



**MINUTES OF THE ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD BY VIDEO CONFERENCE
ON TUESDAY 2nd JUNE 2020**

Present

Councillors G Forman (Mayor) K Cargill, T Forman, M Cargill, A Foster, E Randle, V Blake, M Bowe, L Pusey, C Neal-Sturgess, K Soares, D Henderson, K Forbes, M Hempell and K Greenaway

In attendance Mrs V Lowe, Town Clerk and Cllr S Juned, District Councillor

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT DISCRETION OF MAYOR

There was no public participation.

District and County Councillors' Reports

Cllr S Juned (Ward Member for Alcester Town) reported that SDC was launching its Discretionary Business Grant scheme from 8th June. The Museum and the Town Hall had both received Small Business grants.

The SPD on Climate Change would be considered by the SDC Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the following week with adoption anticipated in July.

The Site Allocation Plan had been withdrawn and a new consultation would start in September.

Cllr M Cargill (County Councillor and Ward Member for Alcester and Rural) confirmed that schools were reopening with two thirds expected to partly open. Decisions were being made locally by Headteachers in conjunction with parents. The A46 resurfacing work is due to start and Cllr Cargill is trying to liaise with Severn Trent so that their planned work at this location is co-ordinated with the current closure.

The RSC has announced that it will remain closed until Spring 2021 and it is anticipated that the Coventry City of Culture year will be postponed.

Cllr Cargill reported that SDC had set up a Recovery Group involving members, officers, businesses and other key players in the District.

He reminded Councillors that due to its reliance on tourism and the car industry, the local area was likely to be badly impacted by the Covid-19 crisis. He reported that the District Council anticipated a £8m deficit in its budget.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr E Wilson.

2. Minutes of Council Meetings

The Mayor asked Councillors to consider for approval the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 5th May 2020. They were proposed to be accepted by Cllr M Cargill, seconded by Cllr Neal-Sturgess and approved by Council; they were then signed by the Mayor.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest on the agenda items.

4. Annual Return

The completed Annual Return had been circulated in advance. The report from the Internal Auditor, Mrs S Griffiths had also been circulated in advance.

The Town Clerk confirmed that despite the current lockdown, all financial documentation had been made available to the Internal Auditor as usual.

Council considered the Internal Audit procedures for the year 2019-20 and agreed that they were adequate and effective.



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Cllr Foster asked the Town Clerk whether previous discussions regarding the need for regular users of the EPCC to have their own insurance, should be identified as a potential liability of the Town Council. The Town Clerk confirmed that the terms and conditions of the EPCC made it clear that regular users were responsible for their own insurance, rather than being the responsibility of ATC. There were no other questions regarding the documentation supplied.

5. Approval of Annual Governance Statement

The statements on the Annual Governance Statement were considered and approved. The Mayor asked Councillors to confirm that they were happy for her to sign the Statement. This was agreed unanimously. The Statement was signed by the Mayor as Chair of the Meeting. (*Minute reference – Annual Return*)

6. Approval of Accounting Statements

The Accounting Statements which had been prepared and signed by the Town Clerk as Responsible Financial Officer were considered and approved. The Mayor asked Councillors to confirm that they were happy for her to sign the Statements. This was agreed unanimously. The Statements were signed by the Mayor as Chair of the Meeting. (*Minute reference – Annual Return*)

7. Alcester Town Recovery Working Group

Cllr Bowe gave a report on the first meeting of the new Task and Finish Group on 29th May. He explained that the purpose of the Group was to consider ideas to encourage footfall back into the High Street once shops were allowed to reopen. Cllr Bowe had previously circulated notes on the outcomes of the meeting.

Cllr Foster asked if businesses were being asked to find solutions. Cllr Bowe explained that they were only being asked for views at the current time via an online survey. He confirmed that, moving forwards, good practice in other towns would also be considered.

In view of the urgency of the situation, it was proposed by the Mayor that authority was delegated to the Town Clerk (in conjunction with the Task and Finish Group) to produce a Recovery Plan considering views of businesses and residents. The Town Clerk will report to Councillors by email at strategic points between Council meetings. This was seconded by Cllr Bowe and unanimously carried by Council.

8. Report on Alcester Community Resilience

Cllr Randle gave a report on the ongoing community resilience effort. She reported that to date, 514 contacts had been made by phone or email. 1800 complimentary meals had been delivered. There was now a decrease in demand matching the easing of the government restrictions.

Cllr Randle suggested that Councillors should start to consider how and when support should be withdrawn. Importantly, consideration should also be given to the resource of motivated volunteers who had come forward to assist and in particular, how they could be recognised and engaged in future projects.

Following an enquiry from Cllr Bowe, Cllr Soares explained the current funding situation for the complimentary meals service. She confirmed that the service was reducing to once a week.



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9. Report on Town Council operations during Covid-19 crisis

The Town Clerk had circulated her report in advance which was discussed and approved.

The Town Clerk reported that a request had been received from the Riverside Angling Club to lease and manage fishing rights along land owned by the Town Council. This request was discussed, and Councillors agreed that they had no objection in principle to the proposal. It was agreed that Cllr T Forman would contact the Angling Club to discuss further.

Cllr Forbes had received a request from residents to create a permanent feature out of the painted "rocks" laid along the old railway tracks in support of the NHS and key workers. The retention of the rocks was agreed in principle and Cllr Forbes agreed to investigate suitable locations and cost.

10. Planning Committee

Cllr Neal-Sturgess confirmed that there had only been a couple of minor planning applications since the end of March.

He reported that there had been an informal video meeting with Aldi Supermarkets regarding their proposal to develop a new store at the Broad Lane Leisure site. A planning application was expected in June.

11. Payment of Accounts

The Town Clerk presented the Payment of Accounts for the preceding month. The accounts were proposed to be approved by Cllr Foster, seconded by Cllr Soares and carried by Council.

12. Correspondence

Email correspondence received by the Clerk was taken as read.

There was no further correspondence to report.

13. Dates of future meetings

Full Council Tuesday 7th July 2020 at 7pm

All meetings will take place remotely using Zoom software. Anyone wishing to attend should contact the Town Clerk on clerk@alcester-tc.gov.uk for details of how to join the meeting.

The Mayor closed the meeting.