

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
7 pm on Thursday, 5th March 2020

Present: Cllr. Herbert Harper (in the Chair), Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, Cllr. Natalie Park, Cllr. Matthew Park, Cllr. Marcus Themans, Cllr. Daniel Thomas, Cllr. Allan Walter, Cllr. Duncan White, Cllr. Milner Whiteman OBE.

Town Clerk: Trudi Barrett

In attendance: Shropshire Councillor David Turner, 10 members of the public

1) Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

He reported that on 26th February he had met Ms Frances Darling, Licensing Officer at Shropshire Council, accompanied by the Chair of the Christmas Fayre Committee and the Town Clerk, to discuss Shropshire Council's Street Trading Policy. Ms Darling was aware of the issues facing Much Wenlock and other towns and was looking for a way to amend policy to accommodate community events.

The Mayor encouraged everybody to support the forthcoming Live Arts festival.

2) Apologies for absence

Cllr. Dafydd Jenkins - work

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.

He reported the completion of recent highways repairs around the town including those in Wilmore Street and Barrow Street. The delaminated surface on Homer Bank was due to be replaced the following day. The gully sucker had been clearing drains in the town, but some required digging out.

Around 12 properties had suffered flooding into living rooms during the recent heavy rain. Shropshire Council was committed to addressing the safety of residents and providing support and would be carrying out a review of measures to be taken for the future.

Cllr Turner advised that he had addressed Shropshire Council Cabinet on 12th February regarding consultation on the Local Plan Review and the shortage of time in which revised proposals for Much Wenlock could be considered. He noted that the Plan period had been pushed out to 2038.

A litter pick along local footpaths was planned for 25th March, in conjunction with Walkers are Welcome, with another planned for 27th March under the umbrella of the Great British Spring Clean.

Cllr Turner's next surgery would be held on Saturday, 7th March at Much Wenlock Museum.

Cllr Turner provided posters about Coronavirus for display.

The Mayor reported the difficulty he had experienced when telephoning Shropshire Council about the flooding, when he had been on hold for at least 40 minutes. Cllr Turner responded that he had already raised this issue with Shropshire Council.

Cllr Turner was thanked for his report and left the meeting.

6) Public Session

- a. Mr Kevin Hadley, a resident of the lower end of Sheinton Street, reported the difficulty he had experienced during the recent flood event due to the absence of street lighting. There was part-night lighting in this part of Sheinton Street, with street lights going off at midnight and coming on again at 6am. The main flooding on 16th February had occurred at around 12.30/12.45 when there had been no light provided in the street. This had compounded the flooding problems. Despite Much Wenlock being in a rapid response catchment area, the emergency services had advised that they would not attend until there was around 6ins of water in the property. Fast flowing water had come towards the Bullring from the direction of the Lady Forester Centre, bringing pine needles and sewage with it, and it had not been safe to walk in the street. Neighbours had been alerted.

The resident provided information comparing the recent flood event with that of 2007.

Mr Hadley asked the Town Council to support his request to Shropshire Council for the street lights to be kept on all night.

Mr Hadley reported that a week had passed after the flooding before the gullies had been cleaned in the lower part of Sheinton Street and some were still blocked with silt.

- b. Mr Arthur Hill provided an update from the local Flood Group. The group of six people had developed a relationship with John Bellis, the Shropshire Council Flooding Officer, with whom they had been working on flooding issues in the town. They had highlighted concerns about blocked drains and outstanding work on connections with the existing attenuation ponds. John Bellis had been proactively working to find solutions and schedule in work and had responded quickly when called.

The group had noted the revised proposal for Hunters Gate, which could solve drainage problems in that area.

The group reported grave reservations about the drainage at Callaughtons Ash, where the scheme had failed. Dye had been put in the water and had appeared in the field by Hunters Gate within two days.

Generally, matters were moving forward and the group would keep the Town Council informed.

The Mayor thanked Mr Hill and other members of the Flood Group.

- c. Mr Eric Humphries referenced item 9 on the agenda regarding the revised proposal for site MUW012. Mr Humphries expressed his opposition to the latest proposal for a larger site with 130 houses, rather than the 80 previously proposed. He drew attention to the effects of recent road closures on traffic in the town and the impact of additional traffic as well as concerns about flooding. The proposed, additional housing would be built on one of the wettest fields in Much Wenlock. Mr Humphries stated that, in his view, the new proposal was for a new site and should not be referred to as the 'preferred' site. He hoped that the Town Council would debate and vote against the revised proposal, rather than simply note it.

The Mayor responded that consultation on the revised proposal was the responsibility of Shropshire Council, not the Town Council. Shropshire Council intended to offer people the chance to comment on the new proposal by 20th March. The Town Council would make its views known at the appropriate time.

7) Flooding in Much Wenlock

- a. The Mayor noted the comments of residents made during the public session. It had been surprising that many flood gates provided to houses previously were no longer in place. Some residents had found the gates too heavy to install but there was not enough warning time to provide help when the gates were needed.
- b. Members noted information that had been distributed by Councillors to those houses thought to have been affected by flooding.
- c. It was noted that the water level had dropped very quickly after the flooding and the culvert and attenuation ponds had worked well. The poor design of drains in the High Street had caused water to flow down Back Lane and Sheinton Street and an improvement to this would help the situation. A more effective way of channelling the water into the culvert at the Gaskell corner was also required.

It was noted that water flows should be reported to the Flooding Officer at Shropshire Council for him to address and find solutions.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to write to Shropshire Council regarding the part-night lit street lights in Sheinton Street and to request that they be altered to stay on all night.

A meeting of Town Councillors with John Bellis, Flooding Officer at Shropshire Council, should be arranged in due course.

8) Ironbridge Power Station

- a. Councillors noted that Much Wenlock Town Council's objections had been submitted to application 19/05509/MAW (Minerals) – Proposed Quarry to the East of Much Wenlock Road, Buildwas.

It was noted that Telford & Wrekin had extended the deadline for responses to the outline application for the Power Station (TWC/2019/1046) from 6th March to 20th March. The Shropshire Council deadline for responses to application 19/05560/OUT still appeared to be 6th March. Preparing a response in the time allowed created considerable pressure.

A response to the application had been drafted and included objections on highways grounds, climate change and inconsistencies in information, e.g. employment figures reducing from 4,520 to 546. Policies of Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin had been referenced. It was noted that the authorities should consider and comply with those policies, even though they were not always material planning considerations. A possible alternative to the proposed housing development could be a holiday park.

Thanks were expressed to the Mayor and staff for preparing the response.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve and submit the draft response to planning applications 19/05560/OUT and TWC/2019/1046.

- b. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to request that Shropshire Council extend the deadline for comments on both application 19/05509/MAW (quarry) and 1900560/OUT.**

9) Preferred Site Allocation: Site MUW012, Much Wenlock

Councillors noted revised proposals for site MUW012 from Wenlock Estates/Berrys, proposing an increase from 80 houses to 120/30 (figures provided varied). A public consultation event had been held by the developers on 26th February 2020. It was not known whether there had been any alteration to the revised proposals following the event.

It was noted that at a meeting of the Town Council's Planning & Environment Committee held on 5th September 2017, attended by a representative of Berrys, Town Councillors had raised the issue of essential flooding measures on Hunters Gate. Berrys had assured the Council that this would be addressed. However, only now did Wenlock Estates/Berrys appear to have realised that attenuation would be required on the site and this would necessitate either cutting profit or increasing housing numbers.

The Town Council had supported the proposal for 80 houses. However, now that revised proposals had been submitted, it could be argued that the whole process should be restarted in Much Wenlock to give other landowners the opportunity to change their proposals. Shropshire Council had advised that it was not their intention to do this at present, although it would be possible to submit comments at the formal consultation stage for the Local Plan.

It was noted that the flooding measures currently in place for Hunters Gate and Callaughtons Ash were ineffective and the need for additional measures was included in the Much Wenlock Place Plan.

It was noted that the revised proposal had not come to the Town Council as an application. Members of the Planning & Environment Committee had discussed the proposals in the form presented and, on the basis of what was known, were unanimous that they would not be in favour.

Concern was expressed by a member of the public that the revisions meant that the site could no longer be considered the preferred site and that the proposer was attempting to circumnavigate the system. Residents were looking for the Town Council to take a view on the proposals, even if this did not affect Shropshire Council's decision.

Councillors were advised by a member of the public that the Town Council could decide to take a position on the proposals rather than noting them.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to note the revised proposals for site MUW012 subject to a formal proposal being received.

10) Nominations for Mayor 2020/2021

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED to nominate Councillor Daniel Thomas as Mayor for the civic year 2020/2021.

11) Nominations for Deputy Mayor 2020/2021

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED to nominate Councillor Mary Hill as Deputy Mayor for the civic year 2020/2021.

12) Minutes

- a. The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 6th February 2020 were considered for approval. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2020 be APPROVED and ADOPTED as a true record.**
- b. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 7th January 2020 be ADOPTED as a true record.**

13) Town Clerk's Report

Members received a written report from the Town Clerk on outstanding matters and action taken since the last Council meeting. The Clerk also gave a brief report on the recent Market Town Clerks' Meeting. **NOTED**

14) Working Group Reports

Councillors considered reports from the following working groups:

a. Friends of the Cemetery

It was reported that little damage had been caused by the recent high winds and flooding. Spring work had not yet started in the Cemetery.

b. History

A meeting would be held the following week to discuss storage of the regalia, burial books, etc.

c. Communications, Markets & Tourism

The group had met several times to discuss the VE Day celebrations. It was planned to hold a celebration on the Church Green between 11am and 4pm on the Bank Holiday with entertainment throughout the day, as well as some stalls. The group was seeking sponsors and there was increasing interest in the town.

d. Housing Needs

Cllr. Holyoak provided an update from Connexus. Negotiations were nearing completion and Shropshire Council was supportive of the new scheme. No decision had yet been taken on the type of houses to be provided, but they would be environmentally friendly. It was not known yet where the proposed site was located.

e. Barclays Bank / 10 High Street

It was noted that modifications had been undertaken to the cashpoint machine and access was now possible through the front door. The working party would meet to discuss proposals for consideration at the next full Council meeting.

15) Internal Financial Risk and Health & Safety Evaluation

On the recommendation of the Finance, Asset Management & HR Committee, it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve the Internal Financial Risk and Health & Safety Evaluation.**

16) Climate Change

It was noted that the response to the planning application for Ironbridge Power Station had included references to Climate Change.

17) Consultation

There was no consultation to hand.

18) Correspondence

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

- a. SALC information bulletins and other information.
- b. Editions of The Rural Bulletin.
- c. Connecting Shropshire Update February 2020.
- d. Invitation to Healthwatch Shropshire Board meeting on 27.2.20 and Healthwatch Stronger Together event on 4.3.20.
- e. Invitation to attend the WOS 2020 celebration on 7th March 2020. Several Councillors would be attending.

19) Agenda items for next Town Council meeting

Members were invited to suggest items for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting.

20) Date of next meeting

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.

21) Gaskell Recreation Ground

- a. Councillors considered the recommendations of the Gaskell Recreation Ground Management Committee voting members with regard to the tender submissions received for the Perimeter Path. The Committee preferred a porous tarmac surface as this would be most durable and suitable for the purpose.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to award the contract for the creation of a perimeter path on the Gaskell Recreation Ground to the Great Outdoor Gym Company at a cost of £65,626.

Councillors noted the importance of awarding the contract on a fixed price basis.

- b. Councillors considered a request from the Gaskell Recreation Ground Management Committee for financial support to cover the cost of the installation of a timer and necessary cabling for the new access gate from William Brookes School through to the Gaskell Recreation Ground.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to fund the installation of a timer and necessary cabling for the new access gate from William Brookes School to the Gaskell Recreation Ground at a cost of £3,040.

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

Cllr Themans left the meeting.

22) Repair of Queen Street Bus Shelter

Councillors considered quotations for the repair and redecoration of Queen Street bus shelter.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to award the contract for the repair and redecoration of the Queen Street bus shelter to Rob’s Maintenance Services at a cost of £400.50.

23) Clerk’s Annual Leave

Members noted the Clerk’s remaining annual leave for the current year.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to allow the Clerk to carry over 2 weeks annual leave into April 2020.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Signed.....
Town Mayor

Date.....