

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
 held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
 7 pm on Thursday 30 July 2015

PRESENT:

Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak (Chairman), Cllr. Robin Bennett, Cllr. Bert Harper, Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Dafydd Jenkins, Cllr. Paul Laming, Cllr. Robert Toft, Cllr. David Turner, and Cllr. Milner Whiteman OBE.

TOWN CLERK:

Sharon Clayton

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lesley Durbin

1) CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. She gave a verbal report of the Mayoral engagements she had attended since she took office in May 2015 follows:

- 10 May - Garden Party at Cruckmeole, Shrewsbury
- 21 May – Telford & Wrekin Mayor Making and Civic Reception
- 27 May – Ludlow Mayor Making and Civic Reception
- 30 May – Cuan House Fete and Dog Show
- 17 June – Twinning party at Much Wenlock Primary School
- 20 June – Holy Trinity Church Fete and Dog Show
- 21 June – Oswestry Civic Service
- 27 June – Much Wenlock Primary School Fete
- 28 June – Open Gardens in Much Wenlock including a visit to the cemetery chapel
- 1 July – opening of the WW1 Exhibition at Much Wenlock Guildhall
- 8 July – Shropshire Housing Association opening of new houses at Oreleton near Ludlow
- 11 July – Wenlock Olympian Society dedication of Oak tree to the King of Greece
- 12 July – Wenlock Olympian Society meeting with delegation from Japan and Australia
- 18 July – Festival at the Edge and Much Wenlock Food Fair
- 25 July – Hereford Cathedral Festival of Three Choirs, Civic Service and lunch
- 26 July – Mayor of Telford and Wrekin Civic Service at Wellington Methodist Church

In accordance with Standing Order no: 10(a)(vi) it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** that the order of business be changed to enable agenda items 13 and 18 to be considered as one item and as the last discussion on the agenda.

2) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from the following councillors:

COUNCILLOR	REASON FOR ABSENCE
Mike Grace	Holiday
Joffrey Watson	Family commitments

These apologies were 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.

4) DISPENSATIONS

None requested.

5) CEMETERY CHAPEL

Lesley Durbin informed Members about plans to renovate the Victorian cemetery chapel which had remained closed and unused since the late 1970s. The building had been registered as a community asset and, if restored for community use, it would comfortably hold 30 to 40 people. The 'Friends of the Cemetery' wanted to seek outside funding for the chapel to become a community building but, before it could be used as such, it would need toilets and a kitchenette. The 'Friends had already helped the Town Council to secure a pre-feasibility grant of £3,900 from the 'Community Rights Programme - Community Right to Build' and the Town Council had approved that these funds should be used for architectural drawings to be drawn up.

The 'Friends' had held two open days so that people could look inside the chapel to see its potential, and more open days were planned to take place on the first Friday of each month.

Balfours had previously surveyed the chapel in 2009 and estimated that repair work would cost in the region of £50,000. The 'Friends' had identified a number of funding sources including S106 monies.

Mrs Durbin asked the Council to consider whether it was prepared to take on the building as a 'going concern' for lettings and management and to put some 'pump priming' money into the project. The Council would also need to act quickly if it was to take advantage of community willingness to put in expertise for low cost without the 'three tender rule'. The chapel would need a sensitive lettings policy due to its proximity to the new cemetery and therefore its use would be confined to small meetings, exhibitions, lectures, etc. The chapel could also be used for small 'after funeral gatherings' and, since it is not Church of England consecrated, it could be used by all faiths.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED that the Town Council would re-consider whether to support the project once the architect's drawings had been prepared and there was more information available to determine the cost of the project.

The Chairman thanked Mrs. Durbin for attending the meeting and updating Members on proposed plans for the chapel.

6) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

7) MINUTES

The minutes of a Town Council meeting held on 2 July 2015 were considered for approval.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes be signed and ADOPTED as a true record.

8) TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

- a) Members received a written report from the Town Clerk on outstanding matters and action taken since the last Council meeting. Members also received written clerk's reports from a Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on 21 July 2015 and a meeting of the Gaskell Recreation Ground Management Committee held on 6 July 2015.

With reference to the Town Clerk's report concerning the Australian visitor's desire to twin with Much Wenlock it was suggested that EU funding might be available.

The Town Clerk added the following verbal report:

- o She had received a formal invitation from Shropshire Housing Group inviting councillors to attend a Much Wenlock Project Board meeting at the Priory Hall on Tuesday 1 September 2015 at 7:30 pm.

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

- b) Members received a written report from the Town Clerk which recommended that the Town Council's approved template be submitted by all councillors wishing to have a proposal considered at Town Council meetings. The template was intended to assist Members to make a more informed decision by explaining the background behind proposals, any underlying issues, any legal or financial implications, and how the decision should be communicated if approved. The provision of such information aimed to shorten the decision making process.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that:

- i. **The approved template be completed by all councillors wishing to have a proposal considered at Town Council meetings and then forwarded to the Town Clerk for inclusion on the agenda.**
- ii. **In normal circumstances, and if appropriate, the template should also be completed by the Town Clerk.**

- c) Members received a comprehensive written report from the Town Clerk following her recent attendance at two training events, one entitled 'Local councils, drivers in their communities', and the other on memorial safety training – 2009 guidelines. Following the memorial safety training the Town Clerk recommended that a policy be developed for memorial testing in Much Wenlock cemetery and that a memorial inspection be undertaken.

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

- i. **The report be NOTED.**
- ii. **The Finance & Resources Committee should consider the development of a policy for memorial testing in Much Wenlock cemetery, in conjunction with their review of cemetery policies, and consider and approve that a memorial inspection be undertaken.**

9) ACTION PLAN

The Town Council had agreed that a monthly review of the Council's Action Plan should take place and had subsequently established an Action Plan Working Group on 2 July 2015 to take the lead on each Action Plan project.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** that, since the working group had not met, the Town Clerk should organise a meeting for the working group to take place after August 2015.

10) DATE OF ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

Members were informed that a Police & Crime Commissioner election was scheduled to take place on the same day as the 2016 Annual Town Council meeting and the Priory Hall would not be available for the Civic Reception after the Mayor Making Ceremony. Members were therefore asked to approve an alternative date.

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

- i. **The Town Clerk should agree an alternative date for the Civic Reception with the Priory Hall.**
- ii. **The alternative date would be considered and approved by the Town Council at its next meeting.**

11) CIL AND SECTION 106 MONIES

Members received a written report from Cllr. David Turner in which he outlined what S106 and CIL monies were available in Much Wenlock. Cllr. Turner proposed that the Town Council should consider how these monies should be allotted using the Place Plan, Neighbourhood Plan, and consultation guidance.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** that Cllr. David Turner should assist the Town Clerk to look at the availability of funds so that the proposal could be considered at the next meeting.

12) REPORT FROM SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

Cllr. David Turner presented a verbal report as follows:

○ “WW1 remembrance

On Wednesday 17th June I attended the Great War Remembrance Service at St Chads Church in Shrewsbury to commemorate Private Charles Henry Clee of the Kings Shropshire Light Infantry who was killed in action on 16th June 1915, remembered at the Menin Gate at Ypres and whose memorial is at Much Wenlock. On 15th July I attended to commemorate Private Edwin Francis Hayward of The Berkshire Yeomanry who died of diabetes at Ras-el-Tin Military Hospital, Alexandria on 13th July 1915, who is buried at the Alexandria Chatby Military Cemetery and whose memorial is at Bourton.

○ Highways

On 24th July approval was given for a number of highway schemes, including the HGV traffic lights planned for the A4169 in Sheinton Street. This was signed off on the basis that it will be implemented during 2015/16. Detailed design work must now commence.

○ Schools sustainability

At your December meeting I spoke about falling school rolls which would place pressure on nearly all schools. Innovative solutions are required and they will be different in different places. Here is a map showing the majority of secondary school catchments. The number of pupils on roll at Shropshire Schools has fallen by about 10% in recent years and this trend will continue, with a further fall of nearly 4% by 2019/20. But the decline in numbers is not evenly spread throughout Shropshire. Some areas will see a modest increase in numbers or a fairly stable school population - so the decline in other areas will be greater than the 4% Shropshire average.

At a Young People's Scrutiny Committee last week I spoke about the paradox of more houses being built and fewer children being born in Shropshire. Recently the property research website, Zoopla, reported that in Shropshire, Much Wenlock has the highest average house prices - £321,955. As an attractive town with surrounding settlements and villages where the quality of life is perceived as being very good, this is no surprise.

This does, however, not encourage those of child-bearing age to stay here – or in Church Stretton - to raise families. Across the country we know that people with young families are struggling to get enough money together for a deposit on a market house. Those seeking social housing or shared equity properties find it very difficult to secure property in Much Wenlock – the demand is high. What will help to address the issue is the building of a handful of Single Plot Exception Site homes in the area. A consent has just been granted for one in Bourton Road Much Wenlock and a further consent is forthcoming in Homer.

In addition, and you will see further reference to this in my article in the August/September edition of the Wenlock Herald, the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan commits the Town Council to work with a registered provider to bring forward affordable housing. Marches CLT Services, a consultancy provided by Shropshire Housing Group with expertise in community-led housing, has been working with a small group of local people to explore this ambition. Hopefully this, and other schemes across Shropshire, will go some small way to help young families live in our small market towns and villages and in turn receive a first-class education in sustainable schools.

○ Former youth club building

As Shropshire Councillor for Much Wenlock, I have a conflict of interest regarding the transfer of this asset to the Town Council along with monies to refurbish the building etc.

Nonetheless, I would just like to say that the Town Council agreed the Heads of Terms for the transfer at its February 2015 meeting after a protracted series of discussions about a variety of issues. You agreed to carry out a drainage survey in May last year and placed the order some twelve months later which, so far as I know, the Town Council has still not seen. Contrary to the Clerk's usual guidance about late information for meetings we now have before us an extraordinary letter from the land surveyor telling us what to do – only hours before the commencement of the meeting.

On a number of occasions Steve Brown from Shropshire Council has made it very clear what his options are – to convey this amenity to the Town Council in order that young people in our community, and many others, can benefit from this facility right next to the Gaskell Recreation Ground – or to sell it to the highest bidder. On the assumption that someone decides to put a small housing development on the site, they will make money and Shropshire Council will make money. Much Wenlock will lose the potential of the facility and the opportunity to have an office where it can manage and stimulate the use of the Gaskell field.

A significant amount of time, effort and money has been expended by both parties on this long-running saga and I know that Steve Brown, in these straitened circumstances, does not intend that that his limited budget will suffer.

Please do not falter at this late stage.”

It was AGREED that the report be NOTED.

13) CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON

Members considered for approval that the Christmas lights switch-on should take place on Saturday 21 November 2015 because the Chamber of Trade had decided not to have a late night opening this year. However, Members were informed that Broseley would be having their Christmas lights switch-on at the same time.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that this year's Christmas lights switch-on should take place on Saturday 14 November 2015 subject to the Chamber of Trade's agreement.

14) FOOD FAIR

Members received a written report from Cllr. Robin Bennett on the last two Food Fairs facilitated by the Town Council in June and July 2015. The report outlined the costs incurred in organising the events and the income received.

Members also considered for approval that another Food Fair should take place to coincide with the Christmas lights switch-on.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the Town Clerk's office should determine whether there would be sufficient interest in a Food Fair in November before making a decision.

15) PLANNING

- a) There were no planning applications referred by the Planning & Environment Committee to the Town Council for consideration.
NOTED.
- b) There was no update from the Chairman of the Planning & Environment Committee.
NOTED.

16) EVENTS AT THE CORN EXCHANGE

Members considered a proposal by Cllr. Robert Toft, and seconded by Cllr. Robin Bennett, that future use of the Corn Exchange should be free of charge for Much Wenlock driven events of significance that benefit the town.

Concern was expressed that to allow events to be held with no charge would have an impact on the Council's finances for which it had not budgeted and how it would affect the charities who had to pay for stalls. It was suggested that the Town Council could give grant aid instead to offset any loss in income.

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

- i. Future use of the Corn Exchange would be free of charge for Much Wenlock driven significant events that benefit the town.
- ii. The charge of £100 made to the Poetry Festival in April 2015 should be refunded.

17) ROAD SAFETY POLICY

Members considered for approval which road safety priorities should be submitted to Shropshire Council.

It was **PROPOSED**, **SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** to reiterate the Town Council's last submission.

Cllr. David Turner voted against this decision.

18) REPORT FROM THE LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE (LJC)

Members received a verbal report from one of the Town Council's LJC representatives, Cllr. Mary Hill, who had attended the last LJC meeting. She said there had been a good turnout, all attendees were from Much Wenlock. She thought this was possibly due to the attendance of Steve Brown, Shropshire Council's Highways, Transport & Environmental Commissioning Manager. The Police were also in attendance and there had been much discussion about traffic issues.

It was **PROPOSED**, **SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** that this report be **NOTED**.

19) CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was received:

- a) SALC information bulletins and other information.
- b) Extract from 'The Forum' publication August 2015 featuring the voluntary work of Barbara Corfield for Age UK.

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

20) AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

It was **AGREED** to include the following on the agenda for the next meeting.

- Approval of the date for next year's Annual Town Council meeting and the 2016 Civic Service
- The possibility of holding an additional Food Fair in November 2015

21) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 3 September 2015.

As agreed earlier in the meeting and in accordance with Standing Order no: 10(a)(vi) it was **PROPOSED**, **SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** that use of the pavilion should be considered before the youth club building.

22) YOUTH CLUB BUILDING AND ASSOCIATED LAND TRANSFER, GASKELL RECREATION GROUND**Pavilion**

Members considered for approval a request from the Gaskell Recreation Ground Management Committee that the Town Council should decide who should keep the income derived from use of the cricket pavilion on the Gaskell Recreation Ground. The Town Council had agreed to take on ownership of the pavilion from Shropshire Council and the property is not technically part of the Gaskell Recreation Ground. Therefore guidance was sought as to whether the charity or the Town Council should keep the income.

Concern was expressed about access to the pavilion should any repair work be required because of its proximity to the school and its enclosure within the school boundary fence.

It was PROPOSED and SECONDED that the Cricket Club should maintain the building, have free use, and pay a peppercorn rent.

After being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that the Cricket Club should maintain the building, have free use, and pay a peppercorn rent.

Due to his interest declared earlier Cllr. David Turner left at this point in the meeting.

Shropshire Council's offer

Members received information from the Town Council's solicitor concerning the Conveyance of the Youth Club building and associated land, the transfer of which was awaiting signature. Members were also asked to agree necessary works to be carried out within an agreed budget to bring the Youth Club building up to an adoptable standard. Shropshire Council had agreed to carry out works to the path and then give the Town Council a one off contribution of £2,000 towards its future upkeep.

Members received a copy of the drainage survey report which had been delivered by hand just before the meeting. Cllr. Robin Bennett raised a Point of Order and expressed concern that the survey appeared to be in two parts, the first part in response to the Town Council's order for the works, and the second part made wider recommendations. The surveyor's report included a covering letter which recommended that the Town Council should not progress with the transfer. Cllr. Bennett thought these recommendations were outside of the remit of the brief, and as he was not alone in being concerned, he suggested that these recommendations be disregarded.

*At this point in the meeting it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and unanimously **RESOLVED** to revoke Standing Order no: 3w and continue with the meeting.*

It was PROPOSED that the Town Council should ask for some indemnity from sewage and foul drainage liabilities with no time limit, and that a written agreement should be obtained from the school to allow access to the pavilion. It was further PROPOSED that no decision should be made until more information had been received from the Town Council's solicitor.

After being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that the solicitor should be asked

- To clarify who the building could be sold to, (should the Council decide to sell it) because the Heads of Terms commits the Council to using the property for community use. Can it only be sold for similar use?
- To confirm with Shropshire Council whether the licence with Carnewydd, Farley Road, is purely for one property or does it apply to all nine properties in that location?
- Whether the Town Council can be indemnified from all responsibility for the foul water that is coming from Farley Road and William Brookes School so that the Town Council is not responsible. The Town Council also seeks surface water indemnity.
- Should the Town Council seek a £50m indemnity from any accidents that may occur on the footpath adjacent to the school?

It was further **RESOLVED** that Shropshire Council should be asked to re-align the security fence to allow access for maintenance.

The meeting closed at 21:15.

Signed.....

Date.....

Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak
Town Mayor