

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held remotely by video conference
at 7 pm on Thursday, 14th January 2021

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

Town Clerk: Trudi Barrett

In attendance: Diane Barlow (RFO), Reverend Alison Walker, Shropshire Councillor David Turner, Mr Allan Wilson and several members of the public.

1. Chairman's welcome

The Mayor wished everybody a happy new year and welcomed everybody to the meeting, particularly Allan Wilson, who would be making a presentation during the meeting.

The Mayor noted that the Town Council had been pleased to work again with Much Wenlock Parish Church and Illuminate FX, to light up the church for Christmas, allowing for a thoughtful reflection and pleasant extension of the Christmas lights.

Due to the lockdown several events had been cancelled, such as a Crime Prevention Day with the local policing team and the much-anticipated visit of the High Sheriff of Shropshire. It was hoped that these events could be re-arranged.

The Mayor highlighted that the next edition of the Wenlock Herald would be an online only publication due to the lockdown and would be available on the Church's website and social media pages. The Herald was a very useful document for local events and news and the Town Council was pleased to support it financially.

The Mayor noted the sad and sudden death of Suzanne Boulos over the Christmas break. He had fond memories of Suzanne Boulos both personally and through her involvement in Town Council projects. Suzanne had done much for the town and the Town Council, including taking photos of a range of Town Council and Wenlock events from Mayor Makings to the Battles Over event.

Finally, the Mayor issued a reminder to all that Much Wenlock Mutual Aid stood ready should anyone have need of its services. The Covid rate in Shropshire was still very high and lockdown rules had to be obeyed. On a positive note, the Mayor personally knew people who had already received the vaccine.

2. Apologies

None. All Councillors were present.

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.

4. Dispensations

None requested.

5. Shropshire Council report

Shropshire Councillor David Turner gave a verbal report. He reported that the footway outside 37 Barrow Street had been blocked by heras fencing for 13 months and despite assurances that there was a buyer in place for the property, no action had been taken. Councillor Turner had urged Shropshire Council officers to escalate their approach to the matter.

Councillor Turner noted that the impact of the Buildwas planning application would be felt in Much Wenlock.

Highways England had put a holding objection on the application due to concerns about the M54 modelling and it was now likely that the application would be considered by Shropshire Council in March.

The application for a change of use for 13 St Mary's Lane would be considered by Shropshire Council's Planning Committee due to local objections and Councillor Turner trusted that the Town Council would submit their comments.

Councillor Turner was thanked for his report.

6. Police Report

Members noted the report which had been submitted by the Local Policing Team. Thanks were expressed to the police for the report.

7. Presentation by Shropshire Climate Action Partnership

Allan Wilson of Shropshire Climate Action Partnership gave a presentation entitled 'Acting for the benefit of our communities and environment' on the topic of climate change and the Zero Carbon Shropshire Plan:

Shropshire Climate Action Partnership included many individuals and groups committed to addressing the climate crisis and was supported by Shropshire Council. The UK was committed to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 but the aim of the Shropshire Climate Action Partnership was to achieve the goal of a zero carbon Shropshire by 2030. The presentation gave an overview of the current world situation, based on scientific fact. The Town Council could play its part in reaching the Shropshire goal by, among other things, influencing residents and signposting to information. It was noted that most energy was used in transport and heating homes.

The Zero Carbon Shropshire Plan, A Call to Action, gave information on simple things that could be done to help reduce carbon footprint. The example of Little Wenlock Village Hall was cited as a case study in the installation of solar panels and other measures.

Councillors asked about incentives for 'going green' and addressing the problems of listed buildings. Mr Wilson advised that the government was exploring ways of retro-fitting houses to improve efficiency but that it had been identified that this would not be possible on around 10% of properties.

Councillors enquired about the possibility of installing small hydro-electric systems on fast flowing rivers or small solar panel ranges locally. Mr Wilson advised this was potentially possible but would need planning permission.

Mr Wilson was thanked for his presentation and left the meeting.

8. Public session

Mr Arthur Hill spoke about planning application 20/04432/FUL for Callaughtons Ash. He noted a report by WSP, Shropshire Council's drainage consultants, which stated WSP's objections to the application. The Drainage and Flood Risk Manager at Shropshire Council had been in touch with the Flood Group to discuss the application and drainage problems with the existing development. Mr Hill urged the Town Council to object to the application.

9. Minutes

- a. The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 3rd December 2020 were considered for approval.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 3rd December 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 3rd November 2020 be ADOPTED.**

10. Town Clerk's Report

Members received a written report from the Town Clerk on outstanding matters and action taken since the last Council meeting. She advised that, due to the latest lockdown restrictions, administrative staff were working from home again, going into the office only when work could not be completed from home. The Clerk had recently attended remote seminars on '10 Ways to Employee Wellbeing', provided by Ellis Whittam, the Council's HR Consultant, and on the forthcoming 2021 Census.

Members **NOTED** the report.

11. 2021-22 Budget

Members considered the draft budget for 2021-22. Shropshire Council had advised that there had been a reduction in the tax base (Band D equivalent) for Much Wenlock, from 1,220.73 in 2020-21 to 1,203.50 in 2021-22. This meant that to show a zero percent increase in the precept, the precept requirement would need be reduced compared to the previous year. The RFO outlined suggested amendments to the draft budget to achieve a reasonable increase in the level of precept.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve a budget of £260,754 and a precept of £208,203 for the financial year 2021-22.

This represented an increase of 1.8% over the previous year's precept, but an actual increase of 3.3% to due to the impact of the reduction in tax base.

The RFO was thanked for her work on the budget and left the meeting.

12. Planning Matters

- a. Members considered a recommendation from the Planning & Environment Committee with regard to a response to consultation on application 20/04432/FUL: Erection of 14 No. affordable dwellings with associated parking, roads and landscaping on proposed residential development land to the south of Callaughtons Ash.

It was noted that the Council had already submitted comments on this application but that the Shropshire Council Planning Officer had advised that it would not be possible to include the requested condition should the application be permitted. The resolution passed by the Planning Committee had therefore been rescinded and the application reconsidered.

Councillors were aware that the drainage on the existing development at Callaughtons Ash was inadequate and the scheme proposed for this development was also inadequate, as identified in the objection made by WSP, Shropshire Council's Drainage Consultant.

Councillor Harper outlined his concerns about other aspects of the application:

- The area of the land, which was greater than that specified in the National Planning Policy Framework for entry level exception sites, and the need to ensure compliance with the regulations on the location and setting of exemption sites
- The number of dwellings, which exceeded the guidance figure for affordable housing on exception sites in the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Development Plan (policy H5) and would result in a total of 26 dwellings for the complete development. The Shropshire Core Strategy set a maximum of 20 dwellings on an urban exception site (settlement of more than 3,000 people) and this site was a rural exception site.
- The need for affordable housing developments to be in the right place and safe for residents. The flooding problems made this site unsafe and other sites could be considered.

Councillors were keen to register their support for the development of affordable housing in the town. However, they acknowledged the flooding and drainage problems associated with the application site.

It was noted that Connexus had sought other sites for development in the town but had found none at an affordable price.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to submit the following comment to Shropshire Council for application 20/04432/FUL:

Much Wenlock Town Council supports the development of affordable housing on this site but objects to the application in its current form due to the poor design of the drainage system. Councillors support comments made by Shropshire Council's drainage consultant WSP and the views expressed by Much Wenlock Flood Group with regard to the drainage scheme.

- b. It was noted that Shropshire Council was inviting representations on the Local Plan Review - Regulation 19: Pre-Submission Draft of the Shropshire Local Plan, which must be submitted by 5pm on Friday, 5th February 2021. This consultation referred to compliance with all legal requirements, including the duty to co-operate and soundness.

Members considered comments on 'strategic corridors' provided by the Transport Working Group.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to submit the comments on 'strategic corridors' provided by the Transport Working Group.

13. Transport Working Group

Members noted a report from the Transport Working Group, which included comments on Buildwas Power Station, Shadwell Quarry, Callaughton Road housing, Sheinton Street Pedestrian Safety and a Much Wenlock Resident Transport Survey.

The Transport Group was thanked for their work and the report.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to place relevant matters on the agenda of the February full Council meeting.

14. Reinvigoration of Much Wenlock Town Centre

Members noted a report on progress with the initiatives financed by the Small Market Town Support Fund grant. It was noted that the new signs had been produced but would not be installed until restrictions were lifted.

15. Friends of the Old Cemetery

Councillor Hill outlined arrangements for the funeral of Suzanne Boulos, which would take place on 9th February at Shrewsbury crematorium, and advised that there would be no memorial in the town. It was suggested that a small garden be planted in the Old Cemetery, where Suzanne had been a volunteer. Suzanne’s family would also like to provide a bench alongside the flower bed.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to support the planting of a small flower bed and installation of a bench in memory of Suzanne Boulos in the Old Cemetery.

16. Lockdown Project

Councillor Hill provided an update on progress with the project to gather a record of local experiences of the coronavirus pandemic for retention in the archives. The project had been extended beyond the end of 2020 as the effects of the pandemic were still being felt. So far 46 individual submissions had been made to the project, with more to come, expressing a whole range of experiences. It was intended to produce a bound document for retention in the archives and possibly paperback copies to sell at cost. Shropshire Archives had requested a copy. It would also be important to make the document available on-line.

Members noted the report and expressed thanks to Councillor Hill and the volunteers working with her on the project.

17. The High Sheriff of Shropshire’s Outstanding Young Citizen Awards 2021

Members noted correspondence regarding the above award for young people aged 18 years and under.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to nominate Oran Stafford and Thomas Quinn, who had both worked hard during the lockdown to create excellent online church services and sermons.

18. Consultation

Councillors considered a response to the following consultation:

Shropshire Council’s Budget Consultation 2021-22.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to note the consultation but to make no response.

19. Census 2021

Members noted that the 2021 Census would be held on 21st March 2021.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to use the Town Council’s communication channels, such as information boards, website and social media, to raise awareness of the Census.

20. Correspondence

Members received and noted the following, which had been emailed to Members:

- a. SALC information bulletin and other information
- b. Shropshire Council Press Releases
- c. Rural Bulletins
- d. Community Reassurance Updates from Shropshire Council
- e. NHS 111 Stakeholder Briefing from Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Sustainability & Transformation Partnership.
- f. Friendly Bus Covid-19 Update November 2020 and Newsletter December 2020
- g. Shropshire Hills AONB Newsletter
- h. Link to Shropshire Council Tree Survey.

21. Agenda items for next town council meeting

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

- Transport matters, including Sheinton Street

22. Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on 4th February 2021.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Signed Date
Town Mayor