financial years. Noted.

176/17

Staff Appraisals

The Town Clerk reported that she would be carrying out the staff appraisals this month. Members were needed to undertake her own appraisal.

AGREED - that the Mayor and Councillors P Goulbourne and Mrs E Peers carry out the Town Clerk's appraisal at a date and time to be arranged.

177/17

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday, 2nd January, 2018

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Mayor:

Date: