

MINUTES

Minutes of the Annual Meeting followed by the May 2021 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)



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

Also present –One member of the public and The Clerk

Meeting commenced at 19.07

Annual Meeting

2021/05 1 To Elect the Chairman of Whitland Town Council for 2021/2022 and to receive their Declaration of Office

Cllr Chapman welcomed all to the meeting and requested to receive any nominations for the Office of Chairman to Whitland Town Council –

Cllr Shipton nominated Cllr Davies-Scourfield for the Office of Chair to Whitland Town Council, Cllr Blandford seconded the nomination.

As no further nominations were received, no vote was required and Cllr Davies-Scourfield accepted the Office of Chair to Whitland Town Council.

Cllr Davies-Scourfield read and signed her Declaration of Office.

2021/05 2 To Elect the Vice Chairman of Whitland Town Council for 2021/2022 and to receive their Declaration of Office

Cllr Davies-Scourfield requested to receive any nominations for the Office of Vice Chairman to Whitland Town Council –

Cllr Scourfield nominated Cllr Blandford for the Office of Vice Chair to Whitland Town Council; Cllr Chapman seconded the proposal

Cllr Blandford nominated Cllr Chapman for the Office of Vice Chair to Whitland Town Council; Cllr West seconded the proposal

Cllr Shipton nominated Cllr McDowell for the Office of Vice Chair to Whitland Town Council; Cllr J Jones seconded the proposal

Cllr Eynon nominated Cllr Shipton for the Office of Vice Chair to Whitland Town Council; Cllr Davies seconded the proposal

All the above nominees confirmed their acceptance of Office should they be appointed.

Following three rounds of voting, Cllr Shipton was offered the Office of Vice Chair to Whitland Town Council. Cllr Shipton accepted such advising the Council that, as one of the longest serving members of the Council, he has recently witnessed the Council working as a team and that such teamwork will continue through the Council's new projects. Cllr Shipton then read and signed his declaration of Office.

Cllr Conner-Hughes left the meeting

2021/05 3 Out Going Chairman's Report

I think it can be fair to be said that this past year has been like no other since the formation of Whitland Town Council. The community of Whitland has faced, just like every other village, town and city, challenging times - economically, socially, physically and mentally. The community spirit of the local businesses and neighbours has ensured that residents needs have been met with deliveries of groceries, welfare calls and support. This continued Community Spirit and generosity has upheld hope through un-certain times.

I would, once again on behalf of the Council, like to thank all our Health Service and care workers, Emergency Service workers and all front-line workers that have continued to serve the community, in very challenging times, while maintaining the safety of others.

Also, a thank you to our local schools, teaching staff and parents/guardians, who ensured that the disruption to education was kept to a minimum with home schooling becoming a challenge all of its own.

During 2020/2021 the new Town Council website went live, the Land in Trevaughan was planted with native fruit trees as part of the Local Places for Nature Scheme, unfortunately several trees were removed at Bryngwenllian park and the Abbey site following the identification of Ash Die Back, four new planters/bike locks will be arriving in the Town soon as part of a Carmarthenshire County Council grant scheme and permission was granted for an area of land within the Parc Dr Owen to be taken under a Lease Agreement to enable the Whitland Town Council to provide a play park area for residents and visitors to Whitland.

The Council currently has a full complement of 13 councillors and I hope that all Council Members enjoy their experience and as a Councillor we will continue to build Whitland for a better future.

During this year the Council, due to his retirement, lost one of its longest serving Members Mr Ron Jenkins MBE, he will be missed.

As Chair for the past two and a half years it has been my pleasure to serve Our Town, even though it may have been a bumpy ride at times with some challenging decisions having to be made. I personally feel that I have given 100% dedication to the role and supported the Clerk outside of Meetings, been part of most Working Parties/Sub-Committees, been the front face and the person on the street that everyone approaches, almost a second full time job!

Whitland has a community that deserves recognition for its success, its resilience, its vision and its future. I wish the 2021/2022 Chairman all the best for the forthcoming year and can assure the Council of my continued support as Whitland Town Council embraces its new journey, projects and future.

2021/05 4 2021/2022 Chair's Address to the Council

Cllr Davies-Scourfield thanked Cllr Chapman and all Fellow Councillors for their trust in her to become the next Chair of Whitland Town Council. Cllr Davies-Scourfield also reported that she is proud to accept the Office of Chair to the Council of the Town in which she was born and has lived in all her life.

2021/05 5 Apologies for Absence - None

2021/05 6 To receive Natasha West's Declaration of Office

Cllr West read and signed her Declaration of Office as Councillor to Whitland Town Council

2021/05 7 To receive any personal and prejudicial Declaration of Interests.

Cllr Shipton declared a personal interest in Agenda item 2021/05 18(A) – The applicant is well known to Cllr Shipton

2021/05 8 Appointment of Committee/Working Party/Task and Finish Group Members – Consideration being given to the amended Terms of Reference

All Councillors confirmed that they had received the amended Terms of Reference for the Committees/Working Parties/Task and Finish Groups

Grounds Management Working Group – Cllrs Len Shipton, Ray Jones, Julie Jones, Enfys Eynon and Mathew McDowall

Personnel Working Group - Cllrs Jenny Davies-Scourfield, Ffion Scourfield, Jonathan Blandford and Mathew McDowall

Policies Working Group - Cllrs Jenny Davies-Scourfield, Barry Chapman and Jonathan Blandford

Finance Working Group - Cllrs Jenny Davies-Scourfield, Ffion Scourfield and Ray Jones

Christmas and Festivities Working Group – Cllrs Barry Chapman, Natasha West and Len Shipton

Play Park Task and Finish Group – All Councillors requested to be a part of this project management – All meetings will be open to all Councillors

Grievance/Complaints Panel – Cllrs will be invited according to the alphabetical order (a to z) of their surname, providing that they do not have an interest in any matters requiring their services

Grievance/Complaints Panel Review - Cllrs will be invited according to the alphabetical order (z to a) of their surname, providing that they do not have an interest in any matters requiring their services

2021/05 9 To review the Council's representation on outside bodies

One Voice Wales – Cllr Barry Chapman

Local School – Cllr Ffion Scourfield (Community Governor)

Ten Towns – Cllr Barry Chapman

Dementia Aware – Cllr Natasha West

2021/05 10 To confirm Remuneration payments to be made to Councillors for 2021/2022

The Clerk requested the relevant information from Councillors to enable any payments to be processed

2021/05 11 To Receive any Updates Regarding the Audit Process – End of year accounts were approved at the Extraordinary General Meeting of Whitland Town Council held on Monday 26th April 2021. For continuity of service Whitland Town Council will continue to use Messrs Llewelyn Davies, Chartered Accountants of Whitland to carry out its internal Audits.

The Clerk, in her capacity as Responsible Finance Officer, confirmed that:

- the record of accounts received and invoices raised has been finalised for the financial year 2020/2021
- the Annual Return has been completed, signed by herself and all variances noted and documented
- all information requested within the Governance Statement has been prepared for onward submission, this included – a copy of the Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer's Contract of Employment, Minutes depicting the rate of pay (if not stated within the Contract) and certain payslips and tax record for the Clerk/ Responsible Finance Officer
- a Letter of Engagement (Internal Auditor) depicting the scope of the Internal Audit required has been drafted, taking into account the information requested by the Auditor General for Wales.
- the VAT return has been completed with a request for the refund of £ £2,527.89 being submitted

All the above information has been passed onto the Internal Auditor for their consideration – A report will be available at the June Meeting.

(Post meeting note – Prior to the information being forwarded to the Internal Auditor Cllr Davies-Scourfield, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, carried out a check of invoices paid, cheques issued, information requested within the Governance Statement and the income and expenditure report)

2021/05 12 To set the time and dates of the General Meetings of Whitland Town Council (May 2021 to April 2022)

Monday 14th June 2021 (7pm)

Monday 12th July 2021 (7pm)
 Monday 9th August 2021 (7pm)
 Monday 13th September 2021 (7pm)
 Monday 11th October 2021 (7pm)
 Monday 8th November 2021 (7pm)
 Monday 13th December 2021 (7pm)
 Monday 10th January 2022 (7pm)
 Monday 14th February 2022 (7pm)
 Monday 14th March 2022 (7pm)

Whether the meetings are to be held remotely, face to face for Councillors with a live link to Zoom for members of the public (and any absent Councillors) to log into or face to face meetings with members of the public to attend in person (with a possible link to Zoom for members of the public or absent Councillors to attend) will be confirmed at the previous meeting.

General Meeting Agenda

2021/05 13 To Receive the Minutes of the Meeting Held on the 10th April 2021

Cllr Blandford proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 10th April 2021, as presented, be signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting; Cllr Scourfield seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

2021/05 14 Matters Arising from the Minutes – Information Only - None

2021/05 15 To Receive the Minutes of the Meeting Held on the 26th April 2021

Cllr Chapman proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on the 26th April 2021, as presented, be signed as a true and accurate record of the meeting; Cllr Scourfield seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

2021/05 16 Matters Arising from the Minutes – Information Only - None

2021/05 17 Account(s) for Payment and Bank Reconciliation – See finance report

All Councillors, apart from Cllr West, confirmed that they had received the financial report and information. The information was sent to Cllr West's personal Email account. For clarity and ease of reference the Clerk shared the information on screen for all attending to see.

The Clerk advised that she had made three purchases, with all Financial Regulations being adhered to, on behalf of the Council namely:

12.04.2021	1296	Amazon Book of Condolence	£29.95
12.04.2021	1297	Newhall Cleaning Fluids - Toilets	£24.24
12.04.2021	1298	Amazon Toilet Paper and Mops	£48.77
10.05.2021	1299	E C James Abbey Tree Removal	£800.00
10.05.2021	1300	Wages (Net Amount)	£266.10
10.05.2021	1301	Salary (Net Amount - inc 9.5 hours approved O/T April meeting)	£777.06
10.05.2021	1302	Messrs Lewis Office Inc Insurance and Services (Apportioned)	£221.36
10.05.2021	1303	Grounds Maintenance/grass Cutting	£480.00
		Harrowing Trevaughn Field	FOC

Cllr Shipton acknowledged the three purchases made by the Clerk and proposed that all invoices, as presented, be paid in full; Cllr Eynon seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

Bank/Cash Book Reconciliation

Following consideration of the information provided and the answering of any queries raised, Cllr R Jones proposed that Whitland Town Council accept the figures, as presented, as a true record of the Council 's finances to date; Cllr Scourfield seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement

Cash Flow		
01.04.2021 - 30.04.2021		
Balance	£	52,323.52 B/F
Payments Made	£	6,857.06
Income Received	£	18,674.14
	£	64,140.60 C/F

The Chair thanked the Clerk for such a comprehensive and accurate report of the Council's finances.

2021/05 18 Planning Application(s) Received

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

A PL/01693 Alltybailey, Velfrey Road, Whitland, SA34 0QR
Proposed Change of Use/Conversion of existing barn to a 2 bedroom holiday letting accommodation

Cllr Chapman proposed that Whitland Town Council support this application noting that the applicant has made good use of the plot; Cllr Davies seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full support.

B PL/01718 Brynteg, North Road, Whitland, SA34 0BH
Proposed single storey side garage for storage and maintenance of classic cars along with minor alterations to existing dwelling

Cllr Chapman proposed that Whitland Town Council support this application noting that this will not be business use; Cllr Shipton seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full support

C PL/01643 32 Trevaughan Lodge Road, Whitland, SA34 0QF
Proposed extension and alterations

Cllr Chapman proposed that Whitland Town Council support this application noting that other properties within the vicinity have also made similar alterations to their properties with no detrimental effects on surrounding properties; Cllr Eynon seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full support.

D PL/01673 Cartref, North Road, Whitland, SA34 0AY
Construction of a new conservatory to the rear of the property

Cllr McDowall proposed that Whitland Town Council support this application noting that the proposed works are to the rear of the property with no effect on neighbour properties; Cllr Shipton seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full support.

2021/05 19 To consider any planning applications Notices received from the Carmarthenshire County Council - None

2021/05 20 Consideration of Correspondence Received

- Email received regarding the Community Renewable Fund Notice – Emailed to all Councillors for their consideration
- Email received from Carmarthenshire County Council advising that the Planters/bike locks will be delivered to Cllr McDowall imminently
- Email received from a member of the public requesting any assistance relocating to Whitland – The Clerk to request confirmation that details can be passed onto the County Councillor for her consideration.
- Email received from the Council's Solicitor advising that the draft Lease between the Council and Parc Dr Owen Committee will be completed for approval by the Whitland Town Council within the next week.

- Email received regarding the Town Wifi advising that the License has expired – This Email was also forwarded by a member of the public who had received it. The Clerk advised that she had contacted the Carmarthenshire County Council, who run this project, and advised them accordingly.
- Phone call received by the Clerk advising that there were sheep within the Abbey Ruin site, which were able to access the road. The Clerk advised Councillors that she had contacted the sheep owner requesting who had given her permission to graze sheep in this area (none granted this year) and if the sheep could be removed from this site but could be put in the adjoining area, due to safety reasons. Following a site visit by the Clerk it was noted that the grass in this area has been grazed down to the root which is contrary to the advice given by CADW, the grass should be of a 4in length. The Clerk to ensure that the sheep are removed ASAP
- The Clerk advised Councillors that the three months' Notice to Quit has been served upon the Solicitors representing the owners of the Abbey Ruin site and in return the Solicitor has acknowledged such.
- The Clerk requested confirmation that all Councillors had received a copy of her requested leave dates. All Councillors agreed with the dates.

2021/05 21 To receive County Councillor's Report – None received

It was noted that the Whitland Town Council have not received a report from the County Councillor since October 2020 – Although a Report is available on Facebook this is not noted as a formal channel of correspondence for the Whitland Town Council. It was also noted that certain correspondence with the County Councillor, via Email, have not been responded to as yet.

The Council requested the Clerk to Email the County Councillor requesting once again sight of any reports prior to the meetings.

2021/05 22 To Receive Any Reports from Committees/Working Parties

To include reports from the:

- a) Grounds Management Working Party – Cllr L Shipton

St Mary Street – Hording along the 'Old Dairy Site' –

- It was confirmed that the safety report has been forwarded to the Chief Executive of Carmarthenshire County Council, but no response received to date.

Trevaughan Pathway –

- Carmarthenshire County Council are attempting to ascertain the ownership of this pathway and therefore where any liability to repair/replace such lies.
- The safety Officer at Carmarthenshire County Council is assessing the possible erection of fencing along the stream – this will be carried out due to health and safety reasons.

It was noted that the electrical connection to the rear of the Station Public House, has been removed by persons unknown for reasons unknown.

The question arose if the electrics were safe. The Clerk was requested to make further enquires and ensure the electrics are safe.

(Post meeting note – The Clerk attended on site 11.05.2021 and spoke with the proprietor of the Station Public House. It was confirmed that the electric connection has been removed, for health and safety reasons, by a qualified electrician and has been left safe. When this, now removed, connection may be required again the Proprietor of the Station Public House, will afford the Whitland Town Council any assistance he can to re-establish any connection required.)

- b) The Parc Dr Owen Play Park Task and Finish Group – Cllr F Scourfield

Cllr Scourfield advised the Council that there has been a lot of enthusiasm shown in the Community regarding this project.

- Information regarding play equipment which promotes the regeneration/sustainability of energy is being sought
- The Section 106 Clerk at Carmarthenshire County Council is being kept up to date with the project
- The school children are engaged and are in the process of producing drawings of their ideal play park
- Consideration to be given to a web page/Face Book post requesting anyone to send pictures to the Clerk of their ideal play park and why they would like to see certain play equipment in it
- Once the draft lease is in place the Clerk can apply for grants which have already been identified and park designers can be requested to attend on site
- Consideration to be given to a possible 2nd phase to locate gym equipment around the perimeter of parc Dr Owen, suitable for all ages, and possible sponsored by local businesses

2021/05 23 To Receive Reports from Council Representatives – None at present

2021/05 24 Adoption of Policies and/or Procedures – to consider a date for the Policy Working Group to meet and discuss the requirements of the Council

The date for the next meeting of the Policies Working Group is Monday 24.05.2021 at 7pm Via Zoom

2021/05 25 To consider any information received from British Rail and the proposed wording for 'Ron's Plaque'

Cllr Chapman proposed that the Clerk purchase a local Welsh slate, engraved plaque (with words to be approved via Email) up to the value of £300; Cllr McDowall seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

2021/05 26 To consider how to replace the toilet hand washer/dryer units – The three automatic hand washing/drying units in the public toilets have ceased working and at a cost of £2,010 to replace each unit alternatives are to be considered

Councillors were advised that, at present, each of the public toilets are furnished with an automatic wash, soap and dry hands unit. The removal of such will leave a hole in the wall, leading into the plant room, of approximately 1m x 2m

Following discussion of the possible solutions to provide a hygienic, sustainable solution to such Cllr Davies-Scourfield proposed that Whitland Town Council seek prices from three local plumbers to block the hole with a false wall, and then install hand washing basins (with automatic turn off taps) and air hand dryers to each of the public toilets; Cllr Scourfield seconded the proposal with all Cllrs in full agreement.

2021/05 27 Considerations for discussion at the next meeting

- Any information regarding the Cemetery
- Reduction in height of the tall trees on the boundary of the Pocket Park
 - (Site meeting to take place prior to the June 2021 meeting)
- The removal of the large tree branches in the River Taf, one mile upstream from Whitland Town, and the possibility of such causing major flooding problems

Cllr Shipton left the meeting

- The possibility of face to face meeting with a Zoom link for members of the public (or absent Councillors) to log in and attend remotely.
 - Cllr Chapman advised the Council that the Town Hall Committee are considering opening such to the public again in September 2021, due to painting works being undertaken

Adopted/reviewed/updated during 2021

Grievance and disciplinary Policy – January 2021
Financial Regulations – January 2021
Financial Risk Assessment – January 2021
Remuneration decisions for 2021/2022 – February 2021
Standing Orders – February 2021
Complaints Policy – April 2021