

**MINUTES of an EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING of WILTON TOWN COUNCIL** held online on: TUESDAY 15th September 2020 at 7.00pm

**Joining the Meeting online**

Cllr Andy Kinsey – Deputy Mayor of Wilton  
Cllr Pauline Church  
Cllr Alan Crossley  
Cllr Peter Edge  
Cllr Paula Johnston  
Cllr Teresa Taylor

**In Attendance** Mr Mark Bastick, *Administrative Officer*, and Mr Hugh Abel, *Minute Secretary*.

**Also Present** (*names recorded as presented on each individual's screen*) Hannah Abbey, Jenny Alger, B, Alexander Boyd, Andrew C, Clare, Adam Cook, Jason, Steven Lawrence, Liv McClennan, Beth Morgan, Mr, Larissa Tonkin, Corinne Whiloch, Craig Webster.

**Community engagement**

*Larissa Tonkin* – told the meeting that all of the questions in my emails of 28th August have not been addressed satisfactorily. Last Tuesday's meeting reached a consensus and recommendations will be going forward. WTC has now lost three town councillors and a Clerk. There is one part-time Clerk left and it is not reasonable to expect him to be able to cover the gap in his 20 hours. Wilton residents should not be expected to give additional support given that this situation arose from Council mismanagement. The Clerk's position should have been dealt with by the grievance procedure and not, as was suggested, by the Monitoring Officer. The Councillors should follow their own standing orders. I note that Cllr Johnston submitted herself to the Monitoring Officer who is known not to have the means to resolve the situation. She said that she had consistently witnessed meetings since early February. She had seen some of the Clerk's recommendations challenged by Cllr Church who then requested minutes to be altered because the press had heard about it. This was inappropriate at best.

WTC needs to reassure residents how it will achieve Clerk support without paying £50 and hour for an appropriately qualified locum Clerk. It also has to state how it will address the situation of a Clerk experiencing significant stress and bullying which may also happen to the Councillors and we can't afford to lose any more. It's been very open to me as a bystander and not pleasant to watch. How will this be managed and addressed. We are in the midst of a pandemic. We are at a time of national crisis. It is essential that we focus on the resolution of issues and that simply has not happened in the past several months. It must be done to support to support the vulnerable and Wilton residents as a whole.

**Councillor Pauline Church gave her report to the Town Council**

Cllr Church said that to set the record straight about an issue raised by the previous speaker: the account in the minutes wasn't quite accurate and didn't reflect what actually happened.

- *South Street road going up to Bishopstone* – works have been proceeding and it will be surface dressed in the Spring of 2021. Various works will be carried out before then - shallow depressions then, later, deeper ones. Each element has to be allowed to settle. Following some repair work carried out in August which was followed by two days of heavy rain, she has made enquiries about what remedial work is needed to make this part of the work good.
- *Grass Cutting & Detritus removal on A30/A36 roundabout*  
This will start of Friday 25th September and Friday 2nd October starting at 5 and 6 in the morning
- *Wilton Parkway* – there will be a stakeholder meeting on 16th October to prepare our Department of Transport bid. Presently weekly meetings are being held to get this organised and put the most compelling bid forward.
- *Redrow Residents Update Meeting* – this is in the process of being set up and will probably take place at the end of next month.

- *Distribution of Government Money* – we have so far given out some £90 million to support businesses. There is also a recovery grant for small and mid-size businesses of between £1,000 and £3,000. Applications are through Wiltshire and Swindon growth hub.

### **Questions for Cllr Church**

*Cllr Edge* – On the stakeholder meeting on 16th October are you circulating all stakeholders?

*Cllr Church* – No invitations have gone out yet as we're still establishing the wider group.

*Cllr Edge* – Also can I ask about the forthcoming debate at County Hall on 20th September about the new planning laws and whether to support or adopt the government's proposals. Can we count on your support to reject the government's proposals.

*Cllr Church* – believed that the proposals were more attuned to urban areas but she had not yet had the briefing papers about it yet so was not able to give a definitive answer.

## **AGENDA**

### **96/20 Apologies**

Cllr Blackman apologised for her absence because she was away on holiday

Cllr Matthews apologised for his absence because of a prior commitment

**Resolved:** to accept these apologies and the reason for them.

### **97/20 Community Engagement**

*Cllr Kinsey* – With reference to the various roles, I have undertaken to help wherever I can. With reference to a locum Clerk, He said that he had started exploring various avenues to see if a qualified clerk could come in for a few hours a week to make sure that the council is legal.

#### *Standing orders were suspended*

*Larissa Tonkin* – told the meeting that she felt it really admirable to offer support in this way.

However it is 25 hours a week but if you are not familiar with the work it is liable to take even more time. Mark would be aware of the current workload and knows what needs to be done.

#### *Standing orders were re imposed*

*Cllr Johnston* – said that with reference to the allegations against me and the assumption that the grievance procedure can be used. This is not the case and that reporting to the Monitoring Officer is the only option that is open. She cited a similar case concerning Ledbury Town Council in 2018 where its grievance procedures had been used and sanctions were imposed. After being challenged the case went to judicial review where the verdict was against the council at great expense to the council. The only option is report to the Monitoring Officer. Presently, no one had contacted her with any complaint.

*Cllr Edge* – just to clarify the situation Cllr Johnston referred to, the Monitoring Officer is not the procedure being used. The complaint was made under the Town Council's regulations and must therefore be dealt with in that way. It is down to the person making the allegations as to where it is directed. It is quite within the capability of the Town Council to deal with it using its own internal disciplinary procedures.

*Cllr Kinsey* – the previous Mayor has said that he asked for details of the complaint to be submitted by the complainant. No such submission has been received. There were allegations but no official complaint. Therefore that is an end to the matter.

### **98/20 Declarations of Interest**

a. None were offered.

b. Dispensation requests – none had been submitted

**Resolved:** to note

## 99/20 Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on September 1st 2020

**Resolved:** that the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on September 1st 2020 be approved as a correct record without amendment and signed by the Chairman. (*prop Cllr Edge, sec Cllr Crossley – nem con*)

### 100/20 Mayor's Updates

The Mayor had nothing to add at this point.

### 101/20 Staffing Matters

The Mayor said that the formation of a staffing committee was important and it should be formed as soon as possible. After discussion it was agreed to set up a staffing committee composed of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Cllrs Church, Edge & Johnston. The Mayor would convene the first meeting at a mutually convenient time. The committee's task would be to implement the following tasks and schedule prepared by the outgoing Clerk.

The Town Clerk leaves the Council's employment on 28th September, but with leave owed and TOIL accrued, his last working day was Friday 11th September. Therefore, it is now necessary to make arrangements to secure a replacement. Before his departure, the Clerk has prepared the recruitment pack and documents as follows:

- Draft Contract of Employment
  - Job Description
  - Person Specification
  - Job Advertisement
- The last three of these documents form the recruitment pack.

The Clerk recommends the following timeframe for the recruitment process:

- 21 September - advertisement of Vacancy
- 30 October - closing date for applications - 30th October.
- Week commencing 9th November – Interviews
- Probable start date – 1 January 2021.

It is often difficult to recruit qualified and experienced professional clerks, therefore it is recommended that the position is advertised as follows:

- Council website - immediately
- Council social media channels - immediately
- Salisbury Journal - two weeks
- Valley News - two weeks
- NALC, WALC and SLCC websites

The Clerk has further recommended interim arrangements that may be put into operation with immediate effect. It is recommended that the Assistant Clerk is invited to act as interim Town Clerk.

This has several principal benefits: the Assistant Clerk holds the ILCA qualification, has a sound knowledge of the council's procedures and practices and it would be considerably cheaper than recruiting a locum clerk (this would cost the Council in the region of £1,500 per week).

Recruiting a locum assistant clerk would cost in the region of £350 per week. The outgoing Clerk is confident that the Assistant Clerk would be more than capable of performing the duties but in recognition of the extra responsibility a reasonable salary adjustment would be required. SCP 18 would be appropriate.

### 102/20 Wilton COVID-19 Response:

Notice of Motion

At the request of the volunteers running Wilton HELP, an informal consultation meeting was held on 9th September. Councillors Crossley, Edge and Matthews represented the Council. A number of matters were discussed, principally, these related to the points raised by Larissa Tonkin on behalf of Wilton HELP in her recent submission to the Council - appended. The general consensus view was that the volunteers wished to continue to operate in a charitable form – either a community interest company or a charity. They would continue to provide support services to vulnerable members of the community, even in a post-Covid world. In order to move this forward, they would need reasonable start-up costs underwritten by the Council. This was estimated to be in the region of £7,000.

**Resolved:** to approve the motion.

Cllr Kinsey asked Larissa Tonkin for a business plan and an outline of proposed expenditure.

In order to progress the matter, Councillor Edge has submitted the following motion:

(1) That Wilton Town Council applauds the valuable work carried out by the Wilton Help Covid-19 Volunteers and supports the continuation of this extraordinary community achievement.

(2) That the Council supports the group with their application to become a registered CIC or other 'not-for-profit' vehicle they choose to benefit the residents of Wilton.

(3) That the Council commits to support the financial viability of the group through grants and other sources of income they may require.

(4) The Council agrees to assist in the storage of equipment and the transfer of the existing resources that have been made available to them.

Cllr Church said that since March when this organisation was set up, we are now living in a completely different landscape. The virus is now better understood and managed. Social Isolation is the greatest risk to the well-being of our elderly and vulnerable residents and the need for a local befriending service is crucial. It is really important that the support structure of created by Wilton Help is retained and there is a need to be able to flex the service as demand changes. It was a shame that the term 'mothballing' was used as it gave the wrong impression and discredited the Council and gave a false impression that Wilton Council was no longer supporting the scheme. She was in complete support of the Wilton Help volunteers forging their own governing structure. This will open a wider range of grant funding opportunities for them.

proposed a friendly amendment to items 3 and 4.

(3) "That Wilton Town Council commits to positively support the Wilton HELP volunteer group through grants and other sources of income via the grant application process"

(4) "That Wilton Town Council agrees to assist in the storage of equipment free of charge providing space is available and the request is pre-agreed by council members. That Wilton Town Council transfers the Wilton HELP existing IT/telephony resource to the charity with ongoing subscription and maintenance of the same being met by the charity."

Cllr Edge accepted these two amendments and proposed the amended motion. Seconded by Cllr Johnston and passed unanimously.

**103/20 Date of Next Meeting** To note that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 6th October at 7.00pm – meeting format to be confirmed.

**104/20 To close the meeting**

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.36pm

**Equality Statement**

In the exercise of their responsibilities, Wilton Town Councillors have committed to uphold the Code of Conduct and to have full regard of the following in decision making:

- Equal Opportunities (age, race, gender, sexual orientation, marital status and any disability)
- Data Protection(GDPR)
- Health & Safety
- Human Rights.