

# MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

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

## PRESENT:

Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning, Cllr. Mike Grace, Cllr. Bert Harper, Cllr. Paul Laming, Cllr. David Turner, Cllr. Joffrey Watson, and Cllr. Milner Whiteman OBE.

## TOWN CLERK:

Sharon Clayton

## IN ATTENDANCE:

Bob May, Volunteer Archivist

## 1) CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND COMMUNICATION

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and paid tribute to the late Elizabeth Thomas who served as Mayor of Much Wenlock in 2000 and 2004 and died in March. Cllr. Milner Whiteman also paid tribute to Elizabeth. He said although she was a councillor for only a short time she did many things such as helping with the installation of the Olympian Trail and being actively engaged with the Neighbourhood Development Plan for Much Wenlock. Cllr. Mike Grace said Elizabeth was also instrumental in the installation of the Arts Trail and Cllr. David Turner said she was also involved in the development of the Town Plan for Much Wenlock.

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

After these tributes the Chairman gave the following verbal report of her Mayoral engagements since the last meeting as follows:

- Much Wenlock Festival launch
- Church Coffee Morning
- Shrewsbury's Drapers Charter Night
- Mayor's Charity Fund Raising Event
- Wenlock Olympian Live Arts Festival
- Annual Town Meeting
- Wenlock Olympian Live Arts Festival
- Eisteddfod Concert
- Visit to County Archives
- Memorial Service for Elizabeth Thomas

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 number 16, Devolved Services, would be considered later in the meeting under 'confidential business'.

## 2) APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The following apologies were received:

COUNCILLOR	REASON FOR ABSENCE
Robin Bennett	Work commitment
Mary Hill	Holiday
Dafydd Jenkins	Work 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. He also declared an interest as a member of the Much Wenlock Bowling Club.

### 4) DISPENSATIONS

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

**NOTED.**

### 5) POLICE UPDATE

There was no update from the police.

### 6) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

### 7) MINUTES

- a) The minutes of a Town Council meeting held on 3 March 2016 were considered for approval and following agreed amendments;  
**it was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the amended minutes be signed and ADOPTED as a true record.**
- b) The minutes of a Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 2 February 2016 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.
- c) The minutes of a Finance & Resources Committee meeting held on 23 February 2016 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.
- d) The minutes of a Personnel Committee meeting held on 23 February 2016 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.
- e) The minutes of an Extraordinary Town Council meeting held on 30 June 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.  
**It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the Town Clerk's report be NOTED.**

The Town Clerk also gave the following verbal update:

- The Finance & Resources Committee had considered this year's Christmas lights switch on at its last meeting and it was agreed to recommend to the Town Council that the lights should be switched on in November with the official switch-on held on the same day as this year's Christmas Fayre. The Town Clerk had passed this information on to the Chamber of Trade and was awaiting feedback to see if it met with their approval.

Cllr. David Turner declared an interest and did not participate in the following discussion.

- Steve Brown at Shropshire Council had asked the Town Council to let him know in principle whether the Town Council supported that s106 monies assigned to open space should be spent on the Gaskell Recreation Ground. The Finance & Resources Committee had agreed to support, in principle, that all the s106 monies assigned to Much Wenlock be allocated for drainage works on the Gaskell Recreation Ground, and the Neighbourhood Fund should be held in reserves for the time being. However, the Gaskell Recreation Ground Management Committee was concerned that Shropshire Council wanted to concentrate on drainage issues at the bottom of the ground near to the children's playground.

On behalf of the Gaskell Recreation Ground Management Committee Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning said that the committee welcomed the initiative by Shropshire Council but would ask that all areas of the ground should be included. Concern was expressed that ownership of the deep tank in the children's playground had yet to be determined and ought to be resolved before any work was undertaken.

**It was AGREED, in principle, that the s106 monies should be assigned to the Gaskell Recreation Ground and that the Gaskell Recreation Ground Management Committee should be asked to design a suitable drainage scheme.**

Concern was expressed that the Wenlock Herald did not include promotion of the forthcoming Food Fair and the Town Clerk informed Members that it would be included in future editions.

- b) Members received the notes from a meeting of Market Town Clerks held on 21 March 2016.

**NOTED.**

- c) Members received notes from the Town Clerk's attendance at SLCC conferences.

**It was AGREED that these notes should be included for consideration at the next Personnel Committee meeting and included in the Town Clerk's Performance Review.**

#### **9) FUTURE OF EXTERNAL AUDIT**

Members received information on the future of external audit which had already been considered by the Finance & Resources Committee. A new Sector Led Body called SAAA (the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd.) had been established to oversee external audit following the dissolution of the Audit Commission. Parish and town councils could choose to have an auditor appointed to them by the SAAA or they could choose to procure their own. Those authorities who decided to 'opt out' would be reported to DCLG by the SAAA who would confirm when those authorities had appointed local auditors. Unless they chose to 'opt out' all smaller authorities would automatically be opted in to the new body. The Finance & Resources Committee had agreed to 'opt in' since to 'opt out' could be more costly.

**It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to support the Finance & Resources Committee in its decision to 'opt in'.**

#### **10) THE ROLE OF THE MAYOR**

Members considered for approval updated guidance notes on the role of the Mayor. The Town Clerk informed Members that, in future, the Mayor's Allowance would be paid through the payroll since it was a taxable expense.

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

- i. **The updated guidance be APPROVED.**
- ii. **The annual Mayor Making ceremony should be used to invite guests with whom the Town Council could form beneficial partnerships.**

It was AGREED to suspend Standing Orders to allow Bob May, one of the Town Archivists, to speak about the proposed project to conserve the minute books of the Borough of Wenlock.

#### **11) WENLOCK BOROUGH MINUTE BOOKS CONSERVATION**

Members received a comprehensive report from the Town Archivists which gave the historical background of the first minute books of the Borough of Wenlock. The Town Council had previously considered a request from the Archivists to support the conservation of these minute books and the Council had agreed to set aside a budget of £1,250. Members were asked to approve a project recommended by the Archivists that would conserve, digitise, transcribe, and catalogue the first two Wenlock Borough minute books. Professor Mary Beard had been invited and had agreed to be Patron of the Fund Raising Appeal and had also offered to make a donation herself.

Mr. May recommended that the project should be spread over two years and that a budget did not need to be assigned at the moment but he would expect it to be released around June/July 2016. He also suggested that some fund raising events should be arranged at which the audience could hear about the history of the minute books which could be put on display during such events.

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

- i. **The Town Council would part-fund the project which would be conducted in two phases, the first Minute Book and then the second Minute Book.**
- ii. **The Town Council would sponsor and institute an appeal fund for the project, with Professor Mary Beard as the Patron.**
- iii. **The Town Clerk be granted delegated authority to pursue sources of funding.**
- iv. **A working group be established to progress matters with administrative support from the Town Clerk. Members of the working group would comprise the two Volunteer Archivists, Cllr. Mike Grace and Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak. The working group's Terms of Reference would be to formally define the project's scope for approval by the Town Council, discuss appropriate working arrangements with Shropshire Archives, and identify and pursue funding sources.**

- v. **The Mayor should write to Professor Mary Beard to thank her for her kind offer and Professor Beard should be given a copy of the Town Archivist's report.**

## 12) TRAFFIC PLAN FOR MUCH WENLOCK

Members considered the response from Shropshire Council in response to the Town Council's submission of a Traffic Plan for Much Wenlock which outlined the following:

- The proposal for double yellow lines was with Shropshire Council's consultants and the statutory consultation would commence at the beginning of April 2016.
- Any traffic management measures deemed appropriate as a consequence of the proposed Callaughton Lane development would be dealt with by the Highway Development Control Manager.
- Signage to prevent HGVs going through the town was dependent on the receipt of capital funding through the Road Safety Policy route.
- Keep clear markings along Barrow Street cannot be legally enforced because they are advisory markings only.
- Traffic speeds on all entrances to the town would be addressed within the HGV prevention works hopefully within the forthcoming year's capital programme.
- Centreline white markings could not be installed due to the narrow streets not being wide enough.

Concern was expressed that the white lines at Barrow Street were not in the correct place and that there was no enforcement for white lines.

**It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that Shropshire Council should be asked to install double yellow lines at strategic places along Barrow Street to allow oncoming vehicles sufficient space to pull in.**

## 13) LITTER PICKING IN MUCH WENLOCK

Members considered for approval a proposal by Cllr. David Turner that the Town Council should support a regular litter pick carried out by volunteers.

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

- i. **The initiative be supported as an approved duty for volunteers and covered by the Town Council's insurance.**
- ii. **The Finance and Resources Committee should be asked to assign an appropriate budget to purchase litter picking equipment.**

## 14) REPORT FROM SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

Cllr. David Turner gave a verbal report as follows:

- "Shropshire Council - Council tax was set at 1.99% at Council in February and there has been a dispensation for an additional 2.00% to fund adult social care, making a total 3.99%. I am pleased to advise that I believe that Much Wenlock no longer has the highest level of council tax in Shropshire.
- Your Shropshire Councillor - At February's Council meeting I was appointed to the Audit committee. I am now also Vice-Chairman of the South Planning Committee, Chairman of the Much Wenlock & Shipton Local Joint Committee, Vice-Chairman of the Broseley & Barrow Local Joint Committee and a member of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership.
- IP&E - Shropshire Council's company which was formed in 2013 is to close. When I was portfolio holder for Finance I instigated an investigation which revealed that there was little being achieved by the company that couldn't be by the Council. Certainly the amount of business transacted outside the county was not as great as was anticipated.
- Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme - Interviews have been held with providers interested in supporting the resettlement of Syrian refugees into Shropshire.
- Advice surgery - There was no Town Councillor representation other than me at the busy Much Wenlock surgery held on 13th March. My next advice surgery will be held Saturday 30th April at Willey Village Hall when I hope to be accompanied by a Barrow Parish Councillor and a representative of the police."

## **NOTED.**

## 15) COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Members considered for approval a revised Communications Strategy prepared by Cllr. Mike Grace for adoption by the Town Council. He had found a lot of repetition within the various communication policies adopted by the Town Council and he had tried to tease out what needed to be achieved, suggested how communication could be smarter, and what the Town Council could do to raise its profile. He recommended that the Council's media and communication policies should be merged and that a revised communication plan should be developed.

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

- i. **The Council's revised media and communications policies be merged and revised in accordance with the proposals in the recommendation.**
- ii. **A plan for enhancing communications activity be AGREED.**
- iii. **The Town Clerk and Cllr. Mike Grace would work together to develop a revised Communication Strategy.**

#### **16) FLOOD REPORT**

The Town Clerk informed Members that there was no report from the Community Flood Action Group although one would be presented at the next Town Council meeting.

**NOTED.**

#### **17) 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) Cllr. Milner Whiteman, on behalf of the Planning & Environment Committee, informed Members that the Committee had opposed applications to widen a driveway at the Bull Ring, a barn conversion, and a proposal for an annexe which the Committee thought was outside the development boundary. The Committee was also concerned about tipping at Falcons Court and the number of planning application that were being approved retrospectively.

**NOTED.**

#### **18) LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEE**

Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak gave the following verbal update from the last LJC meeting held on 24 February 2016 at the Priory Hall, Much Wenlock. There were only 5 members of the public in attendance. There were discussions about emergency planning, Shropshire Council budget update, and the proposed development at Callaughton Lane.

**NOTED.**

#### **19) COMMEMORATIVE MUGS**

Members considered for approval how the commemorative mugs should be distributed. The Town Clerk updated Members on progress of the mugs which were being made to commemorate the Queen's birthday.

Members were also asked to consider sending birthday greeting to the Queen to congratulate her on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

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

- i. **The Town Council should write to the Queen to congratulate her on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.**
- ii. **The distribution of the mugs would be considered at the next meeting once the mugs had been made.**

#### **20) CONSULTATION**

There was no consultation for consideration.

**NOTED.**

#### **21) 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 concerning 'Men in Sheds'.

It was **AGREED** that:

- i. **The correspondence be NOTED.**
- ii. **Someone should be invited to the next Town Council meeting to talk about 'Men in Sheds'.**

#### **22) AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

It was **AGREED** that Members should get in touch with the Town Clerk if they would like anything included on the next agenda.

#### **23) DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would be the Annual Town Council meeting (Mayor Making Ceremony) that would take place on Tuesday 10 May 2016 and continued on Thursday 12 May 2016.

**NOTED.**

**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.

**24) DEVOLVED SERVICES**

Members received summary reports and costings from meetings held with the Devolved Services Working Group and Shropshire Council. Cllr. David Turner gave Members a brief update on the discussions held to date. The Town Council had been asked to take over the library, museum and open space. There were two options for the Town Council to choose, one was to take over services and staff with some funding from Shropshire Council, or the Town Council could choose to give grant aid to Shropshire Council who would continue to run the services. The Town Council owned the properties where the library and the museum were situated which were leased to Shropshire Council.

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**, **SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** that:

- i. The Town Council should write to Shropshire Council to express dissatisfaction that discussions had commenced late, the goal posts had been moved since negotiations had begun, and that insufficient information in terms of costs had been presented to the Town Council.
- ii. Shropshire Council should be asked to put the car parks back into the equation.
- iii. Shropshire Council should be reminded about the lease agreements between the Town Council and Shropshire Council for the museum and library.

**25) MAYOR'S BADGES**

Members considered for approval the purchase of 'Past Mayor's' badges to be presented to past Mayors in recognition of their year in office.

It was **PROPOSED**, **SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** that this should be referred to the Finance & Resources Committee.

**26) STAFFING MATTERS**

At a Town Council meeting held on 3 March 2016 Members considered engaging professional, independent advice to assist the Council with staffing matters. The Council agreed to spend up to £2,000. [Minute no: 15 dated 3 March 2016]

The Personnel Committee had sought quotes from various service providers and at its last meeting held on 21 March 2016 [minute no: 5] the Committee agreed that Ellis Whittam should be appointed on a 3-year contract, to be paid annually within a budget of £7,000 for the following reasons:

- i. To review and advise on current staffing issues.
- ii. To advise on the resolution of any issues arising from staffing issues.
- iii. To provide general advice on legal issues relating to HR and employment.
- iv. In the context of the devolution of services to advise on future staffing and HR.

It was **PROPOSED**, and **SECONDED** and after being put to the vote with 5 votes in favour and 3 abstentions;

it was **RESOLVED** that:

- i. Ellis Whittam be appointed on a 3-year contract to provide advice on employment law and HR for a fixed fee of £1,995 per annum plus legal expenses insurance cover at approximately £7.50 per annum for each employee.
- ii. The Personnel Committee be given a budget of £1,500 for the 2016/2017 financial year if found necessary to resolve a staffing issue.

The meeting closed at 22:04.

Signed.....

Date.....

Cllr. Herbert Harper  
Town Mayor