



# CHIRK TOWN COUNCIL CYNGOR TREF Y WAUN

## **MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 10<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2021** **held virtually on-line over video /telephone conferencing**

### **Present**

Cllrs Mr Brian Colley (BC) Chairman, Mrs Jackie Allen (JA), Mrs Barbara Humphreys (BH),  
Mrs Sarah Williams (SW), Mr Gareth Baines (GB), Mr Frank Hemmings (FH),  
Mrs Dorothy Griffiths (DG), Mr Terry Evans (TE), Miss Lynne Painter (LP),  
Mr Newman James (NJ), Mr Michael Maxfield (MM), Mr Chris Burgoyne (CB),  
Mr Mark Holmes (MH).  
Mrs Karen Brown (KB), Clerk to the Council.  
Mrs Rebecca Ap Gwyn (RAG) – Administration Officer

BC welcomed all to the meeting.

### **1. To Accept Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence. Cllr Mr Mark Roberts was not in attendance.

### **2. To make Declarations of Interest on items on the agenda**

None.

### **3. To discuss and agree appeals for financial assistance, and review overall allocation of the discretionary funds**

MH stated that the money raised from the Precept is for the people in Chirk and he felt that some groups have to justify being awarded funds and some don't, it is for local people and most don't know it is available. Detailed discussion took place around applications for grants, how often the Council considers appeals, how many local voluntary groups there are in Chirk and how to prioritize these groups, fixed or variable amounts, should certain National charities be supported, proof of need and fundraising efforts by the group seeking funds.

GB proposed to move to quarterly consideration of appeals and the Clerk to get a list of groups to advise them of the deadline for consideration. NJ seconded the proposal.

CB noted that all the information can be published on the new Council website.

JA proposed an amendment, to carry on as normal until the new website is live where a set of criteria (yet to be agreed) is published; then move to quarterly consideration, with an option of any emergency appeals to go to the ordinary monthly Council meeting. GB seconded this amendment. The Council agreed by majority.

To consider appeals for financial assistance deferred from the January 2021 Council meeting.

MH declared a personal interest.

- Catholic Church – to support exterior repair costs. SW noted that this is an important building in Chirk and should be supported. FH proposed £500, CB seconded. Agreed by majority. NJ & BH abstained.
- Urdd – JA proposed to leave on the table and not support on this occasion. BH seconded and the Council agreed.

- Wales Air Ambulance – JA proposed £100, GB seconded the proposal. SW made an amendment for a donation of £200, MM seconded. The amendment was supported by Council.

#### **4. To review a range of items relating to the Council's Standing Orders**

The Chairman stated that over the past six months a range of matters relating to Standing Orders had come up for further discussion and agreement.

##### **a) To consider secret ballot for the appointment of Chair/Vice at future AGM's**

Chirk has historically always voted for the Election of Chair and Vice Chair under a secret ballot, however due to remote meeting protocols and no mention of secret ballot within the Council's Standing Orders it was agreed to decide what to do in future years.

JA stated this was a long tradition in Chirk and saves ill feeling and in the interests of a united Council she proposed to return to a secret ballot. TE supported this.

NJ highlighted the term of the Chairman, to give time to work with the Clerk and get into the role, one year is too short and would like the Council to consider three years. SW supported this and asked if this was possible? The Clerk confirmed that an annual election must take place, however the Council could vote in the same Chairman for three years.

The Clerk drew attention to One Voice Wales advice and the NALC model Standing Orders which states that all nominations and votes should be open, in the object of conducting Council business in an open and transparent manner.

GB proposed to return to the Chirk tradition of holding a secret ballot and amending the Standing Orders accordingly. JA seconded the proposal. SW was strongly against this and felt it should be an open vote. The Council agreed, by majority, to holding of a secret ballots.

##### **b) To consider giving delegated authority to committees**

BC stated that the committees do not have delegated powers, the work of the committees go into great detail and can not make decisions, instead there is much duplication by going through it all again at Council meetings. BC sought to get delegated authority for committees to work more effectively and efficiently. This was met by resistance by some Members stating mis-trust and lack of fairness and a loss of control by the whole Council. BC challenged what was the point of committees – should all work be undertaken by the full Council? FH stated that if it is done properly, committees with delegated authority can work very well. The Clerk stated that in law certain things, including the setting of the budget and precept, can not be delegated. The Council can decide the appropriate level of delegation. The Clerk also noted that since she had commenced with the Council, no challenge had ever been made by Council on Committee recommendations. After a detailed discussion GB proposed to trial delegated powers with the Planning Committee only and keep all other committees as they are. JA seconded the proposal. The Council agreed by majority.

##### **c) To consider giving authority for the Clerk to mark documents as confidential**

The Clerk reported that after issuing the recent Health & Safety report, some Members felt that because of the sensitivity of the document, consideration should have been given to the marking of the document as confidential. Going forward, and having sought advice, it was recommended that the Clerk can mark documents confidential, whilst giving consideration to be being open and transparent. Members discussed that this was reasonable and for the Chair and Clerk to agree

jointly. JA proposed to move to two part agenda with part 2 being a confidential section. GB seconded the proposal. Council agreed.

The Clerk confirmed that this will be helpful with all minutes now going on the website.

**d) To consider if Code of Conduct Member training (or other training) is a requirement of newly appointed Councillors**

Following the Clerk attendance at a training session on Code of Conduct it was recommended that within the Standing Orders the Council consider that all newly appointed Councillors must attend Code of Conduct training. Members felt that the Handbook on the Code of Conduct needed to be reviewed. JA felt that new Councillors should attend Induction training within 6 months. CB noted that 13B of the Standing Orders already states that all Councillors shall undertake training.

Members requested the Clerk maintain a central training record for all Councillors.

**Action:** Clerk to create training records and monitor gaps.

FH suggested refresher training on the Code of Conduct, this was supported by the Council.

**Action:** Clerk to arrange training.

**5. To agree wording for the Defibrillator plaque**

GB reported that this related to Dai Evans and the defibrillator in West View, his daughter would like something simple 'In loving memory of Dai Evans' . This was unanimously agreed.

**Action:** Clerk to ensure plaque is added to the defibrillator.

RAG added that the new purchases of Defibrillators include training for up to 50 people once it is safe to have training.

**6. Non Agenda Item**

The closure of A483 for 8 days will cause difficulty as all traffic will be diverted through Chirk. If there is an accident, it will be total chaos. Another example to link to emergency planning.

**Action:** Clerk to ask Police to be present to monitor traffic flow and illegal parking.

**Action:** TE/FH to see if Wrexham traffic wardens can be available to prohibit parking.

The lack of lines on the main street including the zigzags are causing further parking problems.

Meeting closed 20:30

**Signed**

**Chairman**

**Date**