



# NEWPORT (Shropshire) TOWN COUNCIL

*DRAFT UNTIL SIGNED AT SUBSEQUENT MEETING*

## MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING

*This Town Council meeting was held via Zoom (Virtual Platform).*

held on  
Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> MAY 2020

*Town Councils are temporarily permitted to hold remote meetings due to the current pandemic Covid-19 health crisis: –*

***“The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020”***

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: Peter Scott – Town Mayor  
Susan Bailey  
Lyn Fowler  
Nick Garvey  
Jeremy Good  
Bill Harper  
Thomas Janke  
Tom King  
Alan Lloyd  
Tim Nelson  
Ian Perry  
Sarah Syrda

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Sheila Atkinson –Town Clerk (CiLCA)  
Louise Tunks - RFO (CiLCA)

**TC/01/20-21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - none.

**TC/02/20-21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** - none

### **TC/03/20-21 Town Council Business Continuity Strategy and Policy**

Members **Approved** and formally adopted a pandemic contingency policy plan statement to be implemented to provide guiding principles during the current pandemic crisis. Copy attached at **Appendix ‘A’**

### **TC/04/20-21 Emergency Working Group**

Members **RESOLVED** to form an emergency working group to ensure that the council can continue to function and provide its services during the current COVID-19 health pandemic. The Committee will be comprised of The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairman of each of the Standing Committee (L&ES, R&F, CS, & P&ED). Cllrs: Scott, Fowler, Perry, Janke & Nelson.

### **TC/05/20-21 Temporary Scheme of Delegation**

To enable the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to its residents and maintain core business activities, during any period of restricted activity declared by the

Government in respect of the Covid-19 virus Epidemic, Members **RESOLVED** that the Clerk, in consultation with the Emergency Working Group, has delegated authority and powers in the decision making of this Town Council to conduct and enact business on behalf the Council in line with standing Orders and Financial Regulations taking into account The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Corona virus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (“the 2020 Regulations”) 4<sup>th</sup> April 2020

#### TC/06/20-21 Election of Chairman

- a. Members **Approved that the existing Mayor and Deputy Mayor, will remain in office until an annual meeting can be held, even if that is not until May 2020**, as referenced in *Regulation 4 – of the “2020 Regulations”*. *“Where an appointment would otherwise be made or require to be made at an annual meeting of a local authority [e.g. the election of chairman], such appointment continues until the next annual meeting of the authority or until such time as that authority may determine”*.
- b. **The current chairman/deputy chairman of all standing committees, and representatives nominated on outside bodies will also remain in office until such time as an annual meeting is held.**

#### Financial Reports and Correspondence

**TC/07/20-21** Members noted and approved the March and April finance statement and the payments therein:

Revenue Fund balance b’fwd (29 Feb)	293,248.00
Less: Payments chq No’s (227 to 237)	33,873.48
Out of Meeting Payments - chq No’s (238 to 248)	26,257.06
Direct Debits	13,797.66
Xfer to managed funds	10,000.00
	-
Receipts	7,555.22
Revenue Balance c’fwd (29 Feb)	216,875.02
Ear Marked Reserves balance b’fwd (1 Mar)	149,889.19
<b>Receipts/expenditure</b>	<b>10,000.00 -</b>
Ear Marked Reserves balance c’fwd (31 Mar)	159,889.19
Managed Funds balance b’fwd (1 Mar)	3,006.87
Payments	-
Receipts	-
Managed Funds balance c’fwd (31 Mar)	3,006.87
<b>Total Balance in Hand (31 Mar)</b>	<b>379,771.08</b>

Investments held as asset: CCLA Property Fund	£100,000.00
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Revenue Fund balance b'fwd (31 March)	216,875.02
Less: Payments chq	-
Out of Meeting Payments - chq No's (249 to 266) (Chq 251 £10k to Xray appeal)	22,070.10
Direct Debits	16,004.33
Xfer to managed funds	-
Plus:	
Xfer from managed funds	-
Receipts	245,190.10
Revenue Balance c'fwd (31 March)	433,990.69
Ear Marked Reserves balance b'fwd (31 Mar)	159,889.19
Receipts/ <i>expenditure</i>	<del>10,000.00</del>
Ear Marked Reserves balance c'fwd (30 April)	149,889.19
Managed Funds balance b'fwd (1 April)	3,006.87
Payments	-
Receipts	-
Managed Funds balance c'fwd (31 April)	3,006.87
<b>Total Balance in Hand (31 April)</b>	<b>586,886.75</b>

#### Funerals

Investments held as asset: CCLA Property Fund	£100,000.00
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#### TC/08/20-21 Cheque Signing /Authorised Signatories

Members acknowledged the signing instruction and authority required on financial transactions (*signing of cheques and authorising of payments*) - that being, 2 Members and 1 staff member (Clerk or RFO) for all cheque transactions, including those out of meeting. As there will not be an opportunity to nominate individuals, Members with authority to sign (*most members*) maybe asked, on occasion to undertake signing, the default members being the Mayor & Deputy Mayor or other members of the emergency committee.

#### TC/09/20-21 Annual Governance and Accountability Statements (AGAR)

Members, acknowledged receipt of copy of the annual return form, public notice and final internal audit report for the Annual Governance and Accountability Statements (AGAR)

Members **RESOLVED** to enable the sign off for the year-end return to be undertaken, for submission to the external auditor:

- i. That the end of year accounts be approved.
- ii. That the Annual Return Part 3 section 1 page 4 Annual Governance Statement 2019/20 be approved (*with the answers to questions 1 to 9 being YES*) and signed by the Town Mayor and the Clerk.

iii. That the Annual Governance & Accountability Return 2019/20 Part 3 section 2 (page 5) Accounting statements for 2019/20 be approved for signature by Town Mayor and RFO.

**TC/10/20-21 T&W Kindle Appeal**

Members agreed the correspondence for submission to Telford & Wrekin – **copy at Appendix 'B'** and pledged an amount of up to £2,000 for payment toward the appeal.

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Signed .....

Dated.....

**Appendix 'A' to Minutes  
of a Meeting held on  
13<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

**Town Council Business Continuity during Covid-19 Health Crisis  
Delegation, Strategy and Policy**

In light of the on-going Corona virus emergency and the associated government restrictions on social distancing, scheduled meetings of the Town Council have been postponed including the Annual Meeting which will not take place in the usual form of a public meeting.

During the declared pandemic health crisis most, Local Authorities will cancel their usual meetings and these will need to be replaced with alternative decision-making processes. The lawful way to do this is that a decision that would otherwise have been on an agenda for council or a committee is delegated to an officer. To ensure that this remains inclusive of elected members, the officer is advised in any decision-making, to seek the views of members of the full Council. This could be achieved by correspondence/reports, email, telephone and virtual meetings.

To maintain transparency and adhered to legislation, Members are asked to consider formally adopting a Scheme of delegation, a strategic policy and form an emergency working group to ensure that the council can continue to function and provide its services during the current health pandemic.

In order to maintain some credible levels of transparency, officers are proposing that a probable agenda (but cancelled) for Town Council meetings, continues to be produced, as and when necessary.

The “would-be” agenda could include standard reports and recommendations, albeit many of the decisions will have been made under delegated powers.

This proposal would enable and contribute to providing councillors and members of the public with information on matters normally discussed or noted at meetings, also allowing all councillors an opportunity to provide comment to officers and pose questions that provide an opportunity for scrutiny of individual issues, also providing a record for ratification once normal business is resumed.

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## **MODEL DOCUMENT: Pandemic Contingency Plan Policy**

In addition to Newport Town Council disaster contingency plan, the Council recognises the need to have a separate pandemic plan and procedure.

The reason for this is that a general continuity recovery plan focuses on a short-term recovery programme whereas, for example, in circumstances where a public health emergency is confirmed such as the Corona-virus, the effects of the pandemic could last many months.

The following procedure sets out the contingency measures that the Council will bring into effect in during the current crisis.

The procedure aims to ensure that the Council will be able to operate its business to the best of its abilities in such an event, while protecting, as far as is reasonably possible, its Councillors, Employees, Contractors and Volunteers.

### **Procedure**

The Clerk and Councillors are responsible for ensuring that employees understand the Council's pandemic recovery plan policy and procedure. Employees are responsible for familiarising themselves with the procedure and should speak to the Clerk should they have any questions.

The Council will identify a Pandemic Crisis Management Team. The team will consist of the Clerk, Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor and chairman of standing committees; Community Safety, Leisure & Environmental Services, Resource & Finance and Planning & Economic Development.

Members of the Pandemic Crisis Management Team will be trained in how to respond to a pandemic. Members of the team will be expected to exercise leadership and make operational and business decisions in accordance with delegated authority.

As a contingency measure, employees will be trained in various functions to ensure that adequate cover is provided in different roles.

A pandemic communications strategy will be developed to ensure that employees are provided with up-to-date and accurate information on the status of the pandemic. Information will be provided to employees via e-mail and through team meetings.

As well as other important information, employees will be briefed on the symptoms of the virus and who to contact should they believe they, or a colleague, has the virus. Employees will also be provided with instructions regarding personal hygiene to avoid spread of the virus.

The Council's leave and absence policies will be reviewed as the status of the pandemic changes. This includes the Council's policies on sickness absence, time off for dependants and bereavement leave.

Employees may be required to observe several measures put in place to keep the risk of infection to an absolute minimum. Whilst advice will be published at the time in question to ensure it is specific to the pandemic, it is likely that rules will include:

- Social distancing at work such as maintaining at least one metre distance between participants in essential meetings to provide delivery of essential services.
- Avoiding unnecessary travel
- Cancellation of face-to-face meetings
- Working from home
- Increased levels of hygiene management including keeping hands clean and coughing and sneezing into tissues which are immediately disposed of safely.
- A requirement for employees to adhere to Government guidance on management of symptoms and self-isolation where recommended.

The above policy and procedure will be continuously reviewed and updated to take account of the changing status of a pandemic.

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**Appendix 'B' to Minutes  
of a Meeting held on  
13<sup>th</sup> May 2020**

Dear Cllr Watling

**#KindleKindness Campaign**

Following the launch of your #KindleKindness campaign on 23th April and the direct request for Town and Parish Councils to contribute. Members of Newport Town Council have agreed to pledge their support with some involvement. However, the council do not have any online banking facilities or is it thought to be appropriate to pay the third-party platform "gofundme".

Nevertheless, there is a willingness to contribute in some way to help ease the loneliness at women's and children's centre at the Princess Royal Hospital and to care homes across the Borough, which could be achieved either by directly purchasing specifically identified entertainment devices and equipment or on receipt of an invoice.

Members would also seek assurance that the 3 care homes in the four wards of Newport namely: Bank House, Cottage Christian Care Home, and the Rylands are provided for within the scheme and that they also received the chance to enjoy some entertainment, keep informed and keep in touch with family and friends with an appropriately researched consultation as to what their preferred requirements would

be. Following informal discussions with the managers of our care homes, it is clear that some electronic devices may not be suitable for use by the service users in these establishments.

The campaign appears to be gaining momentum, and Newport Town Council look forward to being able to support the residents of the Borough during the current health crisis.

Yours sincerely

*Electronically signed*

Sheila Atkinson  
Town Clerk