

Caretaker and Market Officer Role

The new 20 hours post of caretaker and market officer was prepared and a new officer is now in post with effect from 7th April 2022. Two induction and probationary meetings have taken place. Probationary has been completed today. The standard procedure for the next two/three months objectives, development needs and training have been identified and agreed.

Councillor Vacancy – Parkgate Ward

New councillor advert and application form for Parkgate ward has been distributed.

Council Plan

I produced and presented a power point presentation to stimulate conversations and bring forward ideas to help formulate the councillors and staff thoughts for what should be the council's key aims and priorities. Stakeholders met on Tuesday 15th March and Saturday 19th March. A situation analysis report and recommendations has been written.

External Consultant for Strategic Plan and Staff Reviews (Pete Cooper)

Unsuccessful contractors for the bid have been advised. A pre-contract meeting with the approved contractor took place on Tuesday 8th February. The outcome and approval of costs were considered and approved at an additional Full Council meeting on 15th February.

Pete, the contractor, met with staff and committee chairs on 14th March. Arrangements were made and all stakeholders were invited to attend on Saturday 19th March to consider a Strategic Plan for Council.

Zoom meetings were subsequently set up with Pete, to meet with the Finance Manager and the Council Manager. Councillors and staff were invited to attend a zoom meeting with Pete to discuss the situation analysis report. It was agreed by the councillors present that the confidential draft situation analysis report and recommendation from the group be submitted for consideration at the Annual Meeting of the Council 17.05.2022, along with the recommendations as written by Pete in the report.

Covid 19 and Omicron

I have read and disseminating the latest government information to our councillors and staff. I have kept everyone up to date as the latest guidance arrives. I have updated for approval, the council's risk assessment for staff/councillors and hall hirers. The government has removed remaining domestic restrictions in England. There are still steps that we can take to reduce the risk of catching and spreading COVID-19:

- [Get vaccinated](#)
- Let fresh air in if meeting indoors, or meet outside
- Consider wearing a face covering in crowded, enclosed spaces
- [Get tested](#) if you have COVID-19 symptoms, and stay at home if positive

Reception at Town Hall

I have opened and man the town hall reception for two mornings per week. The number of visitors is currently around 3-5 over the 2 day period.

Virtual Community Engagement Summit

Audrey and I both attended this full day summit on Wednesday 6th April.

Headline talks were about;

- 'Isolation to Transformation' and the 'C2 Connecting Communities' project which focuses on making the local area 'community centred'. By asking residents what do they need from the council, the council were then in turn able to advise what rate increases would be made, creating a culture of 'no surprises'. C2 provided the conditions to enable the community to work together and engage. By giving them a voice and empowering them, this had huge health and wellbeing benefits. People felt better and healthier.
- 'Welshpool Community Angels', who spoke about the difficulties that they had encountered due to Covid. They provide meals on wheels and staff cook/ed for local residents. It was their opportunity to help out and gave them a seat at the table where this opportunity had not been there before.
- 'Cloudy IT' gave a presentation about what they are able to offer town and parish councils, and how they have developed apps for councils.
- 'Facebook Groups'. This presentation brought to attendees an insight on what can be achieved by having a Facebook Groups and how this, unlike a Facebook Page had a greater sense and a more community feel. It has a higher reach than a Facebook page. Unlike Facebook it has a much higher reach and has a 'community feel'. It's a virtual community where everyone can comment. The rules can be set and can be made clear by pinning them to the top of the page in the welcome area. To be believed in, it has to be posted on 2-3 times per week. Arguments must be forbidden and the correct procedures for complaints followed so that this can be avoided. The Group can have the authority to take off posts as it sees fit. Destructive criticisms would be allowed. Not all comments have to be responded to. Posts can be scheduled in advance for sending each week.
- 'Seven steps to the Perfect Community event'. This outlined how important it was to ensure that all communication was clear and plans understood, along with detailed research of the target audience and a suitable venue. Along with a contingency budget, a budget of between 15-20% for promotion was advised. If the event is a repeat, look at the scientific evidence of why it should carry on, or change or even fold.
- 'New Local'. This talked about local council's networking to support each-other, with the focus being on community power and giving them the driving seat. How as a sector parish councils can take over and offer local services, they could open up the deliberations with the whole community. Think about how they can mobilise community volunteer groups to work with them and change the dialog. Not just think of what decision they need to take but ask the community how this should be addressed. Shift institutional mind-sets, as this doesn't work with the community. Think of the community as equal partners who can help to deliver and someone who the council wish to listen to. Simple engagement can be effective and transformative, it doesn't have to be perfect in its production, it just has to get the message out there that you are listening.
- 'The Eden Project' – Jubilee Big Lunch.

Data Protection and Cyber Security

Cyber security and data protection training for all of our councillors and staff has been requested via our IT consultant. A date is to be confirmed. Our contractor will arrange this via zoom to encourage more participation. He will also put together a short video for us. The good councillors guide to cyber security has been circulated to all councillors and staff. I have completed data protection training via 'High Speed Training' at a cost of £25. Staff have been asked to undertake and complete the same training. Each will receive a certificate when completed.

Local Council Awards Scheme

I have attended the LCAS introduction session on Wednesday 11th May at 2pm.

Website

Our new website has been launched and functionality improvements made.

Health and Safety

Staff health and safety training; fire risk, manual handling was completed on 16th February 2022 (FOC) by Trevor, Audrey and I. Nicky is scheduling additional training for herself, James, our new member of staff, and HRGO agency staff.

I undertook and passed the Level 2 Food Hygiene and Safety for Catering course.

Cheshire West Crowdfunding - Project Creator Workshop – Spacehive

Details were circulated on 15th February 2022. Submission for this round were to be completed by 23rd March 2022. I have been informed that discussions are taking place to consider a partnership Crowdfund application for town hall staging improvements.

Council and Local information

The Clerk magazine, NALC, ChALC information and About My Area newsletter: I read quarterly magazine, the weekly newsletters and regular bulletins that are published.

General information and updates

Committee and sub-committee agendas and supporting papers: Details have been overviewed and discussed with our Governance & Operations Manager (G&OM). Agendas have been signed and distributed. I have discussed and helped to guide our Senior Market & Support Co-ordinator (SM&SC) with town hall and market and trader issues.

Our SM&SC has kept our website and Twitter account updated with the latest meeting information.

Our Finance Manager (FM) has completed with RBS the end of year accounts and has met with our internal auditor for the final internal audit inspection. He has prepared the necessary paperwork for the end of year accounts and paperwork in preparation for submission to the external auditor.

I cover and respond to the council@ emails and telephone calls when our SM&SC is absent and our G&OM covers these when both myself and the SM&SC are absent.

Staff Matters

Weekly staff meetings continue to be conducted via zoom. Ad-hoc face-to-face meetings also take place. Annual leave entitlements have been finalised via our annual leave chart with staff carrying forward any unused leave in line with NTC policy. Regular scheduled welfare meeting take place.

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Council Manager