

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
7 pm on Thursday 28 July 2016

PRESENT:

Cllr. Herbert Harper (Chairman), Cllr. Robin Bennett, Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning, Cllr. Mike Grace, Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, Cllr. Paul Laming, Cllr. David Turner, Cllr. Joffrey Watson, and Cllr. Milner Whiteman OBE.

TOWN CLERK:

Sharon Clayton

IN ATTENDANCE:

6 members of the public

1) CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

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

- 10 July: spent the day at the 130th Wenlock Olympian Games which was very impressive with varied activities.
- 18 July: presented a civic gift to students at William Brookes School who made the donation boxes for the Guildhall.
- 19 July: launch event in relation to the restoration of the Borough of Wenlock minute books project.
- 21 July: accompanied the Town Clerk at a meeting with two representatives from Shropshire Council Highways with regards to rules and regulations in relation to the town's Christmas lighting and there were no apparent issues.

2) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr. Dafydd Jenkins who had work commitments.

This apology was **CONFIRMED** and **ACCEPTED** as **APPROVED** absence.

Cllr. Joffrey Watson sent apologies that he would be late and would need to leave early.

Cllr. Paul Laming apologised that he had to leave early.

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

Five members of the public had requested to speak about the planning application for affordable homes at Callaughton Lane. The Chairman explained that he would invite them to speak in alphabetical order and each would be allowed 3 minutes to speak in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders, after which councillors may want to respond with questions. He explained how, when considering planning matters, the Planning & Environment Committee took great care to ensure compliance with the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Much Wenlock, especially site specific issues such as whether development was near to watercourses etc.

In line with the Town Council's policies and transparency the Chairman invited the Town Clerk to advise Members, especially those on the Project Board, about voting on matters on which they have an interest. The Chairman also reminded Members about the Nolan Principles in accordance with the Localism Act provisions.

Following this advice Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak declared a non-pecuniary interest as she was a member of the Project Board and said she would not participate in the deliberations. Cllr. Mike Grace informed the meeting that he had been elected by the Town Council to represent the Town Council on the Project Board and to report back to the Town Council.

Cllr. David Turner informed the meeting that he had been a member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, and that he had taken advice concerning his position as a Shropshire councillor. He had been informed that he was able to participate in the discussion and would judge the application on its merits. Cllr. Robin Bennett also said that he would judge the application on its merits and that he had no preconceived ideas.

Cllr. Joffrey Watson arrived at this point in the meeting.

The Chairman then invited members of the public to speak.

The first speaker asked why the Neighbourhood Development Plan was being ignored because the application was for 12 dwellings and not 10 as outlined in the Neighbourhood Plan. The design proposals were not in keeping with others in the town and his property would be overlooked by the development. He also expressed concern about traffic on the Bridgnorth Road.

The second speaker was a community member on the Project Board. She said that the Project board had raised concerns about traffic issues and Shropshire Housing Group engineers had worked with Shropshire Council to resolve these issues and it was believed that improvements would be made, including the extension of the 30 mph zone. It was also believed that the development would improve localised flooding. The reason why the number of dwellings had been increased to 12 was because the Project Group felt that without them it would not properly meet the needs of the community. The use of timber in the design was to fulfil the passive house requirement and make them energy efficient in line with government policy.

The third speaker said that the Neighbourhood Plan should be adhered to and the proposals should not exceed 10 dwellings otherwise it would set a precedent for other planning applications.

The fourth speaker said that she was concerned about vehicular access to the site due to its narrowness. She asked who owned the grassed area to the side since there seemed to be no knowledge of ownership. She also expressed concern about parked traffic at the primary school opposite the site, she was opposed to the wood cladding on the houses, and expressed concern that the site looked as though it was designed to accommodate further development.

The final speaker said that he supported the application in principle but had concerns about speeding within the locality of the development site. He said that Shropshire Council would not reduce the speed limit because vehicles would not obey it. He expressed concern that two of the dwellings would be shared equity and not for rent, and was further concerned about the use of timber cladding. He asked who would be responsible for the maintenance of the attenuation ponds once the development was complete. He also informed the meeting that he had been a member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The Chairman thanked all of the speakers and said that he hoped that councillors would reflect on the comments made when considering the application.

6) COMMUNITY LED AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT

Members considered planning applications no: 16/02910/FUL – land west of Callaughton Lane, and to the south of Oakfield Park, Much Wenlock, for the erection of twelve affordable dwellings with associated parking, roads, landscaping, sustainable drainage scheme and enhanced access from the Callaughton Lane.

The Chairman explained the process which led up to the planning proposal being drawn up and said he could not find any reference to details of the chosen development site. Cllr. Mike Grace explained that the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group had assessed each site in terms of what the Plan was trying to do at that time. The Chairman continued to say that the proposed development site had been chosen by the Shropshire Housing Group Project Board. The Civic Society acknowledged the need for affordable homes but expressed concern about the location of the site and the relative issues which include access into a rural lane, flooding issues, the possibility of further development and it would be incompatible with the Neighbourhood Plan. The Civic Society did not support more than 10 dwellings as it would not comply with the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Chairman invited comments from Members, who each spoke in turn and in so doing, acknowledged community concerns. The meeting was informed that the proposals will meet the needs of the local community as set out in the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Project Board had insisted that drainage plans would be adequate, and Shropshire Housing Group would still own the site and be responsible for the attenuation ponds.

It was suggested that if the 12 dwellings were not approved the scheme may not go ahead because it may not be financially viable to the developer.

The Chairman of the Planning & Environment Committee explained how the Committee always referred to the Neighbourhood Plan when responding to planning applications, and he referred to policies within the Plan which were applicable to this application.

Cllr. David Turner informed the meeting about how the site had been chosen and that there had been public consultations throughout the process.

The Chairman referred to the Neighbourhood Plan and Policy H5 in Objective 1, Housing, which was applicable to the delivery of affordable housing, and reminded Members that the proposed development site was situated in a designated Rapid Response Catchment area.

Following a comprehensive debate it was proposed to vote 'no objection' subject to community concerns being addressed.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** no objection subject to:

- i. **The 30 mph speed limit on the approach to Much Wenlock should be extended further along the A458 towards Bridgnorth.**
- ii. **The 12 dwellings should be for rent and only for local people.**
- iii. **Clarification should be sought as to (a) who owns the land between the Bridgnorth Road and the development site and (b) where would the footpath be located.**
- iv. **The width of the road to the site should be addressed to allow traffic to pass without incident.**
- v. **The development should conform to the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Much Wenlock.**

Cllr. Paul Laming and Cllr. Joffrey Watson left at this point in the meeting.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman **PROPOSED**, and it was **SECONDED** and **AGREED** to suspend the meeting for a five-minute break.

7) MINUTES

- a) The minutes of a Town Council meeting held on 7 July 2016 were considered for approval.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes be signed and ADOPTED as a true record.
- b) The minutes of a Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 31 May 2016 and an Extraordinary meeting held on 14 June 2016 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.
- c) The minutes of a Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on 24 May 2016 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.

8) TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

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

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

9) FINANCE

Members received income and expenditure from 1 April to 30 June 2016.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** that income and expenditure from 1 April to 30 June 2016 be **NOTED**.

10) DEVOLVED SERVICES

- a) Members received a verbal update from the Devolved Services Working Group following their meetings with Shropshire Council. The Working Group had been informed that the time for parish and town councils to respond had been extended for a further twelve months although the Working Group felt it prudent to continue with negotiations.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that a report of actions from meetings to date should be presented for consideration by the Town Council at its next meeting.

- b) Members considered for approval a library specification from Shropshire Council which set out how the Town Council would manage the library should it take over its management.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to consider this further at a future meeting.

- c) Members received a copy of a press release issued by Shropshire Council which outlined its proposals for the future of local services. The Council was consulting with parish and town councils about devolved services and had found a way to continue to fund local services for a further twelve months and therefore allow more time to reach agreement with parish and town councils over future provision.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the information be NOTED.

11) PLANNING

- a) There were no planning applications referred to the Town Council to consider other than the application for affordable homes discussed earlier in the meeting.

- b) The Chairman of the Planning & Environment Committee informed Members that the planning application for 15 High Street, Much Wenlock had still not been decided, and the Presthope Caravan site certificate of unlawfulness was subject to an appeal.

NOTED.

12) COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Members considered for approval a communication strategy to raise awareness of the role of the local councillor in the run up to the 2017 local elections.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that:

- i. **The focus of the strategy should be to show examples of how town councillors help to make Much Wenlock a better place in which to live and work.**
- ii. **Members should forward ideas to the Town Clerk so that they could be incorporated into future publicity.**

13) REVIEW OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR MUCH WENLOCK

Members considered for approval that the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Much Wenlock should be reviewed in accordance with page 7 in the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Much Wenlock which states that "A review of the Plan will be carried out within three years of the making of the Plan".

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that:

- i. **A review of the Plan should commence.**
- ii. **The local community should be invited to suggest aspects of the Plan which they feel should be a priority for the review process.**
- iii. **A public meeting would be held in the autumn to communicate and discuss the review.**
- iv. **The Planning & Environment Committee would work with the Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Working Group to begin the review.**

14) REPORT FROM SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

Cllr. David Turner informed Members that his next advice surgery would be on 10 September at Much Wenlock Museum and at Willey Village Hall on 29 October 2016. As always he welcomed the presence of other Town Councillors at any of his surgeries.

NOTED.

15) LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE (LJC)

Members received a verbal update from the last meeting of the LJC held at Shipton Village Hall. Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak and Cllr. Mary Hill had attended as the Town Council's representatives where they received a presentation on Highways, and the trials of needing a new medical centre. It was an interesting meeting although attendance was poor.

NOTED.

16) CONSULTATION

There was no consultation for consideration.

17) CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was received:

- a) Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) information bulletins and other information sent to Members via email.
- b) Information from Shropshire Council informing that Arriva had taken over the 436 local bus service following GHA Coaches going into administration.
- c) An email from PC Jane Cowen concerning the "Stop That Thief" initiative.

It was **AGREED** that:

- i. **The correspondence be NOTED.**
- ii. **Shropshire Council should be congratulated on how it had managed to replace the bus service in a very short time.**

18) AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

It was **AGREED** to contact the Town Clerk if anyone wanted anything included on the next agenda.

19) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 1 September 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.

20) HIGH STREET REGENERATION AND THE APPOINTMENT OF A PROMOTIONS OFFICER

Members considered how the High Street could be regenerated and the town promoted to encourage more visitors to the town. Cllr. Robin Bennett proposed that a Promotions Officer be appointed, on a contract basis, to promote the town through social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

The Town Clerk expressed concern that there was insufficient information on the contractual basis upon which a person would be appointed in terms of hours of work, budget, and monitoring success, if any.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that:

- i. **A Promotions Contractor should be engaged to advise the Town Council on social media work activities and to develop and implement a programme of activity to promote the town's activities, events, and council functions through social media.**
- ii. **The contractor should be engaged to work within a limit of £1,000.**
- iii. **The Finance & Resources Committee to have delegated authority to engage a suitable contractor.**

The meeting closed at 21:25.

Signed.....

Date.....

Cllr. Herbert Harper
Town Mayor