

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

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

Present:

Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning (Chairman), Cllr. Adam Davy, Cllr. Herbert Harper, Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, Cllr. Kate Southan, Cllr. Marcus Themans, Cllr. Daniel Thomas, Cllr. Allan Walter and Cllr. Milner Whiteman OBE.

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.

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 11 be considered after Cllr. David Turner's report. It was further proposed that part of the discussions concerning the closure of the Much Wenlock branch of Barclays Bank would be held in closed session.

The Chairman informed the meeting that the Civic Service would take place at 6.30 pm on Sunday 1 July 2018 at Holy Trinity Church. He encouraged all to attend.

2) Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. Dafydd Jenkins who had a work commitment.

This apology was ACCEPTED 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 granted a dispensation to all councillors who held accounts with Barclays Bank in order to allow them to participate in discussions concerning the intended closure of the Much Wenlock branch.

NOTED.

5) Shropshire Council Report

Cllr. David Turner gave the following verbal report:

- Barclays intended to close its Much Wenlock branch in October 2018 and he had serious concerns about the economic impact it would have on the town. Although customers could go the Post Office at the Spar in the High Street he did not feel the staff could adequately cope. Philip Dunne MP had arranged a meeting to discuss the proposals with representatives from Barclays Bank to which Cllr. Turner and representatives from the Town Council had been invited. Cllr. Turner wanted to work with the Town Council to persuade Barclays to continue to provide banking facilities in the town.
- Cllr. Turner expressed concern that the Town Council had still not completed its grant application for Leadership funding to assist development proposals on the Gaskell Recreation Ground.
- He had responded to Shropshire Council's Parking Strategy.
- The Much Wenlock flood alleviation scheme had been shortlisted for an award.
- His next advice surgery would take place on 9 June 2018 at Much Wenlock museum.

NOTED

6) Barclays Bank closure

The Town Council had been informed by Barclays Bank that its Much Wenlock branch would be closing on 4 October 2018 and a discussion took place about how the Town Council should respond. An Impact Assessment undertaken by Barclays had demonstrated that the number of customers visiting the branch had fallen and only 56 customers were exclusively using the branch and only 14,132 transactions had taken place in 2017. Whilst there was a Post Office at the Spar store in the High Street concern was expressed that it might not be able to cope and it was therefore important that pro-active negotiations should take place with Barclays.

The Town Council had been invited to attend a meeting with representatives from Barclays Bank on 8 June 2018 and it was proposed that a positive effort should be made to explore how a locally based banking and financial service for the community could be maintained in the town. Members were in agreement that the cash machine should be retained even though the bank intended to close, and that the Town Council should ask the bank to delay the closure until alternative processes could be put in place. It was therefore PROPOSED that the Town Council should write to various people asking for support to maintain banking facilities in Much Wenlock.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that:

- a) **the Town Council should write to the following:**
 - Barclays Bank
 - The Right Honourable Theresa May MP (Prime Minister)
 - The Right Honourable Jeremy Corbyn MP (Leader of the Labour Party)
 - Philip Dunne MP
 - Shropshire Councillor David Turner
 - Shropshire Council
- b) **An Action Working Group be established to draw up an action plan to provide locally based banking and financial services to the local community. The Working Group should consist of two Town Councillors, Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning and Cllr. Herbert Harper, and interested members of the local community.**
- c) **The Town Council seeks an agreement with Barclays to defer the closure date whilst the Town Council attempts to put alternative processes in place.**
- d) **The Town Council communicates its intentions to the local community.**
- e) **The Town Council seeks the views and advice of other areas that have been faced with bank closures.**

It was further PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that supplementary discussions be considered later in the meeting in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960.

7) Public session

There were no requests to speak.

8) Minutes

- a) The minutes of the re-convened Annual Town Council meeting held on 17 May 2018 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 Finance & Asset Management Committee meeting held on 24 April 2018 were **NOTED and ADOPTED.**

9) Town Clerk's Report

Members received a written report from the Town Clerk on outstanding matters and action taken since the last Council meeting. The Town Clerk also advised Members about their responsibilities regarding Data Protection Regulations.

It was AGREED that:

- a) **The Town Clerk's report be NOTED.**
- b) **Confidential supporting documents should accompany agendas on coloured paper.**

10) Review and approval of Terms of Reference

Members considered the following for approval:

- a) Appeals Panel
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the Terms of Reference be APPROVED.
- b) Discipline & Grievance Panel
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the Terms of Reference be APPROVED.

- c) Planning & Environment Committee
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the Terms of Reference be APPROVED.
- d) Finance & Asset Management Committee
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the Terms of Reference be APPROVED.
- e) HR Committee
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the Terms of Reference be APPROVED.
- f) Media, Marketing and Tourism
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the Terms of Reference be APPROVED.

11) Review/adoption of policies/procedures

Members considered the following for approval:

- a) Councillor Vacancy Policy
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the policy be APPROVED.
- b) Procedure for Advertising Casual Vacancies
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the procedure be APPROVED.
- c) Subject Access Policy
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the policy be APPROVED.
- d) Subject Access Requests Procedure
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the procedure be APPROVED.

12) Litter picks

Members considered for approval the purchase of litter picks and bag openers to be used for regular litter picks carried out by volunteers.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously AGREED that litter picks and bag openers should be purchased at a total cost of £309.80.

13) Complaint concerning Dr William Penny Brookes Herbarium

Members considered a letter received from a member of staff and one of the archivists asking the Town Council to reverse its decision to transfer the Dr William Penny Brookes Herbarium to Shropshire Museums. The Council had resolved that the herbarium be re-located following advice from Shropshire Museums Collections and Curatorial Services. The herbarium was beginning to deteriorate, and Shropshire Museums could house it in more conducive conditions where it would be available to a wider audience including researchers. However, the complainants argued that its removal would be an irreparable loss to Much Wenlock's heritage.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously AGREED that the decision should not be rescinded and that the herbarium should be transferred to Shropshire Museums as agreed by the Town Council in January 2018.

14) ASB application

Members considered for approval whether the Town Council should apply for a Protection Order in an attempt to reduce and control anti-social behaviour at the Corn Exchange. Orders could be obtained to deal with unreasonable behaviour that has a detrimental effect on the local community.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that the Town Council should apply for a Public Spaces Protection Order.

15) Littering at the entrance to Shadwell Quarry

Members considered the amount of litter that was being left at the entrance to Shadwell Quarry which included empty laughing gas canisters which young people were using for the wrong purposes. The police had been informed and had said that they would investigate. Whilst there was a large boulder in front of the gates it was an obstruction for emergency services should an accident occur through trespassing. Members felt it was an unused asset that could be re-developed and thus generate employment.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that:

- a) **The Town Council should write to the owners of the site to express concern about safety and enquire what future plans they had for the site.**
- b) **Shropshire Council should be asked whether this site had been allocated for economic development.**

16) Consultation

None received.

17) Correspondence

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

- a) SALC information bulletin and other information sent to Members via email.
- b) Email from Barclays Bank notifying of its closure.
- c) Police report.

NOTED.

18) Agenda items for the next town council meeting

It was **AGREED** that youth provision and grant applications should be included on the agenda for the next meeting.

19) Date of next meeting

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 5 July 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.

20) Barclays Bank closure

In response to Barclays Bank’s notice to close its Much Wenlock branch Members considered the options available as to how a locally based banking and financial service for the community could be maintained in the town by utilising an idea used by AgeUK. Options suggested included purchasing the freehold of the branch and using part of the premises for Town Council purposes and dedicating an area for use by bank customers and bank staff. The intention was to transform banking services to appeal to all ages with assistance from banking providers and to provide banking services from a variety of banks working in co-operation.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED that, in order to secure access to local banking facilities and support trade in Much Wenlock:

- a) **The Town Council should make a proposal to Barclays Bank PLC (company registration number 09740322) for the Town Council to enter into exclusive negotiations with Barclays Bank UK PLC with the intention that the Council purchase the freehold Title of the property at 10 High Street, Much Wenlock, TF13 6AA.**
- b) **Negotiations to be subject to a process of due diligence and a satisfactory survey of the property.**
- c) **Representatives of the Town Council delegated to represent the Council at a meeting with officers of Barclays Bank on Friday 8 June 2018 make a proposition to those officers that the Town Council be given exclusive rights to enter into negotiations, subject to due diligence and satisfactory survey, with the aim of the Town Council purchasing the freehold Title to the property at 10 High Street, Much Wenlock, TF13 6AA held by Barclays Bank UK PLC (company registration number 09740322).**
- d) **Representatives of the Town Council delegated to negotiate the Town Council’s proposals would be the Mayor and Town Clerk.**
- e) **A letter signed by the Town Clerk, and attachment of the background proposal conveying the Council’s agreed resolution, be presented to Barclays Bank representatives in attendance at a meeting held on 8 June 2018.**

The meeting closed at 20:52.

Signed.....
Town Mayor

Date.....