

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
7 pm on Thursday, 3rd October 2019

Present: Cllr. Herbert Harper (in the Chair), Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Kate Southan, Cllr. Marcus Themans, Cllr. Daniel Thomas, Cllr. Allan Walter and Cllr. Milner Whiteman OBE.

Town Clerk: Trudi Barrett

In attendance: Shropshire Councillor David Turner and 14 members of the public

1) Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

He reported recent events attended:

- A Mayors and Clerks meeting on 10th September in Shrewsbury with the Clerk;
- A market town Mayor's and Clerks meeting on 11th September in Church Stretton with the Clerk where of mutual concern were discussed, including variances in precept between market towns and the outlying parishes and the pressure of additional services the town councils were being asked to take on;
- An open day at the fire station, along with some other Councillors, on 21st September when visitors were able to view the excellent facilities;
- The Wenlock Olympians 9 mile trail race on 29th September, where the Mayor presented the medals and Councillor Thomas had been a steward;
- An exhibition about the mineral extraction plans for the Ironbridge Power Station with Councillor Hill. Councillor Holyoak had also attended.

The Chairman announced that the Police and Crime Commissioner would be holding an engagement event at the Priory Hall in Much Wenlock on Friday, 25th October, between 12.30 and 2.30 pm.

2) Apologies for absence

Councillor Davy – family commitment, Councillor Holyoak – other engagement, Councillor Jenkins - work

These apologies were 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.**

4) Dispensations

None requested.

5) Shropshire Council Report

Shropshire Councillor, David Turner, gave a verbal report:

- He had attended meetings with relevant agencies and residents to discuss concerns about flooding since the Hunters Gate housing development had been completed.
- He had attended the exhibition regarding mineral extraction from the power station site the previous day. He noted that a considerable minority of the materials would be removed by road and the need to strongly resist vehicles coming through Much Wenlock.
- Shropshire Council was undertaking further consultation on car parking to address issues of continuing concern.
- He highlighted ongoing problems with drains in the town and encouraged residents to report problems to Shropshire Council.
- He noted that BT were reviewing the retention of some public phone boxes, one of which was located in Homer. He suggested that if there was no justification for the retention of the telephone, the box could be used for another purpose, such as to house a defibrillator.

Councillor Themans questioned Councillor Turner about the licensing of market stall holders, an issue which was affecting events in the town. Councillor Turner undertook to make enquiries about the matter.

6) Public Session

- a. A member of the public referred to flooding issues in the town and outlined actions being taken by a group of local residents to encourage Shropshire Council and Severn Trent to resolve the problems, particularly associated with Hunters Gate. It was noted that pipework was in place to carry water away from Hunters Gate and that £175,000 was believed to have been set aside to carry out the necessary work.
Concern was also expressed about pothole repair and the quality of the work carried out. Shropshire Councillor Turner was asked to find out who inspects the work, signs it off and is liable for it.
- b. It was noted that several residents had been in touch with the Environment Agency to express an interest in helping to raise awareness of the risk of flooding in the town and how to prepare for such an event.
- c. A representative of the Mendips View Residents Group spoke regarding agenda item 11. The Residents Group supported the position of the Town Council on the preferred site for housing development as being land adjacent to Hunter's Gate. The Residents Group strongly objected to the suggestion put forward by the Neighbourhood Refresh Group, without reference to the residents of Mendips View, that land to the south of Sytche Lane be developed instead. The Mendips View Residents Group stated that the Hunter's Gate site would be closer to the primary school and would give direct access on to the main road. There would be no alleviation of traffic pressure on the Gaskell corner by development at Sytche Lane rather than land adjacent to Hunter's Gate. The agricultural land adjacent to Sytche Lane was currently soaking up water and helping to prevent flooding in Farley and Sheinton. The Hunter's Gate site had been identified by Shropshire Council as their preferred development site and there was no reason to contradict their professional judgement.

7) Resignation of Graham Edgcumbe Venning

- a. Members noted the resignation from the Council of Graham Edgcumbe Venning on 7th September 2019 due to ill health. Graham Edgcumbe Venning had worked extremely hard on behalf of the community and would be much missed on the Council. A letter of thanks had been sent on behalf of the Council.
- b. Members noted that a by-election had been called to fill the vacancy and that Shropshire Council would be making the arrangements. The date of the by-election would be Thursday, 7th November 2019. Given the cost of providing poll cards, Councillors agreed that these would not be required.

8) Minutes

- a. The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 5th September 2019 were considered for approval. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes be APPROVED and ADOPTED as a true record.**
- b. The minutes of the extraordinary Town Council meeting held on 11th September 2019 were considered for approval. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes be APPROVED and ADOPTED as a true record.**

9) External Audit

- a. Members noted that the external audit of the Council's accounts for the financial year 2018/19 had been completed and that the auditor had confirmed that the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return was in accordance with Proper Practices and that no other matters had come to the attention of the auditor giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met.
- b. Members noted the other matters, not affecting the opinion of the external auditor, which were drawn to the attention of the Council.

10) 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 noted that the ceremony to unveil the plaque to Alderman Davies in Back Lane had been arranged for 12.15pm on Remembrance Sunday, after the service at Holy Trinity Church.

Shropshire Council had advised that Much Wenlock would not be put forward for the Historic England Future High Streets Fund as applications would be considered on the basis of economic need and social deprivation criteria and it would be very difficult to make a case for Much Wenlock. It was noted that Oswestry had gone through to the second round.

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Clerk would be attending a meeting with the Mayor and Clerk to Bridgnorth Town Council to discuss boundary review issues on 9th October.

NOTED

11) Preferred Sites Consultation Response

Members considered the recommendation from the Planning & Environment Committee with regard to the request received from a member of the public that the Council review its response to the Shropshire Council Preferred Sites consultation in the light of proposals for the former Ironbridge Power Station.

The Planning & Environment Committee had reviewed the decision to support the preferred site MUW012, land off Hunters Gate, and recommended that support for MUW012 be confirmed and that no change be made to the Council's position. The Council had previously given close attention to the sites offered and MUW012 stood out as being the most suitable and sustainable and providing the best option for the town.

It was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan Refresh Group had suggested in all three documents submitted to Shropshire Council, that site MUW008, land adjacent to Sytche Lane, which was linked to site MUW003, should be the preferred site. It was noted that MUW008 had a capacity of 334 dwellings and the indicative capacity of MUW012 was 112, with the intention to build 80 dwellings.

Councillors were asked for their individual comments and spoke in support of MUW012, citing the potential infrastructure benefits of this site, concerns about drainage and the topography of MUW008, the preference for a site with a smaller maximum capacity and the sustainability of Hunters Gate. It was noted that Councillor Turner had previously highlighted the sustainability of Callaughton Lane for housing development, a factor which applied equally to Hunters Gate on the other side of the road.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED to maintain the Council's position of support for site MUW012, land off Hunters Gate.

12) Working Group Reports

Councillors considered reports from the following working groups:

a. **Friends of the Cemetery**

Less work was now required in the cemetery as the weather grew colder. Caring for God's Acre been approached to undertake some tidying up over the winter. A small commemoration event would be held in the old cemetery on Friday, 8th November when the headteacher of the primary school would bring some year 6 children to visit.

b. **History**

The group had not met due to Councillor Hill's injury.

c. **Communications, Markets & Tourism**

Problems associated with the licensing of market stalls were noted.

d. **Housing Needs**

It was noted that Prof. Barrow from Shropshire Council intended to make an informal visit to the town, rather than speak at a Council meeting. Shropshire Council's housing company had now been set up.

13) Christmas Lights Switch-on

- a. Members noted that anchor bolt testing would take place on Sunday, 13th October and that the Christmas lights would be installed on Sunday, 3rd November. Road closures had been arranged for both days.
- b. Members noted that the formal Christmas Lights switch-on event planned for 21st November had been cancelled due to difficulties with risk assessments for the event and the need for licensing of stalls as well as the requirement for an effective sound system. The switch-on would still take place on 21st November to give a longer display period but with no ceremony. It was hoped that a stand-alone switch-on event could be arranged for 2020.

14) Barclays Bank

Members noted an update from the Barclays Bank working group, which had previously included Graham Edgcumbe Venning. All Councillors had now had the opportunity to view the interior of the banking premises. Discussions were under way with Barclays to resolve outstanding issues.

15) Climate Change

It was noted that local Councils in Shropshire were keen to work together in a coordinated way to address issues associated with climate change and that such matters would be discussed further at a meeting scheduled for 5th November. Councillors agreed that it would also be sensible to work with other groups in the town and to involve knowledgeable members of the community when setting up the Town Council's working group. The Clerk was asked to add this item to the agenda of the next meeting for further consideration.

16) Ironbridge Power Station Re-development

- a. Members noted the Question and Answer information provided by Harworth. Harworth had advised that the demolition of the towers was likely to take place in November.
- b. Members noted a report from the public information event held on 2nd October regarding sand and gravel extraction from Buildwas Quarry. 2m tonnes of materials would be removed from the site over 5 years, with 25% being transported by road. A large proportion of the materials moved from the site by road would go into the Telford & Wrekin area, as Telford & Wrekin had no mineral quarries. It was understood that there was an agreement to repair the rail bridge for removal of the remaining 75% of materials. It was intended to use two engines, one at the front and one at the back of the load to cope with the incline. The extraction of ash would be undertaken between 2020 and 2022 and the extraction of sand and gravel between 2020 and 2025. Building work was due to start in 2021/22. All operations would generate road traffic and it was important to monitor the effect on Much Wenlock. A guarantee had been given that the extraction lorries would turn right out of the power station site, thus going away from Much Wenlock.

17) Consultation

Members considered a response to the following consultation:

- a. Shropshire Council's Youth Strategy, closing on 31st October 2019.
It was noted that it would be useful to liaise with the secondary school before responding and Councillor Southan undertook to do this.
- b. Shropshire Council's proposed introduction of a Post 19 Transport Policy, closing on 18th October 2019.
The Clerk was asked to publicise this consultation via social media encouraging members of the public to respond and to notify the Town Council of their views.
- c. Amendments to Shropshire Council's Parking Strategy, closing on 3rd November 2019.
It was noted that the cheaper parking fee in Falcon's Court had encouraged additional parking there.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to make no response to this consultation.

18) BT Payphone Removal

Members noted that consultation on the removal of further BT payphones in Shropshire had begun and that the removal of the payphone in Homer would be considered by the Town Council's Planning & Environment Committee at their next meeting.

19) Defibrillator

Members noted that training on the use of the defibrillator had been arranged for staff and Councillors on Monday, 7th October and that training for members of the public had been arranged for Saturday, 2nd November between 10am and 12.00 noon on a drop-in basis, under the Corn Exchange.

20) Correspondence

Members received and NOTED the following:

- a. SALC information bulletin and other information.
- b. Editions of The Rural Bulletin.
- c. Early Help Update September 2019.
- d. Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Suicide Prevention "Pick up the phone you are not alone" resource information.
The Clerk was asked to arrange for this information to be publicised via social media to raise awareness of the services available.
- e. Recover! Shropshire DAAT newsletter September 2019.

21) Agenda items for next Town Council meeting

Members were invited to suggest items for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting.

22) Date of next meeting

Members **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Thursday, 7th November 2019 at 7.00pm at The Guildhall.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm

Signed.....
Town Mayor

Date.....