

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
7 pm on Thursday, 6th February 2020

Present: Cllr. Herbert Harper (in the Chair), Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, Cllr. Natalie Park, Cllr. Matthew Park, Cllr. Daniel Thomas, Cllr. Allan Walter, Cllr. Duncan White, Cllr. Milner Whiteman OBE.

Town Clerk: Trudi Barrett

In attendance: Shropshire Councillor David Turner, Mr G Renwick – Head Teacher, William Brookes School, 4 members of the public

1) Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

He reported that he had attended the recent SALC meeting at Quatt Village Hall on 16th January 2020 (see minute 12).

2) Apologies for absence

Cllr. Dafydd Jenkins and Cllr. Marcus Themans, who were working.

These apologies were accepted 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 noted that clearing of gullies and drains was ongoing although some were damaged under ground and needed repair. Councillor Turner gave an overview of repairs to the highway and footpath in High Street and Wilmore Street, which were to be undertaken towards the end of February, as well as those being carried out in other areas around the town. It was noted that Shropshire Council had appointed a temporary consultant to address issues with the operation of the highways department at the Council.

Councillor Turner's next advice surgery in Much Wenlock would be on 7th March when he had invited a member of the Town Council and the police to join him.

With regard to the Shropshire Council Local Plan Review, Councillor Turner noted that the promoters of the site off Hunters Gate/Bridgnorth Road had now put forward a proposal for 130 dwellings, rather than the 80 previously proposed. The promoters had stated that the increase in numbers was necessary to make the development viable in the light of measures required to address flooding issues. Councillor Turner expressed his concerns about the impact of such a development on the town. It was noted that Shropshire Council had taken no decision so far on whether to support the revised proposals. It had been suggested that the promoter arrange a public display.

The Mayor noted that the flooding issues were not new. In 2017, when Berrys had made a presentation to the Town Council, specific reference had been made to the rapid response catchment area in Much Wenlock.

6) Public Session

There had been no requests to speak.

7) Ironbridge Power Station

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow members of the public to speak on this item.**

The Mayor welcomed Mr Geoff Renwick, Head Teacher of William Brookes School (WBS) who had been invited to give the school's perspective on the proposed development.

The developers of the Power Station site had indicated that 141 secondary pupil placements would arise from the development and that those pupils would be expected to attend WBS. It was also indicated that a primary school and nursery would be provided on the development site, but no timescale had been given.

Mr Renwick advised that Shropshire Council had spoken to the school about the proposals. Meetings had also been held with the developer, who had been very clear about what was being planned. The houses would have a Shropshire post code and the children would go to Shropshire schools. There had been little discussion about primary provision, although representatives from Buildwas school had been in attendance.

The additional housing was likely to result in around 120 extra secondary pupils over five years, which would represent one additional class per year group. WBS was confident that they could accommodate the additional pupils and was considering the use of space within the building, which had been constructed for higher numbers than were currently attending the school. If any additional building was required WBS had made clear that this would need to be in keeping with the current school, which had been designed to suit the environment of Much Wenlock. Several additional teachers would be required for the extra classes, but the new pupils would also bring funding with them, which would finance the resources required. This would include essential pastoral care.

Mr Renwick was asked whether there would still be capacity to admit pupils from Ironbridge along with those from the proposed development. He replied that there was no intention to prevent this and the school would consider increasing the pupil admission number to allow those pupils to continue to attend the school. It was noted that, nationally, WBS was considered to be below average for a secondary school.

The issue of additional coaches coming into school from the new development was raised. Mr Renwick advised that some of the coaches coming from Buildwas were not always full and he did not envisage a need for significant additional transport. It had not been established whether pupils from the new development would qualify for free transport due to the distance from school.

Councillors were concerned that there might be insufficient outdoor recreation space available at the school to comply with current regulations. Mr Renwick advised that the school had been designed with a capacity of 1064 pupils and there were presently just under 950. It was unlikely that the available outside space was not appropriate for those numbers. There was also a link with the Gaskell Recreation Ground for use for sports. Mr Renwick agreed to carry out an analysis of the figures and clarify the position.

Mr Renwick advised that the school would continue to work with the Town Council and would be pleased to attend future meetings to keep Councillors informed. Mr Renwick was thanked for his attendance and left the meeting.

Members moved on to consider the following applications for development of the former Ironbridge Power Station site, taking into account recommendations from the Planning & Environment Committee:

19/05560/OUT

Ironbridge Power Station, Buildwas Road, Ironbridge

Outline application (access for consideration comprising formation of two vehicular accesses off A4169 road) for the development of (up to) 1,000 dwellings; retirement village; employment land comprising classes B1(A), B1(C), B2 and B8; retail and other uses comprising classes A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, D1 and D2; allotments, sports pitches, a railway link, leisure uses, primary/nursery school, a park and ride facility, walking and cycling routes, and associated landscaping, drainage and infrastructure works.

Councillors noted that there were 162 documents associated with this application, which had been submitted to Telford & Wrekin as well as Shropshire Council. Matters relevant to the application were considered as follows:

World Heritage Site

The development site was immediately adjacent to Ironbridge, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) since 1986. The WHS attracted approx. 1 million visitors per year.

Heritage Assets and Environment

Councillors noted the proximity of Buildwas Abbey and Bridge House, a Grade II Listed property as well as the Site of Special Scientific Interest, the South Shropshire Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other ancient woodland.

Design

A standard housing estate with two large switching buildings remaining.

Employment

Councillors noted that the indicative number for employment was 622 jobs, a significant drop from the 4,520 indicated at the MIPIM 2019 exhibition in Cannes, France. No explanation had been provided for the difference in figures.

Health Provision

It was noted that Dr Bailey and Ms Hope, the Practice Manager, from Much Wenlock & Cressage Medical Practice had attended the recent Planning & Environment Committee meeting to express their views on the potential impact of the development on the Practice. Dr Bailey had advised that there had been no consultation with the Practice. The Practice was already full and there would be no desire to set up an additional building to accommodate additional patients. The Much Wenlock & Cressage Practice was now liaising with the Ironbridge Medical Practice to seek their views and would then prepare either individual or a joint response to the consultation.

It was also noted that the proposed local centre on the development site, where a medical facility might be located, would be used for the cleaning and processing of sand and gravel for 5 years so Members could not see how this area could be developed during this time.

Education

There was an indication of 103 nursery pupils, 177 primary school pupils and 141 secondary pupils arising from the development. A new nursery/primary school was to be provided on site but no timescale for this was stated.

Highways

Management of the highways issues was crucial for Much Wenlock. It was noted that the Transport statement in the documentation read: "The results of the Traffic Survey show that the A4169 Much Wenlock Road is relatively lightly trafficked with a maximum of just 797 two way vehicles in a peak hour. This equates to approximately 13 vehicles per minute."

The report did not seem to have taken into account the size and shape of the road, the topography, nor seasonal variation due to agriculture, tourism, etc.

It was noted that the parishes of Barrow and Shipton & Easthope had already made objections to highways matters.

It was stated in the documentation that a Park and Ride facility would be included on the site but there was no current indication of the size of that facility. It was noted that this would bring additional traffic to and from the site.

The Town Council had already raised with Shropshire Council the fact that the Telford traffic model used for traffic modelling by Harworth did not include the A49 and this should be included due to the impact of any diversions on surrounding roads.

The Gaskell Arms corner was of particular concern. Harworth had identified this as a problematic junction with little scope for alteration. Councillors expressed concerns about traffic commuting via Much Wenlock and the impact of additional traffic on the surrounding narrow roads with blind bends. It was noted that in the past plans had been drawn up for a bypass for Much Wenlock which had not been implemented. The proposed development made the case for a bypass even stronger.

It was noted that the 1000 houses proposed would, effectively be in a cul de sac. If any problem arose with Buildwas Bridge or if there was an accident on Buildwas Bank, traffic from the development would have to go towards Much Wenlock. The bridge was critical. It was noted that travel over the existing bridge from the Power Station would be restricted to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

Economy

It was noted that around 32% of people in Much Wenlock and Broseley worked in Telford and would be travelling that route. 19.5% came into Much Wenlock and Broseley for work. It was noted that large businesses such as Syspal in Broseley and Morris Corfield in Barrow parish were expanding and would already generate additional traffic in the area. The traffic problems envisaged would add to the journey times of local residents and could discourage visitors to the area.

Land Stability

The Gorge was renowned for its history of landslides. It was noted that on the northern edge of the site there was an area with very significant potential for slope instability.

It was noted that an alternative use of the site had been proposed at a recent Town Council Surgery: development as a holiday village, such as Bluestone. This would provide employment and would be beneficial for the local economy. Tourists would spend money locally and there would be no need for provision of a primary school, health centre or other similar facilities.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and unanimously **RESOLVED** to object to the application 19/05560/OUT Ironbridge Power Station, Buildwas Road, Ironbridge, citing issues including highways, healthcare, the negative effect on the economy and environment as well as the timescale for reviewing such a large application.

A detailed response would be prepared and circulated to all Councillors prior to submission.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** to reinvoke standing orders

Members considered a response to the following application:

19/05509/MAW (Minerals)

Proposed Quarry To The East Of Much Wenlock Road, Buildwas

Phased extraction and processing of sand and gravel including the erection of processing plant and ancillary infrastructure, temporary storage of minerals, utilisation of existing rail siding and creation of new access road on to Much Wenlock Road; restoration of the site.

It was noted that 75% of the minerals were to be removed by rail and 25%, equal to 100,000 tonnes gravel per year, to be removed by road to Telford & Wrekin, who had no such resources, and could use the minerals locally.

It was noted that there was no confirmation that Network Rail had agreed to strengthen the railway bridge to facilitate its use. If the minerals could not be quarried and removed the site could not be developed as the minerals represented a strategic resource. 1.9m tonnes of sand and gravel would need to be removed over a period of 5 years. The pulverised ash from previous wood chip burning would also need to be removed.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** to object to the application 19/05509/MAW (Minerals) Proposed Quarry To The East Of Much Wenlock Road, Buildwas, as there was insufficient information regarding the transportation from site of the minerals.

8) Minutes

- a. The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 9th January 2020 were considered for approval. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th January 2020 be **APPROVED** and **ADOPTED** as a true record.
- b. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 3rd December 2019 be **ADOPTED** as a true record.
- c. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance, Asset Management & HR Committee meeting held on 26th November 2019 be **ADOPTED** as a true record.

9) 2020/21 Budget

- a. Councillors noted that an accounting error had been identified in the 2020/21 budget calculation. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** to rescind the decision taken at the meeting held on 5th December 2019, minute 12: "to approve the budget of £266,392 and the precept of £204,432 for the financial year 2020/21".
- b. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** to approve the budget of £255,133 and the precept of £204,432 for the financial year 2002/21, which includes a contingency of £1,891.

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 Clerk and RFO had presented their identity documents at the Bridgnorth branch of Barclays for the second time in connection with the mandate change.

Councillors noted advice received from the monitoring officer at Shropshire Council that information relating to the land holdings of Councillors, which might include their homes, must be published on the Shropshire Council website. The monitoring officer had made reference to paragraphs 26(5)(b) and 26(7) of the Localism Act 2011.

The Clerk was asked to check with Telford & Wrekin Council why they appeared to handle such details differently.

Contact had been made by the Head of Housing Commissioning at Shropshire Council and this would be followed up by members of the Housing Needs Working Group.

Barclays Bank had advised that the panels for the ATM enclosure were under construction and a date for installation would be provided in the next week or so.

NOTED

11) Working Group Reports

Councillors considered reports from the following working groups:

a. Friends of the Cemetery

Two working groups had recently undertaken work at the Cemetery: the Wild Team from Bridgnorth and Caring for God's Acre. This had been very helpful.

b. History

The group had not met but were still in negotiations regarding a fireproof cabinet for the Archive Room.

c. Communications, Markets & Tourism

Plans for a VE Day celebration were slowly coming together with further meetings planned. It was intended to hold an event on the Church Green starting at around 11am, followed by a special Church service.

It was noted that Shropshire Council had made contact with the Town Council regarding street trading.

d. Housing Needs

In response to concerns about the lack of street lighting for Callaughtons Ash, it was noted that Connexus no longer installed street lighting in their estates to avoid light pollution and a detrimental effect on bats. However, all dwellings were fitted with motion sensor lighting. With regard to future development, it was reported that Connexus were employing flooding specialists and no work would commence until drainage was approved. Matters were progressing positively.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow the meeting to continue past 9.00pm.

e. Barclays Bank – 10 High Street

See minute 10 above.

12) SALC Area Committee Meeting

Members noted a report from the Mayor on matters covered at the SALC Area Committee meeting held on 16th January 2020. Councillor Robert Macey, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Strategic Planning, and Councillor Gwilym Butler, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place Plan and Regulatory Services at Shropshire Council had been in attendance. They reported that recent research had identified the major issues for Shropshire people as Isolation, Mental Health, Public Transport, Housing and Youth Provision.

Other matters covered at the meeting had included boundary reviews, funding received from central Government in relation to Brexit (food safety and inspection), housing, highways repairs and Town Council employment issues. On the recommendation of SALC, a copy of the publication "Being a Good Employer" had been ordered for each Much Wenlock Town Councillor.

13) Annual Town Meeting

- a. It was noted that the Annual Town Meeting would be held on Thursday, 12th March at 7.00pm at the Priory Hall.
- b. Members agreed the format of the meeting which would include reports from the Mayor and Committees as well as an opportunity for questions from the public. Forms would be provided to allow residents to submit written questions for the Chair to read out, rather than asking the questions themselves, if preferred. The local Police Constable would be invited to attend.

14) Climate Change

A copy of Shrewsbury Town Council's document on developing a climate emergency action plan had been obtained.

It was noted that the climate change event planned by a resident had been cancelled due to pressure of work.

Contact had been made with members of the environmental team at Holy Trinity Church with regard to working in tandem on climate change.

15) Summer Garden Party at Buckingham Palace

It was noted that only serving Chairmen/Mayors who had not previously attended the Summer Garden Party at Buckingham Palace were entitled to be nominated and it was therefore not possible for the Council to make a nomination this year.

16) Consultation

There was no consultation to hand.

17) Correspondence

Members NOTED the following, which had been emailed to Members:

- a. SALC information bulletins and other information.
- b. Editions of The Rural Bulletin.

18) Agenda items for next Town Council meeting

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

19) Date of next meeting

Members **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Thursday, **5th March 2020** at 7.00pm in The Guildhall.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Signed.....
Town Mayor

Date.....