

**Middlewich Town Council
Victoria Building
Lewin Street
Middlewich
CW10 9AT**

Minutes of the Five Hundred and Thirteenth Meeting of Middlewich Town Council, held in the Victoria Hall, Civic Way, Middlewich on Monday 21st October 2019, commencing at 7.15 pm

Part One

Present

Councillor Russell Watkinson (Chairman) and Councillors Carol Bulman, Pauline Hickey, Chris Jones, Mike Hunter, David Latham, Helen Watkinson and Gareth Williams

Council Officers:

Denise French, Deputy Town Clerk and Nicola Antoney, Administrative Assistant

1. To receive and approve apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and approved from Councillors Sean Boyle (illness), Jonathan Parry (illness) and Vicky Perez (illness)

Feedback and Reports

2. To receive any announcements to be made by the Chairman

The Chairman updated the Council on a number of matters including the appointment of an internal auditor. The auditor had offered some interim advice including that the Council should seek specific VAT help. This was in process. In addition, since May the Council had paid for legal advice and sought support from Occupational Health. The auditor's report would be submitted in due course.

Resolved 8241

That the Chairman's report be noted.

3. To note any declarations of Members' Interests on any agenda item

Councillor David Latham declared a personal interest in item 4 (f) on the grounds that he was a member of the Middlewich Pride Group.

4. Open Forum

A number of items had been submitted in advance as below:

(a) Canal bridge at Big Lock – a planning application had been submitted to Cheshire East Council. Councillor Mike Hunter further updated that a temporary bridge would be installed and it was hoped this would happen within the next 8 weeks. A written response would be sent to the questioner who was not present at the meeting.

(b) Fountain Fields, various issues regarding the bandstand and CCTV coverage – a written response would be sent to the questioner who was not present at the meeting; copies were available for the public to take away if they wished.

(c) Former Mayor's fund raising - The Deputy Clerk read out the list of recipients of funds – Middlewich Good Neighbours - £1500; Middlewich Additional Needs Network - £1500; Middlewich Over 60s - £200; Middlewich Monday's Wyches - £200; NM Armed Forces Breakfast - £125; and the uniformed groups of Middlewich who had each received £150. A written response would be sent to the questioner who was not present at the meeting.

(d) Request to move the council owned CCTV Camera to Cledford – the resident who had submitted the question elaborated on the need for CCTV coverage of Cledford area including the proximity of shops and a pub and an increase in violent incidents. She advised that some businesses had offered use of their WiFi for camera coverage. The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the local Sergeant had advised that Fountain Fields park was the priority for the moment. Members noted that the Multi Agency Group was meeting on 22nd October to consider various matters including issues in Cledford.

(e) Request for an update on installation of town boundary signage – the Deputy Town Clerk updated that information had been awaited from Cheshire East Council regarding installation. She had now been advised that there was an application fee for Cheshire East Highways to provide a quotation for installation and this was in the sum of £1200. Any installation costs would be additional. She proposed seeking alternate quotes. A written response would be sent to the questioner who was not present at the meeting.

(f) Request to consider starting a Middlewich Lottery with funds raised being used to finance initiatives by the Middlewich Pride Group which was being relaunched by Councillor Latham. Members discussed the role of the existing Community Pride Group and noted that the Vision Manager ran the Hanging Baskets scheme. Members noted that the Council had the power to run a lottery but it was suggested that any funds raised could not be given to an external group. A written response would be sent to the questioner who was not present at the meeting.

Resolved 8242 That

- (a) the relocation of a CCTV camera to Cledford be considered by the Multi Agency Action Group and revisited by the Council after the school holidays and in the meantime a temporary solution be considered; and
- (b) further quotes be sought for installation of the town boundary signs.

5. To receive and adopt the Minutes of the Five Hundred and Eleventh Meeting of Middlewich Town Council held on Tuesday 20th August, the Special Meeting held on 10th September; the Five Hundred and Twelfth Meeting held on Monday 16th September and the Special Meeting held on Thursday 3rd October 2019

Resolved 8243

That the Minutes of the Meetings held on 20th August, 10th September; 16th September and 3rd October 2019 be approved as correct records.

6. Deputy Community Mayor

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that there were no rules or precedent for the roles of Community Mayor and Deputy Community Mayor. She was continuing to seek advice on legal and financial aspects of the roles as an on-going investigation. This followed advice received from the Internal Auditor as part of the audit as mentioned by the Chairman during his announcements. She discussed postponement of this matter. She explained that as the Council's Responsible Financial Officer she had a duty to point out this advice and record it.

The Chair of Internal Committee outlined the process for appointing a Deputy Community Mayor for which 3 strong candidates had been interviewed. The unanimous verdict of the Panel was to appoint Linda Boden. Mrs Boden gave thanks for the appointment and expressed her delight to represent the town which had been her home for many years. She hoped to use her role to bring generations together. Mrs Boden signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Resolved 8244 That:

- (a) the appointment of a Deputy Community Mayor be confirmed; and
- (b) the appointment of Mrs Linda Boden as Deputy Community Mayor be approved unanimously.

7. To receive the minutes of Meetings of the External Committee held on 15th August, 5th September and 3rd October 2019

Resolved 8245 That:

The minutes of the Meetings of the External Committee held on 15th August, 5th September and 3rd October 2019 be received.

8. To receive the minutes of Meetings of the Internal Committee held on 2nd September and 1st October 2019

The minutes of the Meetings of the Internal Committee held on 2nd September and 1st October 2019 be received.

9. To consider any Members' Items previously submitted in writing:

Members Items' were considered:

(a) Councillor Williams: In order to maintain a high level in the quality and effectiveness of Town Council business, I believe that the External Committee (Committee 2) requires an extra councillor. This is, I think, because of a temporary imbalance between the remits of each Committee. I would therefore like to volunteer to serve on both Internal and External Committees, until such time as the balance is restored, or until May 2020. I call on the Town Council to ratify this decision.

(b) Councillor JD Parry - Middlewich Town Council call on Cheshire East Council to hold off any planning application for the traveller transit site until at least the SADPD is approved.

(c) Councillor JD Parry - Middlewich Town Council publicly declares a climate emergency. MTC fully supports CEC in declaring a climate emergency in Cheshire east and calls on the cabinet to urgently prioritise combatting climate change and its adverse effects at a borough level as promised at their meeting on 22nd May 2019, as well as empowering and supporting Town and parish councils in initiatives.

Resolved 8246 That:

- (a) the membership of External Committee be increased by one to seven members plus the Chairman and Vice Chairman as ex-officio Members and Councillor G Williams be appointed onto the Committee until May 2020; and
- (b) the 2 items from Councillor Parry be deferred to the next meeting.

10. To receive verbal reports from Members of Cheshire East Council

Councillor Carol Bulman updated: her time was currently mostly focused on Children and Families and her role as a Corporate Parent. In the latter role she hoped to visit as many Cared for Children as possible. She was a member of the Adoption Panel and would be undergoing training for this role. She explained the role of the 'Virtual School'. She was Chair of Staffing Committee and in this role would be involved with the appointment of a new Chief Executive for Cheshire East Council.

Councillor Mike Hunter updated that a meeting of Cledford Ward Members was to be held and there would be a focus on highways matters including safe routes to schools and speeding issues. He would also be looking at the Minor Works Budget in relation to Middlewich. He continued to Chair the Strategic Planning Board

Resolved 8247: That the verbal updates from Members of Cheshire East Council be received and noted.

Finance

11. To receive the spread sheet of Town Council Income and Expenditure for the months of July, August and September 2019

Resolved 8248

That the Financial reports for July, August and September 2019 be received.

12. Rose Fete Grant

Resolved 8249

That a grant in the sum of £985 be paid to the Rose Fete.

13. Approved Suppliers

Resolved 8250

That a list of approved contractors be approved in principle for a period of 3 years provided the work is within the overall maintenance budget and the Internal Committee be authorised to approve the list of providers.

14. Flagpole for Fountain Fields Park

Resolved 8251

That the funding of a flagpole be deferred for 6 months due to concern over risk of vandalism.

15. Beer Festival

Resolved 8252

That the Council will sponsor a pump at the Beer Festival at a cost of £100.

Highways

None

Planning

16. Planning Applications

Resolved 8253

That the Deputy Town Clerk make the following comments on the applications as listed:

(a) 19/4506C - Existing three-bedroom dwelling split into one single-bedroom and one two-bedroom dwelling. One new four-bedroom dwelling on area currently occupied by outbuildings; 37, NANTWICH ROAD, MIDDLEWICH, CW10 9HD – The Town Council has concerns regarding over development of the site; and detrimental impact on both neighbour amenity and visual amenity.

(b) 19/4646C – 1 no. new fascia panel with internally illuminated lozenge. 1no. new projecting sign; 40-42, WHEELOCK STREET, MIDDLEWICH, CHESHIRE, CW10 9AB – the sign should fit in with the conservation area and be of moderate design.

(c) Application for the Addition of a bridleway known as Manor Drive between Nantwich Road (A530) and Kerridge Close, Middlewich, CW10 0LQ – the Council supports the retention of the Public Right of Way.

(d) 19/4713C - Listed building consent for removal and repair of the deck and parapets and rebuild and repair brick abutments, BIG LOCK, TRENT AND MERSEY CANAL, BOOTH LANE, MIDDLEWICH, CHESHIRE – the Town Council supports this application.

Environment

17. Cheshire East Council Waste Strategy

Resolved 8254

That Councillors be encouraged to respond on an individual basis.

PART 2

Resolved 8255: That the meeting be moved into Part 2 session and the Public and Press be excluded on the basis that the items to be discussed involve financial and staffing matters.

18. Provision of IT to the Council

Resolved 8256

That, having considered 3 quotes, the recommendation of the IT Working Group be approved, and the future IT supplier to the Town Council be appointed in accordance with the details in the report submitted.

19. Civic Way Garage

Resolved 8257

That Cheshire East Council be advised that the Town Council is interested in leasing the Garage on Civic Way car park and requests further information regarding leasing costs and condition of the Garage.

20. Marketing for Folk and Boat

Resolved 8258

That the details of the contract for marketing Folk and Boat for 2020 as set out in the report submitted be confirmed.

21. Staffing Matters

Resolved 8259

That:

- (a) holiday pay and an additional payment be made to the estate of the late Town Clerk in accordance with the details in the report now submitted;
- (b) the arrangements for the temporary Financial Officer role as outlined be confirmed and the contract signed by the Chairman;
- (c) the priorities as outlined in the report be confirmed; and
- (d) an agency be approached for temporary facilities support due to staff absences.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

Internal Committee – Tuesday 5th November 2019 at 7:15pm
 External Committee – Thursday 7th November 2019 at 7:15pm
 Public Meeting – Budget – Tuesday 19th November 2019 at 7.15pm
 Ordinary Meeting of Town Council – Monday 18th November 2019 at 7:15pm

The meeting concluded at 10.00pm.

Councillor Russell Watkinson
Chairman

Signed.....2019