

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

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

Present: Cllr. Herbert Harper (in the Chair), Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, Cllr. Dafydd Jenkins, Cllr. Marcus Themans, Cllr. Daniel Thomas and Cllr. Milner Whiteman OBE.

Town Clerk: Trudi Barrett

In attendance: Shropshire Councillor David Turner and 6 members of the public

1) Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

He reported recent events attended:

- On 4th October the Mayor officially opened and remained for part of the day at the UK Cluniac Forum Conference 2019, held in the Guildhall, Much Wenlock. He was pleased to welcome delegates from all over the UK as well as the President of the European Federation of Cluniac Sites, Mr Rémy Rebeyrotte, a member of the French National Assembly, and Mr Christophe Voros, the European Director.
- On 5th October, the Town Council surgery in the Library.
- On 9th October, accompanied by Cllr. Thomas and the Town Clerk, a meeting with the Mayor and Clerk of Bridgnorth Town Council.
- On 13th October, the Civic Service at Market Drayton.
- On 16th October, accompanied by the Town Clerk, a meeting with Arrol Architects regarding the Council's historic buildings.
- On 30th October the Mayor and Cllr. Holyoak met the Director of Communication of the British Olympic Association, who had spent the day in Much Wenlock in the company of members of the Wenlock Olympian Society.

The Chairman congratulated Cllr. Daniel Thomas, Deputy Mayor, on being awarded the National Association of Local Councils Young Councillor of the Year award on 28th October. This was an outstanding achievement and reflected the willingness of Cllr. Thomas to involve himself in all aspects of the Council's business, from the strategic to the more mundane such as measuring bridges and clearing gutters. The award brought credit not only to Cllr. Thomas himself, but also to his family, the Town Council and Much Wenlock.

2) Apologies for absence

Cllr. Allan Walter – away.

This apology was accepted as approved absence.

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.

5) Shropshire Council Report

Shropshire Councillor, David Turner, gave a verbal report:

Cllr. Turner continued to press for long-overdue action on highways gullies and consequent flooding issues in his ward. He had recently walked around the town with Cllr. Steve Davenport, the Shropshire Council Portfolio Holder for Highways and Car Parking, to highlight the problems. Cllr. Turner had also attended a further meeting in town with Shropshire Council and Kier, focused on gullies. Cllr. Turner listed the various outstanding highways matters he was pursuing and acknowledged that Town Councillors shared his concerns.

Cllr. Turner expressed his disappointment that poll cards had not been issued for the by-election taking place on the day of the meeting and his concern that some residents, particularly in outlying areas, were unaware of the by-election.

Cllr. Turner's next surgery would be held on 14th December 2019 at Much Wenlock Museum at 10.30am.

6) Public Session

None

7) Resignation of Town Councillors

- a. Members noted the resignation from the Council of Adam Davy and Kate Southan on 9th October 2019. The Mayor noted his disappointment that such committed Councillors had felt the need to resign and his concern about comments which were deemed appropriate to circulate on social media. Both individuals should be thanked for their contribution to the town, especially with regard to long outstanding improvements to the Gaskell Recreation Ground.

Councillors also commented on the amount of time Councillors dedicated to Town Council work on a voluntary basis. Consideration should be given to how such work was undertaken, including commissioning additional, paid support if necessary. The support of fellow Councillors was important, and critics should be taken to task over unsubstantiated, negative comments. It was a great pity that two young, enthusiastic people had been lost from the Council.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to send letters of thanks to both Adam Davy and Kate Southan.

- b. Members noted that a by-election had been called for 5th December 2019 to fill the vacancies and that Shropshire Council would be making the arrangements. There had been some criticism that no poll cards had been issued for the by-election on 7th November 2019. However, the cost of providing poll cards would be around £1,500 per by-election, in addition to the basic cost of £2,500 for each by-election, which would need to be paid by the Town Council and thus, the community. It was noted that appropriate notices had been displayed and the candidates had distributed leaflets widely around the town for the by-election on 7th November 2019.

8) Minutes

- a. The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 3rd October 2019 were considered for approval. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd October 2019 be APPROVED and ADOPTED as a true record.**
- b. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes of Planning & Environment meetings held on 4th June, 2nd and 30th July and 3rd September 2019 be ADOPTED as a true record.**
- c. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes of Finance, Asset Management and Personnel Committee meetings held on 21st May, 23rd July and 26th September be ADOPTED as a true record.**

9) 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 the internal auditor would not be able to provide advice on the development of a strategic plan nor be able to act as internal auditor for the Council this year due to ill health.

NOTED

10) Working Group Reports

Councillors considered reports from the following working groups:

- a. **Friends of the Cemetery**
A small remembrance event would be held in the old cemetery on Friday, 8th November with year 6 children from the primary school. Revd Stafford would be in attendance.
- b. **History**
Nothing to report.
- c. **Communications, Markets & Tourism**
It was noted that the numbers of this working group had halved following the recent Councillor resignations. Although there would be no formal event this year, the Christmas lights would be switched on at 4.30pm on 21st November with some shops open for late night shopping.
- d. **Housing Needs**
A visit from Professor Mark Barrow, Director of Place at Shropshire Council, was scheduled for 26th November. During the visit Cllrs Harper and Thomas would discuss Shropshire Council's new housing company and what possibilities there might be for Much Wenlock.

11) Membership of Communications, Markets & Tourism Working Group

Councillors noted that there were currently only two members of the above working group following Councillor resignations. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to leave in abeyance the appointment of two additional members to the Group until new Councillors were elected.**

12) Barclays Bank

- a. Councillors noted an update from the Barclays Bank working group. Further information was awaited from Barclays on the reconfiguration of the ATM enclosure to allow access through the front door. It was noted that this matter needed to be resolved before further steps could be taken.
- b. It was noted that there were currently only two members of the above working group following the resignation of Graham Edgcumbe Venning. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to appoint Cllr. Thomas to the working group.**

13) Discipline & Grievance Panel

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to appoint Cllrs. Themans and Thomas to the Discipline & Grievance Panel.

14) Climate Change

It was noted that the National Association of Local Councils had declared a climate emergency at their recent Annual Conference. In Shropshire, a Mayors meeting to discuss climate change had been scheduled for 5th November but had been cancelled due to lack of a meeting room. The Guildhall would be offered as a venue.

Cllr. Hill and the Town Clerk would be attending a workshop at Shirehall on 20th November, where practical measures to address climate change would be considered.

An event was scheduled to be held in Craven Arms on 28th November 2019, due to be attended by Philip Dunne, entitled "Climate Crisis - The Time is Now", to consider the areas of Agriculture, Transport and Energy in relation to climate change.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to defer further consideration of how to address concerns about climate change to the next meeting.

15) Boundary Review

- a. Councillors noted a report from the meeting held with the Mayor and Clerk of Bridgnorth Town Council, attended by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Town Clerk, regarding a boundary review. Bridgnorth Town Council had recently submitted a request for Shropshire Council to carry out a Community Governance Review for the parish of Bridgnorth (a review of the parish boundary) and Shropshire Council had produced draft proposals. Peter Nutting, Leader of Shropshire Council, was pushing for a review of parish and town council boundaries in the county after the 2021 local elections, however, implementation could be years away.
- b. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to request that Shropshire Council undertake a Community Governance Review for Much Wenlock.**

16) Consultation

Councillors considered a response to the following consultation:

- a. Shropshire Libraries Strategy ending on 8 November 2019.

It was noted that Much Wenlock Town Council had agreed a 6 year financial contribution towards the provision of the library service in the town, rather than taking over the service entirely.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to make no response to the Libraries Strategy consultation, as the proposals were not relevant to arrangements in Much Wenlock.

17) Correspondence

Members NOTED the following, which had been emailed to Members:

- a. SALC information bulletin and other information.
- b. Editions of The Rural Bulletin.
- c. Press release regarding the opening of a therapy-led ward at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.
- d. Invitation to Citizens Advice Shropshire AGM on 21st November 2019.

18) 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 the 2020/21 budget would be considered in December.

19) Date of next meeting

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

The meeting closed at 8.10pm

Signed.....
Town Mayor

Date.....