

# MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a  
**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock  
7 pm on Thursday 6 September 2018

**Present:**

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

**Locum Town Clerk:**

Trudi Barrett

**In attendance:**

24 members of the public

**1) Chairman's welcome**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported on his activities over the summer. He had attended the opening of the Callaughton Lane housing development, the Telford & Wrekin Mayor making and the Wenlock Olympian Games.

The Mayor reported the start of the junction improvements in the High Street, part of a scheme to prevent HGVs from driving along the High Street and road to Broseley. The alterations will be enhanced by the placement of art works currently on the Gaskell Ground as well as floral displays to provide a welcome to Much Wenlock. The Mayor expressed his thanks to Cllr Thomas and his father for moving the artworks.

**2) Apologies for absence**

None – all members were present.

**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**

The Mayor welcomed Shropshire Councillor David Turner and emphasised that Councillor Turner had never been barred from any council meeting. The Mayor wished to move forward on a positive note.

Cllr. Turner drew attention to Shropshire Council's second round of funding for community groups to provide activities for young people and asked the Town Council to encourage groups to bid by the deadline of 16 September.

Cllr. Turner stated that he had urged the Town Council to submit an application for LEADER funding in May and June but this had still not been submitted. He reminded members that this was a finite pool into which other councils were bidding and that the community should not miss out.

Cllr. Turner advised that his sustained efforts with regard to car parking charges had resulted in beneficial changes to the arrangements for Much Wenlock, with reductions in charges and the availability of annual permits.

Cllr. Turner referred to the HGV scheme, which would be one of the last schemes to be undertaken before the Shropshire Council's highways spending freeze. Much Wenlock had worked together with Barrow and Broseley Councils to put together the scheme, which was scheduled to be completed in mid-October.

Members **NOTED** the report from Shropshire Councillor David Turner.

## 6) Public Session

The Mayor stated that he was delighted to have requests to speak from the public and reminded those present that the time for each contribution was limited to 3 minutes. He advised that he would seek agreement from Councillors to consider items 24a and b in private amongst Councillors, excluding public and press, and hoped that members of the public would bear this in mind.

- a) A member of the public requested that items 24a and b be discussed in open session, as the dispute between the Town Council and Shropshire Councillor Turner was public knowledge. Town Councillors and the Shropshire Councillor should work together to resolve issues and for the benefit of the town. There were also people outside the Council who would be prepared to help. The problems were costing the Council and rate payers money that could be better spent.

The Mayor responded that he acknowledged some of the sentiments expressed.

- b) A member of the public commented that the Council would not be supporting 2018 events for lost servicemen. He was concerned that respect should be shown to the members of the community who died in the conflict and their families. He offered to organise and underwrite a beacon for Windmill Hill to commemorate the dead if the Council would not do this.

The member of the public questioned the Council's proposed purchase of Barclays Bank. He stated that there were a number of private individuals who would buy the premises and retain the ATM, rather than the Council spending money on this.

The member of the public referred to the Council's disagreement with the Shropshire Councillor and urged the parties to work together for the benefit of the community.

The Mayor responded that he had heard sentiments which he would endorse. The assertion that the Council was not supporting the memories of 1918 was incorrect and this would be dealt with more fully under item 10 on the agenda.

- c) A member of the public stated that he would like to see the energies and efforts of the Town Council used for the benefit of the people of Much Wenlock, rather than being sapped by issues surrounding item 24 on the agenda. He referred to the Council's decision not to apologise to Councillor Turner and the validity of legal advice. He urged the Town Council to concentrate on the future and not the past.

The Mayor responded that he would endorse some sentiments and not others. He advised that the Council was bound by law and that there were some matters which could not and would not be disclosed to the public.

## 7) Minutes

- a) The minutes of a Town Council meeting held on 5 July 2018 were considered for approval. It was agreed to delete the sentence in the second paragraph of minute 12 "It is not known how the youngest son died who was nineteen" and to replace this with "The youngest son died of Spanish flu aged 19."

**Following the above amendment 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 3 July 2018 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.
- c) The minutes of a Finance & Asset Management Committee meeting held on 26 June 2018 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.
- d) The minutes of a HR Committee meeting held on 12 July 2018 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**. Members noticed an error under minute 2 where the word Deputy had been omitted and "Chairman" should read "Deputy Chairman".

## 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.

With regard to minute 12 from July 2018, Councillors were advised that further information for the memorial plaque might be procured from a descendant of Alderman Davies. It was noted that the £100 allocated for the plaque would not be sufficient and Councillors were in favour of increasing the budget to £250.

With regard to minute 14 from July 2018, it was noted that many issues raised at the last two Council surgeries had related to highways matters, however, for the next two years Shropshire Council would not be funding new highways concerns. Shropshire Council had advised that Town and Parish Councils should continue to contact them regarding highways matters but it was not clear whether this would make a difference. The Town Council would continue to advise Councillor Turner of concerns and members of the public were also encouraged to contact Shropshire Council directly.

With regard to minute 24 from July 2018, it was noted a subsequent email had been received from one former Councillor but it had previously been made clear that no further communication would be entered into.

## NOTED

### 9) Income and Expenditure

Members considered Income and Expenditure from 01 April 2018 to 30 June 2018.

**It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to note and approve the report.**

### 10) Battle's Over

Members **NOTED** that due to the costs involved the Town Council would not be facilitating a beacon as part of the Battle's Over celebrations on 11 November 2018.

The Town Council had approved production of a special cabinet, at a cost of around £890, to house a book of remembrance to be sited in the church. This would be donated for the everlasting remembrance of those who lost their lives in the war. The Council had also purchased two "Silent Soldier" silhouettes and lamp post poppies would be erected throughout the town in readiness for 11<sup>th</sup> November. Retailers would be encouraged to make up appropriate window displays to commemorate those who died. Other activities were also being planned.

It was noted that the Council's decision not to facilitate a beacon had been made not only due to cost, but also on the basis of health and safety considerations, including the requirements of the fire brigade, the need for lighting and marshals, the terrain and the expected weather. The church bell ringers would not be available in the evening and it had not been possible to find a bugler. It was noted that throughout Shropshire only 15 parishes would be lighting a beacon and these did not include Shrewsbury or Telford & Wrekin. Councillors expressed their disappointment at the situation.

**It was PROPOSED, SECONDED AND RESOLVED that members of the Battle's Over Task and Finish Group continue to work together as an end of WW1 group to finalise ways of honouring those who died in the conflict.**

### 11) Post Box

Members considered proposals to relocate the post box in the High Street to the Square to ease traffic issues when emptying the box.

The Mayor expressed his view that the town deserved a gold post box, given Much Wenlock's links with the Olympics, even though the town did not have a gold medallist.

Councillors were not in favour of the suggested location in the Square and considered replacing one of the bollards with the box or placing it opposite the bakery or outside the Spar.

**It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to suggest other suitable locations for the post box on the Square.**

### 12) Local Joint Committee

Members **NOTED** a verbal report from the last meeting of the Local Joint Committee from Councillor Yvonne Holyoak. The programme director for Future Fit had given a presentation and a representative from Severn Trent had spoken. Severn Trent had agreed to follow up concerns and report back in due course.

### 13) Bridgnorth Area Committee

Members **NOTED** a verbal report from Councillor Mary Hill from the last meeting of the Bridgnorth Area Committee of the Shropshire Association of Local Councils. Subjects for the meeting had been highways and the future of the Ironbridge Power Station, particularly the retention and development of the railway link.

It was noted that members of the Town Council would soon be meeting representatives from Harworth, the company managing the redevelopment of the site.

**14) Town and Parish Council Forum**

Members **NOTED** a verbal report from the Town and Parish Council Forum meeting held on 3 September 2018 from Councillor Yvonne Holyoak. This had included presentations on the role of Shropshire Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Shropshire Council Highways and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

**15) Community led road safety concerns**

Members **NOTED** the temporary interim suspension of reporting of new community led road safety concerns to Shropshire Council.

The Mayor drew attention to the last paragraph which stated that Town and Parish Councils should continue to contact the local highways teams to discuss areas of concern.

Councillors expressed their frustration at the lack of action from Shropshire Council and the police when concerns were raised. It was suggested that an online survey be organised to gather the views of members of the public on highways matters to demonstrate the level of concern to Shropshire Council. A paper survey could be included in the Wenlock Herald. A formal proposal would be prepared for the October full Council meeting.

Councillors were asked to notify the Mayor and Clerk of any particular highways concerns they were aware of. It was noted that reporting potholes on the website "Fix my Street" appeared to provoke a response from Shropshire Council.

**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) Notes from a meeting of Market Town Clerks held on 24 May 2018.
- c) Minutes of a meeting of Town Mayors and Town Clerks held on 12 July 2018.
- d) Letter from local resident regarding traffic issues, in particular in King Street. It was understood that Shropshire Councillor Turner had been active in putting forward the concerns of residents in King Street some years ago. It was agreed to ask Councillor Turner to revisit the King Street project and to bring the concerns of residents to the relevant officers at Shropshire Council. King Street should also be included in the list of road safety concerns.

**18) Media, Marketing and Tourism Working Group**

Members **NOTED** a report from the working group.

The group felt that the town should be promoted more positively and through a more extensive social media presence. A "Love Much Wenlock" Facebook and Twitter account had been set up and a domain name secured for a new Much Wenlock Town website. It was recommended that a part-time media manager be employed to promote the town.

It was hoped to set up a virtual Chamber of Commerce to enable local businesses to work together more effectively.

The group thought that more active promotion of tourism was needed and that grant funding could help with this. The group was proposing that the Town Council engage a fund-finder to seek out grants for local groups.

Better relationships between the Council and local organisations such as The Edge and the Leisure Centre would be beneficial.

The group suggested that the Christmas lights switch-on could be a stand-alone event, with the shops staying open, stalls and entertainment.

It was **NOTED** that whilst there was merit in many of these ideas, they would require human and financial resources.

Councillors **NOTED** that there was no up to date Much Wenlock leaflet. The template for the previous version (2013) was available and could be updated and reprinted.

**19) Shropshire Council's Rural Youth Activity Fund**

Members considered the invitation to bid for youth activity funding from Shropshire Council and noted the funding round was open from 20 August until 16 September.

It was noted that the Town Council could not apply for funding, the scheme was only open to community groups. During the previous funding round an application had been submitted by a youth group to run summer activities and £500 had been allocated. However, the cost of the activities proposed was £3,000 and it had not been possible to run the scheme. The group still had the £500 in hand, which could possibly be put towards activities for October half term if further funding could be secured. Councillors agreed to contact the Community Enablement Officer for support in promoting the scheme locally.

**20) Much Wenlock – recent business closures and future opportunities**

- a) Councillors **NOTED** a letter from Shropshire Councillor Turner highlighting his concerns with regard to the closure of Barclays Bank and pubs in the town as well as the challenges facing the town’s businesses.

The Mayor outlined projects the Council was undertaking to improve the Guildhall, the Corn Exchange and the public toilets. Work associated with the HGV scheme would enhance the town. The forthcoming Charter Day celebration event was already full. There were plans to improve the Gaskell Recreation Ground and its facilities. Members **NOTED** enhancement plans already in hand.

- b) The Town Council was already taking action to develop additional opportunities. The Media, Marketing and Tourism Group was investigating ways of promoting the town and the Council was in contact with Shropshire Council’s economic development team. The importance of retaining the ATM in the High Street was noted and this formed part of the discussions with Barclays Bank.

It was suggested that the Council engage with tourism providers and learn from their knowledge and experiences. It was recognised that tourism within Shropshire was very fragmented. The Council was already developing additional links with local organisations.

A member of the public drew attention to the problem of blocked drains in the town.

**21) Agenda items for the next town council meeting**

To be advised.

**22) Date of next meeting**

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

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**Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960**

Members asked that a recorded vote be taken before resolving to discuss the last two items in closed session. After being put to the vote with Councillors Edgcumbe Venning, Davy, Harper, Hill, Southan, Walter and Whiteman in favour, Councillor Jenkins against, and Councillors Themans, Thomas and Holyoak abstained, it was **RESOLVED** that due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted the public and press should not be present.

At this point in the meeting it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and unanimously **RESOLVED** to revoke Standing Order no: 3x and continue with the meeting.

**23) Barclays Bank**

Members considered a report on negotiations to date.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and unanimously **RESOLVED** to increase the offer for the premises as outlined in the confidential report appended with these minutes.

**24) Communication with Former Town Councillor**

- a) It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and unanimously **AGREED** to retrospectively approve the letter sent to Shropshire Council dated 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2018.

- b) Members considered a response to a ‘Personal Statement’ from Shropshire Councillor David Turner. It was **AGREED** that there would be no response at this time.

The meeting closed at 21:30.

Signed.....  
Town Mayor

Date.....