

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
7 pm on Thursday 10th January 2019

Present:

Cllr. Herbert Harper (in the chair), 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:

14 members of the public and three representatives of Connexus.

1) Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2) Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Cllr. Adam Davy, who had a family commitment, and Cllr. Edgcumbe Venning, who was on holiday.

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. It was noted that all members were given a dispensation in June 2018 in relation to discussions about Barclays Bank.

5) Shropshire Council Report

Shropshire Councillor, David Turner, gave a verbal report. He noted that Shropshire Council was consulting on the removal of the Bring Banks currently provided at 120 sites across Shropshire for the recycling of household materials until 25th January and encouraged everyone to comment. Cllr. Turner gave an overview of the revised off-street parking charges, which were being introduced in Much Wenlock on Monday, 14th January. Cllr. Turner's first advice surgery of 2019 would be held on Saturday, 12th January from 10.30 am at the Library.

A public meeting about the Local Plan Review had been held by Shropshire Council the previous week. Cllr. Turner gave an overview of the Plan, which covered the period 2016-2036. Residents had expressed concerns about the preferred site, highways, flooding, impact on local services and other matters. Cllr. Turner encouraged the Town Council to look at options other than the site preferred by Shropshire Council. He reported that the consultation period had been extended to 8th February.

NOTED

6) Public Session

A request to speak had been received from a member of the public but the Chair deemed this would be more appropriate at a meeting following the presentation from Connexus.

7) Presentation from Connexus on Affordable Housing

Representatives from Connexus, a social housing provider covering Shropshire and Herefordshire, gave an update on the affordable housing development at Callaughtons Ash and possible future development.

It was noted that a local lettings plan had been devised for Callaughtons Ash and all residents were required to meet Shropshire Council's local connection criteria, as well as additional preferences to ensure that households covered a mix of family types, sizes and ages. The houses had all been successfully let. There were 10 affordable units for rent and two shared ownership units. Lettings data was distributed to Councillors and discussed. It was agreed that Connexus would provide more information for Councillors about the profiles of tenants and where they had lived previously, without compromising the privacy of the new residents.

Connexus was in the initial stages of investigating another phase of development at Callaughtons Ash, comprising up to 20 units for rental and shared ownership. This would be a follow-on exception site. There was considerable due diligence to be undertaken but the current development would provide a blueprint and would allow faster progress. It was unlikely that Shropshire Council would fund another community led scheme, however, Connexus would be prepared to engage with the local community again on a further scheme. Connexus already had finance in place to build the new dwellings. It was noted that Shropshire Council would not allow open market development on the Callaughtons Ash site and that Connexus would always retain at least 20% ownership of shared ownership properties. For rental properties the rents should be capped at 80% of the local market rental housing level. Representatives of Connexus would be pleased to talk to other landowners interested in providing sites for affordable housing.

Problems with the existing development had been reported in relation to uncompleted landscaping, light pollution and drainage. Connexus agreed to follow these up. It was noted that the drainage plan for Callaughtons Ash was available on the Shropshire Council website and the drainage appeared to be working well so far.

Connexus were pleased to announce that the Callaughtons Ash development had recently been awarded Passive House status, which was a cause for celebration. The development was still generating a lot of interest and tenants were very pleased with the heating performance of the houses.

Connexus were thanked for their presentation.

8) Minutes

- a) The minutes of a Town Council meeting held on 6th December 2018 were considered for approval. Following a minor amendment, **it was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes be signed and APPROVED as a true record.**
- b) The minutes of Planning & Environment Committee meetings held on 2nd October and 30th October were considered for adoption. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes be ADOPTED as a true record.**
- c) The minutes of a Finance & Asset Management Committee meeting held on 23rd October 2018 were considered for adoption. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the minutes be ADOPTED as a true record.**

9) Locum Town Clerk's Report

Members received a written report from the Locum Town Clerk on outstanding matters and action taken since the last Council meeting.

NOTED

10) Temporary Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

Members noted that the Town Council had appointed Sharon Clayton as temporary RFO until the recruitment of a permanent RFO was completed.

11) Budget 2019/2020

Members noted their responsibility in managing money provided by Council tax payers. In Much Wenlock there was a relatively low number of households paying Council tax and a relatively high amount of infrastructure. Councillors recognised the need to set a fair and balanced budget. Members considered for approval the draft budget 2019/2020.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED to set the budget for the financial year 2019/20 at £231,309 and the precept for the financial year 2019/20 at £194,698.

This represented an increase of 3.78% over the previous year's precept of £187,605. However, taking into account the increase in the number of households paying Council tax, the actual increase to a Band D property would be 2.01% or £3.19.

12) Membership of Finance & Asset Management Committee

Members noted that Councillor Southan wished to step down from the Finance & Asset Management Committee due to other commitments. **RESOLVED to leave membership of the Committee at five members for the time being.**

13) Shropshire Local Plan Review – Consultation on Preferred Sites

Members noted that the Council would hold an extraordinary full Council meeting on Thursday, 17th January 2019 at 7.00 pm in the Guildhall to review the consultation documents. Any member of the public wishing to speak at that meeting should request to do so in the usual way. It was noted that the consultation was being undertaken by Shropshire Council and individual members of the public were invited to make their comments to Shropshire Council.

14) Consultation

Members noted the following consultation:

- a) Bring Bank Site Consultation from Shropshire Council, which would close on 25th January 2019.
Members noted that bring banks were sometimes abused by businesses and encouraged fly tipping at the recycling sites. The textile bins were operated by a private company and were not included in the consultation. Kerbside recycling collections were made regularly in the town. Members of the public should be made aware of the consultation via social media.
- b) Police and Crime Commissioner Budget consultation, which would close on 20th January 2019.

15) History Working Group

Members noted a report from the recent meeting of the History/Archives Working Group with the Council's volunteer archivist. The Group had considered measures already undertaken and what was still needed to improve the archive storage. A good working relationship had been formed with the archivist at Shropshire Archives and the items stored in Much Wenlock were being reviewed to decide on the best place for their safekeeping. Some items could be preserved more effectively elsewhere and the Herbarium had already been moved to Ludlow for proper conservation. The Working Group would meet a couple of times per year and report back.

16) Relocation of Post Box in High Street

Members noted that Royal Mail had confirmed that the post box would be relocated to a position outside the Spar shop in the High Street.

17) Buckingham Palace Garden Party

Members noted that SALC was entitled to nominate two individual Chairmen/Mayors to attend the Summer Garden Party at Buckingham Palace and **RESOLVED to put forward the Mayor, Councillor Graham Edgcumbe Venning, for nomination.** (N.B. successful nominees are drawn at random by SALC from a pool of all valid nominations received).

18) Correspondence

Members received and **NOTED** the following:

- a) SALC information bulletin and other information – emailed to Members.
- b) Notes from the fourth Broseley, Much Wenlock and Cressage Well-Being Forum – emailed to Members.

19) Agenda items for next town council meeting

Members were invited to suggest items for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting. Councillors wished to consider how to meet housing need in the town.

20) Date of next meeting

Members **NOTED** that an extraordinary meeting would take place at 7.00 pm on **17th January 2019** in the Guildhall and the next meeting would take place on **7th February 2019**.

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.

21) Gaskell Recreation Ground

- a. Councillors considered proposals to improve the drainage on the Gaskell Recreation Ground. The initial proposal had been amended to make cost savings, which would not compromise the project.
It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve the revised specification and quotation of £67,309.20 for drainage work on the Gaskell Recreation Ground, which included a 5% contingency and maintenance for three months.

- b. It was noted that £62,835 was held as a ringfenced reserve for the drainage project. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to allocate additional funds from reserves to cover the cost of the project.**
- c. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to formally award the contract for the project to the preferred contractor, DW Shotton Landscapes Ltd.**
- d. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to delegate authority to the Gaskell Ground Management Committee to oversee and make decisions during the project.**

22) Barclays Bank

Members **NOTED** a verbal update on the Town Council’s negotiations with Barclays Bank.

23) Recruitment of new Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

Members **NOTED** a report from the Recruitment Panel.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Signed.....
Town Mayor

Date.....