



Much Wenlock Town Council

ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

2017 - 2018

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Much Wenlock Town Council

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Aims and objectives

This Asset Management Plan as been developed to:

- ◆ help the Town Council to manage its property portfolio;
- ◆ identify headline points for inclusion in the Town Council's Action Plan.

Fixed assets

Condition survey of the Town Council's property

In 2009 Balfours carried out a condition survey of the Town Council's property (fixed assets). The survey identified almost £220,000 of remedial work to be carried out over a 5-year period. The table below sets out Balfour's recommended works and the cost.

Property	Estimated Cost £	Comment
Corn Exchange	55,100	Remedial work has been carried out and it is not envisaged that any further significant work will be necessary within the next 3 years. However, the tarmac to the rear of the building, outside the library, is uneven and does present a trip hazard. Unfortunately, the dampness on the west wall of the building has returned although Balfours carried out further remedial work in 2015 to try to eradicate this.

Property	Estimated Cost £	Comment
Cemetery walls	2,500	<p>These are retaining walls and adjoin a pedestrian pavement adjacent to a main road. The Council should ensure that the walls are maintained in a safe condition in order to prevent harm or injury to passers-by should the wall collapse.</p> <p>The hand rail to the steps leading to the cemetery from the Bridgnorth Road is loose and is awaiting attention.</p>
Queen Street bus shelter	8,000	<p>The Finance & Resources Committee considered whether the shelter should be refurbished or replaced. The cost for either is similar and therefore a replacement would be the most cost efficient, Grant funding of 75% was available from Shropshire Council although Shropshire Council would not provide a grant unless it could be determined that Arriva would maintain the bus route on which the bus shelter is situated.</p> <p>In the interim period Shropshire Council has given the Town Council £2,000 towards capital costs and the bus shelter has now been refurbished to an acceptable standard.</p>
Victoria Road bus shelter	750	Some attention to this shelter would make it more attractive to those using public transport.
Thomas Cooke Clock <i>(This is a registered charity and the Town Council has delegated authority to maintain it.)</i>	-	The clock receives an annual maintenance check and remedial work was carried out during the 2014/2015 financial year.

At its budget setting meeting on 14 January 2010 the Town Council agreed to earmark £24,000, commencing in the 2010/2011 fiscal year, for works to be carried out on its property. The Corn Exchange was extensively improved during the early part of 2012 at a cost of circa £59,000, slightly over budget, but additional work was deemed to be economical in the long term.

Property maintenance

The Town Council's decision to introduce a rolling programme of £24,000 per year in the precept towards property maintenance/improvement over a 5-year term equates to a total budget of £120,000 by the end of 2016. However, a reduced amount of £12,000 was included in the 2015/2016 budget. Therefore, only £108,000 has been raised to date and only £50,000 is included in reserves, therefore, a further £70,000 needs to be reserved for property maintenance/improvement. However, if the Town Council wishes to carry out the remainder of the works identified by Balfours (at an estimated cost of £164,550) it will need to continue with its rolling programme and include £24,000 per annum in its budget until 2018, which will raise £168,000 in total between the years 2011 and 2019. However, only £20,000 has been included in the draft 2017/2018 budget.

Street lighting remedial works

In April 2012 the Town Council was informed by E-on that, during maintenance work, remedial works had been identified as outlined in the table below.

Pole light location	Remedial work required
Copse Hill Road	Needs to be replaced due to asbestos in the box
King Street	Needs to be replaced due to asbestos in the box
Near church at King Street	Needs to be replaced due to asbestos in the box
Opposite Mardol Cottages at King Street	Needs to be replaced due to asbestos in the box
Near telephone box at junction at Vineyard Road/Much Wenlock Road	Needs to be replaced due to asbestos in the box
Junction of Copse Much Wenlock Road	Needs to be replaced due to asbestos in the box
Outside 1 Station Road	Needs to be replaced due to asbestos in the box
Outside Beechwood, Station Road	Needs to be replaced due to asbestos in the box
Outside Wheatlands, Station Road	Needs to be replaced due to asbestos in the box
Outside Lyndens, Station Road	Needs to be replaced due to asbestos in the box
Outside pumping station, Station Road	Needs to be replaced due to asbestos in the box
Opposite School, Station Road	Needs to be replaced due to asbestos in the box
Near to substation, Station Road	Needs to be replaced due to asbestos in the box

The **cost** to remove the existing pole lights, supply, deliver, install and electrically test all 13 of the above, complete with AC Ford Box, complete with bracket, LED lantern and associated control gear is **£9,738.04** (quote dated April 2012).

The **cost** to provide electrical connections to all 13 of the above is **£5,603.00** (quote dated April 2012).

The **cost for each pole light replacement is £1,180.08 - total cost is £17,947.62** (quote dated April 2012).

There is no immediate need to replace any of the pole lights. However, should a fault be found in any of them, the contractor will not be able to carry out a repair due to the asbestos inside each pole light. However, whilst the Town Council agreed to to budget £4,500 over the next four years (commencing 2014/2015) only £4,500 was included in the budget for the 2015/2016 fiscal year. There is no provision in the 2016/2017 budget nor in the draft 2017/2018 budget.

TANGIBLE ASSETS

CCTV

The CCTV system has been updated and is covered by a manufacturer's warranty until October 2017.

Christmas lights

The Town Council has replaced its old Christmas lights with more energy efficient lights. The cost of replacement was £4,356 for the lights in the Square and £2,328 for the lights in the Corn Exchange. The Council also has lights for the tree at Back Lane car park and now owns the recently installed Christmas lights in the High Street which cost £3,516. These lights were donated by the Much Wenlock Christmas Lights Fund. The lights in the tree at Back Lane are left in situ throughout the year so the only cost incurred is the annual electrical maintenance check, plus a gratuity payment of £25 to the owner of the house from where the lights are powered. RMW has calculated that the true cost would be no more than £8.

The Guildhall

The visitor experience

The Guildhall is a Grade II* Listed Building and registered as an Asset of Community Value. The building is open to visitors between Easter and October each year on Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday between the hours of 11:00 and 16:00, five hours per day. Three staff are employed to receive visitors and one is employed to keep the premises clean.

Entrance to the Guildhall is free although visitors are encouraged to make a donation. Three donation boxes are placed at strategic locations.

Each month there are various exhibitions in the Court Room which is an added attraction to visitors. There is also a small range of gifts on sale, such as picture postcards, books and cards. These are sold on a sale or return basis and the Council takes 20% commission from gifts and exhibition sales.

Improvements

The Guildhall is in need of some remedial work, especially the Buttermarket. Although the Council had agreed that the Buttermarket should be painted the Conservation Officer has advised that it can only be painted with breathable paint such as lime-wash. However, before this can be applied, the present paint needs to be carefully removed. Most of the bricks are hand-made and soft inside. Some time in the past the inside and the outside of the Buttermarket has been painted with masonry paint and this is not allowing the brickwork to breathe. If the masonry paint is not removed moisture will remain trapped inside and gradually erode the bricks and the building will become unstable.

A quote obtained for the refurbishment of the railings at the Buttermarket indicates that it is likely to cost in the region of £30,000 plus VAT. The building also desperately needs bird proofing and this work is estimated to cost in the region of £3,500 plus VAT.

The Gaskell Recreation Ground

In 1936 Mary Ward gave the Gaskell Recreation Ground to the Borough of Wenlock (the Corporation) *“to hold and maintain the same as a recreation ground and playing field for the use of the residents of the Wenlock Ward of the said borough”*. It was given in celebration of the Silver Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary. However, the ground was given on the proviso that the Corporation establishes and constitutes a Board of Management, consisting of the Ward Members of the Wenlock Ward for the time being, and four persons nominated from time to time by the Donor or other owners of Wenlock Abbey Much Wenlock (now Wenlock Estates).

The ground is regularly used by William Brookes School, the Bowling Club and the Cricket Club which provides regular income for the charity.

There are around 174 trees on the Gaskell Recreation Ground which need to be managed.

Governance

Since 1936, when the Ground was given to the people, the Ward of Much Wenlock has been affected by local government changes. The Gaskell Recreation Ground is now a registered charity of which the town council is a custodian trustee. The town council has a management agreement with the charity which manages the ground on behalf of the town council via a management committee. Membership of the Gaskell Recreation Ground charity comprises all town councillors and four representative of Wenlock Estates. The charity has a Constitution, Financial Regulations, appropriate policies, a chairman, a secretary, and a treasurer. Insurance cover for the Ground is in the name of the charity. This means that representatives of Wenlock Estates are insured as well as Town Councillors. The Charity is able to raise its own funds and receives grant aid from the town council.

Future use

In 2009 the Much Wenlock 2012 Legacy Group and the Gaskell Recreation Ground Board of Management engaged Playdell Smithyman Ltd., on behalf of Engergize Telford & Wrekin, carried out a consultation on the future of the Ground. Playdell Smithyman subsequently produced the following documents:

- Gaskell Recreation Ground August 2009 Consultation Review
- The Vision for Gaskell Recreation Ground Final Report: November 2009
- Gaskell Recreation Ground: Pavilion and Grounds Business Plan December 2010: 2012 and Beyond

Below are a few verbatim extracts of peoples' comments that resulted from the consultation exercise which formed the 'Vision':

"Both the user groups and general public would like to see more openness and communication in relation to the management of the site. This would also help to deal with the issue of the numerous rumours about the recreation ground and its future, which are having a negative effect on people's perception of the site."

"As with the sports club there is a feeling that the school is taking over. There needs to be clarification of the relationship between the site and the school, which in turn needs to be communicated to the wider public."

"There is a desire from local people to be able to have a more active role in maintenance and management."

"The annual Olympic Games event uses the recreation ground purely for car parking and doesn't commemorate/mark its links with Penny Brookes' Olympian Games."

"The site was left to the people of Much Wenlock so the community effectively has ownership of the site."

"Lack of/limited communication between the GRGBoM and the wider community."

"The perception within the community that the school is "taking over" the site."

Below are a few verbatim extracts from the 'Business Plan'. The Business Plan was principally developed to determine the overall financial viability of a new community pavilion on the Gaskell Recreation Ground and is linked to the wider business plan for the Gaskell Recreation Grounds.

"Much Wenlock Cricket Club is a thriving club both in terms of results and membership. In order to continue and to meet the requirements of the league the Club needs a pavilion facility. The Cricket Club have identified a need for a community facility within Much Wenlock and recognise that the pavilion could potentially provide a venue for other teams, groups, societies and events from across the town and the surrounding hinterland."

"The pavilion will be an inclusive facility that meets the needs of the Much Wenlock Cricket Club, other sports teams and the wider community within the town. This business plan seeks to inform the ultimate design of the facility, which will not only meet the requirements of the English Cricket Board and other potential funders, but also take into account the recreation ground and its value as the only significant public open space within the town."

"As part of the ongoing support to Much Wenlock Town Council from Shropshire Council, external consultants, PSD, were employed to determine long term requirements for the development of the existing cricket outfield and football pitch. A budget estimate of £50,000.00 has been identified to improve the quality of the pitches through improved drainage, slitting and aeration."

"The information contained within this Business Plan and obtained through research and consultation confirms there is a need for a pavilion within the Gaskell Recreation Ground."

"A key factor in deciding the final location of the pavilion will relate to pedestrian/vehicular access and car parking. Any new facility will require access for construction, deliveries and access during match days but this is currently unachievable due to the restricted access to car parking at William Brookes School and the requirement to reduce levels of vehicle movement within the Gaskell Recreation Ground."

"At present the preferred location for the proposed pavilion remains undetermined. This is principally due to the ongoing discussions regarding the need to balance pupil safety and public access from the new school and leisure facility to Gaskell Recreation Ground. It is anticipated that this issue will be resolved during 2011 as part of discussions regarding the revised Joint Use Agreement."

"Although the former arrangements for managing the site and school did not necessarily meet the expectations of all stakeholders, there is still clearly a requirement to have a nominated person or body that has the overview of the whole site, who can make informed and balanced decisions regarding the needs of the grounds and all users."

"Financial accountability will continue to rest with Much Wenlock Town Council."

"In discussion with the Grounds and Pavilion Project Group, held as part of the development of this business plan, it is proposed that the ownership and direct management of the new pavilion will rest with Much Wenlock Town Council. To facilitate the management of the pavilion, the Cricket Club have agreed to take a proactive role and assist in the day-to-day

running of the new venue. It is proposed that a management committee will be established as the main liaison mechanism for managing the pavilion.”

Below are a few verbatim extracts from the ‘Consultation Review’.

“There are a number of key issues, in relation to the site, which need to be resolved including parking, litter, public toilets, access and drainage.”

“other” barriers identified by groups were:-

- A community sports hub with better car park and drainage.
- Car parking problems are a deterrent for some of our old members.
- Obviously with a space like this, most particularly because of the children, operational toilets would be an advantage.
- We would like to see parking banned particularly around the Linden Walk and the trees. We believe that parking at the school should be made available to the public during school hours as recompense for the benefit of the school using Linden Field during the day.
- Loose dogs.”

“How can we make Gaskell Recreation Ground a welcoming place?

.....It’s a shame that the play area was situated in the wettest area of the field.

Keep cars off the grounds.

Do everything possible to preserve the trees.”

“What can we do to ensure that the Gaskell Recreation Ground is healthy, safe and secure?

Dogs off the grounds.

Toilets for public use.

Drainage in the play area which is sodden in wet weather and inaccessible.”

“How can the management and maintenance of the Gaskell Recreation Ground be improved?

Put more money into it.

Get a better management committee.

Have management made up of representatives from each user group e.g. school, Olympians, cricket, bowls etc.”

In summary “Both the user groups and general public would like to see more openness and communication in relation to the management of the site. This would also help to deal with the issue of the numerous rumours about the recreation ground and its future, which are having a negative affect on people’s perception of the site” and “There is a perception that the sports groups are “taking over the site”, which suggest a balance needs to be found which reflects the needs of all users.

A number of members of the public who took part in the consultation process, emphasised that the area was left to the people of Much Wenlock not just the sports clubs.”

The Gaskell Recreation Ground Management Committee is currently developing a Management Plan for the Ground which will hopefully be adopted by the charity in early 2017. The aims and objectives of the plan have been derived through consultation and one of its objectives is to make the Gaskell Recreation Ground ‘self funding’ in future.

Rented premises

The Town Council receives revenue from the following properties:

- The Corn Exchange
- Linden Lodge
- Cemetery Field
- Museum
- Library

A rent review was undertaken by the District Valuation Office in 2014 who advised that the current charges are considered to be pitched at the right level, except for the library whose rent should be higher. However, in the current climate it would not be prudent for the Council to raise the rent because it may prompt Shropshire Council to close the library unless the Town Council takes it on. The town council has now agreed to fund the library until 2024 at a total cost of £98,000 commencing April 2017.

RENTED PREMISES

SOURCE	REVENUE PER ANNUM	LEASE TERM	REVIEW DUE	COMMENTS
Library	£2,000	21 years from 24.06.04	25.06.09	See above
Corn Exchange				
Intermediate office	£1,300 +	Open ended	Reviewed 2014	A rent review has now been carried out by the District Valuer.
Corn Exchange	£200 car park space			

SOURCE	REVENUE PER ANNUM	LEASE TERM	REVIEW DUE	COMMENTS
Rear office	£1,500	Open ended	Reviewed 2014	A rent review has now been carried out by the District Valuer.
Front office	£5,700	Open ended	Reviewed 2014	A rent review has now been carried out by the District Valuer.
Buttermarket (Rod Hall)	£7,700	Open ended	Reviewed 2014	A rent review has now been carried out by the District Valuer.
Museum	£4,000	21 years from 29.06.12	Every 5th anniversary of lease date	To be reviewed 2018
Linden Lodge	£6,960	Open ended	January 2017	The Council pays £870 per annum for the property to be managed by Balfours.
Cemetery field	£450	Open ended	March 2019	Lease to the Allotments Society.

Markets

Markets

Much Wenlock has been a market town for over 800 years. In 1138 King Stephen granted Wenlock Priory a three-day fair on 23 – 25 June. By 1224 weekly markets were being held on Sundays. In that same year Henry III visited the town, and granted that the Priory should change market day from Monday to Sunday. In 1468 the market rights were vested in the Borough of Much Wenlock.

Markets are now held at the Corn Market and the Buttermarket. Food Fairs were trialled during 2015 and 2016 but trade has not been consistent and these will no longer continue. During 2017 there will be fortnightly craft markets on Saturday between April and October. There will be a variety of stalls during alternate weeks. Fruit and veg markets will continue at the Buttermarket on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday.

Cemetery chapel

Realising its materialistic value

The cemetery chapel is a Victorian building, built in 1890. It has been left to deteriorate although the cemetery itself is well maintained. Plans have been draw up to refurbish the chapel for community use although applications for grants to undertake this work have been unsuccessful.

The 'Friends of the cemetery' would like to see the cemetery chapel restored and used for community activities. The town council supports this idea and the chapel has now been registered as a community asset in accordance with the 'Localism Act 2011 and Assets of Community Value Regulations (England) 2012'. The date of registration is dated 16 January 2015.

Shropshire Council's offer

Library and open space

At a Town Council meeting held on 3 November 2016 it was agreed to support the delivery of library services in Much Wenlock until 2025. Shropshire Council will continue to run the service directly through a Service Level Agreement which will be funded by the Town Council.

The agreement includes the refurbishment of the library to include a Customer Service Point for the Town Council. During the 2017/2017 fiscal year the Town Council will pay the sum of £16,200 to Shropshire Council although this will be reimbursed to the Town Council has part of the agreement for the refurbishment.

At the time of writing, discussions concerning the Town Council taking on open space are ongoing. This includes:

- ▶ Stretton Road (employment land)
- ▶ Hunters Gate
- ▶ Railway Walk

Contracts

The Town Council has the following contracts:

SUPPLIER	SERVICE	SITE	ANNUAL COST £
Chubb Fire & Security	Security alarm maintenance 3-year term commencing 2016	Corn Exchange	375
Chubb Fire & Security	Security alarm maintenance 3-year term commencing 2016	Guildhall	375
RMW	Emergency lighting and fire alarm maintenance	Corn Exchange	412
RMW	Emergency lighting and fire alarm maintenance	Guildhall	175
Steve Burton Groundcare	Cemetery maintenance	Cemetery	440 per cut
Veolia	Duty of care (waste disposal)	Corn Exchange	45
Highline	Street lighting maintenance 3-year contract commencing 2016	Much Wenlock	3004
Total Gas & Power	Electricity	Corn Exchange	*
Total Gas & Power	Gas	Corn Exchange	*
Total Gas & Power	Electricity	Guildhall	*
Total Gas & Power	Gas	Guildhall	*
British Telecom	Telephone and broadband	Guildhall	*
InovaCom	Telephone and broadband	Corn Exchange	*
SWALEC	Street lighting power	Street lights	*

Contracts are awarded in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

* Cost dependent on usage.