

MINUTES – 18th January 2021

Minutes of the extraordinary meeting of Whitland Town Council held remotely, via the medium of Zoom, on Monday 18th January 2021, at 7.00pm.

Members of the public were able to attend by contacting the Clerk by 1pm on Monday 18th January 2021 to enable all information be provided to connect to the meeting.



Meeting started at 7.01pm

Present: Cllr Barry Chapman (Mayor), Jenny Davies-Scourfield (Deputy Mayor), Len Shipton, Mathew McDowall, Ffion Scourfield, Raymond Jones, Rhys Davies, Frank Connor-Hughes, Jonathan Bands, Julie Jones and Enfys Eynon

Also present – The Locum Clerk

- 1. To accept apologies for absence-** Cllr J Dobson
- 2. To disclose any personal and pecuniary interests** in the items listed below.

Cllr Jones declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 as he has a business interest in Whitland which sells hot food

Cllrs Jones and Eynon read their Declaration of Office. These were accepted by the Locum Clerk.

- 3. To consider the recommendations made by the interview panel** - regarding the position of Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer

Report regarding interview process from Cllr Connor-Hughes

Following Instructions from Full Council in December 2020 the Locum Clerk duly advertised the position of Town Clerk/RFO in local newspapers, online and with the County Councils.

In January 2021 meeting Full Council appointed members of the Staffing Committee and two other Councillors to short list and interview candidates. We received 9 applications for the position, one withdrew. Deadline for application was Sunday 10th January.

In a meeting on Monday 11th January the panel met and examined each application using a broad spectrum to include:-

Locality
Local Council Experience
Admin Experience
Financial Knowledge
Membership or participation in other Committee's/Councils

Each Candidate was scored and the panel unanimously agreed to the short listing of 3 candidates.

Interviews were scheduled for Friday Evening. Gwilym Rippon, who represents the SLCC, agreed to be involved in the interview process to ensure that as a Panel, Council procedures were in place and that the whole process was transparent, integral and independently conducted.

During the interview process each candidate was asked exactly the same predetermined questions with varying answers. These established certain qualities, knowledge of the job, local area and activities of Whitland Town Council, qualifications and experience.

After each interview we assessed each candidate and then following all 3 interviews we met and discussed all 3.

The person who we recommend to Council this evening, has experience in Local Council, has previously been a Clerk, was happy to work towards CilCA qualification, has a knowledge of Whitland and the Council and was available for evening meetings and scheduled site visits together with the qualities that we looked for in the interview process.

As an interview panel we recommend that the position of Clerk and Responsible finance Officer be offered to Mrs Melanie Priestley with an immediate start date subject to her acceptance of the position.

Mr Chairman I ask that Council Consider these recommendations and Propose the Appointment of Clerk

Cllr Shipton proposed the Whitland Town Council appoint Mrs Melanie Priestley as Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer to Whitland Town Council; Cllr Connor-Hughes seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

Mrs Melanie Priestley accepted the position, thanking the Council for offering the position to her.

4. To consider and formulate a response to the correspondence received from the Abbey Working Party

The Clerk advised that a response had been sent to the Abbey Working Group advising that the Council would consider their letter and formulate a response.

Cllr Chapman gave a brief precis to all Cllrs regarding the position of the Whitland Town Council and the Whitland Abbey project.

Cllr Connor-Hughes left the meeting due to work commitments

Following discussion and consideration that further advice is awaited from One Voice Wales, Cllr Chapman proposed that the Locum Clerk draft a response to the Abbey Working Party advising that further advice is awaited, no works to be carried out on the site until a works programme can be formulated by Cllrs and the working party and that the contact details for the person grazing sheep on the site be requested to ensure that the sheep are insured and not the responsibility of the Council; Cllr Davies-Scourfield seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

The Locum Clerk to draft a response, circulate such via Email for all Cllrs to approve and then forward to the working party via Email.

5. To consider the correspondence and request for assistance received from the Coffee Lounge

All Councillors confirmed that they had received a copy of the letter prior to the meeting.

Consideration was given to the existing Grants Policy and Financial Regulations of Whitland Town Council.

It was brought to the Councils attention that this project has been set up to provide a meal to anyone who requests such from anywhere in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire.

Cllr Davies proposed that Whitland Town Council are not able to offer financial support to this project at this point in time; Cllr Davies seconded the proposal with a majority in favour of such. One Councillor abstained from the vote.

It was also suggested that within the Cllrs response to the Coffee Shop that alternative funding being offered be listed and that the Coffee Shop may like to contact the Town Hall food bank and work together.

Any Councillors wishing to provide any items requested will personally do so.

Meeting closed at 19.52