



Much Wenlock Town Council

Town Council Meeting

7th September 2023

Supporting Papers

Town and Parish Council Priorities

Council	Date of Priorities	Priority 1	Priority 2	Priority 3
Astley Abbotts Parish Council	Jul – Sep 2023	Theft (Farms)	Wildlife Crime	Anti-social Driving
Barrow Parish Council	Jul – Sep 2023	Theft (Farms)	Speeding	Theft (Dwelling)
Broseley Town Council	Jul – Sep 2023	Anti-Social Behaviour	Theft (Other)	Drugs
Easthope, Shipton and Stanton Long Parish Council	Jul – Sep 2023	Theft (Outbuildings)	Theft (Farms)	Speeding
Much Wenlock Town Council	Jul – Sep 2023	Theft (Outbuildings)	Drugs	Speeding
Morville, Acton Round, Aston Eyre, Monkhopton and Upton Cressett Parish Council	Jul – Sep 2023	Theft (Farms)	Speeding	Wildlife Crime
Tasley Parish Council	Jul – Sep 2023	Anti-Social Behaviour	Drugs	Speeding

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
at 7 pm on Thursday, 6th July 2023

Present: Councillors Will Benbow, Susan Crooke-Williams, Wilfred Grainger, Marcus Themans (in the chair), Daniel Thomas, Linda West, Duncan White

In attendance: Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, PCSO Mal Goddard and PC Emma Strangwood, eight members of the public in person and two remotely plus Cllr David Fenwick.

1. Mayor's Welcome

In the absence of the Mayor, Councillor Marcus Themans, Deputy Mayor, welcomed everyone to the meeting. On behalf of the Council, he expressed sorrow at the recent death of Robert Toft, a former Town Councillor, and passed on the Council's sincere condolences to Robert's family.

Councillor Themans remarked on the terrible flood event which the town had experienced the previous month as a result of an extraordinary and extremely localised storm. This had shown a lot of weaknesses in the town's drainage system, some of which not been seen before. Councillor Themans was pleased to report that Shropshire Council was addressing the issues and he looked forward to ongoing discussions.

Other notable events in the town during the last month included a 'Made in Shropshire' Fair and the Wenlock Olympics, both of which Councillors had been involved in. The Much Wenlock Open Gardens event the previous weekend had also been a great success. The Mayor and Councillor Crooke-Williams had attended a SALC area committee meeting on behalf of the Council.

2. Apologies for Absence

Councillor David Fenwick – holiday, John O'Dowd – unwell, Councillor Christian Toon – work, Councillor Chris Tyler – late arrival.

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

- a. A member of the public stated that he knew preparation of a traffic management scheme for the Gaskell corner was in progress. He looked forward to seeing the report but urged an experimental period to ensure that the system recommended would work before introducing any permanent changes.
- b. A member of the public who lived in Sheinton Street, at the bottom of the town bowl, expressed his concerns about flooding. He had already discussed these with the Shropshire Council representatives attending the meeting. He mentioned the failure to maintain the eco-kerbs and drains and noted that a drain in Sheinton Street had been removed nine months ago and not been replaced. A promise had been made to rectify this within four weeks of the recent flood but now, into week four, there had been no action. He stated that because the drains were not effective, splash damage was affecting Listed buildings in the street, which could result in legal challenge from residents.
The resident referenced the failure to improve the drainage system in the town, the duty on providers to improve and expand drainage systems and the need to bring those systems up to modern standards. A report on flooding and the resident's thoughts on how to improve the situation was distributed to Members at the end of the meeting.
- c. The Chair of the Much Wenlock Flood Action Group reported that the National Flood Forum and Flood Action Group had triggered a S19 complaint against Shropshire Council over their duty of care following flooding. The evidence had been presented to Shropshire Council and a response was expected within the specified period. He praised Shropshire Council's Drainage and Flood Risk Manager but felt that the Highways department and others made promises with regard to flooding mitigation which were not kept.

In positive news, a good relationship had been established with the CEO of Severn Trent Water. Much Wenlock was to be the first town to receive a new automatic sewage screen which would allow water through but would prevent anything else entering the river. Work on this project would start within three months. Thanks were expressed to the CEO of Severn Trent and members of the Flood Group.

6. Policing

The Deputy Mayor welcomed PCSO Mal Goddard and PC Emma Strangwood to the meeting. PC Strangwood had just joined the local policing team from Ludlow, having been with West Mercia Police for around 15 years in total. She was aware of local issues and had worked with PCSO Goddard previously. A new PCSO was also expected to join the team within the next couple of weeks.

Members noted the written and verbal report provided and thanked PCSO Goddard for the regular reports. The officers left the meeting.

7. Shropshire Council Report

Shropshire Councillor, Daniel Thomas, presented the following report:

“Flooding: my sympathies go out to the people of Much Wenlock who were flooded this time with the exceptional rainfall we had last month. I came out with a shovel to help with any blocked drains and saw Bourton Road like a river. I will praise the excellent work of the Shropshire Council street scene cleaning teams, who cleaned up the town the next day, and the drainage cleaning teams who worked both the next day and the Sunday after preparing Much Wenlock for the next thunderstorms we had from about 8am to 8pm. I was there to support the work and was very impressed with the officers’ work ethic. My thanks go out to all the people of Much Wenlock who helped with traffic marshalling and supporting neighbours.

Shropshire Council’s Drainage and Flood Risk Manager, John Bellis, is coming to Much Wenlock to look further at flooding and the culverts this month. And of course, I am delighted to see Andrew Wilde, Head of Highways and Richard Marshall, Portfolio holder, here tonight working with us. They will take questions from Town Councillors.

Vape Pen Motion: at the Shropshire Council meeting today, I proposed a motion to call on the Government to ban disposable vape pens. This is a type of electronic cigarette, which lasts for around 600 “puffs” and contains valuable materials such as lithium batteries and copper, as well as plastic. I have seen them discarded on walks around our town and the lithium and copper is essential for our green transition. Similarly, they are likely to cause a next health epidemic in young people. I am delighted to say the motion gained cross party support and a letter will be going to Government shortly.

Meet the Leader: the Leader of Shropshire Council, Councillor Lezley Picton, will be at the Corn Exchange on Thursday 13th July from 10 am until midday. Councillor Picton is coming to Wenlock for a drop-in session to answer questions from the public about the wide range of work Shropshire Council undertakes as well as to understand issues specific to Much Wenlock, something she will be well aware of from my meetings with her. Slots will be available on a first come, first served basis and everyone is welcome.

Advice Surgery: my next advice surgery will be held on this Saturday 8th July, between 10:30 am until 12 noon at the museum. No appointment is necessary and I’ll be joined by Town Councillor Linda West and a representative from the police.”

8. Review of Flood Event in Much Wenlock on 12th June 2023

- a. The Deputy Mayor welcomed to the meeting Shropshire Councillor Richard Marshall, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Regulatory Services, and Mr Andy Wilde, Head of Highways at Shropshire Council. He noted it was important not to blame, but to find solutions to the ongoing problems in Much Wenlock. There was clearly an issue with funding and he urged Shropshire Council to work with the Town Council, the Flood Forum and the community to see where more money could be obtained to get things done.
- b. Councillor Marshall thanked the Town Council for the invitation to attend the meeting and responded to points raised as follows:
 - He would speak to the relevant officer at Shropshire Council the following day regarding replacement of the drain in Sheinton Street.
 - He fully understood the frustrations with flooding and the drainage system and Shropshire Council was doing as much as they could at the moment. The recent flood response and the way the team had mobilised had been impressive.
 - The financial pressures had been widely reported and sometimes there was no choice but to push back flood alleviation measures due to other priorities, such as social care.
 - A significant amount had been invested in pothole repair and Shropshire Council was working hard behind the scenes to open up the opportunity to purchase from smaller, local operators.

Mr Wilde expressed thanks for the invitation to attend the meeting and made the following points:

- Significant changes had been made to the Highways service over the past two years, including improved service, reduced unit cost, driving down defects and addressing the root causes of defects, often water and lack of drainage. The Council had started self-delivering many services. Previously contractors had not always addressed the underlying causes of problems and had not captured data to help resolve them.
- Funding was a challenge but the Council had been successful in securing some external funding from the Challenge Fund for work in Much Wenlock and other market towns affected by flooding.
- The Council was working with partner agencies to gain a comprehensive picture of the causes and effects of flooding. The recent event in Much Wenlock had been a 1 in 100 year flood event. These were becoming more common and many factors could have an impact; all data needed to be captured.
- Shropshire Council was negotiating with landowners to explore ways of slowing the flow and mitigating flooding on private land.
- Design work for flood alleviation measures was in progress and Shropshire Council was working with other organisations. He was confident that the resources were in place to move forward positively, although support from the community would be essential to reach the best outcome.
- The reality was that prevention and mitigation would help but the problems were acute and any drainage system in the world would sometimes be overwhelmed.
- The recent flood response had been very effective and appreciated by the community.

Town Councillors raised the following questions:

Q Shropshire Council's Drainage and Flood Risk Manager was very highly regarded but under-resourced, just one person. Councillors were also concerned about the relationship with WSP as often, after allocation of work to WSP, there was no action.

A The WSP contract had just been re-let for four years. Some staff who had previously been externalised had been brought back into Shropshire Council's team. The team was now structured differently: two members of staff had been added to the flooding team and another was being recruited. In addition, the team had been equipped with jetting and camera equipment and could provide better information and intelligence from the field.

No specific concerns about the performance of WSP had been flagged with Mr Wilde before and projects he had been involved with had met their timescales, although he was prepared to look into the concerns of Councillors.

Q MW was a rapid response catchment area and in a unique situation that required unique management. Various strands were being pulled together but there was no overall strategy or policy document specifying relevant management arrangements. This meant it was not possible to see where the gaps were and also meant that it was not possible to make the case for funding as strongly as might be done.

Several reports had been produced on flooding in the town, including the Mouchel report. Had Shropshire Council ever reviewed the actions recommended in this report?

A Yes, the Mouchel report had prompted some of the attenuation, however, it might be that some work that had been recommended had not been followed through.

Q Was it correct that the Government was releasing funds to address flooding?

A Yes, funding pots were available but Shropshire Council had to be selective and put together a case. The funding offered was often for specific scenarios. The Council did submit applications but was not always successful.

Q What funding did Shropshire Council have and how would it be shared?

A The Council had been successful in securing funding of £3.2m for five towns in Shropshire. The funding would be allocated when designs were in place; some flooding problems were easier to solve than others. One of the changes that had been made in the WSP contract was to ensure that WSP was more proactive in seeking and securing external funding for Shropshire Council.

Q The Town Council had often been dissatisfied with the poor service and performance of WSP.

A In some areas they were very effective and in others not so effective. A good outcome often started with a good instruction. There was now a new arrangement in place and new expectations of WSP.

Q A S19 report had been mentioned - was this something that was being actioned?

A It was believed so, but Andy Wilde would follow this up.

- Q Was it worth providing examples of WSP's poor performance?
- A One of the questions to be asked was 'how smart have we been in commissioning' and how specific have our instructions been? The flood and drainage team had been increased now and there would be more support with issuing instructions.
- A There was a lot to be said for having a single point of contact for flooding issues, to prevent people being passed from pillar to post.
- Q The current flood manager was excellent, but he needed support.
- A Members of the team on the ground were now much better equipped to provide information and support.
- Q It was necessary to understand what a good solution to the flooding looked like, to aim high and try to obtain funding for the best option, rather working within the available budget but not aiming for the best solution.
- A Yes, a 'best solution' would inform applications for funding. It would be helpful to talk through ideas with the Town Council's Planning Committee and the Flood Group to work out what the best scheme would look like. That wouldn't mean that everything was achievable, but it would help with funding applications.

Councillors and Shropshire Council representatives agreed that a dialogue and partnership should be maintained and to work towards a comprehensive solution to the problems.

The Shropshire Council representatives were thanked for attending and left the meeting.

Councillor Linda West left the meeting.

9. Minutes

- a. **It was RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 8th June 2023.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 2nd May 2023.**

10. Town Clerk's Report

Members noted the written and verbal report from the Town Clerk.

11. The Guildhall Project

A meeting had been held with Greenwood Projects the previous week. Councillors noted that the consultant was performing very well. In addition to the £12,000 AHF Fund, the Council's application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund had been successful and the Council had been offered £25,250 towards the Guildhall Project. This was very welcome and also gave encouragement that it would be possible to access further funding for the next stage of project.

It was RESOLVED to accept the grant offer of £25,250 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

12. 'Climate Champion' for the Town Council

Members were asked to review the role of Climate Champion, currently held by Councillor Christian Toon, and confirm the appointment of a Councillor to the position. No firm decision could be taken as Councillor Toon was absent and his view was not known. Councillor Toon was to be asked whether he wished to continue in the role. Responsibility for environmental matters would continue to come under the Planning & Environment Committee meeting.

13. CCTV

At the recent SALC meeting it had been reported that funding for CCTV might still be available through the Police and Crime Commissioner's office. The Clerk was asked to check this and report back as it had been stated previously that there was no such funding available from the PCC for 2023/24.

14. Shropshire Council Place Plan

- a. Councillors considered information about the review of the Much Wenlock Place Plan by Shropshire Council. Shropshire Council were trying to rationalise their approach to addressing issues raised to help prioritise and move projects forward. It was noted that the Place Plan was for projects arising from development, not maintenance issues. Town and Parish Councils were invited to submit achievable projects for consideration.
- b. Members reviewed projects already included in the Place Plan and considered projects for submission by the Town Council, including those recommended by the Planning & Environment Committee.

It was RESOLVED to submit the following projects to Shropshire Council for inclusion in the Much Wenlock Place Plan:

- Strategic flood provision (details to be confirmed with Shropshire Council's Drainage & Flood Risk Manager) (priority 1)
- Gaskell corner traffic management scheme (priority 1)
- Introduction of a 40mph buffer zone near to the primary school on the A458 to include an upgrade to the crossing (priority 1)
- Road safety improvements on the A458 near to The Edge Adventure Centre, such as moving the 30mph speed limit to the other side of Newtown Farm, and proposals from the responsible highways engineer of the introduction of red tarmac and road markings (priority 2)
- Introduction of a 40mph buffer zone on the Stretton Road (priority 2)
- Improvements to the junction of Southfield Road with the A458, Victoria Road (priority 2)
- 20mph zones by the schools in the town (priority 2)
- Improving the heavily trafficked footpath between the town centre and Gaskell Ground/school (priority 2)

Members noted that the Rights of Way officer at Shropshire Council had advised that the kissing gate at the entrance to the footpath could be replaced with a more accessible gate and that around 10m of stone could be laid on the ground. Councillors welcomed this news and Councillor Dan Thomas agreed to follow this up.

It was noted that the crossing by the primary school was already in Shropshire Council's list of works as well as a 30mph speed limit at Callaughtons Ash.

The Clerk was asked to circulate the above to all Councillors in case there were any additional, last minute proposals.

15. Much Wenlock Leisure Centre

Members expressed concern about the condition of Much Wenlock Leisure Centre. The leisure centre was sorely in need of maintenance and repairs with problems such as broken lockers, showers that didn't work and changing rooms that didn't lock as well as ageing paintwork. Members thought the poor standards and service arose from poor leadership. Councillor Dan Thomas had also received a complaint about the condition of the leisure centre from Northgate Swimming Club. It was understood that much of the maintenance was the responsibility of William Brookes School and it was hoped that the new business manager at the school would be able to improve matters.

It was RESOLVED to speak to the business manager at William Brookes School about the condition of the leisure centre and to send a letter outlining the Council's concerns to Councillor Robert Macey, the portfolio holder at Shropshire Council.

16. Future Fit / Hospitals Transformation Programme for Shropshire

Members considered a motion to support the retention of fully functioning accident and emergency departments at both Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and Princess Royal Hospital, Telford.

Councillor Croke-Williams expressed the view that there were not enough specialists in Shropshire to run effective accident and emergency departments at both hospitals. It was not possible to recruit sufficient specialists as they were drawn to the larger hospitals elsewhere.

It was RESOLVED to fully support the retention of Accident and Emergency departments at both Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and Princess Royal Hospital, Telford.

A recorded vote was requested: Councillors William Benbow, Wilfred Grainger, Marcus Themans, Daniel Thomas and Duncan White supported the motion, Councillor Croke-Williams voted against.

17. Consultation

Members considered a response to the following consultation:

- a. Statement of Licensing Policy 2024 – 2029. Deadline for response: 27th August 2023.

Councillors noted comments from a member of the public regarding caravan site licensing. Street market licensing and waste licensing should also be considered. Councillors were asked to review the draft policy and submit comments to the Clerk by 14th August.

- b. Town and Parish Council survey from the Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia. Deadline for response: 14th August 2023. **It was RESOLVED that Councillor Duncan White should respond on behalf of Council.**

18. 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. Police Neighbourhood Matters alerts
- g. VCSA newsletters
- h. News from Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust
- i. Advertisement for Carbon Literacy Course from Save our Shropshire

19. Agenda items for next Town Council meeting

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

For the next Planning Committee meeting, the Clerk was asked to include on the agenda possible projects to improve biodiversity and a review of what had already been done.

20. Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 7th September 2023 at 7.00pm at the Guildhall, Much Wenlock.

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.

21. Consultants for Neighbourhood Plan Review

Members considered proposals submitted by consultants to support a review of the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan.

It was RESOLVED that discussions should be held with a shortlist of three consultants following which Councillors would select a consultant to support the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillors David Fenwick, William Benbow, Wilfred Grainger and Chris Tyler would be involved in this process (subject to availability) and would report back to Council.

22. Correspondence

Councillors were advised of recent correspondence.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

Signed Mayor Date

01/23

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a **Planning & Environment Committee meeting**
held at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 6th June 2023 at the Guildhall, Much Wenlock

Present: Councillors William Benbow, David Fenwick (in the chair), Wilf Grainger, Daniel Thomas, Linda West.

In attendance: Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, a member of the Flood Group.

1. Election of Chairperson

It was **RESOLVED** to elect Councillor David Fenwick as Chairperson of the Committee.

2. Election of Deputy Chairperson

It was **RESOLVED** to elect Councillor William Benbow as Deputy Chairperson of the Committee.

3. Apologies

Councillor Chris Tyler – family matter.

4. 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.

5. Dispensations

None requested.

6. Public Session

There had been no requests to speak.

7. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 2nd May 2023 be **APPROVED** and signed as a true record.

8. Planning Applications

Members considered a response to the following planning applications:

23/01728/LBC 11 Barrow Street, Much Wenlock	Replacement Windows and Door Affecting a Grade II Listed Building. It was RESOLVED no objection.
23/01805/FUL Wheatland Garage, Bridgnorth Road, Much Wenlock	<p>Partial demolition of the existing retail convenience store and construction of extensions, revision to car parking facilities, provision of four electric vehicle charging points, installation of solar panels on extension roof and change of use of the ground floor of 17 St Marys Road to a coffee shop (resubmission).</p> <p>Members noted the comments submitted by the Flood Group. There was no mention of drainage at all in the application.</p> <p>Due to the deadline for response the Town Council's comments had been agreed between meetings and submitted to Shropshire Council.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to approve the objection submitted, as follows:</p> <p>Much Wenlock Town Council maintains its objection to the application on the grounds previously stated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The commercialisation of St Mary's Road by conversion of 17 St Mary's Road to a café and the noise, smell and disruption to local residents arising from a café on the street. 2. The loss of a residential unit. 3. The transport statement does not deal with the potential problems of accessing St Mary's Road (Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan policy EJ3 refers).

02/23

Furthermore, the Council submits the following comments regarding transport issues, provided by the Town Council's Transport Working Group:

1. The Transport Statement accompanying the Planning Application claims that the current site is served by two accesses; one from A458 Bridgnorth Road and another from St Mary's Road. This is a mistake that should have been rectified at the site visit: there is a third, well-used access, also onto St Mary's Road. This is only acknowledged in the scheme drawings.

2. There is no plan of the existing site layout or operation, which should be provided to allow proper comparisons.

3. The statement at 3.7 that there has been no Personal Injury Collisions within 500m of the site in the last five years is wrong. A female driver was killed and two children injured in an accident on the A458 in July 2022.

4. In Much Wenlock there are retail options and cafés nearer to the majority of residents than Wheatland Garage. These residents are unlikely to walk past existing cafés to get to Wheatland Garage. It is therefore likely that the majority of customers at the Wheatland Garage café and take-away will be car-based.

5. Table 4.1 describes a small increase in the retail floorspace and claims that 40-50% are walk-in customers. Therefore this does not justify a parking increase of 81% (22-40 spaces). The Transport Statement at para 4.10 concedes this point, stating that 21 spaces would be the normal, acceptable provision. The report provides no logical, acceptable justification for this over-provision, which will generate more traffic, contrary to Shropshire Council's Adopted Policy.

6. The report completely relies on a TRICS analysis of the traffic forecast for the development. There is no reason why observed, empirical data could not have been used. This would have provided a more realistic assessment of the impact of adding on the café and take-away traffic.

7. Traffic leaving the existing garage onto St Mary's Road already causes problems by blocking the road. No thought has been given to how a new development might mitigate this problem. The increased traffic flows from the over-provision of car parking will only exacerbate this issue.

8. The Transport Statement describes the complicated means by which large HGVs will manoeuvre and service the site. The Statement does not describe how the developer proposes to ensure that delivery vehicles approach the site from the A458 Shrewsbury direction. Lorries entering from any other direction will cause chaos.

The following comments are in addition to those previously submitted and repeated above:

1. Much Wenlock Town Council strongly supports the comments by the Highway Authority on this revised application and expects to see the questions they have raised answered in full. The Town Council would appreciate a seat at the table of any meeting between the applicant and Shropshire Council.

2. The Transport Statement at 3.7 continues to claim that there has been no Personal Injury Collisions within 500m of the site in the last five years. This is wrong and was pointed out in this Council's last submission. Sadly, on 10th July 2022, a female driver was killed and two children injured in an accident on the A458 Bridgnorth Road within 250 metres of the Wheatland site. It is true that this accident does not appear on the 'Crashmap' website; however, the author of the Transport Statement should investigate further to confirm this incident.

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23/01477/FUL 14 Stretton Road, Much Wenlock	Single storey side extension, external insulation and render. It was RESOLVED no objection.
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9. Planning Decisions

It was **RESOLVED** to note the following planning decisions:

23/01264/FUL The Stables, Victoria Road, Much Wenlock	Relocate field access track with parking and access steps Decision: Grant Permission
23/01388/FUL 1 Manor View, Bourton, Much Wenlock	Erection of two storey side extension including juliet balcony to rear, single storey rear extension and porch to front. Decision: Grant Permission
23/00695/FUL Coates Kilns, Stretton Westwood, Much Wenlock	Creation of new one-way access and installation of sewage treatment plant Decision: Grant Permission
23/01756/TCA 11 Barrow Street, Much Wenlock	Fell 1no Norway Spruce, 1no Leylandii and 1no Mountain Ash within Much Wenlock Conservation Area. Decision: Consent by Right - Trees
23/01852/TPO Land Adj. 2 High Causeway, Much Wenlock	Prune back canopy from building by 3-4m of 1no Sycamore covered by the Bridgnorth District Council (Land at 2 High Causeway, Much Wenlock) TPO 2007 (Ref: BR/TPO/142) Decision: Grant Permission

10. Application 21/05706/DSA106 – The Lydens, Station Road (Scoltocks Yard)

Members reviewed information regarding the viability appraisal for the development at Scoltocks Yard and the explanation for removal of the obligation for payment of the affordable housing contribution. There was no further action to be taken.

11. Draft Shropshire Local Plan Review 2016 - 2038

Work within Shropshire Council was ongoing but there was nothing further to report.

12. Flooding Issues

- a. Report from the Strategic Flood Working Group: a response on several matters was awaited from Shropshire Council's Drainage and Flood Risk Manager. There was nothing further to report.
- b. Members noted a report from the AGM of the Much Wenlock Flood Group and an update on other flooding matters. It was noted that the Flood Group would now agree responses to planning applications locally, without involvement from the National Flood Forum, due to timing constraints.
- c. Members were advised that a Shropshire Council team had visited Station Road prior to work to reinstate drains and Hunters Gate to inspect the new drainage provision.

13. Transport and Highways Matters

- a. Members received a report from the Transport Working Group. It was noted that the final meeting with WSP had been held regarding the Gaskell junction study.
- b. Members noted that the proposal to extend the 30mph speed limit in Callaughton Lane had received overwhelming support and would be delivered at the earliest opportunity.

14. Place Plan

- a. Members considered information regarding the review of Shropshire Council Place Plans.
- b. Members reviewed the projects listed for Much Wenlock by Shropshire Council and considered the submission of additional projects for inclusion by the response date of 7th August 2023, for recommendation to full Council.

Members noted several projects for the Leisure Centre were already listed and questioned the suitability of these projects for inclusion in the Place Plan. The Clerk was asked to include an item on the condition of the Leisure Centre on the July full Council agenda.

Initial suggestions for projects to be submitted by the Town Council for the Place Plan were:

- Strategic flood provision
- Introduction of a 40mph buffer zone near to the primary school on the A458

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- Road safety improvements on the A458 near to The Edge Adventure Centre, such as moving the 30mph speed limit to the other side of Newtown Farm
- Introduction of a 40mph buffer zone on the Stretton Road
- Improvements to the junction of Southfield Road with the A458

Members noted that projects included in the 2019/20 Place Plan, such as sewerage network capacity, had not been carried over.

It was agreed to contact the Place Plan officer for Much Wenlock to request a meeting to obtain further guidance on the inclusion of projects. It was noted that project proposals were now required to include information on costings. The Council might seek help on costings for highways projects from the local Shropshire Council traffic engineer.

Place Plan projects for submission would be further considered at the July full Council meeting.

15. Climate Change and Ecological/Nature Emergencies

Nothing to report.

16. Consultation*

Members considered a response to the Shropshire Cycling & Walking Plan consultation. It was noted that there was no plan for Much Wenlock. **It was RESOLVED to make no response.**

17. Street Lighting*

18. Street Naming *

19. Footpath Issues

It was noted that some broken tarmac had been put down in the entrance way of the footpath off the Bull Ring but this had made the ground quite uneven. Shropshire Council had agreed to meet the landowner to discuss how to improve the access. The Clerk was asked to write to Wenlock Estates to ask for a meeting to discuss the muddy entrance and options for replacing the kissing gate.

Councillor Benbow was still seeking a response from the landowner regarding the Atterley footpath. Members noted the need to reinstate a footpath through the Farley quarry site.

20. Footpath/Bridleway Creation Orders*

21. Footpath Diversion Orders*

22. Road Closures*

- a. Location: B4380 Leighton (diversion through Much Wenlock)
Date/Time: 1st to 4th June 2023 and 19th June 2023
9.30am - 4pm on weekdays, 8am - 5pm on weekends
Purpose: Surface dressing and white lining
Agency: Kier / Shropshire Highways
- b. Location: B3473 Stocking Lane junction to Rudgewood Junction (diversion through Much Wenlock)
Date/Time: 4th to 6th June and 26th June
9.30am – 4.30pm on weekdays, 8am - 5pm on weekends
Purpose: Stud removal, surface dressing and white lining
Agency: Kier / Shropshire Highways

23. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)*

24. Stopping Up Orders*

25. Speed Limit Orders*

26. Prohibition Orders*

27. Date of next meeting

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 4th July 2023 at 7pm at the Guildhall, Much Wenlock.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

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

05/23

28. Consultants for Neighbourhood Plan Review

Two proposals had been obtained from consultants for support with the review of the Neighbourhood Plan and the Clerk was in touch with two other consultants. It was noted that an announcement on grant funding for 2023/24 was still awaited.

29. Gaskell Corner Proposals

Members reviewed the WSP feasibility study for the Gaskell corner and discussed the options proposed. The Council’s Transport Working Group had considered the report and drafted a suggested response.

It was RESOLVED to take forward for recommendation to full Council the WSP Option 4, with an agreed amendment.

30. Planning Enforcement

Members received an update on enforcement issues 23/09619/ENF and 23/09621/ENF.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed.....(Chairperson)

Date.....

06/23

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a **Planning & Environment Committee meeting**
held at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 4th July 2023 at the Guildhall, Much Wenlock

Present: Councillors William Benbow (in the chair), Wilf Grainger, Daniel Thomas, Chris Tyler, Linda West.

In attendance: Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, Ms Jo Jukes.

1. Apologies

Councillor David Fenwick – holiday.

2. 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.

3. Dispensations

None requested.

4. Public Session

There had been no requests to speak.

5. Creating Stepping Stones for Nature Recovery across the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership and wider

Ms J Jukes gave a report on the above conference, organised by Middle Marches Community Land Trust and Shropshire AONB, which she attended on 12th May 2023 on behalf of the Town Council. The conference aimed to outline opportunities for town and parish councils to understand the Environment Act, as well as the opportunities available to help prepare nature recovery strategies and to develop local plans. It highlighted the importance of individuals and community groups in the recovery process.

The Environment Act 2021 places a duty on local authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity, with agreed policies, objectives and actions. Community involvement is fundamental to achieving this. The conference focussed on creating 'stepping stones' - small, achievable steps forward that would make a difference. Examples included:

- providing and improving habitats, e.g. green corridors, buffer areas, meadows
- managing roadside verges to increase biodiversity
- using community spaces to plant more trees, encourage wildflowers, etc
- carbon capture – retaining existing hedgerows and trees
- ensuring hedgerows are cut in late winter to retain berries
- ponds – retention and creation
- wildflower areas
- migratory birds – providing nesting sites for birds such as swifts and swallows

Ms Jukes was keen to discuss what actions the Town Council might take and which other parties could be involved. She would be willing to work with the Council to try to make progress.

Councillors responded that the Council's land holdings were only the Gaskell Recreation Ground, the Cemetery and the Pound. However, the Council was consulted on local planning applications and could make representations in this way. The Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan also referenced environmental issues and the policies would be considered as part of the forthcoming overall review of the Plan. The Council had little influence over landowners but developing Government policy was directed towards environmental improvements.

The Clerk advised that she had previously contacted Shropshire Council with regard to the management of verges around the town but had received no response. Councillors requested that further attempts be made.

Councillors agreed to give further consideration to the issues raised and thanked Ms Jukes for attending.

Ms Jukes left the meeting.

6. Minutes

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 6th June 2023 be APPROVED and signed as a true record.

07/23

7. Planning Applications

Members considered a response to the following planning applications:

23/02599/TCA Bourton Estate, Bourton, Much Wenlock	To remove 2no. Ash (T1-2), 1no. Sycamore (T3) and 1no. group of Ash and Sycamore (G1) within Bourton Conservation Area. It was RESOLVED to object to the removal of the trees based on the loss of amenity value to the residents of Bourton in the Conservation Area. Councillors cited the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan objective 8, the local landscape and wildlife.
23/02847/TCA 26 Sheinton Street, Much Wenlock	To remove 2no. Ash within Much Wenlock Conservation Area. It was RESOLVED no objections.

8. Planning Decisions

It was RESOLVED to note the following planning decisions:

23/01653/LBC 48 High Street, Much Wenlock	Reinstatement of internal porch by front door - removed in c.2005 as part of previous renovations. Replacement of 2x (modern) doors and 1x internal (modern) door. Replacement of 5x windows to rear aspect of the property. Decision: Grant Permission
23/01477/FUL 14 Stretton Road, Much Wenlock	Single Storey side extension, external insulation and render. Decision: Grant Permission
23/01728/LBC 11 Barrow Street, Much Wenlock	Replacement Windows and Door, along with remedial structural repairs affecting a Grade II Listed Building. Decision: Grant Permission
23/01805/FUL Wheatland Garage, Bridgnorth Road, Much Wenlock	Partial demolition of the existing retail convenience store and construction of extensions, revision to car parking facilities, provision of four electric vehicle charging points, installation of solar panels on extension roof and change of use of the ground floor of 17 St Marys Road to a coffee shop (resubmission). Decision: Refuse Councillors noted that the decision for refusal did not include reference to flood risk or conversion of a residential property to commercial use.

9. Draft Shropshire Local Plan Review 2016 - 2038

Members were advised that Shropshire Council had been expected to reply to the Inspectors questions by 30th June 2023 but nothing had been added to the relevant website apart from information on waste and minerals. As no response to the Inspectors questions on the Duty to Cooperate had been provided so far, Councillor Tyler queried the claim of Shropshire Council that they had fulfilled the Duty to Cooperate.

10. Flooding Issues

- a. Report from the Strategic Flood Working Group: the group had met to reconfirm their purpose and activities. The group considered that the Town Council should issue more frequent public communications about flooding matters and the Council's efforts to address the problems. It was important to engage the community and prompt more interest and action from residents. Shropshire Council needed to work to provide the infrastructure to deal with the unique situation of the town.
- b. With regard to the flooding event on 12th June, Members criticised the lack of a strategic plan to deal with flooding in Much Wenlock. While various measures were under consideration, progress was too slow and the Drainage and Flood Risk Manager at Shropshire Council was under-resourced. Members noted the forthcoming meeting with Shropshire Council's Drainage and Flood Risk Manager regarding the town culvert.

Shropshire Councillor Richard Marshall, Portfolio Holder for Highways, and Mr Andy Wilde, Head of Highways, would be attending the full Council meeting on 6th July in connection with the flooding and would take questions. Members suggested the following topics for questioning:

- How would the Shropshire Council flood team be properly resourced?
- Could the flood action plan in the Mouchel report be reviewed?
- How could WSP be made to operate more efficiently?

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Councillor Benbow agreed to formulate questions and circulate these to all Councillors prior to the meeting on Thursday.

Members noted that the Shropshire Council representatives would be meeting members of the Flood Action Group prior to the Council meeting to discuss the inadequate configuration of waste water pipes at the corner of the Bull Ring and Sheinton Street.

- c. There were no other flooding issues for consideration.

11. Transport and Highways Matters

- a. Once a substantive response was received from WSP regarding the Gaskell corner report, a meeting of the Transport Working Group would be arranged.
- b. Members noted that the Council's comments regarding the Gaskell corner feasibility report had been submitted to WSP and acknowledged. A more comprehensive response from WSP would follow in due course.

12. Place Plan

- a. Members considered information from the Place Plan officer for Much Wenlock regarding the review of Shropshire Council Place Plans. A remote meeting would be held with the Place Plan officer later in the week to clarify matters.
- b. Members gave further consideration to the submission of projects for inclusion in the Place Plan. They were concerned that some projects had already been included which should be addressed as repair and maintenance issues.

It was agreed to circulate the project suggestions put forward at the previous Planning & Environment Committee meeting to all Councillors for consideration at the forthcoming full Council meeting.

13. Climate Change and Ecological/Nature Emergencies

Members noted that Plastic Free July was under way and that information on the initiative had been circulated.

14. Consultation*

15. Street Lighting*

16. Street Naming *

19. Footpath Issues

Members noted that discussions regarding the Atterley footpath were in progress.

A response had been received from the landowner concerning the footpath off the Bull Ring. The landowner had no objection to the Council stoning the area by the gate to reduce the bogginess and replacing the existing kissing gate with something pushchair-friendly that did not affect the stock proof fencing of the field.

Councillors welcomed this response, which had been passed on to the Rights of Way officer at Shropshire Council. It was hoped that Shropshire Council would install a replacement gate this year. Improvement of the ground surface by the gate could be added to the list of Much Wenlock Place Plan projects. The Clerk was asked to thank the landowner for the positive response and advise of the Council's intended actions.

20. Footpath/Bridleway Creation Orders*

21. Footpath Diversion Orders*

22. Road Closures*

Members noted the following road closure:

- a. Location: Callaughton Farm junction B4378 to Walton Grange
- Date/Time: 29th August to 1st September 2023, all the time
- Purpose: New water connection
- Agency: Severn Trent Water

23. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)*

24. Stopping Up Orders*

25. Speed Limit Orders*

26. Prohibition Orders*

09/23

27. Date of next meeting

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 1st August 2023 at 7pm at the Guildhall, Much Wenlock.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

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

28. Consultants for Neighbourhood Plan Review

Members considered proposals obtained from consultants to support a review of the Neighbourhood Plan. **It was RESOLVED to recommend a shortlist of three consultants to full Council and, with the agreement of full Council, to arrange short, remote meetings with the selected consultants to inform the final decision.** The same panel of Councillors should meet all consultants and ask an agreed set of questions.

29. Planning Enforcement

Members noted the registration of enforcement issue 23/09704/ENF and an update on enforcement issue 23/09619/ENF.

The Clerk was asked to submit an enforcement concern about removal of a hedgerow.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed.....(Chairperson)

Date.....

01/23

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
FINANCE & ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
 meeting held at the Corn Exchange, Much Wenlock
 at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 23rd May 2023

Present:

Cllrs. Susan Crooke-Williams, David Fenwick, Marcus Themans and Duncan White.

In attendance:

Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, Diane Barlow – Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

1. Election of Chairperson

It was **RESOLVED** to elect Councillor Marcus Themans as Chairperson of the committee.

2. Election of Deputy Chairperson

It was **RESOLVED** to elect Councillor Susan Crooke-Williams as Deputy Chairperson of the committee.

3. Apologies

Councillor Christian Toon – work commitment.

4. 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.

5. Dispensations

None requested.

6. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Asset Management Committee held on 21st March 2023 be **APPROVED** and signed as a true record.

7. Town Clerk's report

The Clerk provided a written and verbal report. Councillors were keen to see progress with obtaining quotations for engraving the mayoral chain with the names of recent mayors. It was noted that a revised quotation was awaited from Healthmatic for replacement of the automatic doors on the public toilets in St Mary's car park.

Members noted the report.

8. Finance

- a. The RFO presented a written and verbal report. She advised that, following feedback from customers, Unity Trust Bank had come to an agreement with the Post Office so that cash deposits could continue to be accepted at Post Office counters. This would be helpful to the Council.

The RFO had been successful in obtaining a refund of £6,252.68 from the Council's street lighting energy provider, SSE SWALEC. This resulted from recent conversions to LED lamps and the Council's eligibility for the Business Energy Relief Scheme.

Rialtas Business Solutions had recently completed the financial year end closedown. The Council concluded the financial year ending 31st March 2023 with income totalling £290,321, which was 5.4% above budget, and expenditure of £283,210, which was 2.8% above budget.

Income to 30th April 2023 was £8,412 (excluding the precept and income from property proceeds) and expenditure was £23,891.

Members noted the report.

The RFO informed Members that the receipt from the sale of 2 Burgage Way could only be used for capital expenditure: purchase of fixed assets, significant enhancement of existing capital assets or change of use.

- b. Members noted the balance sheet as at 30th April 2023.

02/23

- c. Members noted the income and expenditure to 30th April 2023.
- d. Members reviewed the bank reconciliations to 30th April 2023. **It was RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliations to 30th April 2023.**
- e. **It was RESOLVED to approve payments from 22nd March 2023 to date.**

9. Additional Signatory for Unity Trust Bank

It was RESOLVED to nominate Councillor Susan Crooke-Williams as an additional signatory for Unity Trust Bank, for approval by full Council.

10. Internal Audit Report

Members reviewed the final internal audit report for 2022/23. They noted the auditor's comment that general reserves were now at the lowest recommended level and that the Council should be careful to maintain the level of the reserves. The auditor also advised that it would improve internal controls if a councillor carried out spot checks on the petty cash transactions and balance.

It was RESOLVED to nominate Councillor Susan Crooke-Williams to undertake periodic checks of the petty cash. It was RESOLVED to inform full Council of the findings in the internal audit report and action taken to address these.

Thanks were expressed to the RFO and Town Clerk for their work and the resulting positive outcome of the internal audit.

11. Review of Town Council Banking Arrangements

In response to concerns raised by Councillors about the FSCS protection limit, the RFO provided an overview of the Council's current bank accounts and the spread of funds between institutions. She advised that FSCS protection only covered deposits made by a public authority with an annual budget (expenditure) of up to EUR 500,000. The Public Sector Deposit Fund, where some Town Council funds were deposited, did not have FSCS cover but spread the risk by investing in a wide range of banks (typically 30 to 40).

The RFO advised that not all accounts available were suitable for local councils and some offered very poor interest rates. She had identified a local council saver account with Cambridge Building Society, which the Council might open, although the interest rate was not so good as that currently paid on the funds held with Unity Trust Bank.

It was RESOLVED to remain with the Council's current banking arrangements at present but to monitor the situation in case any change should become necessary.

12. The Guildhall Project – Renovation and Future Use

Members received a report from the meeting held with Greenwood Projects the previous week. It was hoped to hear the outcome of current funding applications by the end of June. A list of stakeholders had been provided to Greenwood Projects for forthcoming consultation as part of the feasibility study. The next meeting had been set for 29th June.

13. Replacement Locks for Corn Exchange

Members considered a recommendation in the Fire Risk Assessment that replacement locks be fitted in the Corn Exchange to allow exit doors to be opened without a key in the event of an emergency.

It was RESOLVED to purchase and fit appropriate locks to exit doors from all occupancies in the Corn Exchange.

14. Rural Market Town Group Subscription

It was RESOLVED to take out a paid subscription to the Rural Market Towns Group at a cost of £90.75 + VAT p.a.

15. Request for Memorial Bench in Cemetery

Members considered a request to install a memorial bench in the new part of the Cemetery, adjacent to the allotments.

It was RESOLVED to agree to the installation subject to approval of the bench quality and design.

16. War Graves Plaque for Cemetery

Members considered an offer from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to provide a plaque free of charge to indicate the presence of war graves in the cemetery.

It was RESOLVED to accept the offer and to install the plaque on the wall under the canopy of the lychgate at the entrance off Bridgnorth Road.

03/23

17. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance & Asset Management Committee would be held on Tuesday, 25th July 2023 at 7.00pm at The Corn Exchange.

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.

18. Rental of Mary Webb Room

Members considered an enquiry about long term rental of the Mary Webb room.

It was RESOLVED to retain the room for Council meetings and hourly rental.

19. Gaskell Recreation Ground

It was noted that there had been no progress with proposals for the Gaskell Ground.

It was RESOLVED to write formally to Shropshire Council to discuss options.

Members noted that the Council was holding S106 money in the amount of £12,369, which the Council had agreed to allocate to the Gaskell Recreation Ground at the meeting held on 4th June 2020.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....

06/22

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
HR COMMITTEE MEETING
held at the Guildhall, Much Wenlock
at 7.00pm on Thursday, 6th April 2023

Present: Councillors John O'Dowd, Marcus Themans, Daniel Thomas and Duncan White (in the chair)

In attendance: Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk

1. Apologies

None

2. 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 declared.

3. Dispensations

None requested.

4. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on 7th February 2023.

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.

5. Appointment of Cleaner

Members noted that the recruitment process for a new cleaner had been concluded and considered the outcome. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the appointment of Ms A Baker as cleaner for the Corn Exchange and Guildhall with effect from 1st April 2023.

The meeting closed at 6.45pm.

Signed:
Chair

Date:

Actions from Town Council meetings

MONTH	MINUTE NUMBER	RESOLUTION	TASK COMPLETE	COMMENT
June 2022	13	Continue to check the Local Plan EIP website for updates.	Ongoing	Councillors and associates also requested to check EIP website themselves, in case of delay with Clerk checking.
October 2022	6b	Mayor and Clerk to draft a procedure for making CCTV footage available to the police.	In progress	
June 2023	24	Consider the consultancy proposals for a review of the Neighbourhood Plan when all were to hand.	Yes	See July 2023, item 21 below
July 2023	11	To accept the grant offer from the National Lottery Heritage Fund	Yes	
	12	Ask Cllr Toon whether he wishes to continue in the role of 'Climate Champion'	Yes	To be raised at full Council meeting on 7 th September
	13	Check whether funding is available from the PCC for CCTV	Yes	There is no specific budget for CCTV available from the PCC for 2023/24. There are some other, small, grants available.
	14	Circulate proposed projects to Cllrs for any last minute additions and then submit Place Plan projects to Shropshire Council	Yes	Proposals submitted and under consideration by SC.
	15	Speak to the business manager at William Brookes School re the condition of the leisure centre Send a letter to Cllr Robert Macey, portfolio holder at SC, outlining the Council's concerns	Yes	Aware of problems and measures in hand. Offered to meet on site, if desired. Response awaited.
	16	Fully support the retention of A&E departments at both Royal Shrewsbury and Princess Royal, Telford, Hospitals	Yes	Letter sent and acknowledgement received.
	17a	Response to consultation on SC Statement of Licensing Policy 2024-29	Yes	On agenda
	19	Include item on agenda of next Planning Committee meeting re project to improve biodiversity	Yes	Considered on 1 st August 2023
	21	Discuss support for review of Neighbourhood Plan with shortlisted consultants and select a consultant.	Yes	Consultant selected and appointed

Other activities:

- Annual leave
- Piece written for Wenlock Herald
- Meeting with Good2Great on 12th July re possible town promotion
- Engagement with 'Meet the Leader' visit of SC Cllr Lezley Picton on 13th July
- Liaison re refurbishment work on 10 High Street
- Ongoing liaison with Greenwood Projects re Guildhall and meeting scheduled for 5th September
- Submission of grant application for Neighbourhood Plan funding

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

INVESTMENT STRATEGY

2023-2026

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Much Wenlock Town Council acknowledges the importance of prudently investing funds held on behalf of the community. All investments will adhere to the Council's financial procedures and advice received from the Council's internal and external auditors.
- 1.2 This strategy has been prepared in accordance with the Guidance on Local Government Investments ("the Guidance"), issued under section 15(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 2003, and guidance within Governance and Accountability for Local Councils, A Practitioners Guide.
- 1.3 The Guidance states:
- a) Where a town or parish council expects its investments at any time during a financial year to exceed £100,000, ("the Guidance") should apply in relation to that year.
 - b) Where a town or parish council expects its investments at any time during a financial year to exceed £10,000 but not £100,000, it should decide on the extent, if any, to which it would be reasonable to have regard to ("the Guidance") in relation to that year.
 - c) Where a town or parish council expects its investments at any time during a financial year not to exceed £10,000, no part of ("the Guidance") need be treated as applying in relation to that year.
- 1.4 Much Wenlock Town Council expects its investments during the 2023-26 financial years to exceed £100,000 and therefore has agreed to apply ("the Guidance") as set out below.

2.0 Definitions

- 2.1 The following definitions of terms apply:
- 2.1.1. **Investment** covers all of the financial assets of a local authority as well as other non-financial assets that the organisation holds primarily or partially to generate a profit: for example, investment property portfolios. This may therefore include investments that are not managed as part of normal funding management processes or under funding management delegations.

2.1.2 A **credit rating agency** is one of the following three companies:

- Standard and Poor's
- Moody's Investors Service Ltd; and
- Fitch Ratings Ltd

2.1.3 A **loan** is a written or oral agreement where a local authority temporarily transfers cash to a third party, joint venture, subsidiary, or associate who promises to return it according to, normally with interest. This definition does not include a loan to another local authority, which is classified as a specified investment.

3.0 Investment Objectives

3.1 Investments made by the council can be classified into one of two main categories:

- Investments held for asset management purposes: and
- Other investments

3.2 In 2023-26 the council's investments will only be held for funding management purposes.

3.3 The council's investment priorities are:

- The security of its reserves
- The liquidity of its investments

3.4 The council will aim to achieve an optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity being maintained.

3.5 All investments will be made in sterling and, as a minimum, surplus funds will be aggregated in an interest-bearing account.

3.6 The Government maintains that the borrowing of monies purely to invest, or to lend and make a return, is unlawful and this council will not engage in such activity.

3.7 In balancing risk against return, this Council is more concerned to avoid risks than to maximise returns.

3.8 The Council will ensure that it has adequate, though not excessive, cash resources to enable it to have the level of funds available which are necessary for the achievement of its key objectives.

4.0 Security of Investments

4.1 For the prudent management of its treasury balances, maintaining sufficient levels of security and liquidity, the Council will use:

- UK banks or UK building societies, local authorities, or other public authorities
- Other recognized funds specifically targeted at the public sector, such as the Public Sector Deposit Fund

- UK FCA regulated qualifying money market funds with a triple A rating.

5.0 Risk Assessment

- 5.1 The Council's reserves, with the exception of the Public Sector Deposit Fund, are covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme up to £85,000, which is the deposit limit of the scheme. (See paragraph 8.5 below)
- 5.2 The Council will only invest in institutions of "high credit quality". Investments will be spread over different providers where appropriate to minimise risk.
- 5.3 The Council will monitor the risk of loss on investments by reference to credit ratings. The Council should aim for ratings equivalent to the Fitch rating A (low default risk). The Council will also have regard for the general economic and political environment in which institutions operate.
- 5.4 The investment position will be reviewed monthly by the Responsible Financial Officer and reported to the Finance and Asset Management Committee at meetings as part of the regular financial report.
- 5.5 The Council does not employ any financial advisors, either in-house or externally, but will rely on information which is publicly available.
- 5.6 The Council will prepare an annual Financial Risk Assessment, to assess internal financial controls, identify risks and evaluate performance against guidelines where appropriate. The Financial Risk Assessment will be published annually.

6.0 Review and Amendment of Regulations

- 6.1 The Investment Strategy will be reviewed every three years. The Investment Strategy will be reviewed by the Responsible Financial Officer and the Finance and Asset Management Committee, which will then make a recommendation to Full Council.

7.0 Transparency

- 7.1 This strategy will be posted on the Town Council's website and a hard copy will be available from the Town Council.

8.0 Account Management Arrangements

- 8.1 The Responsible Financial Officer will report bank account balances to the Finance and Asset Management Committee during each meeting.
- 8.2 Balances may vary due to activity within each account throughout the year.
- 8.3 The Responsible Financial Officer will continually monitor account balances and make recommendations to the Finance and Asset Management Committee based on planned expenditure, aimed at ensuring there is sufficient working capital to meet ongoing commitments and to spread financial risk across financial institutions where possible.

8.4 The Responsible Financial Office will monitor the interest rates of the Council's investment to obtain maximum returns. Bank accounts will be maintained to provide effective management of funds and to allow effective day-to-day operations of the Council.

8.5 Financial Services Compensation Scheme

The first £85,000 of investment in each financial institution will be compensated in the event that a bank or building society fails. Where multiple accounts are held with a bank that are part of the same banking group that they are treated as one bank.

The CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund is not covered by the FSCS but the fund was assessed by Fitch in 2023 and provided with a AAmmf rating. CCLA provides an actively managed portfolio and its investments are spread across a diverse range of UK funds, helping to mitigate any exposure to potential failures.

8.6 Risk of Failure

The risk of failure of any of the financial institutions used by the Town Council is low. The UK Government is unlikely to allow a major high street provider to fail as evidenced by the Financial Crisis of 2007-8.

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Grants policy (DRAFT)

1. Introduction

1.1 Much Wenlock Town Council is empowered under legislation (LGA 1972 s137, and the General Power of Competence) to offer community grant funding and is committed to supporting local clubs, volunteer organisations and community organisations where it can. To enable it to do this, the Council usually sets aside some funds in its budget each year for the provision of grants.

1.2 Grants are not usually made to commercial organisations or groups which are based outside of the Parish of Much Wenlock.

1.3 Grants must be commensurate with the direct benefit to the area and may not be used to benefit an individual

1.3 The grant budget is limited and is spread out amongst successful applicants each year.

1.4 Applications are invited from eligible local organisations from 1 September to 30 September each year. Applications received after 30 September will not be considered.

1.5 Grant application forms are available from Much Wenlock Town Council by contacting the office on 01952 727509 or by emailing the Council's Responsible Financial Officer, on admin@muchwenlock-tc.gov.uk. Application forms may also be found on the Town Council's website: muchwenlock-tc.gov.uk/grants.

1.6 Further information on the scheme can also be obtained by contacting the Responsible Financial Officer using the contact details in paragraph 1.5 above.

2. General Criteria

2.1 At its meeting in October each year, the Council's Finance and Asset Management Committee considers all fully completed applications received by the deadline of 30 September. Grants are awarded at the absolute discretion of the Committee and there is no obligation on the Council to provide the grant funding requested, or any amount of funding to an applicant. Applications must demonstrate a clear need for financial support and highlight the potential benefit of the grant to the community of Much Wenlock. To do this, applications must demonstrate that they meet one or more of the criteria below:

- The promotion and/or improvement of the environmental, social, or economic well-being of Much Wenlock and its community
- Provision or improvement of recreation and/or sports
- Provision of a service and/or improving its effectiveness
- Enhancing the quality of life of the community of Much Wenlock
- Improving the local environment

3. Grant Application Process

3.1 All applications should be made to the Responsible Financial Officer on the standard application form (please see paragraph 1.5) above. All applications and any supporting documentation must be submitted by 30 September. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

3.2 Applications must meet the following requirements in order to be considered:

- Provide full details of the project or activity
- Demonstrate that the grant will be of benefit to the local community within the Parish of Much Wenlock
- Demonstrate a clear need for the funding
- Provide details of any further applications for funding made to other bodies or organisations and any successful applications where appropriate
- Provide details of the number of individuals the grant funding will benefit, where appropriate
- Provide a copy of the previous year's accounts or, for new initiatives, a detailed budget or business plan
- Provide details of the governance of the organisation including, if relevant, names of the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer
- Provide bank details including sort code and account number (Please note that payments may not be made to an individual).

4. Conditions of Funding

4.1 Applications will be considered from voluntary organisations, registered charities or organisations operating on a not-for-profit basis for the benefit of Much Wenlock's community.

- Applications will not be considered from private organisations operated as a business to make a profit or a surplus
- Grants will not be made to individuals
- Grants will not be made retrospectively
- Only one application for a grant will be considered from each organisation in any one financial year
- An organisation should have a bank account in its own name, unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Ongoing commitments to award grants in future years will not be made. A fresh application will be required each year
- Any previous award of a grant to an organisation or group does not guarantee any future award of grant funds
- Each application will be considered on its own merits.

4.2 The Council reserves the right to refuse any grant application which it considered to be inappropriate or does not meet the objectives stated in this policy or, if appropriate, provide a lower award of grant than that applied for.

4.3 Any grant awarded must only be used for the purpose for which it was provided. Any unspent grant must be returned to the Council 12 months after it was awarded. The Town Council reserves the right to ask for repayment of the grant:

- If the terms of the grant award are breached
- If the organisation has submitted any dishonest or misleading information on the grant application form
- If the organisation ceases to exist, becomes insolvent, goes into receivership or administration.

4.4 If requested, the recipient of the grant will supply the Town Council with details of the expenditure incurred and will provide all financial records and accounts for a period of two years. Successful applicants should therefore keep a record of expenditure/receipts in case the Council wishes to review these records. In accordance with LGA 1972 s228 this information may also be inspected by members of the public.

4.5 Recognition of the grant from Much Wenlock Town Council must be made in any publicity relating to the activities for which a grant has been awarded.

5. How Will the Application Be Assessed

5.1 The Finance and Asset Management Committee will consider:

- How well the organisation is managed
- How well the grant will meet the needs of the community, providing positive benefits to the residents
- Whether the costs are appropriate and realistic
- What level of contribution has been or will be raised locally
- Whether the organisation or group could reasonably have been expected to obtain sufficient funding from another, perhaps more appropriate, source
- How effectively the organisation will use the grant.

6. How Will the Applicant Be Notified

6.1 Applicants will be notified in writing of the outcome of their application as soon as practicable after the meeting of the Finance and Asset Management Committee in October.

6.2 Agreed grant awards will be paid as soon as practicable after the meeting of the Finance and Asset Management Committee in October, by bank transfer to the organisation's bank account detailed in its application form.



Much Wenlock Town Council

DISPOSAL AND DESTRUCTION PROCEDURE FOR TOWN COUNCIL RECORDS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document is designed to outline the formal procedure for disposal and destruction of records held by Much Wenlock Council.
- 1.2 Compliance with this procedure will be the responsibility of the Town Clerk.
- 1.3 All applicable individuals will be suitably trained to ensure compliance with this procedure.
- 1.4 Managing records effectively is essential to the efficient running of the Council, and staff are aware of the Secretary of State's Code of Practice on records management issued under section 46 of the FOIA ("the code").

2. Procedure for Paper Based Records

- 2.1 The Town Clerk or RFO will produce lists of those records which have reached the end of their retention period. This individual is the 'proposer' of record destruction.
- 2.2 The Finance & Asset Management Committee or HR Committee, as appropriate, will review the list for any exceptions, such as a 'Legal Hold', and identify a new retention period for any such records. The relevant committee is the 'authoriser' of the record destruction.
- 2.3 The 'Proposer' and 'Authoriser' cannot be the same person.
- 2.4 Subject to approval and agreement of 'Proposer' and 'Authoriser', records can be destroyed.
- 2.5 A certificate of destruction must be created for the destruction for each unit/batch. This will include:
 - List of records destroyed, versions, quantity, descriptions, and other identifiers
 - Proposer of destruction (as per 2.1)
 - Authoriser of destruction (as per 2.2)
 - Date of destruction
 - Method of destruction
- 2.6 All equipment on site will be maintained as per the manufacturer's guidance, and in an operational state. This may include maintenance and safety checks to be conducted.

3. Destruction of Electronic Records

- 3.1 Due to the complexities surrounding the deletion of electronic records, digital copies or twins of physical media will be treated in the same way with regard to destruction.
- 3.2 All efforts will be made to remove electronic records from operation that are not forensically recoverable.
- 3.3 A certificate of destruction shall be completed as per the process for physical records. ~~Evidence of electronic deletion should include a screen capture of the completed process.~~
- 3.4 It is recognised that forensic capabilities can recover files incorrectly destroyed from moveable and solid state drives. All appropriate actions will be taken to reduce the risk of recovery by using appropriate software on the files as named above, secure hardware disposal practices to ensure drives are wiped fully prior to removal and the use of encryption where appropriate.

4. Destruction of other information media

- 4.1 The Council recognises that from time to time it may find itself in possession of records in formats that are outside the scope of the above destruction processes. Guidance will be found on how best to deal with these mediums and follow the same authorisation and proposal checks, with a certificate of destruction to confirm the action taken.

Approved: 6th October 2022 by full Council

Review date: 3 years from approval, unless earlier review necessary

DRAFT v5

WINDMILL HILL NATURE RESERVE AGREEMENT

Synopsis

This Nature Reserve Agreement for Windmill Hill in Much Wenlock is made between Much Wenlock Town Council and Wenlock Estates and The Much Wenlock Windmill Trust for the purpose of managing Windmill Hill as a nature reserve and declaring Windmill Hill a Local Nature Reserve in accordance with the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (NPAC 1949). Full public access will be maintained to Windmill Hill for the duration of the Agreement.

The Parties

Much Wenlock Town Council, whose registered office is at The Corn Exchange, 62 High Street, Much Wenlock, Shropshire, TF13 6EA

Wenlock Estates (freehold owner), whose registered office is at (address)

The Much Wenlock Windmill Trust, whose contact address is the Chair of the Trust, currently Tony Jones, (address)

Much Wenlock Town Council

Much Wenlock Town Council is the local authority within whose area the Windmill Hill is located. Shropshire Council has delegated authority to Much Wenlock Town Council for the designation of Windmill Hill as a Local Nature Reserve.

Wenlock Estates

Wenlock Estates is the freehold owner of the Windmill Hill, the land to be designated and managed as a Local Nature Reserve.

The Much Wenlock Windmill Trust

The Much Wenlock Windmill Trust is a registered charity, number 1109806. The Much Wenlock Windmill Trust holds the lease for the land known as Windmill Field (for the purposes of this agreement called 'Windmill Hill'), Much Wenlock, Shropshire, from Wenlock Estates from 6th September 2001 for 99 years to 2100.

The aforementioned Lease is between, acting as Wenlock Estates, and the Trustees of the Much Wenlock & District Society, whose successor organisation is The Much Wenlock Windmill Trust.

By the terms of the lease dated 6th September 2001, the Much Wenlock & District Society, succeeded by The Much Wenlock Windmill Trust, is required to "pay all existing and future rates, taxes, duties, charges, assessments and outgoings whatsoever now or hereafter to be charged or imposed upon the Demised Premises or any part thereof and to indemnify the lessor in respect thereof."

The lease requires a right of way to be maintained across the Demised Premises with or without livestock from Farley Road adjoining the Demised Premises to land on the south side of the former railway.

The Declaration of Trust for The Much Wenlock Windmill Trust was made on 11th March 2005. The objects of the Charitable Trust are "To preserve and restore for the public benefit as a place of historical and environmental interest the old windmill and its associated land, situated off Farley Road, Much Wenlock, Shropshire, by such exclusively charitable means as the trustees shall from time to time determine."

Windmill Hill Local Nature Reserve

Windmill Hill Local Nature Reserve (2.83 ha) in Much Wenlock, Shropshire, comprises primarily limestone grassland and lies to the north of the Gaskell Recreation Ground and south of Shadwell Quarry with Farley Road to the west and woodland to the east and is shown by the red line on the attached plan.

The Nature Reserve Agreement

Windmill Hill Local Nature Reserve will be managed by The Much Wenlock Windmill Trust as a nature reserve for both a conservation purpose and a recreational purpose within the meaning of section 15 of the NPAC 1949:

- A nature reserve is land managed not only for a conservation purpose but also for a recreational purpose, if the management of the land for the recreational purpose does not compromise its management for the conservation purpose.
- Land is managed for a conservation purpose if it is managed for the purpose of: a) providing, under suitable conditions and control, special opportunities for the study of, and research into, matters relating to the fauna and flora of Great Britain and the physical conditions in which they live, and for the study of geological and physiographical features of special interest in the area, or b) preserving flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features of special interest in the area including enabling or facilitating its recovery or increase, c) or for both those purposes.
- Land is managed for a recreational purpose if it is managed for the purpose of providing opportunities for the enjoyment of nature or for open-air recreation.

The management activities required to manage the Local Nature Reserve shall be set initially for the period 2023 to 2032 in a management plan to be revised and agreed as necessary by all parties to this agreement as will the management plans required beyond 2032. The Much Wenlock Windmill Trust shall carry out the provisions of the management plan at its own expense. The Much Wenlock Windmill Trust shall submit an Annual Report to the Council as to the management of the reserve.

Much Wenlock Town Council shall be represented by one Councillor on the management committee of The Much Wenlock Windmill Trust for the Local Nature Reserve who will be entitled to vote at meetings of the management committee.

Much Wenlock Town Council shall not be required to give any assistance whether financial or otherwise in the management of the Local Nature Reserve but may choose to do so.

The Agreement will commence on the date when Windmill Hill is declared a Local Nature Reserve by Much Wenlock Town Council in accordance with sections 19 and 21 of the NPAC 1949. Full public access will be maintained to Windmill Hill for the duration of the Agreement. The Agreement will continue in force for 25 years, at which point the Agreement will be reviewed by all parties and may be extended for a further 25 years and thereafter as mutually agreed by all parties to this Agreement. The Agreement may be terminated by one party to this Agreement giving twelve months notice to the other two parties. In such a situation, Much Wenlock Town Council will determine whether to acquire a further legal interest in Windmill Hill in order to maintain the Local Nature Reserve status or to reverse the declaration of a Local Nature Reserve following the provisions set out in section 19 of the NPAC 1949.

Byelaws

Much Wenlock Town Council may make such byelaws as the Council thinks fit for the proper control of the Local Nature Reserve in accordance with section 20 of the NPAC 1949 subject to consultation with and in full agreement with the other two parties to this Agreement.

Much Wenlock Town Council

Signed:
Name:
Witnessed by:
Dated:

Signed:
Name:

The Wenlock Estates

Signed:
Name:
Dated:

The Much Wenlock Windmill Trust

Signed:
Name:
Dated:

Date: Tuesday, 29 August 2023 at 16:01

Subject: The Marches Forward Partnership

Forwarded on behalf of Cllr Lezley Picton, Leader of Shropshire Council

Town and Parish Councils, and Parish Meetings

Dear Councillor

The Marches Forward Partnership

Please find attached a copy of a news release that has gone out this afternoon. It explains Shropshire Council's intention to work with Herefordshire Council as well as Monmouthshire and Powys County Councils in a ground breaking partnership that will see us take a collaborative approach on cross border shared interests. We also believe that working together will give us the opportunity to boost investment into the region.

The Marches Forward Partnership will be the first time that English and Welsh neighbouring authorities will work together on common issues that cross our national boundaries. We all know that we have many similarities and challenges so it makes good sense to address shared priorities together, particularly around the rural economy and the green agenda.

Collectively we will apply for funding from both English and Welsh governments on major projects that will benefit our region, potentially unlocking millions of pounds for agreed initiatives.

I want to be clear that we're not creating a super-council. It's very important to each of us that every authority retains its own identity and independence and that we all carry on delivering services to residents and businesses as we do now.

It's equally important that Town and Parish Councils continue to operate in the same way as you're doing now. This won't impact on your work at all, other than hopefully bringing a bigger profile to our region and more money from government that will benefit everyone.

It's also worth noting that this proposed partnership costs us nothing. Neither does it stop us from working with other councils or organisations now or in the future.

Early proposals suggest that we'll be looking to collaborate on transport, energy, housing and the visitor economy amongst other areas of shared interest. Each local authority will lead a cross council working group on identified subject areas and of course any proposals will always come back to elected members for consultation and sign off.

I hope you are as enthusiastic as I am about putting any geographic differences to one side and working together on things that matter to us all. This is an opportunity to put the region on the map for all the right reasons and to tell our respective governments that we are very much open for doing business with them.

As ever, drop me a note if you have any questions and of course I will keep you posted with developments as they progress.

Best wishes.

Lezley Picton
Leader
Shropshire Council

Shropshire Council set to sign ground breaking cross border partnership

Shropshire Council is set to confirm a ground breaking agreement with other English and Welsh local authorities at its cabinet next month (06 September).

A proposed Marches Forward Partnership would see Shropshire Council work with Herefordshire Council, Monmouthshire and Powys county councils. They would join forces to apply for funding from government on major projects that will benefit the Marches region, which covers 80% of the English/Welsh borderland.

Each council would retain their own identity and independence and continue to deliver services to residents and businesses as they do now but will work together, as partners, where there is mutual benefit and added value.

Areas of cross border shared interests are likely to include transport, skills and housing alongside energy, climate change and digital connectivity – common issues for the area's population of almost 750,000.

It is anticipated that the councils' planned collaboration and desire to work together will increase overall government investment, unlocking millions of pounds for identified initiatives that support the Marches' rural economy and green growth.

Leader of Shropshire Council, Lezley Picton, said:

"There is great potential if we work alongside colleagues at Herefordshire Council and Monmouthshire and Powys County Councils. It reflects the geography of the historic Marches area while acknowledging our many shared interests and challenges. There has always been cross border support for one another, so this proposed partnership is a natural progression.

"We are already talking to government about what benefits our collaboration would bring and are enthusiastic about the potential for the wider region.

"We are looking to sign up to an agreement that would confirm functional arrangements between the four councils in October. There is no cost implication of the partnership and it does not stop us from working with other authorities and partners at any point now or in the future.

"It's exciting and indeed ground-breaking for neighbouring authorities in England and Wales to be working together in this way. There are naturally strong ties between our two nations and this gives us an opportunity to build on our shared heritage and look ahead to the future. We hope we can break down the artificial cross border barriers that exist.

"While the Romans, Normans and Plantagenets failed to unite this historic area, with these shared interests among these border councils, I am convinced we can together take control of some of the big issues that are important to so many people in the Marches."

Ends

Note to editors:

Herefordshire Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Powys County Council and Shropshire Council are working together to tackle cross border shared interests and boost investment into the region.

This is the first time neighbouring authorities in England and Wales have proposed to work together. Government is enthusiastic about the planned collaboration which covers a population of more than 735,000 residents and an area of approximately 1,140,000 hectares.

Each council will be taking a report to their respective cabinets. Monmouthshire and Shropshire will hold their cabinet meeting on 06 September, Powys on 19 September and Herefordshire on 28 September.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the four authorities is scheduled to take place during October.