

# SWAFFHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Report and meeting Guide for a Virtual meeting of the Town Council, to be held on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 4.00 p.m. using the following link: -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85931030270?pwd=N1RpMTRHNElyMGIMSTlaa2NlVU1BUT09>

*The Virtual meeting of the Full Council on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 4.00pm commences with prayers led by the Mayor.*

## **1. To receive APOLOGIES & REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

Breckland Cllr Ian Sherwood – as the meeting clashes with a ‘virtual’ meeting of Breckland Cabinet. Cllr Sherwood has stated that if the meeting finishes in good time, then he will join the Town Council meeting late. Cllr Ed Colman will be giving the Breckland report.

## **2. To receive DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** – for items included on the Agenda.

None received in advance

*To adjourn the meeting to allow members of the public to address the Town Council in a PUBLIC OPEN FORUM (Maximum of 15 minutes) – NB the public will be muted at the end of the public session.*

## **3. To receive MAYOR'S REPORT**

3.1 To receive a report on Civic Events attended by the Mayor.

Food Market – BBC Look East Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May

BBC Radio Norfolk – Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May (Food Market related)

VE Day – laying of a wreath – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May

3.2 To receive and consider urgent reports, correspondence or information at the Mayor’s discretion - prior notice must be given.

Urgent item (1) – Market Committee -a resignation from the Market Committee has been received from Cllr Ian Pilcher and if we can appoint a replacement, there is a Virtual Market Committee meeting on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May at 4pm – any nominations for the Market Committee?

Urgent item (2) - Flags in the Town Centre – it was decided by a consensus decision to put up the flags in the Town Centre for VE Day, there was a differing opinion on whether the flags should remain up for the duration of the season, current policy would be until 30<sup>th</sup> September. Clarification is therefore sought from councillors, are they sticking to their current policy or do they want the flags taken down? A second issue to consider was whether the Council should purchase some NHS flags, to show support for NHS staff and key workers, these are approx. £20 each, if so, how many, when and where would you like these displayed?

## **4. To receive and consider REPORTS: police, principal authority etc**

*N.B. Councillors have an opportunity to ask questions after each report and where appropriate can consider to bring forward or discuss items further down the agenda where the representative can make a positive contribution towards the debate: -*

4.1 To receive a **POLICE report** from a local PC or PCSO on police matters for the past month.

4.2 To receive a **COUNTY COUNCILLOR report** from your County Councillor Ed Colman.

[Cllr Ed Colman to report](#)

4.3 To receive a **BRECKLAND COUNCILLOR report** from Cllrs I Sherwood, E Colman, D Wickerson

[Cllr Ed Colman to report](#)

## **5. To receive and/or agree the MINUTES:**

5.1 \*\* Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 – Full Council Meeting.

The minutes to be agreed for accuracy only.

## **6. To receive a report from the TOWN HALL by the Town Clerk**

6.1 To receive a brief report from the Town Clerk.

Consensus Decisions - The global Pandemic Covid-19 was declared on 11<sup>th</sup> March, government guidance was updated on 16<sup>th</sup> March resulting in our office staff 'working from home' since 19<sup>th</sup> March. In the 8 weeks since then Councillors have participated in thirty-six consensus decisions by e-mail decisions, ratified at an extraordinary meeting held 'virtually' last Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May, with a 'Virtual' HR Committee meeting taking place on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May.

Events and Meetings - It has not been an easy period, as meetings and event have been cancelled or postponed, the challenge of working remotely have had to be fine-tuned. There was a virus infection that shut down the Council's server for three days, the server is now secure and we still await a report from ICO our IT company.

Service Closure - Some services have been closed such as Public Toilets, Play Areas, MUGA and Skatepark, with outside staff initially being sent home; in the past couple of weeks they have returned to work as government guidance identified keeping 'parks' open as a priority, so grass cutting was back on the agenda, they are working safely on other tasks around the Town.

Vandalism and Upgrading of Toilets – over the VE Day evening and into the early hours of Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May the Ladies toilet door was vandalised beyond repair. The doorway has been secured and we are currently in dialogue with the Contractor to bring forward the planned refurbishment/upgrade as soon as possible. A 1<sup>st</sup> June start is now not possible because of the materials supply line being delayed, it is hoped that once our contractor can establish delivery dates, then he can finalise a programme which will be circulated ASAP.

Food Market - The Market was initially closed for five Saturday's, a Food Market has been open for the past two weeks, with social distancing measures in place. The decision to open a Food Market was ratified by the Council last Wednesday, by a majority vote.

Covid-19 Law - The Covid-19 Bill was rushed through parliament and became law on 6<sup>th</sup> April, with national guidance on how to apply the law coming through in week commencing 20<sup>th</sup> April. The legality of 'Virtual' meetings was the greatest advantage to the Town Council, as this temporary law is in place until May next year. The staff trialled Zoom meetings and then we progressed to 'Virtual' Council and Committee meetings last week.

Statutory Deadlines - The Council are still having to work to statutory deadlines for things like end of year accounts and VAT returns. Internal and external audit have to be prepared as usual.

Committees - In the coming weeks we will establish all of the Committees, as we move through and out the other side of this 'lockdown' period. We have given support to the Community Response Centre at the White Hart, lending the use of our two trucks, and applying for grants.

Website - We have begun the process of looking at the possible upgrading of the Town Council website. This past eight weeks has established that our 'free' website is very basic and has its limitations. It is intended to carry out some initial work and discuss a 'budget' with the Finance Committee at their meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, with a view of bringing details to the Council meeting in July for consideration. Councillors could assist in this process, putting forward ideas and

examples from elsewhere of features that they would like to see in a possible upgraded website.

6.2 To receive Councillors' questions relating to ongoing business.

**The Town Clerk will answer any questions from Councillors relating to ongoing business.**

## **7. FINANCE:**

7.1 \*\* To receive and consider Accounts for payment for May 2020 (recorded as **Appendix 1**).

**An interim list was circulated to Councillors, an updated list has been circulated at lunchtime today for approval.**

**A payment for Zoom software is included amongst the payments, we have discovered another cost related to the virtual meeting platform. An additional £48 + vat will be required to upgrade to a multi-host system, to allow both the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk to manage the meetings, currently we are limited via a single host system. This will also allow a further 8 hosts to be named, so it could be good for discussion groups for various subjects too! It is recommended that we pay the £48 + Vat to upgrade to a multi-user on Zoom.**

7.2 To receive and consider Market Trader Licence Fees and electric charges.

**Cllr Pilcher puts forward the following resolution for consideration: -**

**'As and when a trader is able to return to market, the return visit will be free of charges and will be followed with a free site for each of the next three markets. Thereafter fees revert to the trader's normal terms for the remainder of the 20/21 licence year'.**

Town Clerk and Chair of Finance have analysed the affordability of this Proposal. This 'near enough' equates to a 'loss of income' in the region of £10 - 12 k. for the relevant period remaining of the 1st Quarter of 20/21 Budget. NB - the 'Loss' is notional and is not an actual 'Cost' - just as TOIL is compensatory and is not evaluated as a 'cost'.

Surplus under spend of 19/20 Budget has given some flexibility for such fiscal allowance as this. This plan is specifically a support and encouragement for regeneration of the Market, which itself is considered so critical to the image and life of Swaffham. Furthermore, the cancellation of such as Sheep Fair has reduced forecast 'event/market' costs, whilst other 'savings' have been made in a variety of other categories, imposed by lock down restrictions.

**It is recommended that each trader is charged for the Electricity Connection in the normal way. It is recommended that a hire charge is made for the hire of a Gazebo in the normal way.**

7.3 To receive and consider Town Council Plans to support businesses and residents after the lockdown? Need a plan of action to help businesses adapt to a new way of working and re-establish Swaffham Town Centre.

**Cllr Judy Anscombe requested that this item be placed on the agenda for discussion.**

## **8. To receive and consider CORRESPONDENCE or INFORMATION**

### **8.1 GENERAL:**

a) \*\* To receive and consider Annual TIC Report from Swaffham Heritage (Museum)

**Comparative figures have been requested and confirmation of the author.**

b) \*\* To receive and consider revised meeting programme calendar of meetings – Full Council and Committees – including Virtual meetings (draft to follow).

**There are one or two amended dates included in the draft programme of meetings. After consulting with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, the programme for May, June and July meetings**

are planned as 'Virtual' meetings. Where the normal meeting programme would have an evening meeting starting at 6.30pm, for as long as we are able the meetings have been brought forward to a 4pm start. The Planning and Transport Committee meetings were already scheduled for a 4pm start, HR Committee is scheduled for 12 noon start as normal.

In the event that government guidance is amended and coming out of the lockdown is accelerated, then meeting dates may not change, but the times of the meeting may change, if we are able to accommodate 'face to face' meetings in the Council Chamber or Councillors are unable to make the earlier start times because of work commitments.

c) \*\* To receive and consider the new 'Normal way of working' (should we have more information this weekend from government). This includes how the office will work, meetings and events etc; all related to Social Distancing and safety of all. (further details to follow)

**Draft discussion document prepared by the Town Clerk, circulated this morning.**

The purpose of this document is to inform the debate taking into account the updated government guidance published on 11<sup>th</sup> May and the government's target dates that are all subject to the progress being made in the coming weeks regarding Covid-19.

There is no resistance from staff to return to the Town Hall when it is safe to do so, this document actually sets out a way in which this can be achieved. There will need to be risk assessments carried out, along the lines of the HSE standard document circulated yesterday but tailored to our premises and circumstances.

There is nothing set in stone, this document will also be discussed by the staff and it is recommended that the HR Committee to manage/oversee this process. They next meet on 1<sup>st</sup> June in two and a half weeks' time.

d) \*\* To receive and consider Communications Policy, including E-mail/WhatsApp (draft to follow). A draft Communications Policy has been circulated, and there could be one or two additions or amendments, such as an e-mail protocol to add as an appendix.

## **8.2 BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

a) \*\* To receive and consider request from Breckland Council to use Market Stalls data. This request is clearly a GDPR issue first and foremost, permission has been requested from each trader to allow contact details to be passed to Breckland Council.

## **8.3 NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL**

a) \*\* To receive and consider Street Lighting for Phases 4 and 5 for Abel Homes Swan's Nest site. Details have been circulated prior to the meeting in respect of street lighting for phases 4 and 5. The previous Council agreed phases 1, 2 and 3, but the current Council have set a Policy that lighting would only be taken on following the negotiation of a satisfactory commuted sum to be paid at the point of adoption.

The Town Clerk recommends a small group of Councillors to attend a 'virtual' meeting with the MD of Abel Homes Paul LeGrice, to start negotiations for the commuted sum for 'street lighting' for this phase of the development.

Abel Homes, are also at an advanced stage with the handing over of play areas and open spaces for stages 1, 2 and 3. The MD of Abel Homes has sent through a map for the Council to indicate where Litter Bins/Dog Bins can be located. It is recommended that this issue could be dealt with

in the same 'virtual' meeting. Preliminary discussions were held with Steve Hitchman of Breckland Council in this regard, regarding the emptying/location of the said bins.

Abel Homes, also need to discuss the possibility of the Town Council adopting the Play areas and Open Spaces for phases 4 and 5 of the development at Swans Nest, and possibly the site to the West of the A1065 at the Southern end of the Town. Similarly, these issues could feature in the same 'virtual' meeting.

**9. To note receipt of CORRESPONDENCE or INFORMATION**

A list of all other correspondence is recorded as **Appendix 2**

**The yellow correspondence files will be brought up to date this week. Last week and this week have been very congested workload wise for the Town Clerk, so this is our priority before close of business on Friday lunchtime this week.**

**10. To notify the DATES of forthcoming meetings and to receive any items for a future AGENDA:**

12.1	Market, Events & Tourism Committee	Mon	18 <sup>th</sup> May	4.00pm	Council Chamber
12.2	Planning & Built Environment Committee	Tues	26 <sup>th</sup>	4.00pm	Council Chamber
12.3	Recreation & Community Services Committee	Wed	27 <sup>th</sup>	4.00pm	Council Chamber
12.4	HR & Governance Committee	Mon	1 <sup>st</sup> June	4.00pm	Council Chamber
12.5	Transport, Access & Environment Committee	Tues	2 <sup>nd</sup>	4.00pm	Council Chamber
12.6	Finance Committee -	Wed	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4.00pm	Council Chamber
12.7	Full Council	Wed	10 <sup>th</sup>	4.00pm	Council Chamber

**11. ADMISSION TO MEETINGS ACT (PUBLIC BODIES) 1960:**

CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS following the exclusion of the public and press

**11.1** To receive and consider any staff related issues from the HR & Governance Committee.

\*Indicates where copies have been circulated to Town Councillors previously.

\*\*Indicates where copies have been circulated to Town Councillors recently.