

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
 held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
 7 pm on Thursday 6 April 2017

PRESENT:

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

TOWN CLERK:

Sharon Clayton

IN ATTENDANCE:

3 members of the public

1) CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked members of the public for their interest.

The Mayoral engagements were as follows:

- 9 March 2017 – Annual Town Meeting. Presented Eric Humphries with a Civic Gift in recognition of him being a Town Councillor for over 30 years and 4 times as Mayor.
- 11 March 2017 – Wenlock Olympian Society reception. Presented Jonathan Edwards CBE with Civic Gift in gratitude of his support to Much Wenlock.
- 12 and 18 March 2017 – Live Arts Festival at the Edge Centre.
- 21 March 2017 – RAF Shawbury – Helicopter Liaison Group

2) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

COUNCILLOR	REASON
Dafydd Jenkins	Work commitment
Joffrey Watson	Family commitment

These apologies were **CONFIRMED** and **AGREED** 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.

As a member of Much Wenlock Cricket Club Cllr. Mike Grace declared an interest in agenda Item no. 13, and as a trustee of William Brookes Foundation declared an interest in agenda item no. 16d.

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 member of the public.

6) MINUTES

- a) The minutes of a Town Council meeting held on 2 March 2017 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 an Extraordinary Town Council meeting held on 13 March 2017 were considered for approval.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that, following the addition of the words "confidential notes accompany these minutes", they be signed and ADOPTED as a true record.

- c) The minutes of a Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 31 January 2017 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.
- d) The minutes of Finance & Resources Committee meetings held on 24 January and 21 February 2017 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.

7) 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.

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

- b) Members received notes from a Market Town Clerks meeting held on 10 March 2017.
NOTED.

8) NOMINATIONS FOR MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR 2017/2018

Cllr. Graham Edgcombe Venning informed the meeting that he had given considerable thought as to whether he wished to stand as Mayor for the ensuing year and had decided that he would and, therefore, no further nominations needed to be sought.

NOTED.

9) DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Members considered for approval that newly elected councillors should complete and sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office, before the Town Clerk, between when they take office on Monday 8 May 2017 and prior to the Annual Town Council meeting on 11 May 2017.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that newly elected councillors should sign their Declaration of Acceptance of Office, before the Town Clerk, between Monday 8 May 2017 and prior to the Annual Town Council meeting.

10) CIVIC SERVICE

Members considered for approval that the date for this year's Civic Service be changed from the agreed date of 14 May to the suggested date of Sunday 18 June 2017 since repair works to the Holy Trinity Church would not be completed by 14 May. However, the Mayor Elect proposed that the service should take place on 25 June 2017 as he would be on holiday on 14 June 2017.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the Civic Service would take place at Holy Trinity church on Sunday 25 June 2017 commencing at 11 am.

11) INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Members received the internal audit report from the internal auditor.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the internal audit report be NOTED.

12) FORWARD PLAN, ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN, AND ACTION PLAN

Members received a revised Forward Plan 2017-2018 and Asset Management Plan 2017-2018, and updated Action Plan for consideration and approval.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the Plans be APPROVED and, following the May elections, presented to the new Town Council for action.

Due to his interest declared earlier Cllr. Mike Grace did not take part in the following discussion.

13) CRICKET PAVILION

Members received information concerning Shropshire Council's proposal to lease the cricket pavilion to Much Wenlock Cricket Club. However, although the pavilion is owned by Shropshire Council, the front of the building encroaches on the Gaskell Recreation Ground, which is owned by the Town Council. The Town Council was not therefore able to grant a lease on that part of the land although it could agree to restrict access for one day per year.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED:

- i. **To support Shropshire Council's proposal to lease the cricket pavilion to Much Wenlock Cricket Club.**
- ii. **The cricket pavilion would be closed for one day per year, that day being 26 December (Boxing Day).**

14) RETIREMENT OF DR STANFORD

Cllr. Herbert Harper **PROPOSED** that a letter of appreciation be sent to Dr Stanford on his retirement, and to thank him for his dedicated service to the local community for over 28 years. After being **SECONDED**;

it was AGREED to send a letter to Dr Stanford to thank him for his commitment to the local community and to wish him well in his retirement.

15) CIL MONIES

Members received notification from Shropshire Council that Much Wenlock had been allocated a Neighbourhood Fund of £169.95 from CIL monies for 2017. The money would be paid with the precept.

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

- i. **The allocation of the Neighbourhood Fund be NOTED.**
- ii. **The money should be used towards alleviating flooding issues on the Gaskell Recreation Ground.**
- iii. **Shropshire Council should be asked why the Town Council had only received such a small amount of funds.**

16) DEVOLVED SERVICES

- a) Members received notes from a meeting of "Our Hub" held on 15 March 2017.

NOTED.

- b) Members received notes from a Library Networking Forum held on 2 March 2017.

NOTED.

- c) Members received notes from a meeting of the Devolved Services Working Group held on 22 March 2017.

NOTED.

- d) Members received an update from a meeting of the Devolved Services Working Group held on 5 April 2017. The library refurbishment was running late and not expected to be complete until August 2017, therefore the Town Council's payment towards future library services would be delayed accordingly and the 18 months deferred payment would commence from the date of completion. There were also some repairs necessary which the Town Council would be responsible for and it was recommended that funds be set aside for essential repairs and refurbishment. Shropshire Council had agreed to reimburse the Town Council £1,250 for costs towards professional fees incurred and also offered the services of a solicitor to prepare the legal documents.

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

- i. **The report be NOTED.**
- ii. **Future decisions concerning the library be considered and approved by the newly appointed Town Council.**

- e) Members considered for approval a Funding Agreement between the Town Council and Shropshire Council concerning library services in Much Wenlock.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that the Agreement be considered and approved by the newly appointed Town Council.

17) COMMUNITY LED HOUSING PROJECT

- a) Members received a report from the Community Led Housing Project Board.

NOTED.

- b) Members considered for approval a Local Lettings Plan for affordable dwellings at Callaughton Lane.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that clarification should be sought from Shropshire Housing Group as to whether the Lettings Plan gives preference to Much Wenlock residents with a local connection.

- c) Members received the minutes from the last meeting of the Project Board held on 14 March 2017.

NOTED.

- d) Members received a letter from Shropshire Housing Group concerning affordable housing at Callaughton Lane which advised that Condition 10 in relation to the drainage had been discharged, and requesting that the Town Council should inform them of who would represent the Town Council on the Project Board following the local elections in May 2017.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that the Mayor would respond to the letter.

18) NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN MONITORING AND REVIEW WORKING GROUP

Members received the notes from the last meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring and Review Working Group held on 20 March 2017.

NOTED.

19) PRIORY HALL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Members received a written report from the Town Council's representative on the Priory Hall Management Committee, Cllr. David Turner. Due to various fundraising events the Committee's finances were in good shape and more events were planned to finance further improvements to the building. Cllr. Turner informed Members that he was quite willing to remain a member of the Management Committee, and as a trustee.

NOTED.

20) ON-STREET TRADERS

Cllr. Robin Bennett reported that he had been listening to the local views concerning a trader selling cheese in the Square. Some took the view that it was in direct competition with a local shop selling cheese and that it was unfair on that local shop, and it was also affecting local trade.

In order to protect the businesses in the town Cllr. Bennet PROPOSED that firstly, bookings should only be taken at most once per week for specific traders on the Square so that the same trader could not trade from the Square more than once in any one week, and secondly, that local shops are encouraged to get out of their shops and take their local trade onto the Square, free of charge. This initiative could be promoted on Facebook with the catch phrase "inside out".

Following this proposal being **SECONDED** it was **AGREED** that:

- i. **Any one trader can have one pitch on the Square, once per week only.**
- ii. **People trading in Much Wenlock (local shops and businesses) can have a stall on the Square, once per week only, free of charge.**

21) CONSULTATION

- a) Draft Strategy for Economic Growth

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to NOTE.

- b) Housing White Paper

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED:

- i. **To respond to the Housing White Paper consultation as recommended by Cllr. Mike Grace.**
- ii. **A copy of the response should be submitted to Shropshire Council.**

22) CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was received:

- a) SALC information bulletin and other information sent to Members via email.
- b) Letter from a member of the public concerning the Annual Town Meeting.
- c) Police report.

NOTED.

23) BUSINESS RESILIENCE

Members considered recommendations from Cllr. Robin Bennett and Cllr. Mike Grace concerning business resilience and the Council's reliance on the Town Clerk. They expressed concern about the procedures followed by the Town Council concerning recent disputes and complaints, which were subject to confidentiality, and they recommended that the Town Council should agree that the Mayor should share all sensitive information with the Deputy Mayor, or appropriate committee chairman. The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council should not agree to a recommendation to share sensitive information because confidentiality should be maintained at all times.

After being put to the vote it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that:

- i. **The Town Council reviews the staffing structure in the office to ensure that the Town Clerk has appropriate cover during any absence.**
- ii. **The Town Council reviews the operational guidance that exists for the delivery of Council policies for their clarity and deliverability and whether they fully reflect the Nolan principles.**
- iii. **All councillors receive appropriate training to include chairmanship, roles and responsibilities, the council as an employer, and the Code of Conduct.**

The recommendation that the Town Council agrees to adopt the approach that the Mayor should share all sensitive information was **NOT APPROVED.**

24) PLANNING

- a) There were no planning applications referred to the Town Council for consideration.
NOTED.
- b) The Chairman of the Planning & Environment Committee informed Members that some members of the Committee had held an informal meeting with Mr Beaman to hear his future proposals concerning 15 High Street. His architect was working on a new application which would be submitted to Shropshire Council although it was not known how soon. He assured Members that the site would be tidied and he would work with the Planning & Environment Committee concerning the Willow tree which he would replace with more suitable trees.

The Committee had also considered a planning application for development at Pinefields. Members had put forward a number of suggestions to Shropshire Council and had unanimously agreed that refurbishment to Pinefields and new development should take place at the same time.

NOTED.

25) 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.

26) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would be the Annual Town Council meeting that would take place on Thursday 11 May 2017.

The Chairman said that, as this was the last meeting of the current Town Council, he wanted to thank the Town Clerk. He said that during his time as Mayor he had learned what a very difficult role the Town Clerk is faced with and he did not think the role was an easy one. On behalf of the Town Council he asked that the Town Clerk and all staff be thanked for their guidance and assistance over the period of this Town Council.

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.

27) COMPLAINTS

- a) Members considered an allegation of defamation, and what appropriate action should be taken based on professional advice received, and the insurance implications of the allegation.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously AGREED that:
- i. **Following legal advice, the person concerned should be informed that the Town Council is not a competent body to deal with allegations of defamation and that it is up to the person making the allegation to take their own action.**
 - ii. **The Town Council's insurer should be informed that a claim of defamation had been received.**
- b) Members considered for approval a budget of circa £3,000 for the provision of professional assistance to deal with the aforementioned allegation of defamation.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously AGREED that no further funding should be allocated to complaints and the complaint should be referred to the Monitoring Officer.

The meeting closed at 20:48.

Signed.....
Town Mayor

Date.....