

# Trowbridge Town Council

Full Council meeting 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Working with the Community

## MINUTES

**At the Full Council Meeting held on Microsoft TEAMS on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 19.00hrs.**

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

**Councillors:** Bates, Bazan, Beaver, Blackmore, Blakemore, Brice, Bridges, Bryant, Cavill, Cooper, Drewett, Fuller (In the Chair), Halik, Hill, Hoar, King, Kirk, Oldrieve, Palmen, Piazza and Whiffen (from 8pm).

**Officers:** Mr L Allan, Mrs A Quick (Minutes) and others not participating.

**Public & Press:** Wiltshire Councillors: J. Trigg & E. Clark.

Public: M. Arrowsmith, D. Cave, P. Egan, K. Martinez, B. Wade, R. Wall, M. Callaway, T. Slack, P. Jubbie, A. Mansfield, D. Lockwood (Town Hall), T. Lewis, L. Williams (Police).

Press: J. Baker (Wiltshire Times), G. Baker (Nub News),

The Mayor, Cllr Cavill gave this statement to before opening the Annual Town Council Meeting;

*“Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen, residents of Wiltshire’s proud County Town, fellow councillors, officers and employees of Trowbridge Town Council – welcome! We are living through difficult and sometimes tragic times. Sigmund Freud summed it up rather well when he wrote in 1920, two days after his daughter, Sophie died from Spanish Flu: ‘The undisguised brutality of our time is weighing heavily upon us’. We can do little as individuals to help those who are bereaved but I think it appropriate that we are now silent, together for a minute to remember those who have passed away.*

The meeting observed a minute’s silence.

*I would like to begin by paying a sincere tribute to all those individuals in and around Trowbridge who have enabled our community to function over many weeks. As a town council we have certainly done as much as we can to help the residents of Trowbridge and I commend to you the details posted on our website and circulated in the Discover Trowbridge weekly Newsletter. Our National Health Service has been noisily thanked through the weekly street appreciation groups and the vulnerable, distressed and disadvantaged sustained through the work of volunteers, our invaluable charities and churches and our town council staff and councillors too, all of whom have been busy identifying problems and distributing supplies, food and prescriptions as needed.*

*But we should also acknowledge our considerable debt to all those who have continued to work in our supermarkets and pharmacies, garages and small shops and who have delivered those all-important parcels and letters with cheerful smiles. Those of us who have benefited from their bravery and courage must surely not just be thanking them for the unselfish services they have provided but appreciate that they have done so in a way that has uplifted our spirits. Thank you all.*

*My thoughts and thanks relating to my mayoral year are published on our Town Council website. There are many and the message is long so I will not repeat it here other than to say that being Mayor and Chairman of Trowbridge Town Council has been a wonderful experience, providing me with many pleasurable memories, the most important of which is the privilege of being invited to almost 150 amazing events on your behalf - which would have been close to 200 had it not been for the current lockdown, incidentally. I have visited charitable support groups, churches, formal events throughout Wiltshire and even opened two shops: it has been wonderful to meet so many amazing people. Since my wife Angela agreed to marry me, it has been the greatest honour of my life to represent the people of Trowbridge and it will remain so until my invitation arrives to judge Best in Show at Crufts. My only regret is that I must now stand down just as I was beginning to get the hang of the job.*

*Prior to coming to the formal part of the meeting I must bring to your attention that it is now just 12 months before our local Councils elections next year. For our democracy to flourish it is essential that those on the electoral register take part in the process. The turnout for local elections is almost always dire – between 30 and 40% compared to almost twice that for National elections. Who governs the country is important but our local parish, town and county have just as much impact on our daily lives. Please vote – and if you have complaints, stand as a candidate. All parties will welcome your participation. That said, let us also make every effort to ensure all candidates focus in what is best for our town, that the fight is fair and the standard protocols – the ‘rules of engagement’ if you like - for the parties and all those involved are understood and adhered to by everyone.*

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I had been going to leave it at that but It has come to my attention that a some councillors, employees and even senior officers are discussing and commenting on councillors and council business inappropriately on social media. This is not hearsay and screen shot evidence is available. Everyone is entitled to their opinion but **public** discussion of the failings of councillors and even the implication that our Town Clerk offers 'protection' to some, is not acceptable in discussions directly attributable those who are clearly employees. I also have evidence that councillors in line for official positions have used language which some residents and other councillors consider obscene. Some aspects of this issue are on the agenda for later in this meeting but in the meantime I ask that our Town Clerk and Human Resources Mangers take immediate steps to ensure these practice cease.

All that said we now come to the meeting of Full Council.

At our last meeting in March, councillors followed the government demand that all formal meetings should be suspended because of the coming 'lock down'; responsibility for decisions was delegated to the Town Clerk.

I was not alone in being very unhappy with this forced relinquishment of our responsibilities but at that stage, as there was no legal basis for holding viable videoconferencing meetings, the decision was out of our hands. At councillors' insistence and with the full cooperation of the Town Clerk and senior officers, briefings have been held via the Internet through which councillors have been kept informed, the usual reports have been discussed and councillors have been able to express their opinions. This process was clearly not perfect for all the reasons I have listed and published elsewhere so for many weeks, I and others had such serious concerns that we intended to propose at this meetings that all meetings should be suspended until we were able to meet face-to-face as normal.

However, when the facts change the intelligent change their minds and we have done so for several sound reasons. Firstly on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April the government introduced legislation which legally allowed videoconferencing for formal meetings. Secondly, in the last few weeks most councillors have become used to videoconferencing and, although it is by no means entirely satisfactory, we now have more confidence in the process. Finally, as face-to-face meetings may not become feasible for many months, it does not seem reasonable to allow important matters to pile up (some might say 'kicked down the road') awaiting decisions. In the meantime the National Association of Local Councils has published guidelines for videoconferencing which I am sure our Town Clerk and new Mayor will have studied carefully. You will see that our Town Clerk has proposed a truncated Agenda. I have no criticism of his decision to keep the meeting as simple as possible but I hope councillors, given the points I have made, will support my opinion that our first task must be to re-establish democratic control of the council. I therefore propose we rescind all the decisions made on March 17<sup>th</sup> under 'Emergency Items'. This will allow us to work through the full agenda this evening as it stands and negate the 'preferred list' our Town Clerk has recommended."

## **3325 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

**RESOLVED: That the council suspends Standing Orders for the duration of this meeting, only in respect of the following:**

**To allow those councillors not able to connect to Microsoft TEAMS to give a vote on any matter by telephone, text message or email.**

## **3326 ELECTION OF MAYOR**

a) Cllr Fuller was nominated and seconded. As there were no other nominations Cllr Fuller was duly elected to the role of Mayor of Trowbridge for the Civic Year 2020/2021.

b) Cllr Fuller signed his statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office as the Mayor of Trowbridge, which was witnessed online by the Town Clerk and will be countersigned by the Clerk upon receipt.

c) Cllr Cavill gave a statement on his Mayoral year, as above.

a) There were no Mayor's Engagements to note owing to the current Covid-19 crisis.

b) The Mayor, Councillor Fuller gave a vote of thanks to retiring Mayor Cllr Cavill.

## **3327 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR**

a) Cllr Oldrieve was nominated and seconded. Cllr Whiffen was also nominated and seconded. Votes for Cllr Oldrieve 10, votes for Cllr Whiffen 8. Cllr Oldrieve was duly elected to the role of Deputy Mayor of Trowbridge for the Civic Year 2020-2021. The vote is included in the appendices.

b) Cllr Oldrieve will undertake the Declaration of Acceptance of Office at an appropriate point in the future.

## **3328 MEMBER OFFICER PROTOCOL & CODE OF CONDUCT**

**RESOLVED: That the council adopts the Member Officer Protocol & Code of Conduct of the council.**

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## 3329 **STANDING ORDERS**

**RESOLVED:** That the council adopts the revised Standing Orders of the Council, including the Financial Regulations.

## 3330 **ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Cllr Cavill was nominated and seconded. Cllr Palmen was also nominated and seconded. A vote took place. Votes for Cllr Cavill 4, votes for Cllr Palmen 12. Councillor Palmen was duly elected to the role of Leader of the Council for the Civic Year 2020-2021. The vote is included in the appendices.

## 3331 **COMMITTEES, BOARDS & PANELS**

- a) **RESOLVED** to approve the following structure of standing committees be established for 2020/21 (as per SO15.1), including the number of members on each committee, with the remit of committees as contained in SO Part 3 'Powers and Duties of the Council and its Committees and sub-Committees:
- b) **RESOLVED** to elect members of committees and chairs and vice-chairs of each committee for 2020/21 as follows:
- i) **Museum Committee** - Chair Cllr Bridges and Vice Chair Cllr Blakemore.
  - ii) **Leisure & Information Services Committee** - Chair, Cllr Bates and Vice Chair Cllr Hoar.
  - iii) **Town Development Committee** - Chair Cllr Whiffen and Vice Chair Cllr Bryant.
  - iv) **Neighbourhood Services Committee** - Chair Cllr Drewett and Vice Chair Cllr Bazan.
  - v) **Policy & Resources Committee** - Chair Cllr Palmen (ex officio as Leader) and Vice Chair Cllr Brice.
- c) **Town Clerk's Review Panel** - Cllr Palmen, Cllr Brice, Cllr Fuller and Cllr Cavill.  
The date of the Town Clerk's Annual Review TBC.
- d) **Risk and Audit Panel** - Cllr Palmen, remaining unchanged.  
The date of the Risk & Audit Panel 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020, subject to finalisation of 2019/20 accounts.

## 3332 **REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES AND TRUSTEE APPOINTMENTS**

- a) **RESOLVED** there will be no change, list is as it stands. Those re-elected to trustee appointments will carry forward for 1 year but will need to be re-confirmed at next year's meeting.
- b) There were no reports from representatives on outside bodies.

Cllr Beaver left the meeting.

## 3333 **GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE**

**RESOLVED:** That; in accordance with The Parish Council (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012; Trowbridge Town Council confirms that it meets the criteria necessary for it to adopt the General Power of Competence:

- i) The number of members of the council that have been declared to be elected, whether at ordinary elections or at a by-election, is equal to or greater than two-thirds of the total number of members of the council;
- ii) The clerk to the council holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration; and
- iii) The clerk to the council has completed the relevant training;

And therefore, the council re-adopts the General Power of Competence.

## 3334 **APOLOGIES**

**RESOLVED** to approve apologies from Councillor Beaver (left meeting at 19:55pm and returned at 20:30).

## 3335 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- a) **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record the Minutes of Full Council meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020, copies of which had previously been circulated with the Agenda.

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A question was asked regarding a complaint registered with the Wiltshire Council Monitoring Officer by Cllr Kirk. He was asked whether he has received a response, but Cllr Kirk declined to comment. A question was asked of Cllr Kirk regarding his request for enforcement action by Wiltshire Council. He was asked whether he has received a response, but Cllr Kirk declined to comment.

## 3336 MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

**RESOLVED to approve the following reports, minutes and recommendations of Committees already circulated:**

- a) **Museum Committee meeting, delegated on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020.**  
**No decisions were made.**
- b) **Neighbourhood Services Committee meeting, delegated on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020.**  
**No decisions were made.** 1 Recommendation was taken forward to the P&R Committee. Contributions to CATG were approved following P&R and CATG meeting.
- c) **Town Development Committee meetings, delegated on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 21<sup>st</sup> April & 12<sup>th</sup> May.**
- d) **Policy & Resources Committee meeting delegated on 5<sup>th</sup> May.**  
Cllr Kirk asked why there are discrepancies in the Furlough scheme figures. Cllr Fuller stated this decision and all staff matters were delegated to the Town Clerk in normal circumstances and has not been delegated as part of the Covid emergency measures. The Town Clerk responded that the amount we claim from Government is 80% of salary. Employers' Claimable NI contribution is variable, depending on amounts above the LEL and pension scheme only allows 80% of 3% of salary.

A question was asked with regards to Cllr Kirk's instruction to a solicitor to sue the council over the Park Storage Unit, Cllr Kirk made the following statement;

*"I had to continue to push this Council to disclose the total cost of the Park Storage Unit and whilst as a Council we may consider interest on a loan irrelevant as a cost. Finally, the Mayor has now managed to have the draft minutes amended to include the figure of over £500,000. The interest on this thirty-year loan term adds over 40% to loan cost. Therefore, I state interest is relevant in a decision-making process and our own figures confirm, that over the next 10 years the precept will have to support about £100,000 in extra cost which will be repaid in 2048.*

*Despite my numerous questions the permitted use of the Park Storage Unit has never been satisfactorily determined. The public and Councillors, may or may not be aware, but as a Town Council in December 2016, we were asked by our solicitors: 'please just let me know what the current "storage" is used for? I ask this because as you are aware when the Town Park was transferred to the Town Council it came with lots of restrictions which basically mean that the land transferred can only be used for community use. This being the case, if the new storage were to be for tools and machinery used in the upkeep of the public park this would probably be fine, but if the new storage area was for say Town Council archiving then this may not be seen as community use.'*

*We are planning to use the Park Storage Unit for 'charged for services', both for Active Trowbridge and potentially the grounds maintenance, street cleaning operation etc. Active Trowbridge is considered 'Commercial' in terms of HMRC for staff furlough purposes. Also, we may decide to contract out services to the private sector – how can this then be 'Community Use'? Particularly, when our solicitor was concerned that we may store something other than a spade dedicated for use in the Town Park.*

*To summarise, No, I am not suing the Town Council. I am acting in the Town Council's interest in formally establishing the limitations of use of this Park Storage Unit and in so doing, protecting the financial investment of Trowbridge Council Tax payers, who are signed up by this Council to fund this project for thirty years. In terms of legal action, my solicitor will be writing to the Town Council for specific details of intended use and then requesting that Wiltshire Council take any potential breach of planning seriously. It is regrettable that I deem this action necessary, but I am not convinced that the full facts have been presented to this Council or the Public."*

## 3337 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a) Cllr Beaver declared an interest as agent for Ashford Homes and as agent for Innox Mills.
- b) There were no Dispensation Requests received by the Town Clerk and not previously considered.

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## **3338 COMMUNICATIONS BY THE MAYOR**

The Mayor reported on the following:

- Mayor's Charities for 2020/2021 are the Bath Cancer Unit and Dorothy House.
- Civic Service – 19<sup>th</sup> July 2020 dependant on the situation of the current health crisis.

## **3339 PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

**Questions from the public were received as follows:**

Cllr Clark submitted a written question, "The council wishes to establish an artificial pitch facility in Hilperton accessed from the A361. Whilst the idea is a very good one, the site is poorly served by public transport, especially at weekends and evenings, and the cycleway facilities aren't too good either. The majority of journeys to the site will be made by car. How does TTC view this in relation to its 'Climate Emergency' position? Surely encouraging the use of motor vehicles for cross-town travel doesn't make sense?"

The Town Clerk responded, "The official Wiltshire Council cycle route map indicates good routes (including quiet streets such as Devizes Rd, Hilperton) from most parts of the town and along the canal towpath to other areas. There is also an alternative by-way to Semington which links to the cycle route to Berryfield. The bus service along Devizes Rd is one of the most frequent services in the area and although not quite as good in terms of evening and weekend as the Warminster-Bath service is better than most other parts of the town and provides direct links to a number of other towns including Frome, Devizes, Melksham & Chippenham."

Daniel Cave asked why can certain Cllrs get away with refusing to answer emails? The Mayor responded that Cllrs should acknowledge receipt of emails at the minimum.

Paul Egan asked, "Who made the decision to Furlough staff at 100%?" Cllr Fuller responded that the Town Clerk made this decision under delegated powers. The Town Clerk confirmed he was advised by South West Councils in order to get approval from staff quickly. From 1<sup>st</sup> June staff will be paid at the 80% rate. Government advice was initially that staff could volunteer in a role different to their usual paid roles, HMRC advice has now changed and this is now no longer acceptable. The Town Clerk stated that we don't know if this will impact on payments so far by HMRC.

Paul Jubbie submitted 3 written questions at the last meeting but no reply has been received.

**ACTION: Town Clerk will ensure responses in writing are sent to P. Jubbie.**

P. Jubbie asked why personal addresses were shared with 50+ other people, against GDPR. The Mayor apologised on behalf of the council and stated that this is an issue with using MS Teams. The Town Clerk will ensure that the public are made aware of this if MS Teams continues to be used. We will need to investigate how we can address this bearing in mind the GDPR issue.

## **3340 POLICE MATTERS**

A Police Report was not received, this will be deferred to a future meeting.

## **3341 QUESTION**

Cllr Kirk submitted a question regarding the Park Storage Unit.

Cllr Kirk stated this question does not need to be considered. The Town Clerk stated that Cllr Kirk's question was answered by his previous statement.

## **3342 MOTION 2003091235: PARK STORAGE UNIT**

Cllr Kirk withdrew this motion.

Cllr Beaver returned to the meeting

## **3343 MOTION 2003091837 : RECORDED VOTES**

The motion was considered and an amendment was suggested to account for implementation only when electronic voting is available. The amendment was **CARRIED** and it was

**RESOLVED: That as a Town Council we amend 'Standing Orders' to stipulate that a recorded vote is required for all decisions at Full Council when we are able to do so electronically.**

Recorded votes are included in appendices.

## **3344 MOTION 2003092243: EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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Initials.....dated.....

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The Council considered the following motion:

*That as a Town Council, we recognise that we have a responsibility to include the most vulnerable in our society in everything that we do and complete an Equalities Impact Assessment to ascertain whether we are including everyone in everything that we do as Trowbridge Town Council.*

Members were concerned that it was not a legal requirement and would be expensive to do for everything.

**MOTION LOST:** Recorded vote is included in appendices.

## 3345 **MOTION 2003100827: BORROWING**

The Council considered the following motion:

*That as a Town Council we restrict and stipulate, that any further borrowing must be repaid with the term of the Council.*

**MOTION LOST:** Recorded vote is included in appendices.

## 3346 **TOWN COUNCIL STRATEGY – 2021-2025**

The council considered advanced preparations for the review of the Council Strategy.

Cllr Bryant requested that he would like to establish a cross-party working group of councillors to explore options for reinstating public toilet facilities within the environment of Trowbridge Park. Cllr King offered to join this group, including Officers from Neighbourhood Services. Cllr Piazza made an Amendment to include members of the public in this working group. Town Clerk suggested meetings could be held to consult with public members but not include them as members of the group. The working group should be kept to a small number to enable action to be taken quickly.

**RESOLVED: That the Council establishes a cross-party working group of councillors, with council officers, to consider options for reinstating public toilet facilities within the environs of Trowbridge Park. These should include but not be exclusive to, opportunities afforded within sites at which water supply and sewerage disposal currently exist. Such that during the 2021-2025 term of office such a development could be implemented. The working group will consult with residents as appropriate.**

Recorded vote is included in appendices.

## 3347 **MOTION 2004201226 : PARK STORAGE**

**RESOLVED: That, for the avoidance of doubt in relation to the debated cost of the 'Park Storage Unit' the Council accepts the following figures and information being correct and true:**

**Loan Amount: £300,000 (from Public Work Loan Board with a 30-year term)**

**Loan Interest for the full term: £124,260.60**

**Community Infrastructure Levy 2018/19: £24,258**

**Community Infrastructure Levy 2019/20: £14,283**

**Section 106 Payment: £46,000**

Recorded vote is included in appendices.

## 3348 **MOTION 2004291546 : PUBLIC TOILETS**

Cllr Palmen stated the wording is not relevant as TTC is only responsible for Trowbridge, not all towns. P. Jubbie reiterated his previous statements regarding public toilets, stating no evidence is documented. Cllr Blackmore stated toilets often had drug addicts and needles therefore not safe for the public. Cllr Whiffen stated that the ongoing costs were the reason they were removed.

Cllr Beaver made an amendment to the motion. Cllr Fuller asked if this can this be referred to the working party for their consideration. The amendment was **CARRIED** and it was

**RESOLVED: That as Trowbridge Town Council, we recognise public toilets are a necessity for any town and that we begin to look through financial means at possible locations of placing these toilets. Whilst we accept the spirit of this motion it duplicates item 3346 therefore is to be referred to the Working Party.**

Recorded votes are included in appendices.

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## 3349 **MOTION 2005011823: PARK STORAGE UNIT**

The Council considered the following motion:

*That the Park Storage Unit development is suspended, pending further investigation into its suitability as one potential site for a Public Toilet provision in the Park.*

**MOTION LOST.** Recorded vote is included in appendices.

## 3350 **MOTION: AXE THE MAYOR'S TAX**

It was made clear that councillors pay for tickets if they wish to attend the Dinner. Cllr Cavill is in favour of minimising cost but the dinner is to recognise the contribution of many people in the town. Cllr Kirk asked whether Councillors had subsidised tickets in the past? Cllr Fuller confirmed that this did happen and Mayor's expenses are reviewed every 4 years. Cllr Oldrieve disagrees with the way this motion is worded as it gives the impression that Mayors are taking money from the council. Cllr Brice stated that Mayors contribute to expenses and would hate anyone to be prevented from taking the role due to lack of income. Cllr King asked if there is already a body looking at Mayor's expenses why do we need to discuss this? Cllr Palmen asked why this can't be put to committee. Cllr Fuller stated that he intends to keep cost of the Mayor's role to a minimum. An amendment to add the final phrase was proposed. The **amendment was CARRIED** and it was

**RESOLVED: That this Council instructs the councillor who is elected to serve as Mayor that the Civic Dinner will be organised keeping the cost as low as feasibly possible, therefore minimising cost to the Town Council.**

Recorded votes are included in appendices.

## 3351 **MOTION 2005062222: PARK AIR QUALITY**

The Council considered the following motion:

*That by building a permanent operating base (Park Storage Unit) and bringing all these vehicles into the Park, from outside locations; That as a Council (which has declared a Climate Emergency), we accept that this will unquestionably result in an increase in pollution (air pollution and noise pollution) in the Town Park?*

**MOTION LOST.** Recorded vote is included in appendices.

## 3352 **BANK MANDATE**

Item deferred until signing is feasible.

## 3353 **ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**

a) **RESOLVED to note that, subject to finalisation of the accounts and in accordance with Financial Regulation B2.2.6, 'that any underspent revenue should be allocated to appropriate earmarked reserves and to review the other reserves prior to completion of the Annual Return'.**

b) **RESOLVED to note:** that unspent loans for the Museum project and the Bandstand Storage Unit Project are also carried forward as required by accounting convention.

## 3354 **POLICIES**

Item deferred.

## 3355 **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

There was no Annual Town Meeting in 2020.

## 3356 **LIST OF ATTENDANCES**

**RESOLVED** to note the list of attendances for the past year, copies previously circulated.

## 3357 **COMPLAINT**

In response to the complaint made against Cllr Piazza, he gave the following statement;

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This complaint against me has been submitted by a Trowbridge Town Councillor who shared a post on Facebook created originally by a Trowbridge Town Council officer which contained political content opposing the Conservative Party. That councillor took advantage of the officer's political content and used it to promote his own political beliefs. I commented on the post stating that Trowbridge Town Council officers should remain impartial and arguably councillors should know better than to promote political content created by officers, and I requested the councillor to take it down.

It is, as I have said to many residents, a huge honour to represent them as their councillor; for this reason, I do not take any complaint made against me lightly. I want to be a councillor that speaks less and works more; however, I make the exception here to defend myself against what I believe to be a purposeful politically motivated attack to remove me from the council during a time of national emergency — a time in which councillors should be instead focusing on doing their duty: helping and protecting their residents, instead of involving themselves in political mudslinging during a crisis.

This matter raises a number of issues which ignore our Standing Orders and our Staff Handbook:

- The details of the complaint should not have been disclosed on the agenda. The officer who made the decision to put this item in the agenda has breached the agreed principle of mutual respect by sharing full details of the complaint publicly A18 1 & 2 and A25
- Members should respect the impartiality and integrity of all the Council's Officers. Similarly, all Officers must respect the role of Members as elected representatives. 2.3
- Members and officers should be mutually supportive in order to minimise any potential embarrassment to the council. Criticism of officers should be dealt with in private and officers must not to be publicly critical of the council or its policies.
- The Code of Conduct is clear that neither officers nor members should seek to take unfair advantage of their position or seek to exert undue influence on the other party.

I have requested for this meeting to be livestreamed because I believe in transparency, accountability and scrutiny. The evidence submitted has been falsified and edited. The complaint includes 'edited highlights' which seek to take unfair advantage of the situation. Furthermore, the submitted evidence does not include the original post which had the officer sharing political content. One comment which was deleted includes an image of an extremist organisation submitted in support of the councillor's views that officers should act politically. Today it has transpired that officers are posting political content using their Facebook profiles, which are also used to assist residents and indicate they are Trowbridge Town Council officers, to liken members of a political party to Nazism. I hope everyone will all agree with me that such behaviour is outrageous and unacceptable. This is not a one-off matter that the edited evidence suggests. This shows widespread breach of the rules by town council staff.

If we look at the evidence: I did not criticise the officer directly not did I, as the complainer claims 'reprimand' the officer – in fact, at no point have I ever spoken to this officer on Facebook. I have spoken to them once in person when introducing myself to them. I, instead, criticised the councillor for sharing the content and using it to promote their own political beliefs.

The whole basis of the Member/Officer Protocol and Code of Conduct is that it relies on Mutual Respect. The Staff Handbook, Appendix 8 makes it clear is that officers must serve all councillors equally and impartially. They should certainly not seek to take unfair advantage of their position or seek to exert undue influence.

This complaint was made on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2020 – and made public through a government document on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020. Such behaviour is unacceptable: leaving me, an elected councillor, being scrutinised publicly here for commenting on an officer's political post shared by another councillor, for simply requesting the councillor to take down the post – which, incidentally, he did not. This is just an attempt to discredit a councillor, as though this is a court room drama, in an attempt to win votes next year.

Trowbridge Town Council's Clerk stated: "It is wholly appropriate that anyone can request an officer to correct factual inaccuracies in their social media posts or to retract and correct anything which unfairly accuses individual councillors or the council of anything or which otherwise could bring the council into disrepute but if councillors wish to make an official complaint this should be done in accordance with the council's policy, not publicly."

So why are we breaching our own rules here? I do not support public flogging with falsified and tampered evidence. It appears as though neither does the Town Clerk for officers. Therefore, why is this acceptable for councillors to be publicly flogged, in this manner, when the evidence submitted has been heavily edited to favour one political party and create drama.



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Instead we have is a councillor attempting to promote his own party's beliefs and even claim that I was bullying him; when instead I was only stating fact that Trowbridge Town Council officers should under no circumstances, act, or even appear to act in favour of one political party. No ifs – no buts. The councillor has made a complaint towards another councillor who attempted to correct him on standard basic government procedures that most residents would understand and accept: that an employed government officer should be politically impartial. Instead, the councillor is encouraging other officers to break the rules. Our council is not flourishing. The creative spirit and potential of this council is not being used sensibly. Speaking to a resident this week, they said I was a breath of fresh air. Knowing that complaints are being submitted and attempts are being made to discredit my name by the opposition prove that I am on the right track and siding with the people of Trowbridge, my residents. This is an inane complaint: I do not think the residents of Trowbridge will take kindly to this waste of time and money during a global pandemic. Trowbridge needs change, desperately. Thank you.”

Cllr Palmen replied that Cllr Piazza has gone against the Code of Conduct when using Social Media regarding a Council Officer. If there is an issue with a Council Officer this should be taken up with the Town Clerk. Cllr Palmen offered to withdraw this complaint if Cllr Piazza is willing to apologise to the Council Officer and abide by the Code of Conduct in future.

**RESOLVED: That the council notifies the Monitoring Officer at Wiltshire Council of this complaint and considers that it should not impose any limitations on Cllr Piazza.**

**3358 DATES OF MEETINGS 2020/21**

**RESOLVED to note:** the revised dates of meetings of Council and committees for 2020/21, copies of which have been circulated.

**3359 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED to note:** Full Council 21<sup>st</sup> July 2020 including approval of the Annual Accounts.

**3360 MEDIA RELEASES**

**RESOLVED to make the following press/social media releases;**

- a) Appointment of new Mayor, Deputy Mayor & Leader.

Meeting Closed 22.40pm

Signed.....Dated.....

## FULL COUNCIL MEETING 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020 ACTION LIST

ACTION	BY WHOM	DATE COMPLETED
<b>RESOLVED: That the council suspends Standing Orders for the duration of this meeting, only in respect of the following:</b>	All	

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<p><b>To allow those councillors not able to connect to Microsoft TEAMS to give a vote on any matter by telephone, text message or email.</b></p>		
<p><b>RESOLVED to elect members of committees and chairs and vice-chairs of each committee for 2020/21 as follows:</b>  <b>i) Museum Committee</b> - Chair Cllr Bridges and Vice Chair Cllr Blakemore.  <b>ii) Leisure &amp; Information Services Committee</b> - Chair, Cllr Bates and Vice Chair Cllr Hoar.  <b>iii) Town Development Committee</b> - Chair Cllr Whiffen and Vice Chair Cllr Bryant.  <b>iv) Neighbourhood Services Committee</b> - Chair Cllr Drewett and Vice Chair Cllr Bazan.  <b>v) Policy &amp; Resources Committee</b> - Chair Cllr Palmen (ex officio as Leader) and Vice Chair Cllr Brice.  <b>c) Town Clerk's Review Panel</b> - Cllr Palmen, Cllr Brice, Cllr Fuller and Cllr Cavill.  <b>d) Risk and Audit Panel</b> - Cllr Palmen, remaining unchanged.</p>	<p><b>LA/ AQ</b></p>	
<p><b>ACTION: Town Clerk will ensure responses to questions from last meeting are sent in writing to P. Jubbie.</b></p>	<p><b>LA</b></p>	
<p><b>RESOLVED: That as a Town Council we amend 'Standing Orders' to stipulate that a recorded vote is required for all decisions at Full Council when we are able to do so electronically.</b></p>	<p><b>LA</b></p>	
<p><b>RESOLVED: That the Council establishes a cross-party working group of councillors, with council officers, to consider options for reinstating public toilet facilities within the environs of Trowbridge Park. These should include but not be exclusive to, opportunities afforded within sites at which water supply and sewerage disposal currently exist. Such that during the 2021-2025 term of office such a development could be implemented. The working group will consult with residents as appropriate.</b></p>	<p><b>LA</b></p>	
<p><b>RESOLVED: That as Trowbridge Town Council, we recognise public toilets are a necessity for any town and that we begin to look through financial means at possible locations of placing these toilets. Whilst we accept the spirit of this motion it duplicates item 3346 therefore is to be referred to the Working Party.</b></p>	<p><b>LA</b></p>	
<p><b>RESOLVED: That this Council instructs the councillor who is elected to serve as Mayor that the Civic Dinner will be organised keeping the cost as low as feasibly possible, therefore minimising cost to the Town Council.</b></p>	<p><b>PF</b></p>	
<p><b>RESOLVED to note that, subject to finalisation of the accounts and in accordance with Financial Regulation B2.2.6, 'that any underspent revenue should be allocated to appropriate earmarked reserves and to review the other reserves prior to completion of the Annual Return'.</b></p>	<p><b>LA</b></p>	
<p><b>RESOLVED to note: that unspent loans for the Museum project and the Bandstand Storage Unit Project are also carried forward as required by accounting convention.</b></p>	<p><b>LA</b></p>	

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<b>RESOLVED:</b> That the council notifies the Monitoring Officer at Wiltshire Council of this complaint and considers if it should impose any limitations on Cllr Piazza.	<b>LA</b>	
<b>RESOLVED</b> to make a press release/social media report regarding the appointment of the following: <b>New Mayor – Cllr Fuller</b> <b>Deputy Mayor – Cllr Oldrieve</b> <b>Leader – Cllr Palmen</b>	<b>AC (TTC)</b>	

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NAME	✓ FOR	X AGAINST				- ABSTAIN				3343 Substantive as amended	3344 EIA	3345 Borrowing	3346 Strategy – Toilet Working Party	3347 Storage Project £	3348 Amend toilet duplicate	3348 Substantive as amended	3349 Storage stop	3350 Amend Civic Dinner	3350 Substantive as amended	3351 Park Air Q	Complaint	3357		
	3325 Suspend SO for voting by tel. etc.	3327 D-Mayor Whiffen	3330 Leader Cavill or Palmen	Museum VC Blakemore or Cavill	TownDev VC Bryant or Hill	Brice or Drewett	NeighSV Chair	Bazan or Oldrieve	Neighs VC	P&R VC Brice or Cavill	3343 Amend to only electronic voting	3343 Substantive as amended	3344 EIA	3345 Borrowing	3346 Strategy – Toilet Working Party	3347 Storage Project £	3348 Amend toilet duplicate	3348 Substantive as amended	3349 Storage stop	3350 Amend Civic Dinner	3350 Substantive as amended	3351 Park Air Q	Complaint	3357
Bates	✓	O	P	B					B	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓
Bazan	✓	W	-		H	D	B			-	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	-
Beaver	✓	O	P		B					Left	M'ing	X	X	✓	-	-	-	X	X	-	-	X	✓	✓
Blackmore	✓	O	P	B		B	O			✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Blakemore	✓	O	P	B						✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Brice	-	O	P			B	O		B	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Bridges	✓	O	P	B	B				B	✓	✓	X	X	-	✓	-	-	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Bryant	✓	O	P		B	B	O			✓	✓	X	X	✓	-	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Cavill	✓	W	C	C					C	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	-	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓
Cooper	✓	W	-							X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	-	✓
Drewett	✓	W	P			D (D)	B (B)		C	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Fuller	✓	W	C	C	H	D	B		C	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	-	-	X	-	-	-	X	✓	✓
Halik	✓	-	-	-						X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	-	-	-	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hill	X	W	P							✓	✓	✓	X	✓	-	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Hoar	✓	O	P						B	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
King	✓	W	C			D	B			✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Kirk	✓	-	-							X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	-	✓	-	✓
Oldrieve	✓	O	P			B	O		B	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Palmen	✓	O	P	B	B	B	O		B	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓
Piazza	-	-	-							X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	-	✓
Whiffen	X	W	C		H	B	B		C	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓
	RESOLVED	SUSPEND SOs for voting	OLDRIEVE	BLAKE-MORE	BRYANT	DREWETT	BAZAN	BRICE	AMEND	AMEND	APPROVED	LOST	LOST	APPROVED	APPROVED	AMEND	APPROVED	LOST	AMEND	APPROVED	LOST	APPROVED	APPROVED	APPROVED