

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
 held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
 7 pm on Thursday 11 January 2018

Present:

Cllr. Milner Whiteman OBE (Chairman), Cllr. Trevor Childs, Cllr. Adam Davy, Cllr. David Gibbon, Cllr. Herbert Harper, Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, Cllr. Marcus Themans and Cllr. Allan Walter.

Town Clerk:

Sharon Clayton

In attendance:

Lianne Deathridge, Emergency Planning Manager at Shropshire Council

Cllr. David Turner - Shropshire Council

1 member of the public

1) Chairman's welcome

In the absence of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, Cllr. Milner Whiteman chaired the meeting. He wished everyone a Happy New Year and reminded Members that Becky Jones would be visiting the town at 11 am on Tuesday 23 January 2018 to discuss works needed to the Council's Listed Buildings and all Members were invited to attend.

2) Apologies for absence

COUNCILLOR	REASON
Graham Edgcumbe Venning	Holiday
Dafydd Jenkins	Work 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.

None declared.

4) Dispensations

The Town Clerk informed Members that she had granted a dispensation to all Members for the setting of the 2018/2019 budget and precept.

NOTED.

5) Emergency planning

The Chairman invited Lianne Deathridge to explain about Shropshire Council's emergency plan and how the Council works with its partners and how it would like to work with parish councils. The Council ensures it meets the statutory requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 which means it has to be prepared to meet any threats, hazards and dangers it might face, such as terrorism, or natural weather e.g. snow and floods.

The Council works closely with the West Mercia resilience forum which includes West Mercia Police, Shropshire Fire and Rescue, West Midlands Ambulance Services, colleagues in Telford & Wrekin Council, Herefordshire Council and Worcestershire Council, as well as the Environment Agency, the MET Office, Highways England and other large companies.

Emergency Planning in Shropshire meets every other month with partner agencies known as a tactical co-ordinating group. There is a risk register for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin that includes all the top risks. There are 8 specific risks that apply to our area which are assessed monthly. There is out of hours cover all year round and communication is by pager, and community work is very much supported.

Lianne was asked about what emergency plans were in place at the chemical works at Farley and she explained that the Fire & Rescue Service have plans in place and the river has been fitted with sensors to detect pollution. Lianne was also asked about the lack of communication concerning the recent water leak which left Much Wenlock without water. Lianne explained that she had been told by Severn Trent that the leak only affected Telford but later found out that both Much Wenlock and Broseley were affected. Delayed information led to communication problems and Severn Trent had subsequently agreed to attend a future emergency planning meeting with other agencies and partners. Lianne was asked about the recent snow which caused roads to be cut off and she explained that Shropshire Council is responsible for highways and the scale of the issue would have been down to how Shropshire Council prioritised because all areas were affected in Shropshire. Members were informed that Broseley intends to develop a community resilience plan for future emergencies.

The Chairman thanked Lianne for attending the meeting after which she left.

6) Shropshire Council Report

Cllr. David Turner wished everyone a Happy New Year and gave the following verbal report:

- He had attended St. Chadd's remembrance services for those killed in action or died from injuries during WW1.
- Shropshire Council's tax increase was mooted to be 5.9% and Cllr. Turner had difficulty supporting this and was disappointed that the Council had not implemented sufficient cost saving measures some months ago.
- Arriva had taken over the 436-bus service running through Much Wenlock following the unsatisfactory service provided by the previous contractor. An Arriva App had become available providing details of bus services that people could use on their phones.
- On the night before the snow fell Shropshire Council had treated the roads with salt and grit and, to a large extent, it had been successful. However, the grit spreaders had been delayed due to traffic and although the roads had been gritted before the second snow fall the snow that fell was too deep for the gritting to have any effect. Fallen trees across the roads had also caused problems.
- There had been a good turnout for the last litter pick which had been followed with tea on the Square.
- Cllr. Turner's next surgery would take place on 6 January 2018 at Willey Village Hall.
- The response to Shropshire Council's Parking Strategy consultation had attracted circa 2,500 comments. Responses revealed considerable resistance to linear pricing and the classification (banding) of car parks and their relative charges. Cllr. Turner had very strong views about the proposals and intended to make them known to Shropshire Council at a meeting that was open to members of the public.

Cllr. Turner's report was **NOTED**.

7) Public session

There were no members of the public present at this point.

8) Minutes

- a) The minutes of a Town Council meeting held on 7 December 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 a Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 31 October 2017 were **NOTED and ADOPTED**.

9) 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.

The Town Clerk also gave the following verbal report:

- The Town Clerk's office had been redecorated a few days before Christmas.
- The Town Clerk had been informed that funding for Christmas lights had been secured and the Town Clerk was working with Mrs P to seek quotes for new Christmas lights and the installation of a power supply for Christmas trees on the Gaskell corner and Sheinton corner.

It was AGREED that the Town Clerk's report be NOTED.

- b) Members received a report concerning works to be carried out by Western Power to replace overhead power lines with underground cables. The work was expected to take almost three months commencing on 8 January 2018.
NOTED.

10) Interim internal audit report

Members considered for approval recommendations from the internal auditor following her interim internal audit. The overall findings supported that the Town Council was making progress to meet the key control objectives in the areas examined.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that the following recommendations be **APPROVED**:

- a) **The Council should have a Forward Plan, a Strategic Financial Budget and a 3-year revenue and capital forecast.**
- b) **The Council's financial/business/health and safety/fire risk assessments should be kept under review.**
- c) **The Council should risk assess its funds to ensure banking security.**
- d) **A general unallocated reserve policy should be introduced which supports the Council's 'working capital' funds held and allocated reserves should continue to be explained.**

11) Budget/precept 2018/2019

- a) Members received a written report on the 2018/2019 budget.

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

- b) Members received a report on the current funds held in reserves.

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

- c) Members considered for approval the Critical Commitments Strategy 2018-2021 and were advised that, in accordance with the Town Council's Financial Regulations the Council was required to prepare a 3-year revenue and capital forecast.

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

- **£14,300 should be included in the budget to fund library services for the next 8 years.**
- **Public toilets provision would continue with the present contractor until 2020 after which the contract would be reviewed.**
- **Works to the Gaskell Recreation Ground would be carried out in accordance with the approved 2017/2025 Management Plan.**
- **An Action Plan would be developed for essential works to be carried out on the Council's property portfolio.**
- **Plans for increasing burial space at the cemetery would be considered during 2019/2020.**
- **Aspirations for better use of the Corn Exchange and car park would be considered during 2019/2020.**
- **Works to the Pound should be discussed further with William Brookes Academy during 2018/2019.**

- d) Members considered for approval an updated Action Plan.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that that the updated Action Plan be **APPROVED**.

- e) Members considered for approval the 2018/2019 budget and precept.

It was **PROPOSED** that the current precept should be increased by 2% due to inflation and to build sufficient reserves for works to the property in the Council's care. After being **SECONDED** it was unanimously **AGREED** that the budget for 2018/2019 should be set at £223,225 and the precept for 2018/2019 should be set at £187,605 with the 2% increase being allocated to works to the Guildhall.

12) Report from the Chairman of the Finance & Resources Management Committee

- a) Members received a written report from the Chairman of the Finance & Resources Management Committee which informed that Shropshire Council planned to carry out work to improve the junctions at the Gaskell corner and Sheinton corner. The pavements were to be widened to deter HGVs from travelling through the town. As part of the works Shropshire Council had agreed to install new planters and, at the same time, had offered to install the art features which the Town Council had agreed to re-locate. Cllr. Mary Hill **PROPOSED** that one of the art features should be installed on the Gaskell corner by Shropshire Council.

After being SECONDED it was AGREED that Shropshire Council should install one of the art features on the Gaskell corner and a budget of £300 should be set aside for repairs and maintenance of the art features.

- b) In his written report the Chairman informed Members that the Finance & Resources Management Committee had reviewed the lettings policy and management of the markets at the Corn Exchange which included a location plan for market stalls which would be allocated upon letting.
NOTED.

- c) Members were informed that, following the vacation of the rear office at the Corn Exchange, the Finance & Resources Management Committee had agreed not re-let but to use the room for meetings, both by the Town Council and members of the public/organisations. The latter would help to generate income and a usage policy was to be developed. However, before it could be used, it needed to be re-decorated and furnished and it was **PROPOSED** that a budget of £1,500 be approved for this purpose.

After being **SECONDED** it was **AGREED** that:

- A budget of up to £1,500 be **APPROVED**.
- All councillors should be involved in the refurbishment and not the Town Clerk due to her workload.

13) Town Archives

Members considered for approval a number of recommendations made by Shropshire Museums Collections and Curatorial Services concerning some of the archive material held in the Town Council's care. Environmental conditions at the Corn Exchange were not ideal and transferring them to Shropshire Archives would provide better storage conditions and make them more accessible to researchers.

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

- a) The Town Council should formalise the arrangements in place with Shropshire Museums regarding items presently in store at the Museum Resource Centre.
- b) The herbarium, seal impression and geology collections should be transferred into the care of Shropshire Museums.
- c) A History Working Group be established whose Terms of Reference would be to examine the town archives and produce a list of same and make recommendations to the town Council concerning their future safe-keeping.

14) Road Safety Policy

Members considered for approval road safety improvements in Much Wenlock for inclusion in Shropshire Council's Road Safety Policy.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that Shropshire Council should be asked to install a 20-mph zone near Much Wenlock Primary School.

15) Consultation

Members considered for approval a response to admission arrangements for 2019/2020 which proposed to change the secondary school designated catchment area for 12 properties that lie within the Much Wenlock Town Council area. The proposals would rectify discrepancies between the primary school and secondary school boundaries.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that the proposed changes be supported.

16) Correspondence

The following correspondence was received:

- a) SALC information bulletin and other information sent to Members via email.
- b) The Town Clerk informed Members that she had received information from Graham Oliver, the Community Ambassador for Shropshire and that, in response to anti-social behaviour at the Corn Exchange, the youths had been spoken to by the police and, in some cases, their parents had been written to and local schools made aware. The police will keep an eye on the area but this would be dependent on priorities and workload although the police were being extra vigilant with their available resources.
- c) Notes from a Market Town Clerks meeting held on 9 November 2017.
- d) Information from NALC concerning the appointment of a Data Protection Officer.

NOTED.

17) Draft protocol for councillor/clerk relations

Members considered for approval a protocol for councillor and clerk relations as recommended by SALC.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that the protocol be **ADOPTED**.

18) Agenda items for the next town council meeting

It was **AGREED** that traffic issues and nominations for Mayor and Deputy Mayor should be included on the next agenda.

19) Date of next meeting

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 1 February 2018.

The meeting closed at 20:50.

Signed.....
Town Mayor

Date.....