

## WHITEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

**Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer:** Marlene Jewell  
Telephone: 01946 67366  
**Chairman:** Councillor Brian O’Kane

**To: Members of Whitehaven Town Council**

You are duly **SUMMONED** to attend an **VIRTUAL EXTRAORDINARY MEETING** of **WHITEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL** which will be held on **Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021** at **6:00pm** on the **Zoom Platform** to transact the business contained in the attached Agenda.

The Meeting takes place under the authorisation scheme outlined in the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) (Regulations) 2020.

### **Join Zoom Meeting:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81498451482?pwd=N3pZeXI4UjAxV25sU3RLNnZHOTdNZz09>

**Meeting ID: 814 9845 1482**

**Password: 958318**

Signed.....*Marlene Jewell*.....

Dated.....*16<sup>th</sup> April 2021*.....

Marlene Jewell, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

### **AGENDA**

All Councillors and members of the public attending the virtual meeting should be aware that by joining the meeting they are agreeing to the following guidelines:

- a) The meeting may be recorded for the purpose of minute taking and will be disposed of within 24 hours;
- b) All attendees should have their microphones on mute;
- c) To adhere to the Council’s Code of Conduct and Standing Orders;
- d) Only unmute microphones when invited to do so;
- e) Speak clearly and look into the camera;
- f) Turn phones to silent;
- g) Be aware of time lags and allow time for participants to respond;

- h) Introduce themselves when raising a point;
- i) Respond to the Chair when their name is called;
- j) Be aware of your background and what others can see behind you

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

To receive declarations of interest by elected Members in respect of Agenda items.

If a Member requires any advice on any item involving a possible declaration of interest which could affect his/her ability to speak and/or vote he/she is advised to contact the Clerk at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

### **3. Public Participation**

### **4. Return to Face to Face Meetings**

## **RETURN TO FACE TO FACE MEETINGS**

To consider a report on the issues concerning the return to face to face meetings and to determine the date of the Annual Meeting

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Regulations that allow Councils to hold remote meetings (Zoom etc) apply to Council meetings to be held before 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021. This means that all Councils must return to face to face meetings from 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021.
- 1.2 The Government has said that having considered the case for extending the legislation that it is was not possible for emergency coronavirus legislation to enable remote meetings to continue after 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 to be brought forward.
- 1.3 Many local authorities have raised objections to returning to face to face meetings such as lack of suitable premises to conduct socially distanced meetings, that not everyone will have been vaccinated and the requirement to wear masks.
- 1.4 There is a High Court case underway about this brought by Lawyers in Local Government, the Association of Democratic Services Officers and Hertfordshire County Council who have asked the High Court to make a declaration on whether they can continue to hold meetings remotely past the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021. The hearing on this will take place on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2021. However, the outcome of the hearing is uncertain.

- 1.5 Interestingly The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 which comes into force on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2021 makes express provision for Welsh local authorities to meet remotely.
- 1.6 Our Annual Meeting would normally be held on the last Thursday in May which unless things change would have to be held face to face and there is no provision to hold a “hybrid” meeting of part face to face and part remote. The Council does have an option to hold the Annual Meeting remotely before 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 - that is on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021.
- 1.7 After 17th May 2021 when Step 3 of the Government’s Roadmap out of Lockdown comes into being it is anticipated that a greater range of indoor activity can resume but it is not clear how many can attend indoors and still says that only up to 30 people can attend funerals weddings etc although no numbers are given for business and activities.
- 1.8 The Council Meeting is a public meeting and has to be open for members of the public to attend and obviously a risk assessment would have to be prepared and a checklist of requirements in order to hold a covid free Council Meeting.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That Members consider the above and make a decision as to whether the Annual Meeting be held remotely on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 or whether it be held face to face on the last Thursday in May 2021