



CHIRK TOWN COUNCIL CYNGOR TREF Y WAUN

MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD 27TH JANUARY 2021 held virtually on-line over video /telephone conferencing

Present

Cllrs. Mr Brian Colley (BC) - Chairman,
Mrs Barbara Humphreys (BH),
Mrs Dot Griffiths (DG),
Mr Michael Maxfield (MM),
Miss Lynne Painter (LP)

Mrs Jackie Allen (JA),
Mr Newman James (NJ),
Mr Terry Evans (TE),
Mr Frank Hemmings (FH),
Mr Mark Roberts (MR)

Mr Gareth Baines (GB),
Mrs Sarah Williams (SW),
Mr Chris Burgoyne (CB),
Mr Mark Holmes (MH)

Also in attendance:

Mrs Karen Brown (KB) - Clerk to the Council,
Mrs Rebecca Ap Gwyn (RAG) – Administration Officer
Jack Butler - Press

BC wished all Members a happy new year.

Prior to the main meeting agenda, BC read out a statement in relation to the recent media events which have left many Councillors upset and perhaps frustrated due to the Council's inability to deal with these issues.

BC stated: We continue to be restrained by the procedures and processes relating to complaints regarding a Councillor, to the Welsh Ombudsman and therefore can not comment or discuss these cases. I consider this unfortunate because Chirk Town Council was mentioned in many press reports which, as Chairman, I find very disappointing considering the excellent work that Chirk Town Council, its Councillors and employees contribute to the residents of Chirk.

In the Clerk's report agenda item 9, Karen mentions her recent One Voice Wales Code of Conduct Training and I wish to remind all Councillors of their obligation to adhere to this Code and Standing Orders. I also strongly recommend that Chirk Town Council reviews its Code of Conduct 2016 and make it more robust and up to date in light of recent events. I also strongly recommend that Chirk Town Council reviews and strengthens its social media policy. I consider that Chirk Town Council, through the Clerk, should manage all releases of information to social media or at least approve of such releases. This I am sure can be achieved after the new website is completed. Chirk Town Council must strive for a policy and culture within the Council that recognises the Council acting as a team with recognition and rewards of the team.

Many Members supported this statement.

66. To Accept Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

67. To make Declarations of Interest on items on the agenda

None.

68. To confirm and sign the minutes as a true record of the Ordinary Meeting held on 16th December 2020

The minutes were reviewed. NJ proposed the minutes as a true account, CB seconded, all agreed.

69. To consider any matters arising from the minutes received above not reported elsewhere

Item 59 – Clogged drains – Members asked if the sweeper had been to Pentre and Black Park. FH will chase Wrexham CBC. TE stated that remedial works are due to start on the drains between the Hand Hotel and the AAA's.

Item 65 – Parking – The parking officer had been to Chirk and issued a number of enforcements. The Clerk confirmed the letter from the Council has been sent to all business.

70. To receive oral reports from Council Representatives

JA reported that she had chaired the Wrexham/Flintshire One Voice Wales Area Meeting held on 26/01/21. Key points reported:

- Only 50% of Councils have published their Councillors allowance.
- 87% of Councils are Members of One Voice Wales.
- Consultation on the reform of Community Councils will take place during 2021 on topics around: voting age of 16, staff can stand for election and resign only if elected, Councils to produce an annual report, Council meetings can be held in public houses, members of public can make representation at meetings. Training was initially going to be mandatory, however it is looking like this will be for each Council to decide its own training plan.
- The next guest speaker requested by the group was for Natural Resources Wales to talk about the recent flooding and drains/culverts issues.

71. To receive oral reports from Local Members – Wrexham CBC.

FH reported that there had been two incidents of fly tipping. Members asked if there are consequences for this? FH explained that the authority is involved and it is very complicated. There was flooding on Lodgevale and was unable to obtain any sandbags. SW suggested that a supply of sandbags could be purchased and stored at the Parish Hall.

FH attended the Wrexham Town and Community Council Forum the main focus being a new Charter aimed to improve the relationship between all parties.

BH asked about the landslide at Penybont. FH confirmed the wall and part of the road has gone, the situation is very serious and experts are surveying the site but it is too early to know how long the repairs will take.

TE reported that the recent flooding on Princess Avenue, The Nurseries, Longfields, Old Rhos y Waun is of concern. Everyone was working together.

Concerns were raised over the possible future plan of 180 houses on Lodgevale as the current drainage can not cope. JA noted that the recent changes to planning laws will help as they have to include drainage in the planning application.

The Council agreed to discuss at a future General Purposes Committee the purchasing 100 sand bags.
Action: Clerk to seek prices and agenda item when information available.

TE stated that many Chirk businesses have benefited from the Business Grants available during the recent lockdowns. LP added that the Business Support Team in Wrexham had been very helpful.

Salt bins have been refilled. And pot holes are a never ending problem.

There have been noise, dust and smell complaints about Kronospan. TE has written to Wrexham about the new droning noise.

NJ asked about the damaged fence on the Recreation Ground. KB reported that that it was a road traffic accident.

The listed wall at Whitehurst Gardens has partially collapsed due to the recent rain. CADW are looking to repair.

Cllr Mark Roberts joined the meeting

72. To receive the Kronospan response to the Liaison Meeting Terms of Reference.

BC summarised the letter which offered Chirk Town Council a membership on the Liaison Group of five members (inclusive of Chirk and Wrexham Councillors). TE stated that he was not happy with the proposal as Chirk Town Council voice is being suppressed. SW reminded Members that at the November 2020 meeting when the Council requested six, that the Council was happy to comprise to five and therefore felt that, whilst not ideal, it was better than four.

BC added that there is also the Wrexham Council meeting chaired by Ian Bancroft, Wrexham Chief Executive, planned for 25th February 2021, which will look at improving communication, the fire incident and monitoring.

FH said that the most important thing is to keep talking, and to support NRW in the new licence.

Members highlighted the second paragraph in the letter and within the reply to Kronospan to note that the Council recognises that meetings are confidential. Members also wanted to include the recent noise pollution within the response, both points were agreed to be included in the letter. SW proposed to accept the membership of five. FH seconded the proposal. The Council agreed.

Action: Clerk to send response.

73. To receive a Community Agent update:

a) Quarter 3 monitoring data

Members noted the content of the monitoring data.

FH highlighted all the letters, cards and phone calls received from local residents who were really appreciative of the Christmas hamper. Yvie and the two ladies from Shifnab put in an exceptional effort; it was a great team effort with 72 hampers being delivered to individuals and families in the community. Members of the Council would like to see the hamper scheme continue annually. It was agreed that an official letter of thanks is sent to the Community Agent -Yvie Bennett.

Action: Clerk to send letter.

b) To review the Community Agent hours

The hours were reviewed. GB proposed to keep the hours flexible 16-20 hours per week until the end of March 2021. SW seconded the proposal. All agreed.

74. To receive the report of the Clerk – includes updates, correspondence & speed sign data.

KB presented her report and highlighted the key updates since the last meeting- internal audit, lift repair works, Parish Hall continued closure due to tier 4 restrictions, fence damage, health and safety update, meetings and events attended including the Code of Conduct training. KB discussed the training and the recommendation that the Council should consider amending its Standing Orders to

state that newly appointed Councillors must attend Code of Conduct training. The Council agreed to consider this as part of the wider review of the Standing Orders.

Action: Clerk to agenda this at a future General Purposes meeting.

Defibrillators – The Clerk highlighted the shortfall between donations received and actual cost being £95.75; in addition, the £500 HSBC match funding had not been received but was still due. GB proposed to purchase the defibrillators and the Council to contribute the £95.75 shortfall and to proceed before the HSBC money is received. SW seconded the proposal. All agreed.

Action: Clerk to proceed with the purchase.

Covid-19 Plaque – DG updated Members in detail following her approach to Jim Heath (local artist) to ascertain if he would undertake the work on the plaque. However a new idea of a carved wooden bench was now proposed. DG stated that the bench would be sited just outside the Millennium Gardens looking towards the town. SW raised concerns that a wooden bench would not last and would be losing the plaque. MH proposed to have both the bench and the plaque. FH seconded the proposal for both and the Council agreed.

Action: DG & Clerk to oversee bench and plaque.

Correspondence - NHS, Social Care & Frontline Workers Day on 5th July 2021 - Communities are being asked to do this by agreeing to raise a unique flag at 10am; participate in the Two-Minute Silence at 11am, the Nation's Toast at 1pm, Afternoon Tea at 4pm, the ringing of church bells 71 times with each ring representing a year in the 71 years of the NHS at 8pm, from within their local communities, as a 'tribute' to the Heroes of the NHS, Social Care and those that work so tirelessly on the frontline.

The Council discussed supporting this day and agreed to show the intent to support, subject to the lockdown restrictions in July.

Action: Clerk to add to annual calendar and seek the flag for this event.

GB highlighted that by signalling out one event, the Council should consider supporting other special days. **Action:** Clerk to work with Council on an agreed flag policy.

75. To decide upon appeals for financial assistance received

MH declared a personal interest.

- Catholic Church, Chirk seeking funding for external repair works. Members discussed if funding can be given to Churches. Members discussed the wider issue of how donations are allocated. FH proposed that appeals for financial assistance be discussed in detail at a General Purposes Committee and the decision on this appeal be deferred to the next meeting. This was seconded by NJ. Agreed.

Action: Clerk to arrange a General Purposes Meeting.

TE highlighted the Welsh Churches Act Fund – up to £500 which the Church could also apply to.

- The Urdd – contribution towards children and young people of Wales to enjoy and compete in Eisteddfodau, sports, community activities and the Urdd camps. JA proposed to leave on the table. This was not supported. NJ proposed to leave to the next meeting and discuss with the wider issues. This was agreed by all.
- Wales Air Ambulance – agreed to defer to next General Purposes Meeting.

76. To note planning applications dealt through the Planning Committee

P/2020 /0741 - The Lodge, Black Park, Chirk, Wrexham - Domestic greenhouse. – The Committee had no objection to the proposal.

P/2020/0863 - Glascott, Castle Crescent, Station Avenue, Chirk, Wrexham - Removal of conservatory and erection of new sunroom. – The Committee had no objection to the proposal.

GB proposed that the Council has no objections. MM seconded the proposal. All agreed.

77. To seek approval of payments made between 01.10.2020 to 31.12.2020

A list of payments between 01.10.20 to 31.12.20 amounting to £43,840.48 (included VAT) was given to the Council. JA confirmed that all payments are pre-approved by herself and BC. GB proposed and CB seconded that the payments be retrospectively approved. The motion was passed unanimously.

78. To present items for inclusion on the next agenda

Thanks were given to all Councillors volunteering at the Chirk Surgery vaccination day, it was appreciated by everyone. Councillors enjoyed being out and able to help and see people. JA hopes people can assist again at the next vaccination day.

SW raised the growing idea of a Children's/Community Bike Track in Chirk, FH & MH are looking at potential sites with SW; insurance and signage would be an issue to consider.

Action: Clerk to agenda for next meeting.

Meeting closed 20:50

Signed

Chairman

Date