

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
at 7 pm on Thursday, 1st December 2022

Present: Councillors William Benbow, Susan Crooke-Williams, David Fenwick, Wilfred Grainger, John O'Dowd, Marcus Themans, Daniel Thomas, Christian Toon, Chris Tyler, Linda West, Duncan White (in the chair)

In attendance: Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, PCSO Mal Goddard, one member of the public in person and one remotely

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and presented the following report:

Since the last full Council meeting it has been a busy month for meetings and I have also helped with selling poppies and with the Remembrance parades at both Bourton and Much Wenlock churches. I also attended the lovely, annual ceremony at the cemetery with some of the children from Much Wenlock primary school.

I have been holding preliminary meetings with local groups in an effort to make further use of the library on those days when it is closed. This is part of an undertaking we have made with Shropshire Council to make best use of our buildings.

I have continued to volunteer at the Windmill Trust and in the old part of the cemetery, assisting with pruning and raking, as well as helping at the Priory Hall Craft Fayre and the cancer charity event held at the Hall.

On 24th November I attended the unveiling of a plaque at Pinefields House to commemorate the residence of Dean Cranage, which was also attended by the High Sheriff of Shropshire and other dignitaries. Dean Cranage spent years compiling a record of the architecture of all the churches throughout the county, which is valued to this day and is unique to Shropshire and the envy of other counties.

On the same day I attended a drop-in at the Priory Hall with the High Sheriff, who met some of our local volunteer groups to thank them for all they contribute to our community. In the evening we also had the very successful and well attended Christmas lights switch-on, with the lights being switched on by local fund raiser, Jimmy Moore. I would like to give a big thank you to those who gave up their free time to assist us with stewarding and to the First Responders. A collection was made throughout the event which raised £219.41 for the Midlands Air Ambulance.

We have recently visited Shifnal to see their CCTV system. We have begun work to see how our town system can be upgraded and today we had a meeting with an installation company who will advise us on options for extending and improving our current CCTV provision.

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.

4. Dispensations

None requested.

5. Public Session

There had been no requests to speak.

6. Policing

Members noted with thanks the written police report provided. PCSO Mal Goddard also reported that a new PCSO had been expected to join the local team in January, however, they had now been advised that there would be no new member until March.

7. Shropshire Council Report

Shropshire Councillor, Daniel Thomas, presented the following report:

The feasibility study for the Gaskell Corner has started and you will have seen the monitors and cameras at various points in the town. Members of the Transport Working Group and I will be meeting the person in charge of the study at WSP to discuss the Council's objectives, raised at the last Council and Planning Committee meetings.

Much-needed road repairs will be undertaken on Barrow Street, which will be closed from 16th to 20th January, Monday - Friday, 09:30 - 16:00 each day.

The next Council surgery will be held on Saturday, 14th January, between 10.30 am and 12 noon at the museum. No appointment is necessary. I'll be joined by Town Mayor, Cllr Duncan White, and a representative from the Police.

It was noted that the cameras installed by WSP had only been in position for around 36 hours over a Wednesday, when many shops closed at lunchtime or did not open at all. There had been no advance notice of the installation or discussion with the Shropshire Councillor or Town Council. This should be raised as an issue with WSP.

With regard to the parking proposals for the town, Cllr Thomas advised that public consultation would probably be undertaken in January and that proposals for Station Road and the Sytche could be added at that time.

8. Confirmation of Local Connection

It was RESOLVED to consider this agenda item in public.

Members considered a request for confirmation of 'strong local connection' in relation to an application for a 'Build Your Own' affordable home. The applicant was in attendance and stated that he met at least two of the eligibility criteria specified by Shropshire Council:

- he had lived in his house in Homer for 33 years
- he was over 55 and had family members living at Wigwig.

Members were satisfied that the above was factually correct. **It was RESOLVED to formally confirm to Shropshire Council the applicant's 'Strong Local Connection' to the area.**

9. Minutes

- a. **It was RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 3rd November 2022.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 4th October 2022.**
- c. **It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Finance & Asset Management Committee meeting held on 26th October 2022.**
- d. **It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on 11th October 2022.**

10. 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 check whether the Christmas lights contractor might be able to fit a new rope to the flag pole at the Guildhall when using the cherry picker to remove the lights.

11. Finance & Asset Management Committee

It was RESOLVED that Councillor Tyler cease to be a member of the Finance & Asset Management Committee and that Councillor Crooke-Williams be appointed in his place.

12. Correspondence with Andy Begley, Shropshire Council

Members noted the response to the Town Council's complaint regarding the performance of Shropshire Council's contractors, in particular, WSP. A response had been received late in the afternoon from Prof. Mark Barrow, Executive Director: Place, who had written on behalf of Andy Begley, Chief Executive.

It was RESOLVED that the letter from Prof. Mark Barrow had been received too late for proper consideration at this meeting and that Councillors would therefore consider his response at the January full Council meeting.

13. CCTV

Members received a verbal report on progress with investigating options for improving the Council's CCTV system. The Mayor and Councillor Fenwick, along with the Town Clerk and Admin. Assistant, had recently visited Shifnal to view that Town Council's CCTV system. The system incorporated 26 cameras and highlighted how much better the Much Wenlock system could be. The current Town Council cameras were 0.3 megapixel resolution and the standard resolution was now 8 megapixels.

A meeting had been held earlier in the day with a representative from the company which had supplied the Shifnal system. The representative had been shown around Much Wenlock to identify where cameras might be sited and how wireless connections could be made. A report, proposals and costings would be provided. It was noted that modern cameras could have a wide angle, covering 180 degrees, and that cameras could be fixed to street lights. Monitoring could only be undertaken in the public domain and any private areas covered would be blocked out on the viewing screen. In due course, it was intended to seek grant funding from the Police & Crime Commissioner.

14. 'Flood Sax' and Road Closure Barriers

Members considered whether to become involved in the provision of 'Flood Sax' and Road Closure Barriers for flooding events to help provide a more immediate response than was possible for Shropshire Council. 'Flood Sax' were special, empty bags that were designed to be filled with water when needed and were therefore easier to store and transport than sandbags. It was, however, noted that the Flood Sax were intended for single use, rotted after a few months and could be difficult to dispose of. Road closure signs were important in certain areas of the town, such as the High Street, to stop four wheel drive vehicles travelling along flooded roads and causing waves of flood water to enter houses.

It was RESOLVED to identify storage options for road closure signs at suitable locations around the town.

It was RESOLVED to take a stock of Flood Sax from Shropshire Council once public interest had been gauged and the number required had been established.

The Strategic Flood Working Group would look into the detail of requirements, management and how to engage with residents. The working group would liaise with Town Council administrative staff.

15. Designation of Windmill Field as a Local Nature Reserve

Members considered correspondence from Much Wenlock Windmill Trust regarding the designation of Windmill Field as a Local Nature Reserve, and a request for financial support from the Town Council. It was noted that the Trust had obtained the support of the landowner. Councillors had a number questions about the potential designation, subsequent management of the site and the consequences of the change in status.

It was RESOLVED to defer consideration of the designation of Windmill Field as a Local Nature Reserve until the next meeting and to invite the Chairperson of the Much Wenlock Windmill Trust to speak on the matter.

16. Christmas Lights Display

It was agreed that the Christmas lights switch-on had been very successful and well-attended. Thanks were expressed to all those who had helped with the event. The working group would meet to review the event.

17. Christmas Closure

It was RESOLVED to agree the following office closure dates for the Christmas period: closing on Wednesday, 21st December 2022 and reopening on Tuesday, 3rd January 2023.

18. Consultation

Members considered a response to the following consultation:

- a. The Boundary Commission for England, constituency boundary changes – deadline for final public consultation 5th December 2022.
It was noted that the Council had previously submitted a comment regarding the proposed name of the constituency. **It was RESOLVED to make no further comment.**
- b. Shropshire Council electoral division boundary changes – deadline 30th January 2023.
It was RESOLVED to make no comment at this stage.
- c. Shropshire Council Draft Tenancy Strategy – deadline 6th January 2023.
It was RESOLVED to submit no formal response but to make the informal comment that it would be helpful if the changes made could be highlighted in future consultation on strategy and policy documents.

19. Correspondence

Members noted the following items, which had been emailed to Members:

- a. SALC information bulletins and other information
- b. NALC newsletters and other information
- c. Press releases from Shropshire Council
- d. Rural Bulletins from the Rural Services Network
- e. Information from the RSN Rural Market Town Group
- f. Notification of road closure for works to A458 Harley Bank
- g. Email regarding the Citizen's Good Food Challenge

20. Agenda items for next Town Council meeting

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

- Report back from meeting with WSP regarding Gaskell corner feasibility study

21. Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting would be held at 7.00pm on Thursday, 5th January 2023 at the Guildhall.

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm.

Signed
Town Mayor

Date