

OTC/02/20

Oswestry Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Wednesday 24th June 2020 at 7.00 pm via video conferencing using Zoom.

Present: **Councillors S Best, R Evans, V Hunt, M Isherwood, M Jones, D Kerr, 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
Roger Dyke – Responsible Finance Officer
Simon Cranmer – Operations Manager
Sandra Trevor – PA to the Town Clerk / Mayor
4 Members of the Public**

Prior to the start of the meeting The Mayor expressed the condolences of the Council to the Right Honourable O Paterson MP and his family following the sudden death, announced earlier, of his wife, Rose Paterson.

Public Session

Prior to the public session the Mayor read out a short statement setting out how the meeting would run using Zoom.

Mr Alan Davis asked the Council to look to expand the current Coronavirus street enhancement works to support struggling town centre businesses by increasing footfall. In response the Mayor highlighted that the item was to be discussed by Council.

OTC/02/20

Peter Lloyd expressed support for Central Car Park improvement works as discussed later in the agenda, voicing concern on continued use of the car park by boy racers and resulting disturbance to residents of Regents Court.

16. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor P Cherrington – personal

Councillor B Edwards- personal

Councillor N Hughes- injury

Resolved that the apologies be noted.

17. 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 J Price disclosed a personal interest in agenda item 14 (Notice of Motion concerning bus services) being an employee of a local bus company. He noted that he would leave the meeting for the item.

It was **Resolved** to note the disclosure made.

18. Minutes

Minutes of a meeting held on:

27th May 2020 OTC/01/20

Were confirmed and signed.

19. To Answer Any Questions

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

OTC/02/20

Resolved to note no questions were asked.

20. 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.

Councillor V Hunt highlighted the Church Street Coronavirus pedestrian improvement works.

21. Local Government Association - Model Member Code of Conduct

It was noted that the Local Government Association (LGA) has launched a consultation of a new model code of conduct and that NALC have encouraged Local Councils and County Associations of Local Councils to respond to the LGA by the deadline of 17th August 2020.

The Model code of conduct (Appendix A) was discussed. It was highlighted that the draft code (page 9) suggests that elected members, who are appointed to external groups/organisations/partnerships (Registered interests) by the Council will not be able to speak or vote on items of business relating to these groups/organisations/partnerships. This would suggest that there is very little point Councils appointing to outside bodies when the very purpose is to improve communication. It was also noted that the code could be interpreted that this only applies if you are a member of the organisation and appointed to represent the Council on that body.

It was **Resolved** to note the consultation of the draft Code of Conduct and to request the Clerk highlights the Councils observations to the

OTC/02/20

LGA seeking clarification that a Councillor who is appointed on to an organisation does not have to withdraw from a meeting when the organisation is discussed unless he is also a member in his own right.

22. Schedule of Meetings 2020/21

A Schedule of Meetings 2020/21 was produced by the Town Clerk for Council to receive and adopt. The schedule of meetings would be kept under review to ensure that the Councils' business could be discharged.

Resolved the Schedule be adopted.

23. Investment Analysis

The report from the Finance Officer, **TC/3885/20**, set out the Investment Income for the period up to 30th April 2020.

Resolved to adopt report **TC/3885/20**

24. Sundry Creditors

To adopt the below Statements of Accounts approved for payment by The Chairman/Vice-Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee:

SC/547/20	-	12th February 2020
SC/548/20	-	3rd March 2020
SC/549/20	-	17th March 2020
SC/550/20	-	31st March 2020
SC/551/20	-	30th April 2020
SC/552/20	-	12th May 2020
SC/553/20	-	29th May 2020

Resolved to adopt the Statements as listed.

OTC/02/20

25. Analysis Actual Income and Expenditure (all Committees)

The report from the Finance Officer, **TC/3886/20**, was set out in the form of an Analysis of Actual Income and Expenditure to 31st May 2020.

The Town Clerk provided a verbal update on car park income.

Referring to the report of the Finance Officer, the Town Clerk advised that during the April/May period the Council had lost an approximate sum in the amount of £100,000 in net revenue as a result of Coronavirus and its effect on car park income, market and Cross Market rental etc. Expenditure savings had been made during lockdown.

Since the shops reopened car parking income has increased but remains significantly below the previous year's data. It was reported that the RFO is reviewing budget profiles on a regular basis and that a prediction of the worst-case scenario could be a loss to the Council in the region of £500,000, however it was hoped it would be significantly less than this amount.

Members recalled that the Town Council have been working with NALC and some of the other larger local councils to highlight the pressure on finances. Collectively it is viewed that the following three measures would have a significant impact during the current financial year:

- business rates relief on community buildings;
- payment holidays for Public Works Loans Board;
- enabling use of Capital Reserves for revenue expenditure.

Resolved to note the update.

OTC/02/20

26. Oswestry Town Council - Statement of Annual Governance 2019/2020

The Committee was asked to receive and adopt the Council's Corporate Governance Statement for 2019/20. This statement accompanied the Final Accounts statement; however, **must be minuted and considered separately.**

In adopting the statement, the Committee is confirming satisfaction with the effectiveness of its system of internal control for 2019/20 and 2020/21 in order to comply with the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015. The Committee should be satisfied that the Council "has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of that body's functions and which includes arrangements for management of risk".

Resolved to adopt the Statement of Annual Governance.

27. Annual Return / Final Accounts 2019/20

The Council was asked to adopt, and confirm as a correct record, the Annual Return and supporting information, as provided, to comply with the Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015. The Annual Return must be adopted, signed by the Mayor and submitted to PKF Littlejohn LLP by 31st July 2020, if feasible given the Coronavirus pandemic.

A report providing a brief explanation of the Final Accounts/Annual Return was also provided. The Annual Return included additional notes from Internal Audit.

It was **resolved** to formally adopt the accounts together with report **TC/3766/19**, the Annual Return and supporting information, and for the Mayor and Town Clerk to sign as appropriate.

Further **resolved** to thank the Finance Officer for its completion on time given the ongoing pandemic.

OTC/02/20

28. Notices of Motion in Relation to Central Car Park

Two Notices of Motions in relation to Central Car Park submitted by Councillor M Isherwood and Councillor D P Milner were of a similar nature. The Mayor stipulated that in terms of the Council's constitution, the motions have to be taken in the order submitted and once the first had been considered the Council would be precluded from considering the second one under the six-month rule. To avoid this outcome, it was suggested that the two proponents work together, and that Councillor M Isherwood's motion is seconded by Councillor D P Milner and the second motion is then withdrawn.

Councillor D P Milner agreed to this proposal.

To consider a Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor M Isherwood:

"That this Council,

is committed, in principle, to pay-on-exit for Central Car Park and instructs the Clerk to ascertain the most cost-effective way of implementing this as a matter of urgency and to report back to the Council for final approval when he has ascertained the costs and implications.

instructs the Clerk to seek professional advice from a highway safety consultant with regard to the optimum position for vehicles to emerge from Central Car Park, acknowledging the concerns of local residents with regard to public safety and their concerns that the expansion of pedestrianisation in the town centre may result in an increase in traffic-flow on nearby streets

OTC/02/20

Moving the exit as part of switching to a pay-on-exit system has the advantage of enabling the existing system and exit to be used until the new one is installed and tested so there is no interruption to either carpark use or revenue.”

A lengthy discussion ensued with elected members highlighting the positive and negative elements of the proposal.

After much debate it was **resolved** to adopt the Motion. Officers would investigate the options for pay on exit and contact a Highways consultant for advice and options for a Feasibility Study for Members to consider.

29. Notice of Motion in the Name of Councillor S Mason

Councillor J Price left the meeting for the item and took no part in the discussion or voting.

Before this Notice of Motion was discussed, Councillor S Mason informed the Council that he wished to amend the notice by removing:

2. To reduce service subsidies

To consider a Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor S Mason

" As Oswestry strives to emerges from the challenges of COVID 19, it will be vitally important for the local economy to attract customers back into the town centre quickly. I welcome the Government's support of business by offering them grant funding during the crisis, but our local emphasis needs to shift.

The Future Oswestry Group will take a key role in this, and I am really pleased to hear of the work being planned so far to enable shoppers to return to the town centre with

OTC/02/20

confidence. However, I believe more needs to be done to get our residents to the shops.

Therefore, my motion is calling for Future Oswestry Group to lead on work at redesigning the Oswestry Town bus service.

In its current format it is, in my opinion, unsustainable and too expensive. I call upon Future Oswestry to look into redesigning a service for the future to meet the following outcomes.

1. To better connect our communities such as Park Hall, Gobowen Station, Supermarkets, The Orthopaedic etc.
2. To reduce service subsidies
3. To increase user numbers.
4. To reduce Carbon emissions.

If the outcomes above can be met, then I believe that Oswestry, its residents, its businesses and its environment can all be winners and I call on fellow Councillors to support me “

A discussion took place by Members and it was **resolved** to adopt the motion.

8.08 pm: At this point in the meeting Councillor C Schofield gave his apologies and informed the Chairman that he had to leave the meeting.

30. Performance Monitoring

Members noted that, given Committees have a key role in monitoring the performance of the Council services, it is important

OTC/02/20

that a level of scrutiny and challenge is maintained. Elected members considered a number of reports:

a) **Markets, Income & Trader Number Comparison**

Report **TC/3889/20** on the market income and trader numbers for the financial year 2019/20.

b) **Car Parking Income & Ticket Analysis 2019/20 and 20/21**

Report **TC/3890/20** providing car parking income and ticket analysis for 2019/20.

Report **TC/3892/20** providing car parking income and ticket analysis for 2020/21.

c) **Market Throughput January to March 2020**

Report **TC/3891/20** on market throughput January to March 2020.

Resolved reports for a), b) and c) were noted and no matters raised.

31. **Oswestry Parking and Access Restrictions**

It was noted that on 11th June 2020, Shropshire Council made an experimental order to place one-way traffic and parking restriction on Church Street in Oswestry to help with maintaining social distancing on the high street. Given the nature of the order, the consultation period is extended to the 11th December to allow ongoing feedback to be received and adjustments to the scheme.

Prior to the discussion taking place Councillor Hunt sought clarification from the Clerk regarding his involvement given his role as a Shropshire Councillor. The Clerk noted that whilst such matters were the decision of individual members Oswestry Town Council as consultees were expressing a view and providing feedback.

OTC/02/20

A discussion ensued regarding the merits of the current scheme and possible improvements. It was therefore **resolved** that Oswestry Town Council would make no representation from the meeting and that individual Councillors would give their own feedback to Shropshire Council.

32. Oswestry Parking and Access Restrictions Bailey Head, Bailey Street and New Street

Members were informed, through report **TC/3895/20**, of a consultation being undertaken on changes to the parking and access restrictions for the Bailey Head, Bailey Street and New Street.

It was **resolved** that report **TC/3895/20** be agreed and the Town Clerk to work with Shropshire Council to negotiate local arrangements to minimise the impact the proposal could have on the market.

33. Oswestry Masterplan

The Town Clerk submitted a report, **TC/3896/20** for Members to consider a contribution from the Town Council of up to £10,000 towards the development of a masterplan for Oswestry.

After discussion it was **resolved** to adopt report **TC/3896/20** and provide a contribution of up to £10,000 from Oswestry Town Council utilising the existing Town Centre Plan budget and reserve.

34. Oswestry Balloon Carnival

Notes of a Seminar held on 17th June 2020 were provided for Members to consider.

After considerable discussion it was **resolved** that the Council would not provide funding for the event in 2020 as it felt that a revised socially distancing version did not provide adequate benefits when balanced against the risks and potential costs.

OTC/02/20

It was further **resolved** that the Council would offer to provide sites for balloonists to fly from on the Bank Holiday weekend should they wish to subject to the necessary health and safety measures.

35. Exclusion of Public and Press

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

OTC/02/20

Committee in Private Session

36. NABMA Service Level Agreement
37. Establishment Matters
38. Oswestry Visitor & Exhibition Centre – Building Repairs
39. Oswestry Visitor & Exhibition Centre – Business Proposal
40. Oswestry Borderland Tourism Service Level Agreement
41. Oswestry Gateway Smithfield Site
42. Internal Audit

OTC/02/20

Committee in Private Session

36. NABMA Service Level Agreement

Members were asked to consider an e-mail from NABMA Chief Executive David Preston regarding the Service Level Agreement with Oswestry Town Council.

Resolved the financial issues were noted and part settlement was approved.

37. Establishment Matters

Resolved to note and approve the contents of report **TC/3899/20**.

38. Oswestry Visitor & Exhibition Centre – Building Repairs

Members received a report from the Town Clerk and Operations Manager providing them with a proposal for the repair of Oswestry Visitor & Exhibition Centre.

It was **resolved** to adopt and proceed with recommendations made in report **TC/3897/20**.

39. Oswestry Visitor & Exhibition Centre – Business Proposal

A report from the Town Clerk and Operations Manager was submitted and provided Members with a proposal for future use of the Oswestry Visitor & Exhibition Centre.

Resolved report **TC/3897/20** be adopted and proposal approved.

40. Oswestry Borderland Tourism Service Level Agreement

Members received a report from the Town Clerk provided Members with a proposal for an amendment to the Service Level Agreement between Oswestry Town Council and Oswestry Borderland Tourism.

OTC/02/20

Resolved report **TC/3894/20** be approved.

41. Oswestry Gateway Smithfield Site

Members were asked to consider the notes of a Seminar held on Wednesday 10th June 2020 and the Town Clerk provided a further update.

Resolved recommendation be accepted.

42. Internal Audit Report

The Committee was asked to receive and adopt the Report from the Finance Officer summarising issues raised by Internal Auditor for 2019/20 and external Auditor for 2018/19.

The Committee was also asked to confirm its acceptance with the issues as raised and Officers responses/actions.

Resolved report **TC/3893/20** be adopted and acceptance confirmed.

The Mayor
Councillor D Kerr
Chairman