

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
7 pm on Thursday 1 November 2018

Present:

Cllr. Herbert Harper (in the chair), Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, Cllr. Daniel Thomas, Cllr. Allan Walter and Cllr. Milner Whiteman OBE.

Locum Town Clerk:

Trudi Barrett

In attendance:

Approximately 26 members of the public

1) Chairman's Welcome and Report from Shropshire Councillor, Peter Nutting

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He noted that the training session held the previous week had been very useful. He stressed the need for all Councillors to undertake appropriate training for their role.

The Chairman introduced Shropshire Councillor Peter Nutting, Leader of Shropshire Council, who was in attendance to speak in relation to Shropshire Council's recently announced initiative on Affordable Housing. Councillor Nutting was invited to speak at this point in the meeting:

Councillor Nutting reported on Shropshire Council's proposal to set up a separate housing company to help to address the housing shortage in the county. This would enable Shropshire Council to develop sites with properties for rental and for sale and could include group dwelling schemes for older people. A review was planned of the council housing stock owned by Shropshire Council and currently managed by STAR Housing, which might result in the sale of the freehold of the properties with no change to the tenancies. Shropshire Council would be looking for creative solutions to provide more housing. Once the proposal to set up the housing company was approved, it could be possible for Shropshire Council to start building as early as 2020, initially constructing pre-fabricated houses which could be built more quickly.

It was noted that the smaller housing associations were experiencing problems with funding and that there were moves to amalgamate, however, Shropshire Council would continue to deal with housing associations. In response to a query about which organisation the Town Council should work with to explore options for further affordable housing, Councillor Nutting stated that he would have no objection to the Town Council working with a housing association if this provided the best option for the town.

The new Local Plan would soon be going out for consultation and there was an opportunity for anyone to respond to the consultation and put forward sites for development that had not been identified in the Plan.

Councillor Nutting spoke about current issues with the Community Infrastructure Levy and the conflicting priorities for allocation of the funding. Shropshire Council was currently undertaking a review of the system.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Nutting for his personal commitment and giving his valuable time to attend the Town Council meeting.

2) Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning, Cllr. Adam Davy and Cllr. Kate Southan who were on holiday
Cllr. Dafydd Jenkins and Cllr. Marcus Themans who had a work commitment

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.

4) Dispensations

None requested.

It was noted that the dispensation granted to Members in June for the closure of Barclays Bank was still valid.

5) Shropshire Council Report

Councillor David Turner reported that the revised parking charges in town were likely to be implemented in February. He stated that he was pleased to see that the George and Dragon had re-opened in the High Street.

Councillor Turner referred to the new Local Plan for which the consultation period was expected to be between 29th November 2018 and 31st January 2019. The Plan indicated that 150 dwellings would be required in Much Wenlock between 2016 and 2036. 45 had already been completed, leaving 105 outstanding. The preferred housing site between the primary school and Hunters Gate would provide 80 houses. This scheme would also include appropriate flood prevention measures and consideration of a roundabout for access to the A458. Councillor Turner was pleased to see that mention had been made of the town's Neighbourhood Plan in the Local Plan.

With regard to affordable housing, Councillor Turner stated that the Town Council was committed to support the Neighbourhood Plan and to address the need for affordable housing in the town.

NOTED.

6) Public Session

The Mayor had received a request to speak from a member of the public who was invited to speak.

- a) Information was provided about the Battle's Over event organised by members of the community for the evening of Sunday, 11th November. The event would be held at William Brookes School commencing with a drum head service at 6.45pm, followed by the Last Post by a bugler and the lighting of a beacon on Windmill Hill at 7.00pm. Afterwards light refreshments would be available in the school.

7) Minutes

- a) The minutes of a Town Council meeting held on 4 October 2018 were considered for approval. After correction of typographical errors,
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 4 September were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.
- c) The minutes of a Finance & Asset Management Committee meeting held on 24 September 2018 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.
- d) The minutes of a HR Committee meeting held on 26 July 2018 were **NOTED** and **ADOPTED**.

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.

Councillors noted that no progress had been made on works to the Pound since January and that this matter should be referred to the Finance & Asset Management Committee for review.

NOTED

9) Affordable Housing

The Chair introduced the topic of affordable housing in the town. It was noted that the number of affordable houses required had fallen from the 140 required in 2008 to a current requirement for 15 – 17, so considerable headway had been made. However, more housing was clearly required and the Council needed to consider how best to address this.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to invite representatives of Connexus to the Council meeting in January 2019 for further discussions on affordable housing.

It was noted that holding discussions with Connexus would not prevent the Council from also considering what Shropshire Council might be able to offer following the setting up of the proposed housing company. The identification of suitable sites would be an issue for either organisation. Councillor Nutting was asked to confirm the land holding of Shropshire Council in the town.

10) Town Council Statement

After discussion, **it was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the statement prepared by the Town Clerk be submitted to the Wenlock Herald for publication.**

11) Rescission of Previous Resolution

To allow the Town Council to increase its offer to Barclays Bank, in accordance with Standing Order no. 7a, and at the request of three councillors, it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to approve the rescission of the following decisions:

- a) *"...subject to due diligence, the Town Council's Working Group be granted delegated authority to proceed with negotiations to purchase the premises currently occupied by Barclays Bank for a maximum sum of £165,000 (minute no. 23 dated 5 July 2018) and*
- b) *"...to increase the offer for the premises..." (minute no. 23 dated 6 September 2018)*

12) Communication Policy

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to defer consideration of the updated communication policy to the December meeting.

13) Match Funding

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED AND RESOLVED** to allocate a budget of £30,000 for match funding of the LEADER funding application for improvements to the Gaskell Recreation Ground.

14) Video Recording of Town Council meetings

Councillors noted a verbal report from Councillor Thomas. Following consideration of the issues associated with recording Council meetings, it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to contact Arrol and Snell to check whether the acoustics in the Council Chamber could be improved and to seek quotes as part of the overall programme of works under consideration for the Guildhall. No budget was set for this survey.

15) Consultation

None received.

16) WW1 Commemoration Activities

Councillors **NOTED** a report on the planned WW1 commemoration activities:

- 450 yarn poppies had been made by members of the WI and others and displayed at various locations around the town including the Guildhall railings
- The Town Council had provided a display case for the church and there would be a vigil service on 10th November to dedicate the case.
- An act of remembrance would be held on Friday 9th November at 10.45am at the Cemetery when school children would also lay poppies on the war graves
- The lamp post poppies and "tommy" flats were on display, and the image projection onto the outside of the Church tower had been set up
- The Council had donated books to both schools and commemorative coins were being provided as prizes for the children's poster competition
- Many shops had relevant window displays
- An event was being held at the Corn Exchange on the morning of 10th November.

Thanks were expressed to all those involved in the commemoration activities.

17) Correspondence

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

- a) SALC information bulletin and other information sent to Members via email.

18) Agenda items for the next town council meeting

To be advised.

19) Date of next meeting

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Thursday 6 December 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

Councillors noted a verbal report on negotiations with Barclays Bank.

The meeting closed at 20.55

Signed.....
Town Mayor

Date.....