

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a **Planning & Environment Committee meeting**
held at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 7th November 2023 at the Guildhall, Much Wenlock

Present: Councillors William Benbow, David Fenwick (in the chair), Wilf Grainger, Chris Tyler, Linda West

In attendance: Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk

1. Apologies

Councillor Dan Thomas – family commitment (new baby)

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. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to amend minute 10a to reference **Quality Liquid Feeds and the former fuel depot at Farley, rather than Farley Quarry**. Following that amendment it was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 3rd October 2023 be **APPROVED** and signed as a true record.

6. Planning Applications

Members considered a response to the following planning applications:

23/04288/TPO The William Brookes School, Farley Road, Much Wenlock	Prune back crown over garage by approx. 3m and shape 1no Sycamore protected by the Bridgnorth District Council (William Brookes School/Gaskell Recreation Ground, Much Wenlock) TPO 2008 (Ref: BR/TPO/154). It was RESOLVED no objection.
23/04428/TCA The Lymes, 12 Barrow Street, Much Wenlock	To section fell 1no. Juniper (T1) (and replace with a suitable native tree) within Much Wenlock Conservation Area. It was RESOLVED to object to the application as Councillors were against the felling of a mature tree in the Conservation Area.
23/04470/TCA 5 Queen Street, Much Wenlock	To reduce crowns by 20 percent of 1no. Birch (T1), 1no. Whitebeam (T2), 1no. Acer (T3) and 1no. Laburnum (T4) within Much Wenlock Conservation Area. It was RESOLVED no objection.
23/04433/FUL Gleedon Hill Farm, Sheinton Road, Much Wenlock	New dormer. It was RESOLVED no objection.
23/04509/FUL The Stables, Victoria Road, Much Wenlock	Erection of standalone photovoltaic array comprised of 2No. rows of 11No. panels each. In accordance with Objective 9 of the Neighbourhood Plan, Sustainability and Climate Change, it was RESOLVED to support the application.
22/05214/EIA Farley Quarry, Farley, Much Wenlock	Restoration of part of Farley Quarry by means of the recycling of construction, demolition and excavation wastes and the engineered placement of the rejects from the recycling process to raise levels in the Quarry to create a restoration landform, together with ancillary activities and improvements to the site access.

	<p>Members noted that this application would be considered by Shropshire Council’s Southern Planning Committee on Tuesday, 14th November 2023 and that the recommendation was to grant permission. A site visit would be held on the morning of the same day.</p> <p>The Town Council had objected to this application. It was noted that several members of the public and Shropshire Councillor Daniel Thomas intended to speak against the application.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that Councillor William Benbow would represent the Town Council and speak against the application at the Southern Planning Committee meeting on 14th November 2023.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that Councillors William Benbow and David Fenwick would attend the site visit at approximately 11.45am on 14th November.</p>
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7. Planning Decisions

It was RESOLVED to note the following planning decision:

<p>23/04038/TCA Wenlock Priory, Bull Ring, Much Wenlock</p>	<p>Crown lift to 4m 5no Lime, fell 1no Cherry & fell 1no Horse Chestnut within Much Wenlock Conservation Area. Decision: No Objection</p>
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8. Draft Shropshire Local Plan Review 2016 - 2038

- a. There had been no further announcements regarding the Local Plan review.
- b. The scheduled meeting with the Town Council’s Associates had been postponed due to Storm Ciaran. A new date was to be confirmed.

9. Neighbourhood Plan

- a. Members received a report from the meeting with the consultant, Alison Eardley, held on 19th October, when queries had been addressed to help inform the desk-based review.
- b. Members considered the initial desk-based review document prepared by Alison Eardley, including recommendations for areas where changes were required and next steps.
It was RESOLVED to request a face to face meeting and to ask the consultant for the most suitable timescale.
- c. Members noted that remote meetings had been held with AECOM consultants on 9th October relating to Housing Needs Assessment and Design. Subsequently, Councillors had accompanied the Design consultants on a tour of the town. Reports were awaited.
- d. Next steps would be as 9b.

10. Telford & Wrekin draft Local Plan

- a. Members noted that the Regulation 18 consultation on the Telford & Wrekin draft Local Plan 2020-2040 had commenced and would run until 12th January 2024.
- b. Members noted that the draft Plan included four preferred sites with 620 dwellings around Lightmoor and Horsehay area. **It was RESOLVED to ask the Town Council’s transport consultant to consider possible traffic implications for traffic through Much Wenlock.**

11. Flooding Issues

- a. Members reviewed the circumstances and management of flooding in the town on 20th October caused by Storm Babet. Councillor Tyler was gathering photos and videos of the flooding. Members noted that there was still flood water at the bottom of Oakfield Park. The drain was blocked with silt coming from the fields and the building site. Shropshire Council were aware of the issue and would be attending to clear the drain.
- b. Members considered the message from Shropshire Council’s Emergency Planning unit requesting information from Town and Parish Councils affected by flooding due to Storm Babet. It was noted that the Flood Action Group had already sent some information and that the Town Council would send further details.

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- c. Members received a report from the Strategic Flood Working Group. As well as meeting with Philip Dunne and others on 13th October, Members of the group had attended the Flood Action Group meeting held on 26th October.
- d. Members received a report from the meeting held on 13th October with Philip Dunne MP and representatives from Shropshire Council, the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water. It was noted that this meeting had taken place before Storm Babet.

Members felt that the meeting had helped to keep up the pressure on the Shropshire Council team to move proposals forward quickly, especially the Bourton Road attenuation improvements. Reference had been made to trying to obtain funding for nature-based solutions around the town but this had been rather vague. Councillor Benbow had drafted a response to Shropshire Council referencing schemes to reduce run-off from the Bourton Road fields. There had been little enthusiasm from the authorities for properly upgrading the town culvert, stating that this was not possible in the mediaeval town. Shropshire Council would have £270k available to pipe surface water from the Stretton Road into the attenuation pond, part of the attenuation pond project which had not been completed previously due to lack of funds. Shropshire Council had very limited resources and Town Councillors had aimed to put the onus on the Environment Agency, who had access to government funds, to devise a plan to reduce flooding in the town.

The Deputy Leader of Shropshire Council had stated that planning policy could incorporate a reference to Much Wenlock's designation as a rapid response catchment area for flooding so that this was picked up during consideration of future planning applications.

Members agreed that the meeting had been worthwhile and a follow up meeting would be held in January.

- e. Members considered correspondence from a member of the public highlighting that the recent flooding had been caused by a relatively short period of heavy rain. Members noted the information provided, which they felt supported the action the Town Council was taking. The Clerk was asked to thank the correspondent and ask whether he had considered joining the local Flood Group, if he was not already a member.

12. Transport and Highways Matters

- a. Members considered a report from the Transport Working Group. It was noted that the design for the crossing near to the primary school on the A458 had been completed and was with Shropshire Council Highways. It was hoped that approval would be given by mid-November after which the works would be programmed.

Shropshire Council Highways had advised that a further scheme to improve road safety on the A458 at the top of Harley Bank was on the list of schemes for 2024.

It was noted that both Shropshire Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner had limited funds available to provide small, safety-enhancement highway projects. Councillors might suggest suitable schemes for consideration.

- b. Members considered the views of Shropshire Council's highways department on the WSP Gaskell corner feasibility study. Members were disappointed with the response, which focussed on the style rather than the content of the report. It was noted that WSP aimed to formally issue the report before Christmas, although arrangements for public consultation were not known.
- c. **It was RESOLVED to make no further response to WSP in relation to the Gaskell corner feasibility study at this stage.**

13. Shropshire Council Streetscene

Members noted an update from Shropshire Council's Streetscene department.

14. Climate Change and Ecological/Nature Emergencies*

- a. Members received further information received from Andy Wilde, Head of Highways at Shropshire Council, in response to the Council's letter regarding the management of roadside verges. In addition, the Clerk had spoken to Andy Wilde at the Restoring Shropshire's Verges conference when he had explained that there had been significant re-organisation within the environmental maintenance team at Shropshire Council. He also confirmed that should the Town Council wish to identify and manage a particular verge in the town for wildlife, this might be done with the help of the Restoring Shropshire's Verges group. Shropshire Council's contractors would generally respect signage requesting late cuts, etc.
- b. Members received a report on the recent conference organised by Middle Marches Community Land Trust and Restoring Shropshire's Verges Project: 'Verges, Hedges & Watercourses', which was attended by the Town Clerk and a member of the Friends of the Old Cemetery.

- c. Members noted the invitation to a conference on Friday, 17th November entitled ‘The importance of Town and Parish Councils to help deliver Nature Recovery across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin’. It was suggested the Clerk might attend, if available.
- d. Members received information from Surfers Against Sewage about a deposit return scheme for drinks containers and noted that Plastic Free Wenlock would be promoting this initiative.

15. Consultation*

16. Street Lighting

17. Street Naming *

18. Footpath Issues*

It was RESOLVED that declarations from members of the public regarding historic use of the public footpath at Atterley should be transferred to the Town Council office for safe keeping.

19. Footpath/Bridleway Creation Orders*

20. Footpath Diversion Orders*

21. Road Closures*

Members noted the following road closure:

- a. Location: A4169 Much Wenlock Road, Buildwas
- Date/Time: 8th to 19th January 2024, Monday to Friday 09.30 to 16.00
- Purpose: Pre-dressing patching works, approx. 1,713 m2
- Agency: Shropshire Council

22. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)*

23. Stopping Up Orders*

24. Speed Limit Orders*

25. Prohibition Orders*

26. Date of next meeting

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 5th December 2023 at 7pm at the Guildhall or Corn Exchange (tbc), 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.

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

27. Planning Enforcement

Members noted enforcement issue 23/09961/ENF and an update on enforcement issues 23/09704/ENF, 22/09018/ENF, 23/09833/ENF, 23/09811/ENF, 23/09619/ENF, 23/09773/HRR and 22/08783/ENF.

The meeting closed at 9.13pm

Signed.....(Chairperson)

Date.....