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**Minutes of Town Council Virtual meeting over Zoom platform held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 7pm.**

**Present:** Cllr Debbie Brown (Chair), Cllr Neil Tysall (Vice Chair), Cllr Geoff Hainsworth, Cllr Paul French, Cllr Andy Goold, Cllr Guy James.

**Town Clerk:** M Sheehan

**RFO:** D McBride

**Unitary Cllr** M Shingleton, Cllr G Butler

Public: 7

**09.00V.20 Welcome by the Chair**

Cllr Brown welcomed everyone to the Town councils virtual meeting and the Clerk explained how the meeting will go forward, and how to vote or indicate wanting to speak with the reaction button.

**09.01V.20 Democratic 15-minute Public Time**

This provides an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions about and comment on items on the agenda. Time for this session is limited to 15 minutes (3 minutes per person).

**S Murrell-** said that in the last six months she walked with councillor Shingleton round the park - all the Flowers we found were not as good as last year. Councillor Shingleton and I also collect rubbish and Cllr. Guy James needs a halo for all rubbish he and his wife collected, and they need to be congratulated. We notice that the nettles need cutting back.

The children in the skate park were always well behaved and we would like to suggest that perhaps bulbs could be planted under the trees.

**Councillor French** replied we have an agenda about flowers around the town and it is on the list to talk about.

**S Murrell** said that it was a great asset to the town, a lovely park and congratulated the town council on the park.

**Next to speak was Gilbert Carter and Simon Morgan, but due to technical difficulties the Chair suggested the Town council carry on with the meeting and come back when they have sorted it out. RESOLVED.**

**09.02V.20 Apologies for absence**

**Cllr Greaves - Holiday**

**Cllr Kirkby - Working**

**Cllr Smith - Working**

**PC Steve Mellor - Working**

**09.03V.20 Declaration of interests:  
Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

*Declaration of any disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter to be discussed at the meeting and which is not included in the register of interests.*

**None**

**09.04V.20 To approve the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020 and Confidential minutes 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2020**

**Council RESOLVED to approve the Minutes of 3rd August 2020; duly signed by the Chair.**

**Council RESOLVED to approve the Confidential Minutes of 3rd August 2020; duly signed by the Chair.**

**09.05V.20 Matters arising from the minutes**

Clerk's Report.

**Clerk's Report for September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020 Virtual meeting.**



Residents rang to report broken glass and dog mess issue fields and QEII areas, wondering if we can arrange a picking up day. Picked up rubbish and bottles regularly.  
Meeting with the Social club and cricket club regarding booking Field. Have needed to make it clear that the Field needs booking through the office, due to Cricket and Football match on the same day but at different times.

Looking at Planning applications over email as agreed at March council meeting **03.02E.20- Delegated Powers**, with the following Planning applications looked at over email and comments submitted: **-(20/03277/FUL, Replied with concerns from our Tree warden), (20/03033/FUL, No Objection), (20/02886/FUL).**

**RESOLVED.** Also posted planning applications on Website.

Kept in the loop of Biodigester at Withypool farm and requested answers. Good work by Cllr Greaves keeping on top of things.

Thank you to Cllr French for help sending out letters of thanks for our volunteers and the certificates recognising businesses that really helped. Good job done and well received.

Email sent to Elliot thanking him for support with the Food bank and personal donations, to relay to superiors.

Arranged drop in with PC Steve Mellor again at the Market Hall on a Sunday at short notice. Well received and sent an email of thanks to his superiors.

Damage to CCTV camera, arranged repair and in contact with the Haulage company involved and notified our Insurance.

Had more training on CCTV which will dramatically cut down time checking and alter a few cameras for better view.

Attended Town clerks network meeting via Zoom to share issues in the county. Will let Clerks know that the new way we are working will save time for clerks.

Finished appraisal with Cllr Brown and Cllr Tysall.

Still working with the LEADER grant to sort paperwork. Met with Pete Banford from Shropshire Council to look at the Play area and all in order.

Received two reports of issues with new Play area equipment. Reported to Wicksteed. So much thanks and enjoyment from new equipment.

More CCTV requests from Police, need to train someone else as backup.

Continue to monitor Social media to correct any incorrect assumptions, also publicise good work of Town council when required.

Continue to chase outstanding work like drains, markings etc. No reply to date so will escalate.

Working well getting to grips with the new system of Google docs and meeting arranger, which is saving a lot of time and emails, but needs to be embraced by all.

Will be on annual leave 14<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> September. Signposting more people to the website and Shropshire council.

New VAS now fitted at Newbridge, put out on Social media to let residents know of council involvement.

Have had a traffic warden in the Town. Some tickets issued.

Letter to Mr Smith delivered by hand as requested at last council meeting.

Usual pick up of food for the Food bank on Friday mornings and attending with volunteers and Cllr Brown.

Set up meetings over Zoom as needed.

Thank you received from Roseann Genese for the report in Clarion.

**Clerk added: -**

Received complaints of light pollution from the new nursing home.

Attended meeting with Cllr Brown at neighbours of Withypool farm regarding odour from biodigester.

Attended meeting with Cllr Brown and Peter Williams, estate manager at Mawley Hall.

**09.06V.20 Councillors reports and items for future agendas**

**Cllr French** reported that regarding the cutting back at Newbridge his son Matt and he had sorted out the cutting back around the VA S sign. Have asked the Clerk to follow up to get it cut right back



ready for the winter. The one step at the top of the wells have been reported unsafe and sectioned off and getting addressed. Had a meeting regarding community engagement with the Clerk, Cllr Hainsworth and Cllr Goad. It was a good meeting and will put notes on Google docs.

**Cllr Hainsworth** reported that he had raised with the Clerk about the state of the road in the High Street and also complaints from the parish Hall of the pothole by the Wells.

**The clerk** explained that on Friday he had found up Shropshire highways with an emergency to get the pothole by the wells sorted out as it was very deep and down to the hardcore.

**Cllr Hainsworth** asked if the speed warning signs have been addressed to move out from Newbridge. Clerk to chase.

**Cllr Tysall** reported neighbourhood plan survey results are now with the consultant who has set aside from 1st to the 6th of October to prepare a response. The Strategic Environmental Assessment remains outstanding, but we have a commitment from Eddie West to respond by 14th September. He reported that John Bodenham was stepping down as chair of the group and local resident, Pete Blackburn, was taking over. Jon's one last action was to induct guy James onto the team with 35 years of experience and knowledge that would help the Task & Finish Group.

**Cllr James** was glad to help and reported a discussion ongoing regarding the phasing of developments and that an access statement in relation to the Tenbury Road may assist. The High street will need to be looked at in conjunction with the Tenbury crossroads when looking at access in and out of the Tenbury road.

**Cllr Brown** reported that she and the Clerk had met with the estate manager at Mawley Hall, Pete Williams, who was happy to engage with us and work on issues together. Next year with the council meeting for the public Pete would be willing to come along and talk to residents. Matt is helping with their footpath diversions that the Hall is engaged in regarding charges. The Manor house is looking bad again so we will need to get in touch with Shropshire Council again regarding the foliage growing up the windows and there has been no clearance or work for a long while. Suggested that the complaints group might like to meet to discuss the light issues at the new nursing home. Matt and I went up to Hollywaste on Friday evening to meet with neighbours of Withypool farm and we both felt unwell while up there and indeed when we got home. The town council is there to support the residents not to act in any mediation capacity but for full support and backing.

#### **19.27pm RESOLVED to Suspend Standing Orders**

**Councillor Brown restarted Democratic 15-minute public time and asked Mr Carter if he liked to say something.**

**Gilbert Carter** thanked the Chair on the Clerk for coming up on Friday evening, incredibly grateful to have some officials after how bad it has all been. It was all day and night over the weekend and most of today on and off.

He reported he had sent emails to Graham French and Kirsty Bell showing the frustration and it is nice to know now that they have a heavyweight of the town council behind them. There are only a few of us and I do not think they are taking us seriously. We are not belligerent, but nothing seems to be going our way and it is not helpful.

**Cllr Brown** said that it was unacceptable and gave her a sore throat when she got home.

**Mr Carter** continued that he did not know what they could do and what in fact councillor Butler could do.

**Cllr Butler** confirmed that he had been up on several occasions but that was when they ploughed the field straight away. Gilbert continued that they should have played it immediately the weekend but did not do anything until 2:00 PM on Sunday. There are two questions: does the smell come under being a nuisance? Also, the mixture cannot be correct? Though there was a process agreed to give three months to get up to scratch nothing seems to be happening. Also concerned all movements should be covered there are loads of these across Shropshire with only one or two problems, there are several plants in the area only one this is causing a problem according to Shropshire Council.



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**Councillor Brown** confirmed that Cllr Greaves will continue to represent the town council and hopefully have a meeting with residents, and all concerned and Cllr Butler to take things forward.

**19.40pm RESOLVED to Reinstate Standing Orders.**

**09.07V.20 Unitary Council Reports (Cllr G Butler / Cllr M Shineton)**

**Cllr Butler ANNUAL REPORT 2020**

Firstly, I must apologise for the delay in providing my Annual Report. This has been caused by my absence from work due to sick leave since late January. I am pleased to report that following a long course of treatment I have been given the all clear in July and have started a phased return to work since then taking up my County Shire hall duties as Portfolio holder for Communities Rural affairs and regulatory services .I am hoping to restart my town and parish council meetings in the Autumn .

The last 16 months could not have been predicted ,prior to Covid 19 we were struggling with budget constraints increasing pressure on Highways , Adult Social Care and Children services and our direction was very much in preparation for Brexit following the General election last December and along with Covid I will address these in order .

**Highways**

With the reduction of the Highways budget by £5 million year on year over the past few years to support Children and Adult services we have seen a huge deterioration in the highways , mirrored with some very wet and cold winters .Following the General election the government has provided the council with an extra £11 million for improvements and we are now seeing far more maintenance on the roads in the south than we have seen for many years , The money granted by government is time limited and this has meant we haven't always been able to provide the normal weeks of notice for upgrades and repairs and they have been done under emergency powers. This was relayed to T and PCs last winter and the overwhelming support was to get the work done. We are constantly lobbying the government for more funds and very often they are granted depending on our previous delivery. Our main contractor Kier has been under scrutiny and we have re-negotiated parts of the contract to improve our ability to contract out where services are not being reliably supplied and we are in a far better position to monitor the performance of the contract .

There has been criticism of the Council commissioning an external consultant for highways due to the cost involved. I can understand the sentiment however it has certainly been a case of you get what you pay for. The person employed who has now left has created year on year savings on our methods and commissioning environment which has far outweighed his cost many times over and these are year on year savings. It is now obvious following the departure of The Chief executive that internal restructures were not producing the outcomes both financially and for the delivery of service.

**Adult and Children services**

Shropshire like other councils nationally are suffering greatly with the rise in costs and numbers of people needing care in the service .In Adult care it is noted that people under 65 who require a high level of care are a severe resource on the council .This is due to those historically born with severe issues now have a greater life expectancy than they did say 20 or 30 years ago . There are more adults receiving care aged under 65 than those over .I believe this trend will only continue one way and unless the government totally overhauls Adult social care the future of local government may be in doubt as this service cannot and shouldn't be serviced and balanced by local council tax increases. Council Tax cost is becoming unaffordable for many families and needs to be supported centrally just like education is delivered. The support the VCSA in Shropshire plays and our communities makes us a very resilient place to live and this is mirrored in the delivery of services for these sectors.



### **Finance**

Last year the Budget came in virtually on balance on a spend of circa £668 million .This has been after further cuts and modernisation on the digital platform .The next year will be challenged and will be covered in more detail later under the Covid response .

### **Brexit**

We are planning for Brexit which at present is stabbing in the dark and we have received a government grant to employ 2 further staff in public protection which will oversee the changes in food production and livestock movements and the new regime of licensing etc when border controls etc change . We have to where possible support the industry and ensure we can keep the economy and food production mobile and constant. Watch this space.

### **Local Plan**

The final consultation on the Local plan is out for consultation until the end of September and I would urge all councils to review their position and respond if need be. The main concern is land supply for housing which we have to submit to the government to cover us unto 2038. To date Shropshire is in the top 20 of councils actually delivering to their plan with Oswestry and Shrewsbury having major growth in housing more than since 1945 on average year on year .The government has issued a white paper on housing which I shall hopefully bring more information in due course .

### **Boundary review**

The council has agreed at full council in February to do a full boundary review of Town and Parish councils starting in May 2021 post local elections. We are all aware of the fact that local boundaries have not been looked at for over 120 years and that there are several issues including councillor vacancies , development boundaries around the market towns , increased responsibility and role of local councils, to name but a few .The time has come to look at boundaries but also to look at the future role and responsibilities of local Parish and Town councils and how they have changed over the past decade since we became unitary .

### **Rurality**

I sit on the national organisation RSN (rural services network ) for Shropshire Council which constantly looks at the differential between rural areas and urban areas and lobbies Westminster to change their policies for a more even balance towards the rural areas which are underfunded greatly compared to the urban areas. Prior to Covid we were in anticipation of the fairer funding review to be announced which we believed would have bought some level of fairer funding to the rural areas. This has been halted due to the pandemic and it appears we may be back to square one. The elephant in the room is funding for Adult Social care which takes up around 48% of the whole councils budget .If this is moved to the NHS as muted this may mean a complete overhaul of the role of Local Authorities as a lot of our time , energy , policies are moulded around welfare of our citizens , watch this space! There are several options open to the government. However, it works out we will constantly lobby for a fairer funding agreement. Post Covid with people working from home as long as we can get good broadband installed the rural areas may well hold more weight in the overall delivery of GDP for the country and therefore could influence better funding .We are in a very changing world and many public sector bodies believe the pandemic has made us embrace technology and put us 5 years ahead of where we would have been .

### **Covid 19 Pandemic**

As we are all aware this year will be remembered for the Pandemic. The response Shropshire Council has made has been exceptional and I congratulate all the staff for their resilience and ability to respond to local needs. The Community Response Team has specifically responded to local needs from delivering food parcels and prescriptions to signposting people to solve various needs which were difficult to facilitate in lock down .I must also congratulate all the Town and Parish councils in their response to their communities along with the VCSA and organisations like COCO (Compassionate Communities) and their response to the pandemic and local needs . The way we have responded has shown us a completely new way of working with the majority of work being undertaken from home with MS Teams and Zoom becoming the norm. To that end I am pleased that Shropshire Council has decided to disseminate from the centre at Shire Hall and give a far



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more localised support with Local hubs being introduced for staff to hot desk and to have a far more county wide presence than just at Shire hall . Shire hall will be disposed of over the coming years with a new civic hub in Shrewsbury and other styled hubs around the county. This again will introduce savings for the council.

The government has grant funded the majority of local grant support provided by the council to local businesses and organisations yet we are still down by £3 million with extra support and staff provided and this is on top of the costs incurred from flooding earlier in the year .

The council has set up Three Covid related committees, Firstly the Covid Engagement group which oversees the pandemic within the county and monitors local data, infections, and controls local outbreaks within the county and possible lockdowns. As portfolio holder for communities I sit on these groups and am updated regularly on the countywide situation. How the Craven Arms spike was handled was an exemplar with no new infections in the wider community and it has been seen as an exemplar of good practice by the central Cabinet office of Government.

The other two committees are to deal with the fallout from the pandemic and its impact, the one committee is Business and Economic Development, with the other being Social Welfare and Community resilience which is the one I sit on. The group is already identifying key issues around employment, anxiety, social isolation, homelessness etc.

### **Community and Rural strategy**

We had started developing the strategy prior to Covid and had Consulted greatly with T and PCs and the VCSA and our core outcomes of the strategy to be able to deliver a county wide approach to Shropshire , not leaving any area left out , with developing the place plans to look at the priorities of the strategy as told by the consultees . The core issues are Mental Health at any age, Isolation and loneliness, right job in the right place , same with homes, how to move people around the county ,how do we embrace our large ageing population and see them as an asset , and how do we keep younger people in the county and provide youth provision . The solutions will be different in many parts of the county but how we work with our communities and all partners as an enabler will be key in providing solutions for this great place in which we live. Watch this space.

There are probably many areas I could comment on but above is a brief outline on what is on my agenda at present .I have my portfolio report going to Council in September and will forward a copy of that also in due course.

**Thanks to Madge for her help while I have been off ill and for all your kind words of support.  
Look forward to seeing you soon remotely or in meetings.**

**Cllr Gwilym Butler**



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**Report for Parish Councils August 2020 Cllr Madge Shingleton**

1. Another month of considerable change.
2. Covid19 in Shropshire is well under control with occasional spikes dealt with.
3. Royal Shrewsbury, Princess Royal and Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt are all starting to resume normal service as far as the regulations allow. There is considerable backlog, but everyone is doing their best.
4. Primary Care services which include GP's are adjusting to the many changes required during this emergency. On the plus side there has been a number of 'lessons' learned which officers and staff intend to keep for the future.
5. The revised contract with Keir, WSP and Council has resulted in an improved service but there is still some way to go before we have caught up with the backlog.
6. Will members please look out for signs of 'Ash Dieback' and report any sightings to the County Tree Officer
7. With the exceptional growth this year there are a number of road side hedges which need cutting back especially on the narrow minor roads. If the Parish Council know the owners of the land and feel confident to approach them to cut back during the next slot upto end of March please do, if not please let us know through My Shropshire or myself.
8. There has been a new Drainage and Infrastructure Officer appointed
  
9. Shropshire Transport Team has devised the School transport ready for the September return to school, I have forwarded it to ALL Clerks.
10. There are a number of grants and other finance assistance from both Local and National Government especially related to the Economy and Self Employment.
11. Applications for Planning both large and small continue to flood in. If you are an applicant waiting for a decision before you blame the Planning Dept please check with your Architect/agent or solicitor that the delay is not with them!!!!
12. The Consultation on the Draft Local Plan has been extended to 30<sup>th</sup> September. Please check that your Parish Plan and entry into the Place Plan for our area are all upto date and match up, before the Local Plan is submitted to the Government in February 2021.
13. In spite of all the bad publicity re RSH and PRH the principle of Future Fit is continuing with the amalgamation of the Shropshire and Telford Clinical Commissioning Groups's and local authority Health Scrutiny Committees working together for the whole of the geographical county.
14. We have just issued our Draft Housing Strategy which should be on our web site in a few days, well worth looking at.
15. It has been wonderful how local people have got together to help each other during this extraordinary time many thanks to you all.

Madge Shingleton August 21<sup>st</sup> 2020

**09.08V.20 Financial Matters**

**a) Invoices due for Payment:**

R Skellern – QEII gate and fence installation - £370.00



Morris Bufton - leaf blower - £205.00  
Alan Guest Mowing Services - grass cutting (July) - £701.13  
D McBride - reimbursement plants, compost, and paint - £99.08  
West Mercia Energy - Toilet electric (July) - £44.81  
PKF Littlejohn - External audit fee - £720.00  
**b) To note cheques paid since last meeting:**  
Western Power Distribution - street light works - £1404.74  
**c) To note Debit Card Payments made:**  
McVeigh Parker - QEII Park Fence materials - £181.72  
Fresh Air Fitness - Outdoor Gym balance payment - £1.60  
Viking - Toilet and office supplies - £169.79

**RESOLVED that the accounts are accepted, and all payments are made**

**d) To consider S.137 Grant application:**

South Shropshire Youth Forum - £620.00 towards detached Youth Worker.

The application was shared on screen for all councillors and there was a short discussion where the following points were raised. The Council does not usually get a report back and would need one this time. What job is done with the youth. Who does he engage with and at what times?

It was confirmed that it was at evening and weekends and looked at youths that are not in structured groups. Also, he is experienced in liaising with the Police and Social services.

Cllr Goold expressed a need for feedback from this to the community engagement team.

Cllr French will address at the Youth meeting in September.

**RESOLVED to agree subject to a report expected back as to involvement and issues raised.**

**e) To confirm Shropshire Council Payroll Service Contract.**

**RESOLVED.**

**f) To consider External Auditor's Report for year ended 31st March 2020.**

**RESOLVED and thank you to RFO for work.**

**g) To note income received:**

Food Bank donations - £100.00

Bank Interest - £7.20

HMRC - Job Retention Scheme Grant - £452.35

Noted Information only.

**09.09V.20 Council Policies**

Approve recommendations from Policy Working Group regarding Council policies and updated policy schedule.

**RESOLVED and thank you to Policy group and Dot for all the work.**

**09.10V.20 Annual and Three-Year Business Plans**

To approve Annual Summary Plan for 2020-21- and Three-Year Business Plan for 2020-21 - 2022-23.

**RESOLVED to defer until October to allow Councillors to complete.**

**09.11V.20 Extra rubbish bins for Field, Skate park - Clerk**

Clerk explained the need for more rubbish bins to be sited around the Field and in the Skate park.

**RESOLVED Clerk and RFO to arrange together.**

**09.12V.20 Council ways of improved working - Cllr Brown**

To look at Chromebooks and more efficient ways of working.



**Cllr Brown** explained that we are now using an improved way of working with Google docs and during the Clerks appraisal, Cllr Tysall raised the question about councillors using Chromebooks. Also, as the Clerk and RFO work mostly at home they should not be using their own Laptops.

**RESOLVED that the Clerk and RFO should have council Laptops. Clerk and RFO to organise.**

**Cllr Tysall** explained that a Chromebook is unlike a laptop, it would facilitate a move to paperless working through tools such as Google docs, it will also reduce the need for documents to be attached to emails and downloaded, thus enhancing our data protection. It also facilitates an easy handover for new councillors joining. We can set up new email accounts dedicated as cleoburycouncillorsmith@gmail.com as an example.

**Cllr Goold** can share a link of how to do it.

Agreed for Neil to liaise with Matt to look at protocols for council emails and stick with 123 reg for Website.

Clerk and RFO to bring back some costs for the next meeting.

#### **09.13V.20 Flower Beds Church and High Street flower planters – Cllr French**

**Cllr French** reported that the Council were responsible for planters in memorial gardens, wells, under white gates and churchyard flower beds. Have a budget left of £1,344 as we have only spent £80 so far this year. We can consider other areas like the bulbs to plant in the QEII area. We can also look at planters in the Town as reported back by Cllr Brown and Clerk seen in another Town. To bring back to October meeting with some prices in October.

#### **09.14V.20 To confirm date of next Town Council meeting**

The next Town Council virtual meeting will be held on **Monday 5th October 2020** and posted on the **Town Council Website** <https://www.cleobury.org.uk/blog/>

**The Chair read out the following requesting the public and press be excluded for the next item. RESOLVED.**

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Under section 100a (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Act by virtue of the paragraph specified against the items.

#### **09.15V.20 Employee matters – Cllr Brown**

**Meeting closed at 20.44pm.**

**Signed Chair:**



**Date: 5<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2020**