

ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Town Council held via Zoom on Thursday 11th June, 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 and A Wignall
	Town Clerk & RFO:	Joanne Butterworth
	Assistant Clerk:	Jean Hynes
	Members of the Public:	0
	Press:	0

Public Question Time – No public were present

1/20 **To Receive Apologies and Reason for Absence.**

All Councillors were present.

2/20 **Virtual Meeting Protocol**

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions on public gatherings, the Government had issued emergency regulations to allow council meetings to be held remotely. Council Standing Orders in relation to the conduct of meetings would still apply, but a Protocol had been drawn-up as a temporary addendum to Standing Orders to reflect how the rules would be applied for a virtual on-line meeting.

It was moved by Cllr G Hutchinson, seconded by Cllr G Elner and

RESOLVED – that the Virtual Meeting Protocol be approved as a temporary addendum to Standing Orders to apply to any meetings of the Council and its Committees that need to be held remotely up to May 2021, if required.

3/20 **Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests in Items on the Agenda**

None received.

4/20 **Grant Dispensations**

None received.

5/20 **Response to Public Questions**

None received.

6/20 **Minutes**

(i) Town Council Meeting – 2 March

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

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Town Council meeting on 2 March, 2020 be approved and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.

(ii) Extraordinary Town Council Meeting – 20 March

It was moved by Cllr A Wignall, seconded by Cllr G Hutchinson and

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council meeting on 20 March, 2020 be approved and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.

(iii) Staffing & Governance Sub-Committee – 21 May

The draft minutes of the virtual meeting held on 21 May 2020 were noted.

7/20

Finance/Contracts

(i) Payments for February 2020

The payments made during February, 2020 had been circulated with the Agenda. It was moved by Cllr D Lunn, seconded by Cllr J Frost and

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

(ii) Payments for March 2020

The payments made during March, 2020 had been circulated with the Agenda. It was moved by Cllr A Wignall, seconded by Cllr M Hancock and

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

(iii) Receipts/Payments/Income & Expenditure Reports for Final Quarter 2019/20

The financial analysis reports for the period January – March 2020 had been circulated with the agenda. It was moved by Cllr G Hutchinson, seconded by Cllr J Frost and

RESOLVED - that the 2019/20 Final Quarter reports be approved, confirmed and signed as a true copy.

(iv) Cemetery Working Group Payments for February 2020

The payments made during February, 2020 had been circulated with the Agenda. It was moved by Cllr A Wignall, seconded by Cllr J Frost and

RESOLVED - that the Cemetery Working Group payments for February 2020 be approved, confirmed and signed as a true copy.

(v) Cemetery Working Group Payments for March 2020

The payments made during March, 2020 had been circulated with the Agenda. It was moved by Cllr J Frost, seconded by Cllr G Hutchinson and

RESOLVED – that the Cemetery Working Group payments for March 2020 be approved, confirmed and signed as a true copy.

(vi) Cemetery Working Group Receipts/Payments/Income & Expenditure Reports for Final Quarter 2019/20

The financial analysis reports for the period January – March 2020 had been circulated with the agenda. It was moved by Cllr A Wignall, seconded by Cllr J Frost and

RESOLVED – that the Cemetery Working Group 2019/20 Final Quarter reports be approved, confirmed and signed as a true copy.

(vii) Town Centre Planters

The Town Clerk reported that three quotes had been sought for provision of the summer planters for the Town Centre. However, only one company (who provided the planters last year) had been able to source the plants. Their quote of £1435.14 was within the agreed budget sum, and had been accepted under the temporary scheme of delegation. The planters had been delivered and sited. Noted.

(viii) Town Hall Licensed Bar Rights

Further to Minute 263/19, the Town Clerk reported that only one application for the new three year lease on the Town Hall bar had been received. This was from the existing leaseholder and, following consultation with Members, the lease had been renewed for a further 3 years commencing on 1 June 2020. Noted.

(ix) CCTV Maintenance Contract

The Town Clerk reported that three quotations had been received for the CCTV Maintenance contract. In accordance with the temporary scheme of delegation, and following consultation with members of the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee, Company 2 had been awarded the new 3 year contract, commencing from 30 April 2020. Their price of £1664.10 per annum was cheaper or in line with the other 2 companies, and within the budgeted figure for the contract. They had also installed the current CCTV infrastructure. Noted.

8/20

Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2019/20

The Town Clerk referred to the Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements for 2019/20, which had been circulated. The Internal Audit had been completed on 4 June, and the Internal Auditor's report had been circulated. The only issues raised related to the new gates at the Kingfisher Walk Play Area not being reflected in the Fixed Assets Register, and recommended changes to the RBS accounting system to allow more accurate recording of income and

expenditure. The Asset Register had been updated and work was ongoing to include additional detail in the accounts.

The Town Clerk reported that the budgetary forecast that formed part of the Return had been extended from three to five years in line with best practice. It was moved by Cllr G Hutchinson, seconded by Cllr J Frost and

RESOLVED –

(a) that Members read and answered ‘yes’ to questions 1-8 and ‘not applicable’ to question 9 of Section 1 Annual Governance Statement 2019/20;

(b) that the Section 2 Accounting Statements 2019/20 be confirmed, approved and signed by the Town Mayor and Clerk;

(c) that the year-end Internal Audit report for 2019/20 be noted;

(d) that the Annual Return and Supporting Statement for 2019/20 be signed by the Town Mayor and Clerk ready for submission to the External Auditor (PKF Littlejohn);

(e) that the Balance sheet and supporting statement as at 31 March 2020 be signed by the Town Mayor and Clerk;

(f) that the Notice of public rights and publication of the Unaudited Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2019/20 during the period 15 June to 24 July 2020 be approved;

(g) that the five year forecast and cost of running local services be noted;

(h) that the Earmarked Reserves from the General Reserve Account for the forthcoming year be confirmed and approved as follows:

Town Hall Roof/New Entrance Foyer - £40,000.00.

Main Hall Ventilation/sound proofing/heating/water system - £25,000.00.

Library Contribution £5,000.

Youth Provision £2,000.

Election Costs £2,250.

Neighbourhood Fund 2016/2017 £1,329.43.

Neighbourhood Fund 2017/2018 £3,702.

Neighbourhood Fund 2019/2020 £12,385.19.

CCTV £5,000.

Toilet Water Damage £700.

60% CWG Cash Assets - £21,032.

Ring fenced £1,375.00 income (from 2017/18) the Cottage, Mereside towards any maintenance costs.

9/20

Assets and Insurance

A copy of the Council's updated Inventory of Land and Assets, including buildings and office equipment, had been circulated. The Town Clerk referred to the Art Screens which were rarely hired out and which took up storage space in

the Town Hall shed. It was **AGREED** to investigate the disposal of the Art Screens for local community use.

The annual review of insurance cover had taken place, and there had been a slight increase in the Council's insurance premium for 2020/21 to £4,160 compared to £4,089 last year. The Clerk approached 2 additional insurance companies for quotations - one was unable to quote and the other had specific terms regarding roof inspections, so the Clerk managed to negotiate a reduction in the renewal price with our current insurer to £3,520.59. In accordance with the temporary scheme of delegation, and following consultation with Members, the new insurance cover commenced on 1 June 2020 for 12 months.

Noted.

10/20

Audit and Risk Management

The Town Clerk reported that the Annual Risk Assessment & Management documents had been updated and circulated, along with the Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit & Internal Audit Plan, and the updated list of approved contractors with changes highlighted. In response to questions, the Town Clerk confirmed that there were separate more detailed risk assessments sitting behind the main document, and that she would investigate the existence of any business continuity plans.

RESOLVED – that the following documents be approved:

**Annual Risk Assessment & Management;
Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit;
Internal Audit Plan
List of Approved Contractors, subject to the inclusion of the Internal Auditor.**

11/20

Planning

a) Planning Applications since March 2020

On 20 March 2020, the Council delegated authority to the Town Clerk (or in her absence the Assistant Clerks), in consultation with the Chair of the Planning & Infrastructure Committee, to respond to time-limited consultations on planning applications during the period when the Council and its Committees were unable to meet due to the Government's lockdown measures to combat Covid-19. A list of the Town Council's responses/comments submitted to Shropshire Council during that period had been circulated for information. All Members had had an opportunity to submit their views on the applications in question. Noted.

(b) Planning Applications for Consideration

The Town Clerk reported that a couple of applications had just been received and would be included on the agenda for the July meeting.

12/20

Mayor/Deputy Mayor and Committee Membership 2020/21

The Town Clerk reported that in April 2020, the Government had issued Regulations to dis-apply some of the legislative requirements around Council meetings and their procedures during the coronavirus crisis. This included removing the requirement to hold an annual meeting before the end of May 2020. Regulation 4 stated that where an appointment would otherwise be made or was required to be made at an annual meeting of a local authority, the appointment continued until the next annual meeting of the authority or until such time as that authority may determine. Therefore, the current Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor would continue in their positions until the next Annual Council meeting in May 2021. Similarly, in relation to business normally conducted at the annual meeting, the current membership of committees, working groups and task & finish groups would continue to apply until May 2021.

Noted.

13/20

Casual Vacancy

The Town Clerk reported that Ben Reincke had resigned as a Councillor with effect from 1 May 2020. She had written to thank him for his contribution to the Town Council. The vacancy had been advertised and no request for a bye-election had been received. A casual vacancy for co-option had subsequently been advertised with a closing date for applications of 26 June 2020.

Given that the Council would need to continue to meet remotely for some time, temporary amendments to the Co-option Policy to allow for co-option via a virtual meeting had been circulated for consideration.

It was moved by Cllr P Goulbourne, seconded by Cllr G Hutchinson and

RESOLVED – that the temporary amendments to the Co-option Policy/Process be approved, subject to the deletion of the word “both”.

AGREED – that the Co-option of a new Councillor be considered at the July meeting.

14/20

Programme of Meetings 2020/21

RESOLVED - that the Programme of Meetings for the 2020/21 municipal year, as shown below, be approved:

06.07.20	7.15pm	Virtual meeting via Zoom
07.09.20	7.15pm	Ellesmere Town Hall or via Zoom TBC
05.10.20	7.15pm	Ellesmere Town Hall or via Zoom TBC
02.11.20	7.15pm	Ellesmere Town Hall or via Zoom TBC
07.12.20	7.15pm	Ellesmere Town Hall or via Zoom TBC
04.01.21	7.15pm	Ellesmere Town Hall or via Zoom TBC
01.02.21	7.15pm	Ellesmere Town Hall or via Zoom TBC
01.03.21	7.15pm	Ellesmere Town Hall or via Zoom TBC
12.04.21	7.15pm	Ellesmere Town Hall or via Zoom TBC
12.05.21	7.15pm	Ellesmere Town Hall or via Zoom TBC

15/20

Exclusion of Press and Public

It was moved by Cllr G Hutchinson, seconded by Cllr A Wignall 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Acts.

16/20

Exempt Minutes

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2020 were circulated.

It was moved by Cllr G Hutchinson, seconded by Cllr J Frost and

RESOLVED – that the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2020 be approved and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.

The meeting closed at 8.12pm

Mayor:

Date: