

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
7 pm on Thursday, 4th July 2019

Present: Cllr. Adam Davy, Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning, Cllr. Herbert Harper (in the Chair), Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, Cllr. Dafydd Jenkins, Cllr. Kate Southan, Cllr. Marcus Themans, Cllr. Daniel Thomas, Cllr. Allan Walter and Cllr. Milner Whiteman OBE.

Town Clerk: Trudi Barrett

In attendance: Shropshire Councillor David Turner and two members of the public

1) Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

He reported that he and Councillor Hill had attended a meeting on 18th June at Ironbridge Power Station to discuss potential traffic issues associated with the proposals for redevelopment of the site. The meeting had been hosted by Harworth and had been attended by members of local town and parish councils as well as representatives from Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council.

On 21st June the Chairman had attended a funding workshop with the RFO (see minute 10 below).

On 26th June he had attended the final Great War remembrance service at St Chad's Church in Shrewsbury. St Chad's had been holding similar remembrance services since 2014, and this series of services seemed to have been a unique act of remembrance. The Chairman had purchased a memorial book which listed all those who died in Shropshire in the Great War and he would donate this to the archives in due course. The services had been attended by serving members of the Armed Forces as well as by members of the public and those representing many different organisations. The Chairman wished to record appreciation for Councillor Turner, who had attended many services and ensured representation when servicemen and women from Much Wenlock and surrounding parishes had been remembered.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to send letters of thanks to all those at St Chad's who had organised and been involved in the services, as well as to Councillor Turner for his dedication in attending so many of the services.**

2) Apologies for absence

None

3) Disclosure of pecuniary interests

Members were reminded that they are required to leave the room during the discussion and voting on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, whether or not the interest is entered in the register of members' interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer.

None.

4) Dispensations

None requested. It was noted that in November 2018 all Councillors who held accounts with Barclays Bank had been granted dispensations for a period of up to two years to participate in discussions concerning negotiations with Barclays Bank relating to the purchase of 10 High Street, Much Wenlock.

5) Shropshire Council Report

Shropshire Councillor, David Turner, gave a verbal report.

He had been asked to check with Shropshire Council how often the attenuation pond was inspected and the answer had been monthly. Officers had also indicated that there was no intention to replace the trash screen on the culvert.

Councillor Turner reported that nine local volunteers were working on a project to support the digitally excluded in Much Wenlock and surrounding areas (the "Clickers"). Guidance, support and hardware had been provided by Shropshire Council and the first session was to be held on 18th July.

Consultation had been undertaken with regard to parking restrictions on the roads near to Shadwell Quarry but there had been some objections, which would delay any decision.

Events had been held at Shipton Village Hall and Church Preen Village Hall to provide information on how to combat rural crime. Smartwater had been promoted and examples of successes cited. The police were prepared to give financial support to the Town Council if 80% of residents could be covered.

Councillor Turner had also attended the meeting at Ironbridge Power Station on 18th June. It was clear that the proposals would increase traffic in Much Wenlock and nearby villages. It was expected that there would be calls for a bypass but other solutions, such as one-way streets in Much Wenlock, could be considered. Councillor Turner would be pleased to discuss proposals. It would also be important to consider the impact of the development on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the vicinity of the site.

Shropshire Council was now consulting on three strategic sites as part of the Local Plan Review: Tern Hill, RAF Cosford and Ironbridge Power Station. The public meeting relating to the Power Station would be held on Wednesday, 17th July at Buildwas Village Hall.

Timescales for the Local Plan Review had been revised and all proposals were to go to Shropshire Council Cabinet in March next year. It was unlikely that the Plan would be adopted before 2022. A detailed submission from some residents of Much Wenlock had been received by Shropshire Council.

Councillor Turner had raised with Shropshire Council the need for promotion of local car parking, including residents' parking. It was noted that the car park sign outside St Mary's car park was currently obscured by foliage.

A litter pick had been held on the previous Friday and there would now be a summer break. There was much enthusiasm for gorilla gardening and Councillor Turner had made enquiries of Shropshire Council, who were keen that this should proceed. There were several areas around the town that could benefit and Councillor Turner enquired whether the Town Council would like to support this initiative in some way.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Turner for his report, which was **NOTED**.

The Chairman noted that it had been indicated at the Power Station meeting that a primary school was proposed for the development but no secondary school. It was intended that pupils would attend William Brookes School in Much Wenlock, which would require expansion of the school. Councillor Turner had also been surprised by this announcement and agreed to make enquiries about these proposals.

Councillor Themans indicated his support for the idea of gorilla gardening. Councillor Turner responded that it would be important to ensure that any action taken could be sustained, e.g. low maintenance plants in the right location.

6) Public Session

None.

7) Minutes

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 6th June 2019 were considered for approval. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes be signed and APPROVED as a true record.**

8) Town Clerk's Report

Members received a written report from the Town Clerk on outstanding matters and action taken since the last Council meeting.

It was noted that a small number of residents had now expressed an interest in affordable housing and involvement with the Housing Needs Working Group.

A meeting with Arrol Architects (formerly Arrol & Snell) had been arranged for 17th July. Unfortunately, this now clashed with the public meeting regarding the Power Station at Buildwas. Councillor Thomas offered to attend the Power Station meeting on behalf of the Council.

No response had been received to the Clerk's enquiry about coach parking in the town centre. The Clerk was asked to follow up the enquiry and seek help from Councillor Turner.

NOTED

9) Future High Streets Fund

The Clerk had conveyed the Town Council's interest in the funding scheme to Shropshire Council and a response was awaited.

10) Funding Workshop

The Mayor gave a report on the Funding Workshop he had attended with the RFO on 21st June 2019. It was noted that Herefordshire Council directly employed two fund raisers, who brought in around £2.5 – 3m per year for the county. Although it had never been more difficult to find funding, there were still some sources of finance, including crowd funding, which counted as a donation. One of the speakers had represented the National Lottery Community Fund and the Mayor had invited her to a meeting to discuss Much Wenlock projects. It was noted that projects needed to be community led and to meet a need or demand from the community. Several councillors would attend the meeting to discuss potential projects.

11) Working Group Reports

Councillors considered reports from the following working groups:

a. Friends of the Cemetery

It was noted that the Cemetery would be included in the Open Gardens event on the coming Sunday and would be staffed by volunteers between 2.00 and 4.30pm.

b. History

The History Group were seeking a convenient date to meet.

c. Communications, Markets & Tourism

The group were looking at alternative market organisers, such as Town and Country Markets, an organisation which held markets in Wellington.

Members of the group were working with Revd. Stafford on a family fun day on 31st August. This was likely to need a street closure for Wilmore Street.

The Christmas lights switch-on, on Thursday, 21st November, would also need a street closure. It was hoped that the town's traders would stay open until 8.00pm. There would be three choirs performing and some children's entertainment during the evening. The working group noted the need to ensure appropriate risk assessments were carried out.

A new Guildhall poster had been designed to help promote exhibitions in the Guildhall. Consideration would be given to the introduction of a payment card reader for the Guildhall at the next Finance Committee meeting.

The group had been considering use of the map display boards in the town to promote local events. Tear-off maps could also be produced for use in the museum and library.

The group was also working on a programme of events for the town and the possibility of a summer fair next year to complement the Christmas fayre. It was noted that the biennial festival would be held in 2020 and this would need to be taken into consideration.

The next meeting of the working group would be held at 7.00pm on 18th July at the Guildhall and all Councillors were invited to attend to discuss ideas for markets in the town.

d. Housing Needs

The intentions of the working group had again been advertised in the Wenlock Herald and on social media.

It was noted that Shropshire Council had recently decided to retain its council housing in Bridgnorth and Oswestry with Star Housing continuing to manage the stock. It appeared that Shropshire Council was considering buying land for their development company as well as using their own. If there was enough interest from the community, the Town Council would arrange a meeting with Shropshire Council to discuss the proposals in more detail.

Councillor Holyoak reported that Connexus were very keen to start another project in Much Wenlock. They had the finance but needed to find more land at a reasonable price. They would like to start another community led scheme and would contact previous members. Connexus would like to work with the Town Council and would report as soon as they had something tangible. It was noted that Connexus was also still awaiting the financial contribution from Shropshire Council for the Callaughtons Ash development.

12) Gaskell Recreation Ground

Councillors noted a report from the Management Committee. The Leader funding application had been submitted and Shropshire Council officers were now reviewing the application before consideration at the meeting on 22nd July.

The drainage consultant and contractor had attended the last Management Committee meeting and there had been a detailed discussion of the project. Minor adjustments were to be made to the specification and costings and a provisional date of 19th August had been agreed for the start of the work. Members of the public would be notified of the planned work in advance. The Ground would not be closed but certain areas would need to be fenced off during the works.

13) Ironbridge Power Station Re-development

Councillors considered feedback from a meeting held at the Power Station on 18th June attended by the Mayor and Councillor Hill. Although intending to submit a planning application in September, Harworth were still working on traffic modelling and traffic gauges were in place on roads all around the area. Information had been distributed showing Harworth's proposals and access points. It was noted that 2 million tonnes of sand and gravel would need to be moved off site before house building on that area could commence. It was intended to use the railway line to transport the sand, gravel and pulverised ash but no agreement had been reached yet with Network Rail.

It was intended to use the current Power Station bridge for traffic to the commercial area, some residential areas and the park and ride area. Most of the traffic would come back to the A4169. It was proposed to install traffic lights at the bottom of Buildwas bank. The proposals would result in five major congestion points within 3/10 of a mile.

Councillors considered a draft response to issues raised at the highways meeting on 18th June, prepared by the Mayor. This was not intended as a response to the formal consultation but as a prompt to the developers to consider more fully their traffic management plans. It was noted that those Councillors who had attended the meeting did not consider that the minutes issued by the Pegasus Group (Harworth) to be an accurate record of the meeting and that they did not record many of the concerns raised.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve the draft response circulated, as amended, and to send this to Harworth, Shropshire Council, Shropshire Councillor Turner, Telford & Wrekin Council and the affected town and parish councils.

It was noted that there was currently no Shropshire Council Cabinet member responsible for the Power Station development, although Telford & Wrekin Council had appointed a cabinet member to this role.

Shropshire Council consultation on strategic sites, forming part of the Local Plan Review, would run from 1st July to 9th September. The Mayor would be calling an extraordinary Town Council meeting on Thursday, 15th August to discuss the implications of the Power Station development. During the first hour views from members of the public would be heard and Councillors would discuss the proposals during the second hour of the meeting.

Councillors noted their disappointment at the comments regarding the Town Council made by the Much Wenlock Civic Society in their recent contribution to the Wenlock Herald. Councillor Holyoak declared an interest as a member of the Civic Society. The statements about the Town Council's engagement with proposals for the development of the Power Station were incorrect and misleading.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to write to the Civic Society correcting their statements and to ask for an apology. A copy of the paper following up the traffic meeting should also be sent to the Civic Society.

14) Flood Awareness Event

Councillors noted that a Flood Awareness Event had been organised with representatives of the Environment Agency and Shropshire Council for the evening of Wednesday, 10th July at the Priory Hall. The meeting would commence at 6.30pm with a presentation at 7.30pm.

15) Rural Crime Prevention Evening

Four Town Councillors had attended the Rural Crime Prevention Evening held at Shipton Village Hall on 25th June, which had attracted many members of the public. Members of the community were anxious and angry about the current level of rural crime. It was noted that the discount scheme offered by the police for Smartwater would require a very high level of public participation and considerable expenditure by the Town Council, which would mean an increase in the precept.

16) 'Roads Focus' Campaign

Councillors noted the invitation to attend a drop-in session on Thursday 11th July between 5 and 7pm at the Castle Hall, Bridgnorth, as part of the 'Roads Focus' Campaign being run jointly by Shropshire Council and the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner. Councillors Harper and Edgcumbe Venning would attend. Councillor Holyoak hoped to attend a similar meeting to be held in Ludlow on 8th July.

17) West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner – Annual Survey of Town and Parish Councils

Councillors noted the above survey. Councillors agreed that they were dissatisfied with the current policing of Much Wenlock and it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to reflect this dissatisfaction in the response from the Council.**

It was noted that there were ongoing traffic and behavioural problems associated with Shadwell Quarry and that the police did not seem to be addressing these issues.

18) Consultation

- a. Councillors noted the Shropshire Council review of polling districts and polling places with consultation from 1st July to 12th August. Councillors indicated that they were content with the current arrangements and did not wish to request any changes.
- b. Councillors noted the Shropshire Council consultation on strategic sites (see minute 13).

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow the meeting to continue past 9.00pm.

19) VE Day Commemoration

It was noted that the 75th anniversary of VE Day would be celebrated and commemorated as VE Day 75 over the weekend of 8th - 10th May 2020. It was noted that the bank holiday had been moved to the Friday.

The Communications, Tourism and Markets Working Group would consider options for marking the anniversary.

20) Mayoral Service

Councillors noted that the Mayoral Service would take place at Holy Trinity Church on Sunday, 7th July at 6.30pm and all Councillors were invited to attend.

21) Correspondence

Members received and NOTED the following:

- a. SALC information bulletin and other information – emailed to Members.
- b. Recover! Shropshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team newsletter June 2019 – emailed to Members.
- c. Shropshire Care Closer to Home newsletter June 2019 – emailed to Members.

22) Agenda items for next town council meeting

Members were invited to suggest items for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting. It was noted that proposals should be put forward using the appropriate form. The Clerk was asked to add Gorilla Gardening to the next Planning & Environment Committee agenda.

23) Date of next meeting

Members **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Thursday, **5th September** 2019 at 7.00pm at The Guildhall.

Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the above Act it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** that, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press should not be present.

24) Barclays Bank

Councillors noted an update on the Town Council's negotiations with Barclays Bank, which were nearing completion.

25) Personnel Matters

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve the provision of temporary cover for sickness absence of the Town Handyman at a rate of £8.21 per hour (for those over 25). The Clerk was asked to advertise and make the necessary arrangements.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm

Signed.....
Town Mayor

Date.....