

# OTC/04/20

## Oswestry Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020 at 7.00 pm via video conferencing using Zoom.

**Present:** The Mayor, Councillor D Kerr  
Councillors S Best, P A Cherrington, M Coppock,  
B Edwards, R Evans, V Hunt, M Jones, L Maguire,  
S Mason, D P Milner, J Moore, J Price, R Radford,  
O Rose and C Schofield.

**In the Chair:** The Mayor, Councillor D Kerr

**In attendance:** Arren Roberts – Town Clerk  
Simon Cranmer – Operations Manager  
Sandra Trevor – Office Manager  
5 Members of the Public

### Public Session

- a) Mr Duncan Borrowman, Publican of the Bailey Head, informed Council that he had recently applied for a Pavement Licence under the Business and Planning Bill 2020 but had been told by Shropshire Council that he would not be permitted to have tables on Market Days (Wednesdays and Saturdays). Mr Borrowman asked whether Councillors were asked formally about his application, and whether the Town Clerk received views.

The Mayor explained that delegated emergency powers were given to the Town Clerk because of the difficulty making timely decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic. He confirmed that there was no

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formal scheme for consultation over delegated decisions and in this case the Councillors were not consulted but a formal scheme of consultation would be needed if the period of emergency delegation to the Town Clerk was to continue in the future. If the market rights cannot be easily set aside then the Council could provide permission for the Bailey Head to maintain tables on market days for a small consideration and the Town Clerk has been asked to expedite this. The Mayor apologised on behalf of the Council for any inconvenience this had caused and that this was one of the very many issues the COVID-19 had created for the Council.

- b) The Mayor received a letter from Mr Graham Jones concerning the recent eviction letter to the catering tenants at the Visitor & Exhibition Centre. This was read out to Council and Mr Jones asked what the final cost of the eviction would be and why taxpayers money was being spent to evict the tenants?

The Mayor explained that this was a confidential matter discussed in private session therefore information could not be divulged; however, he confirmed that the Town Council accounts were published and available for inspection.

### 69. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

**Councillor N Hughes – work commitments**

**Councillor M Isherwood – holiday**

**Resolved** the apologies be accepted.

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## 70. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

To receive declarations under consideration on this agenda in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 s32 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

Councillor Edwards expressed a pecuniary interest in **Item 11 – Youth Services** and stated that he would leave the meeting whilst this Item was being discussed.

## 71. Minutes

Minutes of a meeting held on:

**22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020**      **OTC/03/20**

Were confirmed and signed.

## 72. To Answer Any Questions

To answer any questions in accordance with Standing Orders upon which formal notice has been given.

**Resolved** to note no questions were asked.

## 73. Shropshire Council Matters

Update from local Shropshire Councillors V Hunt, D P Milner and J Price on any policies, consultation or general matter relating to Shropshire Council.

Members were informed that the Community Reassurance Teams established during the COVID pandemic were providing regular updates. It was also noted that COVID mobile testing was still available at the Oswestry Showground until Monday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 and there was capacity for testing.

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Members were reminded that the library scheme called Ready Reads was still providing a service offering tailored book choices selected by library staff.

### 74. Standing Committees

**Resolved** the below minutes were adopted:

Development and Planning Committee

**1<sup>st</sup> July 2020**                      **DP/01/20**

**22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020**                    **DP/02/20**

Councillor V Hunt abstained from the vote as a member of the Northern Planning Committee.

### 75. 2020/21 Budget Revision

Members were asked to consider a revised projected budget for 2020/21 from the Finance Officer taking into account the effects of the Coronavirus on the Council's income and expenditure.

Concerns were raised concerning rental owed to the Town Council from property.

A query was also made as to why the computer system operational outturn was higher than budget. The Town Clerk explained that this was due to a change of contract and some additional costs, however this was due to be reviewed.

It was **resolved**:

- Report **TC/3914/20** be noted;
- Members would advise the Town Clerk of any cost saving ideas;

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- The Town Clerk would provide an update regarding any outstanding property rental.

### 76. **Bike2Work Scheme**

Report **TC/3915/20** was received from the Finance Officer for Council to consider offering staff the Bike2Work Scheme to which there is no cost implication upon the Council.

Members welcomed this scheme unanimously and therefore it was **resolved:**

- Report **TC/3915/20** be noted;
- The Town Clerk to investigate whether Councillors could also be part of this scheme.

### 77. **Update on Car Park**

**Resolved** to note an update report would be brought to Council in September.

### 78. **Electronic Communication**

Members received report **TC/3917/20** from the Town Clerk on a recommendation under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for Councillors to have their own specific Town Council email account.

Following discussion and agreement to this recommendation, it was **resolved:**

- To note report **TC/3917/20**;
- The Town Clerk to arrange 18 licences for Councillors;
- The Town Council e-mail address would be the one used for all correspondence between officers/the office and elected members;

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- All emails would be password protected;
- Costings to be sought by the Town Clerk for providing electronic devices for Councillors.

### 79. Youth Services

Report **TC/3918/20** was received from the Town Clerk for Members to consider the arrangements for the commencement of the youth services work tendered by the Council in March 2020.

At this point of the meeting Councillor B Edwards left the meeting.

The Town Clerk reported that they had been unable to progress this because of the pandemic but were now in a position to commence services.

It was **resolved:**

- Report **TC/3918/20** be noted;
- The Contract could be issued and that services could commence.

### 80. Council Policies

Members noted that a number of the Council's policies and procedures e.g. complaints, social media etc and employee related policies e.g. eye tests for staff were due for review. The intention was to bring these periodically to Council for consideration and approval rather than to present them all at once.

**Resolved** the above be noted and policies be presented and approved before the start of the new Council in May 2021.

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## 81. Delegated Powers

Council were asked to review the extended delegated powers given to the Town Clerk aimed at enabling the Council to fulfil their responsibilities during the pandemic.

Elected Members were asked to consider whether this delegation was still required given that Council was able to meet and consider business virtually and that the Town Clerk (under Financial Regulations and Standing Orders) could commit expenditure in circumstances of emergency.

After discussion it was **resolved** that the delegated powers would be removed from the Town Clerk and decision making would revert to the scheme of delegation.

## 82. Consultation on the Reform of the Planning Decision

It was brought to the attention of Councillors that the National Association of Local Councils were consulting County Associations and their members on the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government consultations on reform of the planning system. Council were invited to consider whether it wished to respond to these consultations.

It was noted that:

- The deadline for responses to changes to the current planning system was 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020;
- The deadline for responses to planning for the future - the planning white paper was 15<sup>th</sup> October 2020;
- Finally, the response for responses on transparency and competition: a call for evidence on data on land control was 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

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It was agreed that, in order for responses to be made, further discussion and details were required followed by a report back to Council.

It was therefore **resolved**:

- Report **TC/3905/20** be noted;
- Diane Dorrell, the County Secretary for SALC be invited to speak to Councillors;
- A meeting take place between Shropshire Councillors V Hunt and M Jones, the Town Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair of the Development & Planning Committee along with a member of the Civic Society.

### **83. Marches Investment Fund**

Council were informed that Shropshire Council had secured Marches Investment Fund (MIF) support for strategic business and tourism development. This funding had been identified for seven of the market towns within Shropshire that had been impacted by COVID-19. £12,000 had been allocated to Oswestry BID, working with Oswestry Town Council, to support initiatives aimed at enabling safe reopening, social distancing, driving footfall and reinvigorating the town economy. A number of contributions had been received by elected Members and these had been included in submission which had been provided for information.

**Resolved** the application be noted.

### **84. High Street Action Zone Funding**

Report **TC/3919/20** was presented setting out the Town Council's allocation to the High Street Heritage Action Zone Project.

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It was agreed that this was a great opportunity for the town and the Town Clerk confirmed that Shropshire Council were contributing £90,000 and match funding £125,000 of Section 106 funds.

It was **resolved** to approve the allocation of the Town Council contribution to the HAZ programme as set out in the report and request a further report prior to the launch of the Shopfront scheme to agree Town Council input into the decision-making process.

### 85. Fun Fair

Members were asked to consider a request from Mr Alan Stokes of Stokes Fun fair to place a limited number of rides in Cae Glas Park over the Bank Holiday weekend.

After discussion it was **resolved** that, as a Risk Assessment and a COVID Management Plan was being carried out, and as there were no staffing concerns, this event could take place.

### 86. Events – Decision Making

The Council were reminded that a number of events were scheduled for Winter 2020/21 and decisions would need to be made by Council and partners as to whether or not these events should take place. Assessments would need to consider relevant Government advice, risk assessments, method statements and a financial appraisal. These events included:

- Bonfire evening;
- The Christmas Lights Switch on Event;
- Christmas Music Live and
- Youth Music Festival.

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Members were informed that preliminary meetings were taking place with partners and stakeholder, including the Royal British Legion and Reverend Gibbons concerning Remembrance Sunday, and further information would be provided for the September meeting.

It was **resolved** to note that:

- A detailed report with recommendations would be available for the next Council meeting.
- Members would need to make decisions before any expenditure was made, taking into account government advice.

### **87. Memorial Hall**

At their previous meeting, elected Members requested the Town Clerk meet with the Trustees to better understand the current and future operation of the Memorial Hall.

Members were informed that the meeting took place on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and a number of options and ideas were discussed. Enquiries had been made with Shropshire Council to ascertain whether or not grants were available and an application form for the Town Council's grant programme had been provided.

It was noted that the Trustees were keen that the current way of working continues.

### **88. Exclusion of Public and Press**

That by the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (S1(2)) and in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 , the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following items of business on the

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grounds they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Acts.

**It was resolved to exclude the public and press**

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## **Committee in Private Session**

- 89. Chairmen's Group**
- 90. Smithfield Gateway**
- 91. Visitor and Exhibition Centre**

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## Committee in Private Session

### 89. Chairmen's Group

It was **resolved** to approve the notes of the Chairmen's Group held on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020 – **CG/02/20**

### 90. Smithfield Gateway

Following further correspondence received, the Town Clerk provided a verbal update concerning the Smithfield Gateway.

It was unanimously **resolved** the contents of the correspondence be accepted.

### 91. Visitor & Exhibition Centre

#### a) Oswestry Visitor & Exhibition Centre - License

Councillors were asked to consider the legal advice provided by the Council's Solicitor with regard to the license for the existing catering operation.

Following discussion on each of the options provided, and the advice of the Council's Solicitor, it was unanimously **resolved** to note report **TC/3912/20** and accept Option 3.

#### b) Catering Contract

Councillors were asked to consider and agree the tender documents for the procurement process.

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After discussion, it was unanimously **resolved** to note report **TC/3913/20** and proceed with the tender.

### c) **Exhibition Space**

Councillors were asked to confirm the proposed change of use of the space as per resolution on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

After discussion it was unanimously **resolved** to note report **TC/3920/20** and confirm the resolution of 24<sup>th</sup> June and the proposed change of use of the space.

**The meeting closed at 20:23 hrs.**

**The Mayor  
Councillor D Kerr  
Chairman**