

OTC/03/20

Oswestry Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Wednesday 22nd July 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, N Hughes, V Hunt, M Isherwood,
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 and PA to the Town
Clerk / Mayor
3 Members of the Public

Public Session

Mr Peter Lloyd of the Roft Street Residents' Association raised concerns about Central Car Park. A question was asked as to whether the work being carried out on Central Car Park would be done in collaboration with Shropshire Council. He also asked if the traffic engineers would have access to the 2004 Mouchelle report. Mr Lloyd also voiced his concerns about the continuing anti-social use of the car park which, he stated, was starting to affect the quality of lives of the local residents.

The Mayor expressed his concern on these issues and informed Mr Lloyd that they would be raised later in the agenda.

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A resident of Regent Court also raised the issue of drainage at the exit of Central Car Park. Councillors were informed that severe flooding occurs when there has been heavy rain.

The Town Clerk confirmed that he was aware the drains on the car park had been cleared but, recognising the concern raised, that arrangements would be made for them to be cleared again.

43. Apologies

Resolved there were no apologies.

44. Speaker

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Steve Davenport, Portfolio Holder for Highways Transport, who had been invited to provide Members with an update on the various initiatives promoting sustainable transport in the County.

Councillor Davenport informed Members that Shropshire Council were bidding for the many government grants that were currently available. He assured Members that, if successful, the major towns in Shropshire would have their fair share.

The Highways Team in general had worked tirelessly over the whole of the lockdown period doing resurfacing work and patching. A number of services which have previously been outsourced are being run in-house resulting in jobs being completed quicker. “Rangers” were also being introduced with all the specialist equipment to deal with small reactive works in towns.

Councillor Davenport confirmed that the road in Castle Street leading down Plough Bank was due to be resurfaced and therefore the zebra crossing would be repainted. In response to a question submitted from a member of the public regarding the condition of the highway

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between the Mile End Roundabout and the new Morrisons roundabout, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that this would be addressed. It was also reported that he had also attended a Roft Street Residents' Association meeting before lockdown and confirmed that the issue with drainage had also been addressed.

With regards to Mile End, ground work would commence in November, however there was still an ongoing debate about walking / cycling to the new Innovation Park and whether a bridge or underpass would be suitable.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Davenport for his update to the Council.

45. 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.

It was **resolved** no declarations were made.

46. Minutes

Minutes of a meeting held on:

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Were confirmed and signed.

47. 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.

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48. 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 of a new library scheme called Ready Reads – a service offering tailored book choices selected by library staff which was being introduced to libraries in the county from 6th July 2020.

It was also reported that the public consultation for the Local Plan Partial Review 2016-2036 would take place between July and September and encouraged everyone to look at the document and feed in their views.

49. Notice of Motion in the Name of Councillor M Isherwood

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

“That this Council,

commits to identifying and securing additional land for use as public allotments, as the time people are waiting indicates there is a significant unmet need for this amenity which the Council has a statutory duty to provide.

Further, any additional allotment site will have set aside a plot or plots for community use so that people, for whom taking on an allotment on their own is not an option, can enjoy taking part in producing crops and may benefit from the health and wellbeing improvements this activity can bring

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A lengthy discussion took place about the current allotment waiting list, whether land could be rented or bought to expand Council allotments, and how to engage with community groups.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Milner requesting that the Gatacre Allotment Liaison Committee investigate the matter on behalf of the Council in line with their terms of reference.

Councillor Isherwood agreed to the amendment.

It was **resolved** that the matter be determined by a recorded vote.

It was **resolved** that this Council:

Requests the Gatacre Allotment Committee to identify options for securing additional land for use as public allotments, as the time people are waiting indicates there is a significant unmet need for this amenity which the Council has a statutory duty to provide.

Furthermore, any additional allotment site will have set aside a plot or plots for community use so that people, for whom taking on an allotment on their own is not an option, can enjoy taking part in producing crops and may benefit from the health and wellbeing improvements this activity can bring.

For

Councillors P A Cherrington, M Coppock, B Edwards, R Evans, N Hughes, M Isherwood, M Jones, D Kerr, L Maguire, S Mason, D P Milner, J Moore, J Price R Radford, C Schofield and O Rose.

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Against

Councillors S Best, V Hunt.

50. Notice of Motion in the Name of The Mayor, Councillor D Kerr

To consider a Notice of Motion in the name of The Mayor, Councillor D Kerr

“That this Council,

Commits Oswestry Town Council to provide £10,000 drawn from the Covid 19 funding stream towards the £21,500 cost of this scheme on the proviso that other partners provide the remaining funding to enable the scheme to proceed.

Commits Oswestry Town Council to become a white ribbon accredited authority.”

The agenda noted that West Mercia Women’s Aid have drawn up a proposal to bring Ask Me to Oswestry as a pilot for Shropshire using experience, they have gained from running the programme in Herefordshire.

A lengthy discussion ensued with contribution from a number of elected Members who spoke both in favour and against the Motion. The debate focussed on statistics and the request for financial assistance.

It was **resolved** that the matter be determined by a recorded vote.

It was **resolved** not to adopt the Notice of Motion.

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For

Councillors The Mayor, Councillor D Kerr, B Edwards, M Isherwood, R Radford, O Rose.

Against

Councillors S Best, P A Cherrington, M Coppock, R Evans, V Hunt, M Jones, L Maguire, S Mason, D P Milner, J Moore, J Price, and C Schofield.

51. Notice of Motion in the Name of Councillor O Rose

To consider a Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor O Rose

“That this Council,

requests that the Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor and Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee investigates, and if appropriate employs two young people for a period of six months under the Kickstart job Scheme announced by the Chancellor recently.

This would enable two young people at risk of long-term unemployment to gain important work experience and provide a model for other local employers.

The work placement for these young people could be as part of the Council’s manual team or office based.

Applications for the scheme are expected to open as early as August and to continue for most of 2021.”

This Notice of Motion was well received by Members and was fully supported as a commendable scheme.

It was unanimously **resolved** that the Town Clerk would bring forward proposals regarding Kickstart Job Scheme once

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details have been published and provide a report for Members.

52. Request for Financial Assistance Covid Fund

It was noted that the minutes of a meeting of the Chairmen's Group held on Thursday 18th March 2020 recorded that the Council established a £20,000 budget funded from the Service Improvement Reserve towards the local response to Covid. The Town Clerk reported that grants totalling £2,093 had been provided to a number of local organisations through a small grants scheme however, the request for financial assistance by the Trustees of the Memorial Hall needed consideration by Council.

After discussion it was **resolved** that the Town Clerk would make arrangements to meet with the Trustees to discuss the future of the building.

53. Central Car Park

A report from the Operations Manager following the Motion adopted at Council on 24th June 2020, regarding the Central Car Park, was considered by Members.

A number of short term and long-term options were put forward aiming to resolve the issue of anti-social behaviour at night including police enforcement, temporary overnight closure of the car park, registration recognition cameras, installation of additional CCTV cameras, installing ramps, and signage.

After discussion it was **resolved** that the Town Clerk would arrange to meet with a Police Officer to discuss combating anti-social behaviour.

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54. Cycle Parking Plan

The Town Council have been supporting Shropshire Council to implement additional cycling facilities in Oswestry, in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. A part of these measures was to include additional cycle parking in town centres.

A scheme had been drawn up but whilst initial funding had been secured from Government, this did not cover the future maintenance costs or removal of the street furniture. The Town Council were asked to give their consent to additional cycle parking on their land.

After discussion and vote, it was **resolved** to agree to the siting of the additional cycling parking on Oswestry Town Council operated land and to accept liability for their future upkeep.

55. Attendance of Members

In line with Standing Order 39 and following a number of requests made by elected Members, Councillors received a record of Councillor Attendance for the period between May 2019 – April 2020 for Full Council and the four Standing Committees.

After discussion it was **resolved** to note the report and to request that the Standing Order is reviewed in line with the regular review of Standing Orders.

56. Future Oswestry Group

Members received the notes of the meetings of the Future Oswestry Group held on the 9th April 2020 and 7th May 2020.

Resolved the notes of the meetings be noted.

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57. Risk Management

Councillors were asked to consider and review the Council's strategic risk register.

Resolved the Risk Register be adopted.

58. Investment Analysis

The report from the Finance Officer, **TC/3903/20**, set out the Investment Income for the period up to 30th June 2020.

Resolved to note the report **TC/3903/20**

59. 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/554/20 - 15th June 2020

SC/555/20 - 1st July 2020

Resolved to adopt the Statements as listed.

60. Analysis Actual Income and Expenditure (all Committees)

The report from the Finance Officer, **TC/3900/20**, was set out in the form of an Analysis of Actual Income and Expenditure to 30th June 2020.

Resolved to note the update.

61. Performance Monitoring

Committees have a key role in monitoring the performance of the Council services and it is important that this level of scrutiny is maintained by elected Members. Elected Members considered a

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number of reports from the Responsible Finance Officer and it was **resolved**

- to note report **TC/3901/20** covering Market Performance
- to note report **TC/3906/20** covering Market Department Income and
- to note report **TC/3902/20** Car Parking Analysis.

62. **Oswestry Markets and Events Update**

Report **TC/3909/20** from the Retail Markets and Events Manager gave an overview of market activities.

The Town Clerk informed Members that face coverings would be worn in the Indoor Market from Friday 24th July 2020. He also reported that a trader had shown an interest in the Eat Out to Help Out Scheme.

The Mayor gave his thanks to all stallholders at this difficult time following their letter of appreciation to the Council.

Resolved report **TC/3909/20** was noted.

63. **Fire Risk Assessment Audit**

A report from the Operations Manager updating Council on the Fire Risk Assessment audit carried out on 2nd July 2020, was considered by Councillors.

Resolved report **TC/3905/20** was noted.

64. **Website Accessibility**

A report was submitted setting out the steps that this Council had undertaken, and the further action that was required, in order for the website to be compliant with accessibility regulations relating to the public sector.

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Resolved report **TC/3907/20** was noted and the accessibility statement endorsed.

It was further **resolved** to authorise the Town Clerk to make any necessary adjustments to the statement should additional issues arise.

65. Climate Change Working Group

Following the meeting of the Climate Change Working Group Meeting on 15th July 2020 it was resolved that Council be informed of the Marches Renewable Energy Grant Scheme administered by Herefordshire Council. This scheme provides 50% funding for renewable energy projects.

The Working Group asked that Council authorise officers to explore, in detail, the possibility of applying for this grant to provide renewable energy at Council properties in Oswestry.

It was noted that no decision had to be made yet and **resolved** that the Town Clerk would further explore the Marches Renewable Energy Grant Scheme.

66. 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 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

67. Establishment Matters

68. Chairmen's Group

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Committee in Private Session

67. Establishment Matters

Members were provided with report **TC/3908/20** and asked to consider the recommendations detailed:

It was **resolved** Members noted and supported the actions / recommendations detailed 1 and 2 in the report.

With regards to Item 3. **Mobile Maintenance Team**, the Town Clerk explained to Members the current workload of the team and after discussion it was **resolved** that a casual operative would be employed to cover annual leave, sickness, etc.

Resolved report **TC/3908/20** be noted.

68. Chairmen's Group

It was **resolved** to approve the notes of the Chairmen's Group held on 13th July 2020.

The Town Clerk provided a verbal update with regard to the Smithfield Gateway.

The meeting closed at 21.15 pm.

The Mayor
Councillor D Kerr
Chairman