

ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held in Ellesmere Town Hall on Monday 2nd March, 2020 at 7.15pm.

<u>PRESENT:</u>	Town Mayor (Chair):	Cllr P Goulbourne
	Councillors:	Cllrs N Cull, A. Devismes, G Elner, J Frost, M Hancock, R Hartley, G Hutchinson, D Lunn, J Mowl, B Reincke and A Wignall
	Town Clerk & RFO:	Joanne Butterworth
	Assistant Clerk:	Phil Smith
	Unitary Councillor:	0
	Members of the Public:	1
	Press:	1
	Police:	0
	Guests:	0

Public Question Time - **Mr R McBride** from the Ellesmere Scouts group asked if the Town Council could send a letter to Shropshire Council in support of their planning application for a new Scout Hut on land they owned off Brownlow Court, Ellesmere. Concerns had been raised by Shropshire Highways regarding the proposed access to the site from Birch Road, but he felt there had been a misunderstanding as the main access would be from Wharf Road. The Birch Road access would only be occasionally used. There had also been some issues raised about the proposed materials for the building. Mr McBride went on to explain the history of usage of the land by the Scouts, and the need for a new base/facility for the Scout Group – which had been without a proper home since the demolition of the old Scout Hut in 2011.

242/19 **To Receive Apologies and Reason for Absence.**

All Councillors were present.

243/19 **Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests in Items on the Agenda**

None received.

244/19 **Grant Dispensations**

None received.

245/19 **Response to Public Questions**

Further to the representation received from Ellesmere Scout Group, it was noted that the Planning & Infrastructure Committee had supported the application for a new Scout Meeting Room. However, given the importance of the role of the local Scout Group in providing opportunities/activities for young people, it was **AGREED** – that a letter be sent to the Chair of the Northern Planning Committee to reiterate the Council's support for the planning application, the need for a new base/facility for the Ellesmere Scout Group, the benefit

that a thriving Scout Group brought to the local community, and a hope that any planning issues could be satisfactorily resolved.

246/19

Police Matters

The Town Mayor read out the report for February 2020 that had been provided by PC Crump (who was unable to attend in person) as follows:

“A total of 4 crimes recorded as follows:

- 2 Harassment (parties known to each other)
- 1 Domestic Assault
- 1 Fraud (via internet)

Of these, Police are currently actively investigating all of them.

This month is low in crimes, but obviously Officers have been busy with severe weather conditions. The crime statistics mentioned by Members recently is a complicated matter to try and explain, as there will be so many factors to attribute to each individual case”.

Cllr G Elner noted that an incident of vandalism in Cross Street that he had reported to the Police was not included in the figures. The Town Clerk advised that she would check with PC Crump as to why this incident had not been recorded.

247/19

Shropshire Council Report

Shropshire Cllr A Hartley had given her apologies due to another commitment.

The Town Clerk reported that she had been informed by Cllr Hartley that Shropshire Council had set up a working group to start preparatory work on a review of town/parish boundaries across the county.

248/19

Minutes

(i) Town Council Meeting – 3 February

It was moved by Cllr A Wignall, seconded by Cllr J Frost and

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Town Council meeting on 3 February, 2020 be approved and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.

(ii) Staffing & Governance Sub-Committee

The draft minutes of the meetings held on 17 and 21 February 2020 were noted.

249/19

Cemetery Working Group Minutes

The draft minutes of the meetings of the Cemetery Working Group held on 30 May, 25 July, 3 October and 5 December 2019 were noted.

250/19

Action List from February’s meeting

The updated action list had been circulated.

In relation to the Shropshire Wide Bus Upgrade Project, Cllr A Wignall reported that the online community survey had been conducted asking for views on improvements to bus services. The most popular response was a need for a bus route to Whitchurch – particularly to link to the Shrewsbury – Manchester rail service. There had also been some preferences for more direct bus services to Shrewsbury.

With regard to the representation on the proposed housing development off Canal Way, the Assistant Clerk reported that no response had yet been received from Shropshire Council.

251/19

Finance/Contracts

(i) Payments for January 2020

The payments made during January, 2020 had been circulated with the Agenda. It was moved by Cllr A Wignall, seconded by Cllr B Reincke and

RESOLVED – that the payments for January 2020 be approved, confirmed and signed as a true copy.

(ii) Financial Regulations/Finance Committee Terms of Reference

The Town Clerk reported that the new model Financial Regulations had been endorsed for approval by the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee, and that the terms of reference of the Committee had been amended to align with the changes to the Regulations. It was moved by Cllr G Hutchinson, seconded by Cllr G Elner and

RESOLVED – that the updated Financial Regulations, and Terms of Reference for the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee, be approved.

(iii) LED Street Lighting Conversion and Loan Extension Update

The Town Clerk reported that the Public Works Loan Board had now granted the extension to the Council's loan application for the funding of the LED Street Lighting. Work was ongoing on the project, with the contractors having converted around 60% of the Council's street lights so far. Members reported that reaction from residents so far was generally positive. Noted.

(iv) 2019/20 Year End Accounts

The Town Clerk reported that the RBS Year end closedown had been booked for 3 April 2020, with the Annual Internal Audit due to take place on 9 April. Noted.

(v) New Laptop and Office Phone Line

The Town Clerk reported that it was proposed to purchase a laptop for the new Assistant Clerk to use rather than a fixed PC, as this would provide more flexibility. As she would largely be based in the Town Clerk's office, it was also proposed to provide her with a separate phone line/number. The Council's current telephony provider had been approached for a solution, and their response was reported. An alternative, and much cheaper, solution was to install a phone line via the Town Hall's modem as a temporary measure until January

2021 when the telephony contract is due for renewal. It was moved by Cllr G Elner, seconded by Cllr P Goulbourne and

RESOLVED -

(a) that authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee, to purchase a new laptop – providing the cost is under £500;

(b) that the installation of a modem phone line for the Assistant Clerk until January 2021 be approved.

252/19

Finance – Cemetery Working Group

(i) Payments for January 2020

The payments made during January, 2020 had been circulated with the Agenda. It was moved by Cllr N Cull, seconded by Cllr A Wignall and

RESOLVED – that the payments for January 2020 be approved, confirmed and signed as a true copy.

(ii) Emergency Health & Safety Works

The Town Mayor reported that, following someone slipping in the Memorial Garden at the Cemetery and concerns about the safety of the existing surface, the Working Group had put forward proposals to improve the area and lay down a gravel surface to make it safer. Due to the urgent nature of the works, the Town Clerk had authorised the grounds maintenance contractors to carry out the improvements, the cost for which amounted to £1,025.72. Members endorsed the actions taken, and the costs incurred.

253/19

Town Clerk's Report

The report, which included details of the Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor's engagements during February, was noted.

254/19

Town Hall Maintenance Task & Finish Group

The notes of a meeting of the Town Hall Maintenance Task & Finish Group held on 24 February 2020 were circulated. The Group had looked round the Town Hall to assess the condition of the various rooms, and to identify improvements /repairs that were needed. Five priority actions had been agreed for recommending to Council:

- get costings for the installation of double glazed windows and doors in the Main Hall, Small Hall and Committee Room;
- get costings for the re-decoration of each room separately;
- get costings to repair the wooden upright structure on the lobby/porch;
- get costings to remove the Expelair fans in the Main Hall and the holes to be blocked up;
- check with Shropshire Council if changes to the original plan for an enclosed lobby – with a simpler automatic sliding door instead – would still meet the criteria for Section 106 funding.

The Town Clerk added that enquiries would be made to see if any other external funding might be available for improvement works, and, as previously agreed, clarification would be sought from an expert on the VAT threshold for such works. In relation to the proposal from the Group for pictures of Ellesmere to be displayed in the Main Hall, Cllr N Cull offered to take some photos. This was welcomed by Members, and it was suggested that other local photographers also be asked to provide pictures.

It was moved by Cllr R Hartley, seconded by Cllr M Hancock and

RESOLVED – that the ‘next steps’ identified by the Town Hall Maintenance Task & Finish Group, as shown above, be approved.

255/19

Climate Change Working Group

The Town Mayor presented the minutes of a meeting of the Climate Change Working Group held on 24 February 2020. The Group had identified possible “quick wins”, and there was a discussion regarding the suggestions for planting trees on the Council owned land behind Berwyn View, erecting a bicycle rack at the Town Hall, and registering to host a community ‘Big Spring Clean’ on 4 April 2020. Following consideration of the proposals, it was **AGREED**

- (a) that the proposal for planting trees on the land at the rear of Berwyn View be deferred to the next meeting, pending further information about any interest from Lakelands School in the land, clarification about any access point from the proposed new housing development off Canal Way, and production of a location plan showing where the trees would be planted;**
- (b) that the principle of purchasing a bicycle rack be approved, subject to further investigation as to where best to locate it outside the Town Hall;**
- (c) to register with Keep Britain Tidy to host a community ‘Big Spring Clean’ on 4 April 2020.**

256/19

Councillors’ Reports

(i) The Town Mayor reported that he had attended a Climate Change Workshop at Shirehall. It had been very well attended, and had provided a lot of useful practical information for town/parish councils.

(ii) The Town Mayor presented a written report of the meeting of the SALC Executive Working Group held on 27 February 2020, which had included feedback on Place Plans, the Community Rural Strategy, Boundary Reviews, and Emergency Planning. ed on a recent meeting of the Market Towns Forum held in Church Stretton.

(iii) Cllr B Reincke reported on a recent meeting of the Ellesmere Chamber of Commerce that he had attended as the Council’s representative. There had been discussions about the future of the traders’ car park, traffic warden activity in the town, and the introduction of a voucher scheme for local shops/businesses to offer discounts to residents/visitors;

(iv) Cllr B Reincke reported that the Community Vision Task & Finish Group had met last week to go through and collate the information/feedback received at

the Community Workshop events. There was a further meeting next week to look at the next steps in presenting a Vision Plan/Strategy to the community, and how to engage the community in “ownership” of the vision for the Town’s future.

257/19 **Save the Children Logo**

The Town Clerk reported that Save the Children had given permission for their logo to be used on Council stationery, and an example of how that would look had been circulated to Members. The logo placement on Council stationery was **AGREED**.

258/19 **Annual Joint Dinner**

The Town Clerk reported that Ellesmere Rural Parish Council was hosting this year’s Joint Dinner at the Boathouse Restaurant, Ellesmere on 29 May 2020. Invitations had been sent to Councillors, who were asked to respond if they had not yet done so.

259/19 **Future Meeting Dates**

Monday 6th April 2020 at 7.15pm – Monthly Town Council meeting
Tuesday 10th March 2020 at 1pm - Community Vision Plan Task & Finish Group

The Town Clerk reported that dates for a number of other Task & Finish Group meetings would be finalised shortly and notified to Members.

260/19 **Exclusion of Press and Public**

It was moved by Cllr G Hutchinson, seconded by Cllr B Reincke and

RESOLVED - that in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and Section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1992, the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Acts.

261/19 **Exempt Minutes**

The exempt minutes of meetings of the Staffing & Governance Sub-Committee held on 17th and 21st February 2020 were circulated for noting.

262/19 **Honorary Freewoman/Freeman**

Members discussed potential nominees for 2020, and it was

RESOLVED – that Mrs J Tudor-Watson and Mrs B McBride be approved as Honorary Freewomen for 2020.

263/19 **Town Hall Bar Lease Expiry**

The Town Clerk reported that the current lease for the Town Hall Bar was due to expire on 31 May 2020. It was proposed to put the lease out to tender, and Members agreed the terms/specification of the new lease.

The meeting closed at 9.03pm

Mayor:

Date:

DRAFT