

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

Minutes of the Five Hundred and Fifteenth Meeting of Middlewich Town Council, held in the Victoria Hall, Civic Way, Middlewich on Monday 16th December 2019, commencing at 7.15 pm

Part One

Present

Councillor Gareth Williams (in the Chair) and Councillors Sean Boyle, Carol Bulman, Pauline Hickey, Chris Jones, Graham Orme, Vicky Perez and Helen Watkinson

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 Mike Hunter (family reasons), David Latham, Jonathan Parry and Russell Watkinson (illness)

Feedback and Reports

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

Councillor Williams referred to the statement prepared by the Chairman Councillor Russell Watkinson in advance of the meeting. The statement covered a number of items set out in the report of the Internal Auditor. It had been circulated to Members and is attached.

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

None

4. Town Council Casual Vacancy

Resolved 8260

That Mr Graham Orme be co-opted onto the Town Council and the Declaration of Acceptance of Office was duly signed in the presence of the Proper Officer.

2409

Middlewich Town Council

5. Open Forum

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

(a) Wych Centre – Alison Roylance-White had submitted a question about the Town Council’s investigation into ownership of the Wych Centre. Councillor Williams responded by explaining that the Town Council was custodian of the safety of the town and there was disquiet and concern around increasing incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). He felt a reasonable assumption was that this rise in ASB could be linked to the lack of a youth centre. The Council’s understanding was that the role of the Wych Centre was to benefit young people and this role did not appear to be fulfilled at present. Alison Roylance-White explained that the Wych Centre was for both Youth and Community use and a number of community activities took place at the Centre. A local resident reported on a group he had recently established called Middlewich Youth Engagement. He referred to the possibility of accessing accommodation for activities and would welcome a discussion with representatives of the Town Council. Members also noted discussions with the High School regarding the possible establishment of a Youth Council.

(b) CCTV in the Cledford area – Laura Flaherty asked for an update on her request at the previous meeting that one of the Town Council CCTV cameras be moved from Fountain Fields to the Cledford area. Councillor Bulman reported on meetings with the Police and other agencies where the police had made a commitment for a problem solving approach to tackle current Anti-Social Behaviour issues in the town. The CCTV Manager at Cheshire East Council had been asked to look at hotspots for siting a camera in Cledford. Town Council staff had been undertaking grounds maintenance works in various areas of the town to make areas more open and secure.

(c) Middlewich Neighbourhood Plan – a resident had asked for an update on progress with the Plan. The Vice Chairman explained that it had been the intention to commence work in September on a revised Plan but due to staff shortages this had not happened. Once a new Town Clerk was in post then the process could re-commence. A written response would be sent to the questioner who was not present at the meeting.

(d) Request for an update on installation of town boundary signage – the Deputy Town Clerk updated that one further quote had been received and another quote was being sought. A written response would be sent to the questioner who was not present at the meeting

(e) A resident had asked a series of questions relating to a Facebook statement made after the Multi Agency Meeting on 12th September that outlined discussions and Police action to address issues of ASB. Councillor Williams responded that the statement was a true representation of promises made at the Multi Agency Meeting. He noted there were a lot of elements which could contribute to an overall solution including Cheshire East Council, the Town Council, Street Pastors, volunteers, Police. The Town Council had agreed an extra budget for an additional CCTV camera and to fund the locking of the gates at Fountain Fields park.

A full time permanent Police Officer was based in Middlewich . The Problem Solving Team had already been visible in Middlewich. The Chief Constable had committed resources to Middlewich till the end of September 2020.

(f) A resident had asked about the Members' motion requesting the Town Council to declare a climate emergency. It was agreed to defer this item to discuss as part of item 9.

A member of the public raised an issue about the roundabout on Warmingham Lane by the Bellway Homes development. She asked when surveys would be carried out. Councillor Hunter advised that a meeting with Cheshire East Highways and the Ward Members would be taking place on 3rd December and various issues would be raised including the junction at Town Bridge, safe routes to schools and the roundabout on Warmingham Lane. An update would be made to the next Town Council meeting.

A member of the public asked for an update on the Council budget for 2020-21; it was confirmed the next meeting would be on Tuesday 26th November at 7.15pm.

6. To receive and adopt the Minutes of the Five Hundred and Thirteenth Meeting of Middlewich Town Council held on Monday 21st October 2019

Resolved 8261

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st October 2019 be approved as a correct record.

7. To receive the minutes of the Meeting of the Internal Committee held on 5th November 2019

Resolved 8262

That the minutes of the Meeting of the Internal Committee held on 5th November 2019 be received.

8. To receive the minutes of Meetings of the External Committee held on 7th November 2019

Resolved 8263

That the minutes of the Meetings of the External Committee held on 7th November 2019 be received.

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

A Members Item was considered:

Councillor V Perez - 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 8264 That:

- (a) the Town Council supports Cheshire East Council in declaring a climate emergency and calls on the CEC Cabinet to prioritise combatting climate change and to empower and support Town and Parish Councils in their initiatives; and
- (b) the Council's Internal and External Committees be asked to look at their areas of responsibility to assess any environmental initiatives that can be taken by the Town Council.

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

Councillor Carol Bulman updated: over the past month she had focused on staffing matters including the appointment of the Chief Executive. She was now a mentor to some Cared for Children. She was a member of the Children and Families Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Mike Hunter updated that he was a Member of Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and at the recent meeting Members had looked at waste management. One of the decisions had been to ask Ansa to look at opportunities to reduce their carbon footprint. He had held a number of meetings with Highways. There were a number of Middlewich applications going to the Strategic Planning Board especially in relation to the bypass.

Resolved 8265

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

Finance

11. Financial Regulations

Resolved 8266

That the Financial Regulations be approved and adopted.

12. Folk and Boat Festival 2020

Resolved 8267

That delegated powers be granted to External Committee to spend up to a total budget of £75,000 on artists for the Folk and Boat Festival 2020.

13. Standing Grant to Middlewich Clean Team

Resolved 8268

That the Standing grant of £500 be paid to Middlewich Clean Team.

Highways

None

Planning

14. Application 19/5071C - Conversion of existing bed and breakfast accommodation & wine bar operation to residential apartment (retrospective), Alhambra, 33, WHEELOCK STREET, MIDDLEWICH, CW10 9AG

Resolved 8269

That no comments be made on the application.

Environment

15. New Homes Bonus

Resolved 8270

That the letter from Holmes Chapel Parish Council be supported and any opportunities to work on this matter with HCPC be welcomed.

PART 2

None

The meeting concluded at 8.35pm.

Councillor Mike Hunter
Vice Chairman

Signed.....2019