

MINUTES

Minutes of the General Meeting of Whitland Town Council held remotely, via the medium of Zoom, on Monday 12th April 2021, at 7.00pm.

Members of the public were given the opportunity of joining the meeting by Emailing the Clerk and requesting the meeting details (Email: clerk@whitlandtowncouncil.co.uk)



Meeting commenced at 19.03

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

Also present – Natasha West, Alex McKinney and The Clerk

1. To accept apologies for absence - None

2. To disclose personal and pecuniary interests in the items listed below.

Cllr Scourfield declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 as she lives in close proximity to the proposed site

Cllr Chapman declared a personal interest in agenda item 9a as he knows the applicant and several of their neighbours

Cllr Chapman declared a personal interest in agenda item 14 as he is the Chairman of the Town Hall

Cllr Chapman suspended Standing Orders to enable the two candidates for Co-option consideration to address the Council.

Both candidates addressed the Council advising why they wished to become a Councillor. Opportunity was given for questions to be asked and answered.

Standing Orders recommenced at 19.25

3. To complete the Co-option Process – SEE FOOTNOTE

Following a secret ballot, it was resolved that Natasha West is to be offered the position of Councillor. The Clerk to advise the two candidates accordingly.

4. To review and accept the minutes of the meeting held on 1st March 2021

Cllr Scourfield proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 1st March 2021, as presented, be signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting; Cllr Davies-Scourfield seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

5. Chair's report

Cllr Chapman thanked Councillors for their support over the past twelve months.

6. To receive any updates regarding the following:

Cllr Shipton reported that:

- a) St Mary Street – Hording along the 'Old Dairy Site' – Carmarthenshire County Council have advised that they consider the owner of this site is fully aware of its health and safety obligations and Carmarthenshire County Council further advised that they consider this matter closed.

The Clerk has received a report from an independent Health and Safety Inspector, following a request made by the residents of St Mary's Street, and Cllr Shipton proposed that the Clerk forward such to the Carmarthenshire County Council Health and Safety Officers and the Chief Executive of Carmarthenshire County Council for their consideration; Cllr McDowall seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

- b) Trevaughan Pathway – Carmarthenshire County Council are questioning the ownership of the land on which the pathway is located. No further information, at this point, to report.

Regarding the safety of the stream – The safety Officer at Carmarthenshire County Council is addressing the possibility of fencing being erected.

Trevaughan Play Area – The mulch has now been placed at the base of the newly planted fruit trees to protect them from the frost.

- c) The Parc Dr Owen Play Park - The Clerk advised that agreement has been received from Ms Evans and the Committee of Parc Dr Owen for the Whitland Town Council to obtain part of the old play ground area on a lease for a 30 year rolling term. The Solicitor has been provided the appropriate information to draft such. Once the Lease is in place the Whitland Town Council will then be able to move this project forward. Cllr Shipton proposed that a task and finish group be formed to manage this project, bringing all decisions to full Council. Cllr Scourfield seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement. It was decided that membership of such be confirmed at the Annual Meeting to be held in May 2021.

7. To receive County Councillor’s report – None received

8. To receive reports from Working Groups and Council Representatives including

Cllr Shipton on behalf of the Grounds Working Party – See agenda item 6

9. To consider Planning Applications Received

All planning application information has been Emailed to all Cllrs prior to the meeting

A PL/01621 13 Llys Y Crofft, Whitland, SA34 0HG

Retrospective planning application for 2No structures located in garden of property for use as ancillary accommodation to existing dwelling. 1x sun room located May 2018 1x storage & external shed June 2020 Proposed works also include alterations to existing dwelling to reconfigure access and legibility due to layout and 2nd storey alterations to create additional headroom

The Clerk advised the Council that three letters raising concerns, regarding this planning application, had been received and circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting for their perusal.

Following consideration of all the information provided by the Planning Authority, Cllr Blandford proposed that Whitland Town Council advise the Planning Authority that it does not support this planning application and request that it be considered for refusal with the Enforcement Notice Ref: ENF/00242 be adhered to and the structures removed; Cllr J Jones seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

The considerations for such recommendation are:

- Major over development of the plot
- The structures are considered to be overpowering to neighbouring properties with loss of amenities and privacy to existing properties
- The positioning of the structures and proposed trees will potentially obscure the line of sight for vehicle drivers and the possibility of shadows masking pedestrians with potential catastrophic results if a child should get hit by a vehicle which was unable to see it.
- This will set an unwelcome presidency for future ‘back yard’ development within this housing estate

B PL/01155 Unit 1 Wheelabout Park, Spring Gardens, Whitland, SA34 0HR

Change of use from wedding car hire business to depot building for tree felling business

Following consideration of all the information provided by the Planning Authority, it was agreed that Whitland Town Council support this planning application.

C PL/01327 Land adjacent to Silverdene, North Road, Whitland, SA34 0BH Construction of two detached dwellings

Following consideration of all the information provided by the Planning Authority, it was agreed that Whitland Town Council support this planning application.

10. To consider the pre-planning application made by:

Hayston Developments and Planning Ltd in respect to an "Outline (major) application for residential development (including affordable element) with associated parking and landscaping (all matters reserved except highways)".

The land is located at 'Land adjacent The Beeches, Spring Gardens, Whitland, Carmarthenshire, SA34 0HP'.

Following consideration of all the information provided the following points were raised:

- Any contribution made under Section 106 be towards play facilities in the area as Policy REC2 – Open Space
- This site access is opposite a very busy housing estate within close proximity to the school – What precautions will be put in place to ensure the safety of residents and school children?

11. To receive any planning application Notices - None

12. To receive correspondence

To include the complaint received and responded to by the Whitland Town Council's complaints panel

The Council was advised that the Complaints Panel had addressed the complaint received and responded accordingly and that a further letter had been received advising that the response was not adequate. Advice was given to contact the Ombudsman for Wales and raise their concerns with him.

Following consideration of the contents of the letters received, Cllr Blandford proposed that Whitland Town Council add to its website and Facebook Page a Notice advising that the **Whitland Town Council aims to develop and encourage a working environment and culture in which the harassment, discrimination and/or bullying of its staff or Members is neither tolerated nor accepted**; Cllr Davies-Scourfield seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

13. To consider and approve the Financial Report and Bank/Cashbook Reconciliation for the year end 2020/2021

The Clerk advised the Council that, due to several clerical problems, no bank statements have been received since February 2021 and following several lengthy phone calls the banking mandate has now been processed with backdated statements requested. An Extraordinary Meeting to be held 26th April 2021 to consider the Whitland Town Council's finances to the year end.

14. Invoices for consideration: -

1281	March Wages (To be processed through the PAYE System)	£345.00
1282	March Wages (To be processed through the PAYE System)	£781.92
1283	HMRC PAYE	1199.29
1284	Welsh Harvest – Tree Planting Trevaughan	£230.00
1285	Society of Local Council Clerks Membership (Apportioned)	£72.25
1286	EDF Electric – On account	150.00
1287	Welsh Water – Account Awaited	TBC
1288	Cheque Cancelled	£0.00
1289	One Voice Wales - Membership	£320.00
1290	One Voice Wales - Training	£60.00
1291	Clinic Up – Weed Killer	£37.99

1292	M Priestley – Recorded delivery Postage	£11.44
1293	Carmarthenshire County Council – Street Lighting Maintenance and Energy	£3,570.05
1294	M Priestley – 3 trips to Whitland (as depicted on the financial report)	£31.59
1295	Saundersfoot Community Council – contribution towards Zoom Licence Say (up to April 2021)	£15.00

Following consideration of the above, Cllr Davies-Scourfield proposed that the invoices, as presented, be paid in full; Cllr Davies seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

Whitland Town Hall – Room Hire 2021/2022 £700.00

The Clerk confirmed that, due to Covid imposed restrictions, no meetings had been held in the Town Hall for the financial year 2020/2021 but the room hire consideration had been paid in full, with no refund offered.

Cllr Shipton proposed that Whitland Town Council leave the 2020/2021 payment as is but advise that, due to the Town Hall being closed to meetings, the 2021/2022 consideration will be forthcoming once meetings commence; Cllr Blandford seconded the proposal with all Cllrs eligible to vote in favour of such.

Agenda Items

15. To consider the positioning of the Cycling Priority Planter Locks

Councillors to advise the Clerk, via Email, of any potential positions within Whitland for the planters.

16. To approve the Council’s response to a letter received appertaining to the Abbey (Emailed to all Cllrs prior to the meeting)

All Councillors confirmed that they had received and read the letter received and the drafted response regarding matters appertaining the Abbey site.

Cllr Blandford proposed that the reply be sent via Email in its entirety; Cllr Shipton seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

17. To consider the Whitland Town Council’s future position regarding the Abbey Lease (Synopsis of actions sent to all Cllrs prior to the meeting)

All Councillors confirmed that they had received and read the synopsis.

Following consideration of:-

- the information contained within the synopsis
- the possibility of this site costing an unknown amount of money, due to a very large tree growing through part of the Historical Site being identified with Ash die back, money having to be sourced from the Whitland Town Precept as grants are not guaranteed
- the adjoining field being identified, by CADW, as part of the historical site, requiring excavation and certain works again money having to be sourced from the Whitland Town Precept as grants are not guaranteed

Cllr Shipton proposed that Whitland Town Council serve the requisite three months’ Notice to the appropriate Bodies and relinquish the Lease; Cllr McDowell seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

The Clerk to advise the appropriate Bodies and once confirmation of such has been received advise and thank the group of volunteers accordingly.

18. To consider the price to safely remove the tree identified with Ash dieback from the Abbey site –

The Clerk can confirm that all the relevant permission has been received from CADW and the Method Statement & Risk Assessment have been carried out also approved by CADW.

For clarity this is the small tree just inside the gateway to the site and not the very large tree to the rear of the site, referred to in agenda item 17.

Cllr Chapman proposed that Whitland Town Council accept the price of £800; Cllr Davies-Scourfield seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

19. To consider the turnaround and public display of the Minutes following a meeting

The Clerk requested Council to consider the approval of the Draft Minutes via Email to enable them to be publicly displayed in a more timely manner.

Cllr Chapman proposed that a first draft of the Minutes be sent to all Cllrs for their consideration and to comment upon (if necessary) and then a final draft, taking into account any comments from Councillors, be distributed for approval by all Councillors, via Email, prior to the draft being made public. The Minutes will then be formally approved at the next meeting; Cllr Davies-Scourfield seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

20.30 Cllr Chapman suspended Standing Orders for 10 minutes

20. To consider for adoption the Model Complaints Policy and Procedure

All Councillors confirmed that they had received and read a copy of the Model Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Cllr Blandford proposed that Whitland Town Council adopt the Model Complaints policy as presented; Cllr Scourfield seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

Cllr Blandford requested that the Policies working group consider a Vexatious Correspondence Policy for adoption by this Council. This will be diarised for the June 2021 meeting.

21. To consider any overtime worked by the Clerk during March 2021 due to the extra hours involved appertaining to the complaint received and excessive correspondence appertaining to the Abbey (Acknowledgement via Email that any overtime worked up to 10 hours would be considered at the April meeting)

The Clerk advised that during the month of March 2021 9.5 extra hours had been worked.

Cllr Blandford thanked the Clerk for her professionalism and proposed that Whitland Town Council pay for the 9.5 hours overtime worked; Cllr Davies-Scourfield seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

22. Considerations for discussion at the next meeting

- Ron's Plaque
- Drainage problems along Velfrey road

23. To confirm date of next meeting

Finance Extraordinary meeting – Monday 26th April 2021 7pm via Zoom

Annual Meeting followed by General Meeting – Monday 10th May 2021 via Zoom

Meeting closed 21.40

NOTE:

During the July 2021 meeting the following resolution was reached:

That a foot note be added to the April 2021 Minutes advising of the amendment below.

Following their presentations Mrs West and Mr McKinney left the meeting.

Following a secret ballot, it was resolved that Natasha West is to be offered the position of Councillor. The Clerk to advise the two candidates accordingly and invite Mrs West to the May 2021 meeting to take Office as Councillor.