

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
at 7 pm on Thursday, 2nd September 2021

Present: Cllr. Michael Atherton, Cllr. David Fenwick, Cllr Mike Grace, Cllr Wilfred Grainger, Cllr. John O'Dowd, Cllr. Sam Neal, Cllr. Marcus Themans, Cllr. Daniel Thomas (in the chair), Cllr Robert Toft, Cllr Chris Tyler, Cllr. Duncan White

Town Clerk: Trudi Barrett

In attendance: Several members of the public

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported as follows:

He had enjoyed the musical entertainment recently provided by musicians in the Square and advised that anyone wishing to play music or busk in the Square should contact the Town Council.

The Mayor had been pleased to join a private group tour of Wenlock Abbey and expressed thanks to the owner. It was understood that further tours could be arranged for organised historical or art groups.

The Wenlock Olympian Games were due to go ahead over the weekend of 24th September and the Mayor had been invited to award medals. The Wenlock Olympian Society had done some great work recently in promoting the town's Olympian connection to an international audience during the Olympics.

The town had been the location for a short film during the summer and local people had volunteered as extras or helpers to support the event.

The Mayor also drew attention to the decision of the South Shropshire Planning Committee in rejecting the Buildwas Power Station application. This was in part due to the hard work of this Council, Councillors past and present, and different community members and groups, who all contributed to getting a good result for Much Wenlock.

The Chairman issued a reminder that Hymns on the Green would take place on 12th September at 4.30pm and encouraged people to attend.

2. Apologies for Absence

None – all Members 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 Daniel Thomas gave a verbal report:

The remaining Ironbridge Power Station chimney was scheduled for demolition between 10am and 1pm on 3rd September and roads around the area would be closed from 9am to 6pm.

The application for the development of the Power Station site had been refused by Shropshire Council. Councillor Thomas had spoken on the inadequacies of the plans for the Gaskell corner and the dangers of rat running. Concerns had also been expressed about the 5% of affordable homes proposed, considerably lower than the 20% policy requirement of Shropshire Council. Surprisingly, the applicant, Harworth, had submitted an amended proposal which was to be considered by Shropshire Council on 20th September. The application was to be reconsidered as the formal refusal notice had not been issued. This had been delayed due to a challenge from the applicant to the decision on procedural grounds, which had now been dismissed.

Councillor Thomas was pleased to report that Shadwell Quarry's lawful development application had been refused, as the increase from 55 to 130 chalets was considered too much of a material change. The owners had the right to appeal. Some tree clearance work had been carried out at the entrance to the site but this had not been sufficient to warrant action by Shropshire Council.

The previous week Councillor Thomas had met Steve Charmley, Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council and Portfolio Holder for Highways. They had considered rat running, drainage, electric charging points and bicycle racks for the town, some of which had been delayed due to Covid-19.

6. Police Report

Members of the local policing team had sent their apologies. Councillors noted the written report.

7. Public Session

There had been no requests to speak.

8. Minutes

- a. It was **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 8th July 2021.
- b. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meetings held on 1st June and 6th July 2021.

9. Town Clerk's Report

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

The Clerk was asked to obtain written information from Locality on funding opportunities for a review of the Neighbourhood Plan.

10. Document Retention Policy

Members reviewed a Document Retention Policy, as recommended by DM Payroll Services during the GDPR consultation on 22nd July 2021.

Councillors requested that a procedure for the review and disposal of sensitive documents be drawn up.

It was RESOLVED to approve the Document Retention Policy, subject to the production of and agreement to operational guidelines.

11. Welcome Back Fund

- a. Members noted that Shropshire Council had been awarded £288,000 by the Government through the Welcome Back Fund to encourage visitors and residents to return to town centres and that Much Wenlock had been allocated £5,999, based on population.
- b. Members noted that the scheme recognised the importance of town events in promoting and enhancing the town and that proposals had been submitted to Shropshire Council for funding for Christmas events. A response was awaited.

12. Highways Matters

- a. Members noted a verbal report from the meeting between members of the Transport Working Group and the Sheinton Street residents' group regarding highways matters. The Sheinton Street residents would like to expand to become a town wide group and were keen to undertake a traffic survey. CSO Mal Goddard had explained that if a survey were undertaken, this would need to operate within GDPR rules, for example, with regard to logging registration numbers.
The residents' group had been advised to apply for Town Council recognition if they wanted to become a town-wide organisation. It was recommended that the group draw up terms of reference that all members should sign up to.
- b. Members noted the results of speed surveys carried out by the local policing team on 19th July in Sheinton Street, Farley Road and Bridgnorth Road. The speeds recorded were all under 30mph but this might have been due to the presence of a uniformed police officer. It was not known in which part of Sheinton Street the surveys had been conducted and it was noted that the measurement was for traffic coming into town, rather than going out when speeds might be higher.

Members considered what might be done to slow traffic generally. It was noted that Shropshire Council was introducing a policy for 20mph speed limits outside schools.

It was RESOLVED that the Transport Working Group should consider the survey information in detail.

- c. Members considered information from Sgt Kate Øen regarding the PCC Road Safety Fund. Options for Much Wenlock might include white picket fences at the entrance to the town, automatic smiley face speed signs and number plate recognition cameras. A balance was needed so that traffic restrictions did not deter shoppers and tourists. It was suggested that the town might offer to be a trial location for innovative traffic calming measures.

It was RESOLVED that the Transport Working Group should explore road safety options that might be supported by funding from the PCC Road Safety Fund and report back to the Town Council for approval prior to submitting an application.

13. Transport Working Group Reporting Arrangements

Members considered a proposal from members of the Planning & Environment Committee that the Transport Working Group report to that committee, rather than to full Council.

It was RESOLVED to revise the Terms of Reference of the Transport Working Group to allow the Planning & Environment Committee to oversee the day to day work of the Transport Working Group but to ensure that significant or strategy decisions would come to full Council for approval.

14. Ironbridge Power Station Planning Application (ref. 19/05560/OUT)

- a. Members noted that the planning application for the Ironbridge Power Station was refused by Shropshire Council's Southern Planning Committee on 10th August 2021.
- b. With regard to the 'call in' request made by the Town Council, Members noted that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government had advised that as Shropshire Council had refused planning permission, the Secretary of State had no involvement unless the applicant subsequently appealed against the council's decision.
- c. It was noted that the application was to be re-considered by Shropshire Council on 20th September. The funding proposed in the application for the feasibility study for the Gaskell corner had been increased from £250k to £350k and, via association with others, the affordable housing quota proposed had been increased to 10%. However, the situation had not really changed for Much Wenlock; there might be more money for a study, but there was still no solution. Further representations could be made at the forthcoming meeting.

It was RESOLVED to inform the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government that the application had not been refused and would be reconsidered by Shropshire Council on 20th September 2021.

15. Climate Change

Members considered a discussion paper entitled "The Council's role in addressing twin emergencies of Climate Change and Nature" and a recommendation from the Planning & Environment Committee that the proposals be approved.

It was RESOLVED to:

- a. **Sign the Zero Carbon Shropshire pledge.**
- b. **Invite nominations for a volunteer from members of the Council to 'champion' our approach.**
- c. **Invite community activists to an introductory workshop in order to explore a Council and community-wide approach.**

It was RESOLVED that Mike Atherton be the Council's climate and nature champion.

16. Shropshire Council Local Plan Review

- a. Members noted that on 15th July 2021 Shropshire Council had approved the Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan 2016 to 2038 for submission to the Planning Inspectorate.
- b. Members considered a report prepared by Councillor Mike Grace on next steps and preparation for examination in public.

On the recommendation of the Planning & Environment Committee, it was RESOLVED

- 1. To undertake community consultation to prepare the case for the Examination in Public.**
- 2. To use a combination of options for engagement.**
- 3. To establish a working group under the Planning & Environment Committee to invite community members to help the Town Council to organise the consultation and prepare a case for agreement by the Town Council.**

It was RESOLVED that the working group should be called the Shropshire Local Plan Review Working Group, the membership should be formed of members of the Planning & Environment Committee and invited members of the community, the Group should be chaired by Councillor Mike Grace and should report to the Town Council. Terms of reference would be drawn up for approval.

17. The Friendly Bus

- a. Members noted that the AGM of the Friendly Transport Service (Shropshire) would be held on Wednesday, 15th September at 2pm at the Birchmeadow Centre, Broseley.
- b. Members noted that the Friendly Bus was seeking members for the Management Committee, particularly from Much Wenlock. **It was RESOLVED to publicise the AGM and to encourage members of the community to put themselves forward for election to the Management Committee.**

18. Consultation

Members noted the following consultation and considered a response from the Town Council:

- a. Shropshire County Pension Fund consultation on Climate Change Strategy and Climate Stewardship Plan – response required by 3rd September 2021 (extension to deadline)
It was RESOLVED to welcome the fact that the Shropshire County Pension Fund was considering the Fund’s approach to addressing the risks and opportunities related to climate change. Councillors endorsed and supported the direction of travel to ensure that investments were contributing positively to mitigate climate change. They urged the Fund to investigate opportunities for investment in areas that would benefit the county, for example, green finance for flood mitigation.
- b. West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner’s draft Safer West Mercia Plan 2021-2025 – closing date 1st November 2021.
It was RESOLVED that Councillor Robert Toft would prepare a draft response on behalf of the Town Council for consideration at the next meeting.
- c. Shropshire Council survey on bus services to support a bid to the Government’s ‘Bus Back Better’ fund – closing date 10th September.
 Members agreed that this should be supported to benefit those members of the community who relied on public transport.
It was RESOLVED that Councillor White would respond on behalf of the Town Council.
 The survey would be publicised and Councillors were urged to respond individually.
- d. Shropshire Council Gambling Act Policy Consultation – closing date 19th September 2021.
 Noted.

19. Correspondence

Members **NOTED** the following:

- a. SALC information bulletin and other information.
- b. Friendly Bus Newsletter September 2021
- c. Rural Bulletins from the Rural Services Network
- d. Community Reassurance update 09.07.21
- e. Police SNT update 01.07.21 – 01.08.21
- f. Invitation to Telford Samaritans AGM on 27th September at 7.30pm
- g. Connecting Shropshire Update August 2021
- h. NALC 2021 election survey

20. Agenda Items for Next Town Council Meeting

Members suggested the following item for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting:

Local Plan

21. Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting would be held at 7.00pm on Thursday, 7th October 2021 at the Guildhall.

Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

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

It was RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow the meeting to continue past 9.00 pm

22. Complaint

Councillors considered a complaint from a member of the public.

It was RESOLVED to respond directly and to await a response before taking any further action.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Signed Date
Town Mayor