

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
 held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
 7 pm on Thursday 5 April 2018

Present:

Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning (Chairman), Cllr. Adam Davy, Cllr. Herbert Harper, Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, and Cllr. Dafydd Jenkins.

Town Clerk:

Sharon Clayton

In attendance:

Cllr. David Turner – Shropshire Council
 2 members of the public

1) Chairman's welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and made the following statement:

"It has now been twelve months since you nominated me to become your Chairman and Mayor. Despite some public comments to the contrary I believe we have experienced some twelve months of cohesion and positive progress. More of this as the meeting proceeds, and of course at our next meeting on 3 May. There have been some disappointments with three resignations during the last twelve months. Council is about debate and consolidation and working for the community as the number one objective, not fulfilling personal goals. Transparency has and always will be key, and so is respect for confidentiality when the law demands. We especially need to take that on board this evening later on. I welcome the elections due on 10 May. The Mayoress and I look forward to a number of events in April including a reception at Telford & Wrekin, a reception at Dawley and an event at Shrewsbury Castle. The Mayoress and I had the pleasure of attending the Live Arts Festival...it was magnificent and I've taken the liberty of offering the continued full support of the Town Council at all future events. It was absolutely superb. We have a Councillor Surgery on Saturday morning and Councillors Hill and Harper will be in attendance."

2) Apologies for absence

Councillor	Reason
Marcus Themans	Clashing engagement
Allan Walter	Holiday
Milner Whiteman	Recovering from a broken ankle

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

None requested.

5) Shropshire Council Report

Cllr. David Turner gave the following verbal report:

- He had attended St. Chad's remembrance services for those from Much Wenlock who were killed in action or had died from injuries during WW1.
- He had questioned Shropshire Council about its budget proposals and its failure to generate or save £3m since the May elections in 2017 which he felt was due to mismanagement, and he had protested against this at Shropshire Council's February meeting.

- All Shropshire Councillors receive a basic allowance of £11,500 and those with special responsibilities, such as the Leader, committee chairmen and portfolio holders receive additional allowances. He had spoken against proposed increases especially at a time when the Council had already agreed to increase its budget by 6%. He was particularly appalled that one Shropshire Councillor would receive an additional allowance when his attendance record was only 14%.
- Shropshire Council's Local Plan Review 2016 – 2036 continued and the "Call for Sites" closed in December 2017. Submissions were being reviewed by the Planning Team and local councils would be given an opportunity to comment.
- 530 Neighbourhood Plans had been approved in local referendums. The Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan states that by 2018 it was expected that there would be a successful and positive operational relationship with Housing Associations to bring forward affordable housing, drainage issues would be addressed, and progress made on the F1 employment site, but only affordable housing and drainage issues had been successfully implemented.
- Over 100 expressions of interest had been received for affordable homes at Callaughton Ash.
- Much Wenlock's £2m Flood Alleviation Scheme had won an Environment Agency award.
- Most businesses in Much Wenlock were thriving although a number of attractions, such as the Festival at the Edge had been lost, and the Chamber of Trade had folded. He asked the Town Council to support the Christmas Fayre Committee who urgently needed volunteers to ensure its future.
- Shropshire Council had formed a new seven year partnership arrangement with WPS and Keir for the provision of highways and environmental maintenance.
- £1.9m had been secured from government for pothole repairs.
- Arriva had been awarded a 5-year contract for the 436 Shrewsbury/Bridgnorth bus service from April 2018.
- Airband high speed wireless broadband was live and would soon be available outside of the town.
- His next advice surgery would take place on 21 April 2018 at Shipton Village Hall.

NOTED.

6) Public session

There were no requests to speak.

7) Minutes

The minutes of a Town Council meeting held on 1 March 2018 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

Members received a written report from the Town Clerk on outstanding matters and action taken since the last Council meeting.

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

9) Meeting room at the Corn Exchange

- a) Members received a verbal update on refurbishment and furnishing of the new meeting room at the Corn Exchange. The room had been re-painted although it had taken longer than expected due to issues with damp.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to NOTE.

- b) Members considered for approval a further budget of £500 towards the cost of furnishing the meeting room at the Corn Exchange to ensure the room met a sufficiently good standard for it to be hired for meetings.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that a further £500 be allocated towards the cost of furnishing the room.

10) Communication Strategy

Members received a verbal update on the development of a Communication Strategy from the Communication Strategy Task & Finish Group. Members recommended that a more simplistic communication policy should be adopted based on the NALC template, and that a Communication Strategy should be developed professionally. The Group also recommended that the Council could sponsor a social media apprentice in partnership with one of the businesses in Much Wenlock which was looking to expand. The rate for an apprentice was £3.70 per hour for the first 12 months and this resource could be used to improve the Council's social media presence and other communication channels.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the Task & Finish Group should meet again and prepare a recommendation for consideration at the next Town Council meeting.

11) Gaskell Recreation Ground

Members received a verbal update from members of the Gaskell Recreation Ground Management Committee. Since the resignation of David Gibbon and Trevor Childs, who represented Wenlock Estates, the Committee had been re-structured and Wenlock Estates would now be represented on the Management Committee by Tim Motley and Chris Bowden.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED to NOTE.

12) Consultation

There was no consultation for consideration.

13) Correspondence

The following correspondence was received and **NOTED**:

- a) SALC information bulletin and other information sent to Members via email.
- b) Information from the Shropshire-Wide 20mph Campaign Co-organisers – emailed to Members.
- c) Traffic issues at Sytche Lane, Much Wenlock – emailed to Members.

It was AGREED that the traffic issues identified should be forwarded to Shropshire Council for attention.

14) Agenda items for the next town council meeting

It was **AGREED** that Members should inform the Town Clerk of any items for inclusion on the next agenda.

15) Date of next meeting

It was **NOTED** that the Annual Town Council Meeting would take place on Thursday 3 May 2018 followed by the re-convened Annual Town Council meeting on 10 May 2018.

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.

16) Historic buildings

Members considered for approval quotes for works to the Council's historic buildings. 5 surveyors, recommended by Shropshire Council's Conservation Officer, had been contacted although only two had responded with quotes.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously AGREED that:

- a) **Arrol and Snell be appointed to carry out a condition survey on the Council's historic buildings at a cost of £1,250 plus VAT.**
- b) **The cost of the survey would be taken from the 2018/2019 property budget.**

17) Freedom of Information Requests

Members received information concerning ongoing subject access requests and their costs in terms of staff time, and subsequent communication from the Information Commissioner's Office.

For the past several months the Council had been dealing with a subject access request made in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. This request had been made by a former Town Councillor who had pursued a matter that was concluded by the Town Council whilst they were still a Member. Their continual requests had incurred significant staff resources and costs. All requests for information should be addressed to the Town Clerk but this individual had written directly to all councillors on many occasions.

Members had expressed concern that they did not join the Council to spend time dealing with such criticisms and their key reason for becoming a councillor was to make Much Wenlock a better place to live, work and play. Members were also concerned that the Council should not have any more staff time spent on providing information, some of which could not be released due to confidentiality. The Council wants its staff to help councillors to realise the Council's ambitions and not waste tax payers' money dealing with someone who clearly has a grudge and reluctant to move on.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that:

- a) **The Council had complied with its legal obligations.**
- b) **The Town Clerk should write to the subject access requester, copied to the ICO, outlining the Council's obligations very clearly and quoting why the information was being withheld and that there would be no further communication regarding this matter.**

The meeting closed at 20:54.

Signed.....
Town Mayor

Date.....