

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
7 pm on Thursday 5 November 2015

PRESENT:

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

TOWN CLERK:

Sharon Clayton

IN ATTENDANCE:

Rev'd Matthew Stafford

CSO Mike Watkins

3 members of the public

1) CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a special welcome to new councillor Graham Edgcumbe Venning.

Cllr. Mike Grace arrived at this point in the meeting.

The Mayor gave a verbal report of her Mayoral engagements during October as follows:

- Mayor of Kidderminster Charity Dinner
- Coffee morning at Holy Trinity Church Much Wenlock and town walkabout
- Lifeboats Charity Supper – Much Wenlock
- Wenlock Green Edge Day at Much Wenlock Primary School
- Oswestry Town Mayor's Charity Dinner
- Met with Head Teacher at Much Wenlock Primary School
- Arts for Children – Shrewsbury
- Madeley's Land Agents Reception – Much Wenlock
- ABF lunch in Officers Mess – RAF Shawbury
- Royal British Legion Remembrance Service – Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury

2) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr. Joffrey Watson who had a family commitment, and Cllr. Dafydd Jenkins who was travelling back from a work commitment.

These apologies were **CONFIRMED** 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.

This declaration was NOTED.

4) DISPENSATIONS

None requested.

5) POLICE UPDATE

CSO Mike Watkins gave an update from the police as follows:

The area covered by the Safer Neighbourhoods Team (SNT) includes Broseley and up to Shifnal, as well as Much Wenlock, although Shifnal has its own SNT, and all statistics cover the whole of this area. The Town Council has a lot of useful information that can be passed on to the police. Burglary is the most prevalent crime but there is very little evidence that the police can collect from the scene if it is a shed burglary due to lack of resources. Parking issues are also a problem and the police often receive photographs and, as a result, they are able to send letters to the offending motorists. However, the police can only act if vehicles are causing an obstruction; Shropshire Council is responsible for enforcement. There have been only a couple of minor incidents in Much Wenlock recently and these include Anti Social Behaviour. The police are aware of speeding issues and both CSOs are now laser trained and will be using the lasers for educational purposes in order to try and slow down speeding motorists. The police are not on foot as often as they used to be and this is a consequence of the situation they are now working under, and the size of the area they have to police. However, the police are putting more time into Twitter and other online communication channels.

The Chairman thanked CSO Watkins for the update after which he left the meeting.

6) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no requests to speak.

7) MINUTES

- a) The minutes of a Town Council meeting held on 1 October 2015 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 4 August and 1 September 2015 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.
- c) The minutes of a Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on 22 September 2015 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.
- d) The minutes of a Personnel Committee meeting held on 22 September 2015 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) REPORT FROM SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

Cllr. David Turner presented a verbal report as follows:

- **"Darwin Place** - At the last Town Council meeting we heard local residents' dissatisfaction with the manner in which Swanton Care and Community Ltd has managed this small residential home in Southfield Road for adults with a learning disability and challenging behaviour. Local residents attended a meeting in October with managers of the company, including its Director of Operations and Business Development, and received reassurance about steps they would take to reinforce its principles. Those present at the meeting agreed a provisional date of 25th January for a meeting to update on progress.
- **Highways** - The recent resurfacing works around the town seemed to go quite smoothly, with Wilmore and Barrow streets completed very quickly, the lower part of Oakfield Park looking good and much of Bourton Road from the Gaskell Arms to Perkley House resurfaced. Further work on Merrywell Lane is due next week and Vineyard Road Homer is being resurfaced as well. Further work on Oakfield Park and on Walton Hill estate will take place in the next financial year.

Shropshire Council's Cabinet has given approval for wider consultation with stakeholder and interest groups and the public over the next six weeks for Shropshire Council's proposed Highways Asset Management and Communications Strategies. This includes Roads, Pavements, Structures, Street Lights and Drainage. The purpose of the draft Asset Management Strategy is to enhance how the Authority delivers highways services in a way that makes the process more intelligence-led and customer-responsive. An intelligence-led approach will seek to achieve greater value for money whilst future capital settlements are anticipated to decline from Central Government, and help the Authority in achieving its wider corporate and social goals.

During the course of the Wilmore Street/Barrow Street works, free off-street parking was provided for local residents at Falcons Court car park. I didn't see any increase in use of the car park during this period, despite it being well-publicised locally.

In my role as Shropshire Councillor I met the Town Clerk with Steve Brown, Highways, Transport & Environmental Commissioning Manager, on 8th October at his suggestion to discuss a whole-town approach to traffic management issues. This is not my personal mission, it is one for the whole Town Council to embrace.

- Shropshire Council - Last month I was pleased to accept an invitation to join Shropshire Council's Cabinet with a wide-ranging portfolio including finance, resources, support and IT. This a challenging role and one in which I delivered agenda items at last week's meeting. The first told how, since 2009, the Council had removed £146 million from its budget by delivering services in new and efficient ways, removing waste and bureaucracy from our processes. Overall satisfaction with the Council has increased.

For some of our activities the costs have increased, particularly in looking after our most vulnerable residents be they older people, children in care or people with disabilities. Over the next five years, due to a combination of inflationary increases in costs and further cuts in government grants, we plan to save over £77 million, putting the Council's finances onto a sustainable footing.

In a bid to raise public awareness of these challenges, as part of its "Big Conversation", we will be talking and listening to residents and community groups about how best to face the tough financial challenges together. An online survey is being planned for November and this will be followed up with talking to as many people as possible, conducting further more detailed surveys by email with a representative sample of the population, holding face to face meetings, holding public meetings and through focus groups.

As a member of the Executive, this means that I have had to stand down from the Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee. I continue to be a member of the South Planning Committee, the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership etc. Serving the residents in the whole of the Much Wenlock electoral division remains my priority.

- **Primary schools** - The decision on whether to proceed with the proposed closure of Buildwas Primary School has been shelved by Shropshire Council as an academy sponsor has now come forward. Shropshire Council has decided to await a decision on this new application by the Regional Schools Commissioner on behalf of the Minister.

The minutes of last month's meeting of the Town Council expressed concern about the "impact a closure would have on Much Wenlock Primary school which had requested another classroom and had been denied. Much Wenlock Primary School is the nearest school to Buildwas and was already under pressure. Furthermore an increase in pupil numbers might affect the high quality of education within Much Wenlock."

The chairman of the governing body at Much Wenlock Primary School has expressed some surprise at this draft minute because the school has invested its own funds in developing a new classroom from relatively unused space and, as a consequence, now operates with seven fairly small classes. The leadership doesn't believe that the school feels 'under pressure' nor that there is a danger that the increase in pupil numbers is/will 'affect the high quality of education'. He suggests that closer links between the Town Council and the two schools in the parish might bring a closer understanding of the challenges faced by everyone and to celebrate the successes that are achieved.

- Advice surgery - My next advice surgery will be on Saturday 28th November at Much Wenlock museum when Town Cllr Yvonne Holyoak and a representative of the police will be present."

It was AGREED that this report be NOTED.

10) REPORT FROM THE SHROPSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (SALC) AGM AND BRIDGNORTH AREA COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Cllr. Mary Hill and Cllr. Milner Whiteman had both attended the recent SALC AGM and Bridgnorth Area Committee meetings and Cllr. Hill gave the following verbal report:

One of the items on the agenda at the last Bridgnorth Area Committee meeting included dealing with complaints, where a discussion had ensued around how different councils deal with complaints and how important it is to have relevant policies in place. There had also been a report on the NHS "Future Fit" and the forthcoming consultation about proposed changes to the health service. Cllr. Hill encouraged Members to respond to this consultation to ensure that the best options are available to the local community.

The Chairman thanked Cllr. Hill for this report.

Members agreed that it was important to respond to consultation on the future of the NHS and that the wider community should be encouraged to give their views to councillors so that the Town Council could respond on their behalf.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **AGREED** that a representative from the Health Service should be invited by the Town Council to host a public meeting in Much Wenlock.

11) REPRESENTATION ON COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS/OUTSIDE BODIES AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

- a) Members considered for approval the appointment of Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning to represent the Town Council on the Gaskell Recreation Ground Management Committee following the resignation of Cllr. Robin Bennett. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED that Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning be appointed to represent the Town Council on the Gaskell Recreation Ground Management Committee.**
- b) Members considered for approval the appointment of a Town Councillor to represent the Town Council on the Guildhall Working Group. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the objectives of a Guildhall working group should be referred to the Finance & Resources Committee for consideration.**
- c) Members considered for approval draft Terms of Reference for the Guildhall Working Group. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that these should not be considered due to the previous decision.**
- d) Members considered for approval the appointment of a Member to represent the Town Council on the Priory Hall Management Committee. As no-one volunteered **it was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that there would be no Town Council representation on the Priory Hall Management Committee at this time.**
- e) Members considered for approval the appointment of Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning to the Planning & Environment Committee. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning be appointed to the Planning & Environment Committee.**
- f) Members considered for approval amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Planning & Environment Committee. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that:**
 - i. **Amendments to the Terms of Reference be APPROVED.**
 - ii. **The Terms of Reference should also include that the Committee has delegated authority to respond to licensing applications.**
- g) Members considered for approval amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Group. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference be APPROVED with the inclusion of two members from Shropshire Council being invited to all meetings.**

12) CEMETERY CHAPEL

Members considered for approval further work to the cemetery chapel. Cllr. Mary Hill informed Members that a Remembrance Service was to take place at the cemetery on 11 November 2015 where school children would be in attendance to scatter poppies.

It was **PROPOSED** that the people who had helped to get grant funding for the architect's drawings should be thanked for all their work.

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

- i. **To support further work to the cemetery chapel and that the plans drawn up be APPROVED.**
- ii. **Grant funding should be sought to bring the plans into fruition.**
- iii. **Those who had helped to get grant funding for the architect's drawings should be thanked.**

13) MUCH WENLOCK MALE VOICE CHOIR

Members considered for approval a request to display the history of artefacts presented to the Much Wenlock Male Voice Choir during their travels. It was **PROPOSED** that the items be placed in the museum. It was further **PROPOSED** that the Chairman of the Choir be approached to discuss what items there are and how they might be displayed.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak would facilitate a meeting with the Chairman of the Choir to discuss what items there were and how and where they could be displayed.

14) ACTION PLAN

- a) Members considered for approval priorities for the Town Council's Action Plan as recommended by the Finance & Resources Committee. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that:**
 - i. **Management and enhanced use of the Guildhall/Buttermarket should be priority 1 and referred to the Finance & Resources Committee for further action.**

- ii. **Increased use of the Gaskell Recreation Ground, and acquire and develop use of the youth club building footpath and cricket/sports pavilion should be priority 2. The Management Plan for the Gaskell Recreation Ground should include devolving the youth club building.**
 - iii. **Increase the use of the Corn Exchange market area as priority 3.**
- b) Members considered for approval a draft Project Plan for the Guildhall in order to attract funding.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that this be referred to the Finance & Resources Committee for action.

15) FLOOD REPORT

- a) There was no report from the Community Flood Action Group although Members were informed that there would be a report for the December Town Council meeting.
NOTED.
- b) Members received a response from the Environment Agency (EA) concerning a briefing note issued to Much Wenlock residents highlighting the issues of flash flooding in the area. This briefing note had been developed in partnership with Shropshire Council to raise awareness of watercourses that could be prone to flash flooding, and the hazards and potential threat to life this can cause. The Shylte Brook had been identified as a source of flash flooding and, using Shropshire Council's Urban Management Drainage Plan for Much Wenlock, the EA had identified 380 properties which may be at direct risk of flash flooding. In partnership with Shropshire Council and the Much Wenlock Flood Action Group the EA intended to develop additional threshold alerts for different levels of flooding and encourage residents to sign up to receive flood warnings.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that:
- i. **The information be NOTED.**
 - ii. **The Flood Action Group should be asked for a full report for discussion at the next Town Council meeting.**
- c) Members considered an update received from the Environment Agency concerning the water quality.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that:
- i. **The information be NOTED.**
 - ii. **The Flood Action Group should be asked for a full report for discussion at the next Town Council meeting.**

16) QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY 2016

Members considered how the Town Council might celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday in June 2016. Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak informed Members that the Wenlock Festival had plans to hold a tea party as the official event and wanted support for these plans from the Town Council.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that:

- i. **The Town Council would fully support the Wenlock Festival's plans to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday as the Town's official event.**
- ii. **A commemorative gift should be commissioned, in consultation with the Wenlock Festival, for which the Town Council would earmark a budget.**

17) TRAFFIC PLAN MUCH WENLOCK

In response to residents' concerns Members considered for approval the development of a Traffic Plan for Much Wenlock that would identify traffic issues. The Town Council had already submitted its priorities to Shropshire Council for consideration in its Road Safety Priorities Policy.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that Cllr. David Turner would ask Shropshire Council how it was progressing with the Town Council's priorities previously submitted.

18) PLANNING

- a) There were no planning applications referred by the Planning & Environment Committee.
NOTED.
- b) The Chairman of the Planning & Environment Committee updated Members about the last meeting held on 3 November 2015. She informed Members about a planning application to install of a gate in a Wenlock stone wall near to Falcon's Court car park to provide the householder with access/egress for their refuse bin. The Committee was concerned that this might encourage others to do the same and a row of refuse bins would look unsightly to visitors in the town. The Committee had therefore objected to the application.
NOTED.

- c) The Chairman of the Planning & Environment Committee informed Members about an application for a club licence variation for the Huntsman and The Whipper Inn at 15 High Street Much Wenlock. The Committee had questioned its validity and had been informed by Shropshire Council that it was a valid application. The Committee had also been concerned about the length of the licensing hours applied for in a residential area.

NOTED. However, some Members were concerned that the Council appeared not to be supporting this application when it should be encouraging such a venture for the good of the local economy.

19) CONSULTATION

There was no consultation received. However it was PROPOSED that the Council should respond to Shropshire Council's Highways Asset Management Plan at the next meeting.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that Shropshire Council's Highways Asset Management Plan should be considered at the next meeting and that a time extension should be requested to allow a response to be made.

20) WENLOCK HERALD TOWN COUNCIL REPORT

Members considered a proposal by Cllr. David Turner that the Town Council should exercise care when making apparently unfounded and sweeping allegations that may undermine its relationships with other bodies. This was prompted by the Town Clerk's recent report in the Wenlock Herald which stated that "... in spite of the Planning & Environment Committee referring to the policies within the Neighbourhood Plan for Much Wenlock when responding to planning applications, Shropshire Council had ignored objections and granted permission". The Chairman of the Committee, Cllr. Mary Hill advised Members of examples where the Committee had objected and permission had been granted and she handed a written copy of these examples to Cllr. Turner.

After being put to the vote with three votes for and six votes against it was RESOLVED that the proposal was lost.

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

21) POLICE UPDATE AT TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members considered a proposal by Cllr. David Turner that the Town Council should invite someone from the Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team to provide an update on current concerns. Members were informed that a public meeting was planned to try and recruit volunteer policemen.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the police should be invited to present a report on local policing activities at future Town Council meetings.

In accordance with Standing Order no: 10(a)(vi) the Chairman proposed that the order of business be changed, and after being seconded it was RESOLVED that agenda item nos: 23 and 24 be brought forward and considered before item 22.

22) RECOGNITION OF SERVICES TO THE PARISH

Members considered whether to acknowledge notable people in the parish which the Town Council may wish to publicly acknowledge. Concern was expressed about singling out individuals when other deserving individuals would be left out.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that no particular individuals should be acknowledged at this time.

23) CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was received:

- a) Shropshire Association of Local Councils information bulletins and other information.

It was AGREED that the correspondence be NOTED.

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

24) YOUTH CLUB BUILDING AND ASSOCIATED LAND TRANSFER

As agreed at the last Town Council meeting a site visit with the solicitor had taken place attended by Cllr. Bert Harper, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning, and the Town Clerk. In response to concerns expressed at that site visit the solicitor had asked further questions of Shropshire Council whose response was still awaited.

The Town Council had asked Shropshire Council for indemnities, which had been declined, and a discussion ensued about what further action to take. Following a lengthy discussion where all Members were given an opportunity to speak Cllr. Bert Harper put forward the following motion which was seconded by Cllr. Mary Hill:

“After a process of due diligence, in relation to contract, that Much Wenlock Town Council decline the offer made by Shropshire Council in relation to the building known as the Youth Club and attached garages, the electricity sub station near to the Youth Club, the area of land to the east of that building, the area of land to the east of the footway near to Station Road, the footway from Station Road to the students entrance, and the pavilion and the wooden pavilion and surround. That the residents of Much Wenlock receive information as to the reasoning behind this decision.

An amendment to this proposal was **PROPOSED**, **SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** thus:

That a final decision should not be taken until a reply from Shropshire Council had been received within a time-frame of two weeks.

It was further **PROPOSED**, **SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** that a recorded vote be taken.

After being put to the vote with 5 votes in favour of the amended proposal (Cllr. Milner Whiteman, Cllr. Robin Bennett, Cllr. Mike Grace, Cllr. Paul Laming, and Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning), one abstention (Cllr. Mary Hill), and two votes against (Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak and Cllr. Bert Harper).

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- i. **The Town Council would not make a final decision until Shropshire Council had responded to the last communication from the solicitor.**
- ii. **The matter would be considered further at the next meeting at which Members should be presented with a full written report of questions and answers, properly documented, to show to the community on what basis the council would make its decision.**
- iii. **A copy of the solicitor’s advice be included with the next agenda.**

25) AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

It was **AGREED** that Members should inform the Town Clerk of any items they would like included on the next agenda.

26) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

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

It was also **NOTED** that the Remembrance Service would take place on Sunday 8 November 2015 at Holy Trinity Church commencing at 10:50 am

The meeting closed at 21:40.

Signed.....

Date.....

Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak
Town Mayor