

# MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the  
**RE-CONVENED ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock  
at 7 pm on Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024

**Present:** Councillors Susan Crooke-Williams, David Fenwick, Wilfred Grainger, John O’Dowd, Marcus Themans (in the chair), Daniel Thomas, Chris Tyler, Linda West, Duncan White.

**In attendance:** Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, one member of the public remotely.

## 1. Chairman’s Welcome

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported the following matters:

- Get a Word in Edgeways had presented a story telling activity at the Guildhall on 20<sup>th</sup> April.
- The first Made in Shropshire market of the season had been held on 20<sup>th</sup> April and the next was scheduled for 15<sup>th</sup> June.
- Contractors had been contacted about extending the surfaced footpath around the Gaskell Ground and the Mayor thanked the Windmill Trust for agreeing to access across Windmill Hill. The grass on the Gaskell Ground had been cut and the field was looking beautiful.
- The annual orchid count on Windmill Hill would be held on 29<sup>th</sup> June and this would be combined with a celebration of the new designation of the site as a Local Nature Reserve.
- Work on the new puffin crossing on Bridgnorth Road was planned to start in the next few weeks.
- A meeting about the Guildhall had been held earlier in the day with Greenwood Projects, and this was an item later on the agenda.
- Recruitment of a new Responsible Financial Officer was in progress and interviews were scheduled for the following week. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor expressed thanks to Diane Barlow, outgoing RFO, for her dedication, hard work and cheerfulness.
- The Guildhall Custodian, Gillian Taylor, was also leaving the Council. The Mayor expressed his thanks and best wishes.
- The D-Day commemoration would be held on 6<sup>th</sup> June and the Mayor encouraged Councillors to participate.

In closing, the Mayor thanked Councillors and staff for their participation in the formal Mayor Making the previous week.

## 2. Apologies for Absence

None received.

## 3. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

Members were reminded that they are required to leave the room during the discussion and voting on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, whether or not the interest is entered in the register of members’ interests maintained by the monitoring officer.

## 4. Dispensations

None requested.

## 5. Public Session

There were no members of the public present in person.

## 6. Shropshire Council Report

Shropshire Councillor, Daniel Thomas, presented the following report:

**“New Puffin Crossing for the A458/Bridgnorth Road to improve safety for residents:** on 3<sup>rd</sup> June, work is scheduled to begin on a puffin pedestrian crossing near Much Wenlock Primary School, crossing the A458/Bridgnorth Road. This should provide a safer crossing for children, their parents, and the residents of both Oakfield Park and Callaughtons Ash. It is also likely to slow traffic heading in either direction when not being used by pedestrians. This is a project I’ve been pursuing since being elected in 2021, working with Much Wenlock Town Council and Shropshire Council officers. The proposal includes 40 mph buffer zones for this road, but these will be delivered at a later stage.

**Dog PSPO Update:** Shropshire Council has confirmed that it will be going ahead with the dog constraints Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) which will mean irresponsible dog owners could be given fixed penalty notices of £100 if they allow dogs to foul public areas without cleaning it up. The legislation also bans dogs from fenced play and sports areas and requires them to be on a lead on the highway. The Gaskell Recreation Ground has its own rules regarding dogs and these will still apply.

Shropshire Council Officers will also have the power to ask for a dog to be put on a lead in public areas where they are not under the control of their owner or are acting aggressively. The PSPO will enable Shropshire Council and the police to issue fixed penalty notices of £100 – or £50 if paid within 10 days – to owners who allow their animal to foul public spaces without clearing up afterwards. Confirmation comes after proposals were made to Shropshire Council’s Cabinet in October 2023 and it will come into force on **Saturday June 1, 2024**. Once the order is in place there will be a public education and information campaign advising on health considerations and the enforcement action.

### Local Plan Update

The Planning Inspectors have requested that Shropshire Council undertake a public consultation on the following documents:

- GC25: The newly proposed draft policy on Housing Provision for Older People
- Updated Additional Sustainability Appraisal of the Draft Local Plan
- Updated Housing and Employment Topic Paper
- Updated Green Belt Topic Paper

This consultation, which runs until 11 June 2024. This is an item on our agenda so I won’t say any more now.

**June Surgery:** my next Advice Surgery is on Saturday, June 8<sup>th</sup>, between 10:30 a.m. and 12 noon at Much Wenlock Museum. No appointment is necessary. I'll be joined by a Town Councillor and a representative from the Police.”

In response to questions about the new pedestrian crossing, Councillor Thomas explained that this would be the same kind as the crossing by Travis Perkins. There would be no central refuge, which was not regarded as necessary. There would be sufficient braking distance on the approach to town as a 40mph buffer zone would be introduced. However, public consultation was needed before the introduction of this new speed limit. The location of the 30mph limit would be unchanged.

### 7. Police Report

- a. Members noted with thanks a written report from PCSO Mal Goddard. Councillors expressed frustration at the delay in recruiting a new PCSO for the area.
- b. Members noted the introductory letter from Inspector Damien Kelly, the new Police Inspector for South Shropshire’s Safer Neighbourhood Teams. **It was RESOLVED to invite Inspector Damien Kelly and Sergeant Steve Mason to attend a future Town Council meeting, ideally together.**

### 8. Minutes

- a. **It was RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024.**
- c. **It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2024.**
- d. **It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024.**

### 9. Town Clerk’s Report

Members noted the written and verbal report from the Town Clerk on outstanding matters and action taken since the last Council meeting. In addition, the Clerk advised that representatives of Severn Trent Water had been present under the Corn Exchange for two days to raise awareness of their services.

### 10. Schedule of Future Meetings

**It was RESOLVED to approve proposed meeting dates for the Council year 2024-25, with the date of the Annual Town Meeting set as 13<sup>th</sup> March 2025.**

Members noted that it might be necessary to move the date of the 2025 Mayor Making and Annual Town Council meeting once the date of the 2025 local elections was known. In addition, it was agreed that should the date of the General Election clash with a Town Council meeting date, the date of the Council meeting would be rescheduled.

**11. Finance & Asset Management Committee**

- a. Members reviewed the Terms of Reference for the Finance & Asset Management Committee. **It was RESOLVED to approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Finance & Asset Management Committee.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to appoint the following members to the Finance & Asset Management Committee: Councillors Susan Crooke-Williams, David Fenwick, John O'Dowd, Marcus Themans, Christian Toon and Duncan White.**

**12. Planning & Environment Committee**

- a. Members reviewed the Terms of Reference for the Planning & Environment Committee. **It was RESOLVED to approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Planning & Environment Committee.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to appoint the following members to the Planning & Environment Committee: Councillors William Benbow, David Fenwick, Wilfred Grainger, Daniel Thomas, Chris Tyler and Linda West.**

**13. HR Committee**

- a. Members reviewed the Terms of Reference for the HR Committee. **It was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the HR Committee.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to appoint the following members to the HR Committee: Councillors David Fenwick, John O'Dowd, Marcus Themans and Daniel Thomas.**

**14. Discipline & Grievance Panel**

- a. Members reviewed the Terms of Reference for the Discipline & Grievance Panel. **It was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the Discipline & Grievance Panel.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to appoint the following members to the Discipline & Grievance Panel: Councillors William Benbow, Chris Tyler and Duncan White.**

**15. Working Groups**

- a. **Friends of the Cemetery Working Group**  
**It was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the Friends of the Cemetery Working Group.**  
**It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors John O'Dowd, Daniel Thomas and Chris Tyler to the Friends of the Cemetery Working Group.**
- b. **History and Archives Working Group**  
**It was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the History and Archives Working Group.**  
**It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Will Benbow, Marcus Themans and Christian Toon to the History and Archives Working Group.**  
**It was RESOLVED that Councillor Linda West, as volunteer archivist, should chair the working group.**  
Efforts would be made to involve the Guildhall Custodians and members of the community.
- c. **Property Working Group**  
**It was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the Property Working Group.**  
**It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors William Benbow, David Fenwick, John O'Dowd, Marcus Themans and Duncan White to the Property Working Group.**  
**It was RESOLVED that Councillor Marcus Themans should chair the working group.**
- d. **Shropshire Local Plan Review Working Group**  
**It was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the Shropshire Local Plan Review Working Group.**  
**It was RESOLVED to appoint all members of the Planning & Environment Committee to the Shropshire Local Plan Review Working Group: Councillors William Benbow, David Fenwick, Wilfred Grainger, Daniel Thomas, Chris Tyler and Linda West.**
- e. **Strategic Flood Working Group**  
**It was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Flood Working Group.**  
**It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors William Benbow, Wilfred Grainger, Daniel Thomas and Chris Tyler to the Strategic Flood Working Group.**

f. **Strategic Plan Working Group**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Plan Working Group.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillors Susan Crooke-Williams, David Fenwick, Wilfred Grainger, Marcus Themans, Chris Tyler, Duncan White and the Town Clerk to the Strategic Plan Working Group.

It was noted that progress had stalled with devising a strategic plan for the Council and that this task needed to be completed.

g. **Tourism and Events Working Group**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Terms of Reference for the Tourism and Events Working Group.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillors Susan Crooke-Williams, David Fenwick, Wilfred Grainger, Marcus Themans, Daniel Thomas, Linda West and Duncan White to the Tourism and Events Working Group.

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Duncan White should chair the working group.

h. **Transport Working Group**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Terms of Reference for the Transport Working Group.

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillors William Benbow, Daniel Thomas and Chris Tyler to the Transport Working Group.

**16. Review/appointment of Representatives on Outside Bodies**

Members reviewed the Council's representation on the following outside bodies:

a. **Bridgnorth and Shifnal Local Area Committee of Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC)**

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillors Susan Crooke-Williams and David Fenwick to represent the Council on the Bridgnorth and Shifnal Local Area Committee of SALC.

b. **John L Edwards Trust**

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Daniel Thomas to represent the Council for the John L Edwards Trust.

c. **Much Wenlock Almshouses**

Members noted that Cllr Duncan White had been nominated to represent the Town Council in June 2020 for a term of four years. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Duncan White to represent the Council on the Much Wenlock Almshouses Committee for a further four-year term.

d. **Much Wenlock Forester Charitable Trust**

Members noted that Mr Mark Laws had been nominated to represent the Town Council in April 2021 for a term of four years.

e. **Much Wenlock Windmill Trust**

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillors Wilfred Grainger, John O'Dowd and Duncan White to the Much Wenlock Windmill Trust Management Committee.

f. **Priory Hall Management Committee**

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Duncan White to the Priory Hall Management Committee.

g. **Shropshire Council Emergency Planning**

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillor Duncan White to represent the Council for Shropshire Council Emergency Planning.

h. **Shropshire Hills Destination Partnership**

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillors Wilfred Grainger and Christian Toon to represent the Council on the Shropshire Hills Destination Partnership.

**17. Review and Approval of the Following Policies and Procedures**

a. **Members reviewed and RESOLVED to approve the Standing Orders.**

b. **Members reviewed and RESOLVED to approve the Complaints Procedure and Procedure for Dealing with Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious Complainants.**

c. **Members reviewed and RESOLVED to approve the Publication Scheme, as amended.**

d. **Members reviewed and RESOLVED to approve the Communications and Media Policy.**

e. **Members reviewed and RESOLVED to approve the Privacy notice.**

### 18. Review of Financial Regulations

Members noted that NALC had recently issued revised model Financial Regulations and that, following review by Town Council officers, revised Financial Regulations would be presented to the Council for consideration at the June full Council meeting.

### 19. Approval of Direct Debits and Electronic Bank Payments

- a. **It was RESOLVED to approve the use of variable direct debits for the payment of utility bills and non-domestic rates in accordance with the Town Council's Financial Regulation 6.7.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to approve payment for items by means of electronic bank payments, including BACS and CHAPS, in accordance with the Town Council's Financial Regulation 6.8.**

### 20. The Guildhall Project

Members received an update on the Guildhall Project. The first stage of the project had been completed, final reports had been submitted to the Architectural Heritage Fund and National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and all grant monies awarded had been paid. Members of the Property Working Group had met Greenwood Projects Ltd earlier in the day to review progress and consider next steps. Councillors expressed their satisfaction with the excellent service provided by Greenwood Projects. If Councillors wished to move forward with the Guildhall project, the next step would be to submit an Expression of Interest to the NLHF for further funding. The cost of the preparatory work required was included in the fee previously agreed with Greenwood. Once submitted to the NLHF, a response to the Expression of Interest could be expected within two months.

**It was RESOLVED to continue with the Guildhall Project and to submit an Expression of Interest to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for further funding.**

**It was RESOLVED to delegate authority to the Finance & Asset Management Committee to take forward the Guildhall project to the stage of an Expression of Interest to the NLHF.**

### 21. Neighbourhood Plan Review

Members noted that the Neighbourhood Plan review was moving forward under the leadership of the steering group and the consultant was providing sound advice and guidance.

### 22. Shropshire Local Plan Review

- a. Members received an update on the Shropshire Local Plan Review. In response to concerns from the Inspectors, Shropshire Council had amended the Plan to add 500 more homes to the planned number in relation to the Black Country allowance, making a total of 31,800. These would be split between Shrewsbury (350), Whitchurch (75) and the Buildwas Power Station site (75).
- b. Members noted public consultation on four documents associated with the Local Plan (as outlined in minute 6, Local Plan update, above), with a deadline for responses of 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024. Councillors were advised that responses had been prepared by members of the Civic Society and Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan Refresh Group. It might be appropriate for the Town Council to make a combined response with those bodies.

**It was RESOLVED that members of the Council's Local Plan Working Group should meet members of the Civic Society and Refresh Group to review their proposed consultation responses.**

It was noted that an extraordinary Town Council meeting could be arranged if required to agree the Town Council's response to the Local Plan consultation by 11<sup>th</sup> June.

### 23. D-Day Commemoration – 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Members received an update on plans for the D-Day Commemoration on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2024. The D-Day flag would fly from the church mast on 6<sup>th</sup> June. The Lamp of Peace would be used at the ceremony, then placed in front of the war memorial and used at future remembrance services, if possible. The 'Certificate of Recognition', marking the town's participation in the commemoration, would be displayed on the Council's notice boards. At 8.30pm the procession would leave the church to go to the Priory grounds with the choir, Revd Stafford, the Mayor and a person (hopefully a veteran) carrying the Lamp of Peace. Following a short service of remembrance, the beacon would be lit at 9.15pm. Councillor Thomas would take charge of the beacon. At 9.30pm the procession would return to the church. The Priory grounds would be closed at 10.30pm at the latest. Flags and bunting would be displayed in the town centre.

The Mayor requested a high turnout of Councillors for the event, wearing high visibility vests and carrying torches.

Councillor Crooke-Williams was thanked for organising this event.

**24. Consultation**

Members considered a response to the following Shropshire Council consultation:

- a. Garden Waste and Household Recycling Centres, deadline 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024.  
Members noted that Councillor Thomas had made representations in his Shropshire Councillor capacity and Town Councillors had submitted individual responses. **It was RESOLVED to make no Town Council response.**
- b. Empty Homes, deadline 26<sup>th</sup> May 2024. **It was RESOLVED to make no response.**
- c. Independent Living and Specialist Accommodation Strategy, deadline 31<sup>st</sup> May 2024. **It was RESOLVED to make no response.**
- d. School Library Service, deadline 7<sup>th</sup> June 2024. **It was RESOLVED to make no Town Council response, but that Councillors should make individual responses.**

**25. 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. VCSA Shropshire newsletters
- f. News from Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust
- g. Information on National Gardens Scheme in Shropshire 2024
- h. Housing Plus Group – Corporate Plan 2024-26
- i. What’s On at The Edge Arts Centre
- j. Friendly Transport Service Newsletter May 2024
- k. Zero Carbon Shropshire May 2024 Green News
- l. South Shropshire Climate Action Group May Newsletter
- m. The Rural Services Network Rural Funding Digest May 2024
- n. Lezley’s Leader’s Update May 2024

**26. Agenda items for next Town Council meeting**

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

**27. Date of next meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 7.00pm at the Guildhall.

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**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.**

**28. 10 High Street**

Members received an update on progress with letting the premises and noted that a viewing had taken place earlier in the day. Having considered advice from the letting agent, **it was RESOLVED to reduce the marketing price for 10 High Street and to increase promotion.**

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Signed ..... Town Mayor      Date .....