

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
 held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
 7 pm on Thursday 2 June 2016

PRESENT:

Cllr. Herbert Harper (Chairman), Cllr. Robin Bennett, Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning, Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Dafydd Jenkins, Cllr. David Turner, and Cllr. Milner Whiteman OBE.

IN ATTENDANCE:

1 member of the public

In the absence of the Town Clerk, who was ill, the minutes were taken by Cllr. Herbert Harper.

1) CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and informed the meeting of his Mayoral engagements as follows:

- Visit to the Lady Forester Nursing Home, Much Wenlock where a presentation took place to 3 long-term volunteers of the League of Friends.
- Welcomed approximately 100 members of Townswomen's Guild of Shropshire who were spending the day in Much Wenlock for presentations on the area and visiting various sites.

2) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following apologies were received:

COUNCILLOR	REASON FOR ABSENCE
Mike Grace	Holiday
Yvonne Holyoak	Another commitment
Paul Laming	Family commitment
Joffrey Watson	Family commitment

These apologies were **CONFIRMED** and **ACCEPTED** as **APPROVED** absence.

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.

As a Shropshire Councillor Cllr. David Turner declared an interest in any matters relating to Shropshire Council, and as a Member of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership Management Board, in any matters relating to the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

4) DISPENSATIONS

Dispensation granted to Cllr. David Turner - request to participate in discussions concerning devolved services.

NOTED.

5) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no requests to speak from members of the public.

6) MINUTES

- a) The minutes of the Annual Town Council meeting held on 10 May 2016 were considered for approval. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes be signed and ADOPTED as a true record.** The minutes of the re-convened Annual Town Council meeting held on 12 May 2016 were considered for approval. These were not approved due to Cllr. David Turner's disagreement with what was recorded in his Shropshire Councillor's report.

- b) The minutes of a Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on 26 April 2016 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.
- c) The minutes of a Personnel Committee meeting held on 25 April 2016 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.

7) TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

Members received a written report from the Town Clerk on outstanding matters and action taken since the last Council meeting.

Cllr. Robin Bennett expressed concern about the artist who had used the Town Seal in one of her paintings as part of the Wenlock Festival. The Town Clerk had informed the artist that the Town Council has a policy which forbids the use of the Town Seal without permission and neither can it be used for commercial purposes. The artist had subsequently withdrawn the paintings from sale and Cllr. Bennett felt that since her paintings were part of the Festival they should have been considered as a good cause.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk's report be **NOTED**.

8) FINANCE

- a) Members received income and expenditure from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.
It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that the income and expenditure for the financial year 2015/2016 be **APPROVED**.
- b) Members considered for approval the internal audit report for 2015/2016.
It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that the internal audit report for 2015/2016 be **APPROVED**.
- c) Members considered for approval and agreement Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2015/2016.
It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that the Town Council had ensured that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of the accounting statements.
- d) Members considered for approval the accounts for the financial year from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 contained within the Annual Return, Sections 2.
It was **RESOLVED** that the accounts for the financial year from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 contained within the Annual Return, Sections 2, be **APPROVED**.

9) COMMUNITY LED AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT AND LOCAL LETTINGS POLICY

- a) Members received comments from the consultation events and minutes from a Project Group meeting held on 3 May 2016.
It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** to **NOTE** the comments.
- b) Members considered for comment a draft lettings policy for community led affordable housing.
It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that:
 - i. **The Lettings Policy be NOTED.**
 - ii. **The Policy should include a requirement for the Town Council to be able to process local verification connection in a prompt and efficient manner.**

Cllr. Robin Bennett left at this point in the meeting.

10) REPORT FROM SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

Cllr. David Turner gave the following report:

- **"Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** - As you'll know, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership is endeavouring to convert to a Conservation Trust now that most funding from Shropshire Council is being withdrawn. This is requiring an intense round of meetings with outside bodies and those Shropshire Councillors who sit on the Management Board are working hard to achieve a sustainable future for the AONB.
- **Highways** - You'll recall that Much Wenlock, Broseley and Barrow councils came together many months ago to consider a joint proposal to Shropshire Council regarding restricting access for HGVs etc. We have now received confirmation of the schemes that were given capital funding to be progressed this financial year 2016/17 and the HGV routing for Much Wenlock, Barrow and Broseley was one of those. The design will be carried out in this current financial year with construction in the 2017/18 financial year. Many of you know that, when a large vehicle which has no business in the town, enters our streets, mounts the footway and causes alarm to pedestrians, I ensure that Shropshire Council writes to the operator. When they respond, hauliers sometimes blame satnav systems.

Sometimes such vehicles are making local deliveries and I always advise recipients of such deliveries to ensure that an appropriate sized vehicle is used and that the best route is given. It's therefore something of an embarrassment to find that a lorry mounted the footway in the High Street on Tuesday en route to making a delivery via Back Lane to the Town Council! I understand that the driver had to be directed to the Town Council offices by a local resident. We should be setting a better example.

There has been a lot of concern expressed by pedestrians, residents, traders and motorists about parking in the narrow streets of Much Wenlock. There have been requests for loading bays and disabled parking. There's also been concern about the difficulty the buses have in turning around in Queen Street due to parked vehicles. Three proposals regarding on-street parking are out for consultation now and I hope that the Town Council will offer their immediate and unqualified support for these as a further step in sorting out congestion in the town.

On 23rd March Shropshire Council responded to the Town Clerk's email regarding traffic issues in Barrow Street. They said that keep clear markings cannot be legally enforced as they are advisory markings only. It would be very difficult to actively enforce a handful of very short double yellow and generally the Keep Clear markings are better respected – if they are worn and need remarking then we can certainly take a look at these. On 5th May the Town Council asked for double yellow lines to be installed at strategic places along Barrow Street to allow oncoming vehicles sufficient space to pull in. Now residents in Barrow Street, who hadn't been consulted, have expressed some concern about the Town Council's proposal for double yellow lines. They have requested that a more informed view should be taken, recognizing that some of the white H-bars are now redundant and don't need replacing. There has been one suggestion that bollards on the north side of Barrow Street will protect the footway and pedestrians. I suggest that the Town Council thinks about this again.

- **Advice surgery** - My next advice surgery will be held Saturday 18th June at Much Wenlock museum when I hope to be accompanied by Councillor Yvonne Holyoak and a representative of the police."

NOTED.

11) CONSULTATION

Members received proposals for the following:

- a) No waiting at any time and no loading 10 am – 4 pm at parts of Wilmore Street, Barrow Street, and High Street.
- b) No waiting at any time at parts of Sheinton Street and Queen Street.

It was **PROPOSED**, **SECONDED** and **AGREED** that this should be considered by the Planning & Environment Committee.

12) CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was received:

- a) Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) information bulletins and other information sent to Members via email.

It was **AGREED** that the correspondence be **NOTED.**

13) PLANNING

- a) There were no planning applications referred by the Planning & Environment Committee to the Town Council or to Shropshire Councillor David Turner.

NOTED.

- b) Members were informed that the Planning & Environment Committee was concerned that Shropshire Council had approved a planning application which the Committee felt was outside of the Development Boundary as defined in the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Much Wenlock, and the Committee was to refer this matter to the Neighbourhood Development Plan Monitoring Working Group for consideration and clarification.

NOTED.

14) FLOOD REPORT

There was no report from the Community Flood Action Group.

NOTED.

15) DEVOLVED SERVICES

Members received information from the Devolved Services Working Group following discussions with Shropshire Council concerning devolved services and asset transfer. The Working Group consisted of Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, Cllr. Herbert Harper, and Cllr. David Turner. Shropshire Council had requested an “in principle” indication of views from the Town Council on the services being offered to the Council. This was to save Shropshire Council wasting public money and officer time on re-designing services which the Council may not be interested in. The Town Council’s principles, based on its financial ability, would form the basis for its own consultation with eligible householders within the parish before any decisions on outcomes were made. Although the Town Council had received some information about finance and the relevant benefits and risks, there were still issues that were not clear and changes to what was being offered could still apply.

Members therefore considered the following principles:

- That Much Wenlock Town Council accepts full responsibility and deliver the service or
- That Much Wenlock Town Council precepts sufficiently to fund Shropshire Council to deliver the service and
- To recommend other routes such as community provider/s or shared responsibility by others, but not the Town Council or
- That Much Wenlock Town Council declines the offer.

However, these principles were not binding on any public consultation but would be used as informed and considered options as to the overall ability and financial ability of the Town Council in relation to the services on offer.

Members believed that Much Wenlock library had the highest possibility of a fit with the Town Council’s operations and therefore it was

PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to recommend that the Town Council accepts the devolvement of Much Wenlock library subject to further negotiation and public consultation.

Members considered linking the library with the museum but after detailed consideration Members could not see how this could work without detracting to one or other of the services. Members believed that the best way forward to retain the essential service of the museum was to encourage a Trust with the required expertise to undertake the delivery of this service.

It was therefore PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to recommend that the Town Council decline this service.

Members considered the devolvement of Much Wenlock Sports Centre following a meeting of the Working Group with members, directors, and staff of William Brookes Academy where discussion had taken place as to any possible support to any application the academy may make to Shropshire Council as to the devolvement of this service, but it was made clear that any financial contributions were unlikely.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that this is not a service to be devolved to the Town Council.

Members considered taking on responsibility for open spaces in the parish of Much Wenlock. However, it was unclear which open spaces were on offer for devolvement although Shropshire Council had indicated that they would be on lease for 125 years.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that, whilst some areas of open space might be of interest to the Town Council to maintain, the Council would not accept a leasehold agreement, only freehold.

Members considered car parks in Much Wenlock which were part of the early discussions before being withdrawn from discussion by Shropshire Council.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that car parks must be part of the continuation of the devolvement process with the Town Council.

Members considered the employment land at Stretton Road which had been designated for some years but no progress in developing employment opportunities had been forthcoming. The Neighbourhood Development Plan for Much Wenlock clearly indicates the need to press forward with initiatives to provide such employment opportunities.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that:

- i. **The Town Council was best placed to make employment opportunities available over a shorter time scale.**
- ii. **The Town Council should seek freehold tenure of the land which should be devolved to the Town Council.**

16) SHARED DEVELOPMENT OF PREMISES

Members considered a letter from Much Wenlock & Cressage Medical Practice asking whether the Town Council was interested in a joint venture to establish joint facilities with the Medical Practice in Much Wenlock. The current premises for the Medical Practice were no longer adequate and the Practice had applied to the NHS for funding. If the Practice could demonstrate a need across another sector it was more likely to secure the necessary funding to develop shared premises.

Members were agreed that, at this stage, the Council was supportive of the efforts to establish a new medical centre and the possibility of a multi centre for operating various services, but more details were required, for example, was the centre to be provided on a PFI (Private Finance Initiative) provision.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that, since the Town Council had limited financial ability, more information was required to enable a more informed decision.

17) UNDERGROUND TANK ON THE GASKELL RECREATION GROUND

Members considered information concerning the deep borehole and tank situated in the children's playground on the Gaskell Recreation Ground. It was said to be 30.48 meters deep and originally provided the town with mains water. It was formerly the responsibility of the Borough of Wenlock and Severn Trent had recently been contacted and had indicated that it was not their responsibility and referred the matter to the Town Council. It was proposed that the Town Council should commission an inspection survey of the borehole and that a preliminary inspection was to take place on 6 June 2016 by Wyatt Brothers of Whitchurch after which a further report would be presented to the Town Council.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that:

- i. This information be NOTED.
- ii. The matter be referred to the Finance & Resources Committee for action.

18) AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

It was AGREED that Members should contact the Town Clerk if they wanted anything included on the next agenda.

19) PAST MAYORS BADGES

Members considered how past Mayors should be presented with "Past Mayor" badges. In the past the badges had been purchased by past Mayors although, since 2011, they had been given to past Mayors.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that "Past Mayor" badges should be purchased by past Mayors and not given to them for free.

20) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was NOTED that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 7 July 2016.

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.

21) STAFFING MATTERS

- a) Cllr. Herbert Harper briefed Members on staffing matters.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to appoint Ellis Whittam to advise the Council with HR issues at a cost of £820 + VAT.

Cllr. David Turner left at this point in the meeting.

- b) Members considered the appointment of a Disciplinary and Grievance Panel consisting of 3 Members.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the following Members should be appointed: Cllr. Graham Edgumbe Venning, Cllr. Dafydd Jenkins, and Cllr. Milner Whiteman.
- c) Members considered for approval Terms of Reference for the Disciplinary and Grievance Panel.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the Terms of Reference be APPROVED.

The meeting closed at 21:05.

Signed.....

Date.....

Cllr. Herbert Harper
Town Mayor