

Much Wenlock Town Council

Full Council Meeting

2nd December 2021

Supporting Papers

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MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
 held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
 at 7 pm on Thursday, 4th November 2021

Present: Cllr Mike Grace, Cllr Wilfred Grainger, Cllr. John O'Dowd, Cllr. Marcus Themans, Cllr Robert Toft, Cllr Daniel Thomas (in the chair), Cllr Chris Tyler, Cllr. Duncan White

Town Clerk: Trudi Barrett

In attendance: Several members of the public

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and presented the following report:

"Firstly, on a personal note, I'd like to thank everyone for good wishes and generous gifts on the birth of my son Eric Jack Thomas. I'm pleased to say that both baby and mother are doing well. The last month has been genuinely chaotic, so please bear with me as I get everything under control!

I've been informed that a new bakery/sandwich shop is to take on the old Catherine's bakery site at the end of the month, and on behalf of this Town Council, I welcome the fact that a new bakery is coming in. The shop will be run by the same business owners who have the Wenlock Smoothie, and we wish them well in this new venture.

Some good Christmas events are being planned as we speak with this Council organising a Christmas Lights switch-on event for Thursday 25th November starting at 5:30 pm, which nicely coincides with the Holy Trinity Church's Christmas tree festival, which begins on the same day. Not forgetting the pièce de resistance, the Much Wenlock Christmas Fayre, taking place on Saturday, 4th December.

Last night saw a consultation event regarding the Local Plan and its Examination in Public. Community groups from all aspects of Much Wenlock life sent representatives to discuss the plan and the upcoming stages. I want to thank the Planning Committee for organising such an important event, which ran very smoothly and was essential for community engagement.

As you will have seen tonight, on the way in, the Town Council is carefully using resources to look after this wonderful building that we meet in. The cupola has been safely removed and is now undergoing much-needed repair.

October saw the hard work of the Gaskell Management Committee come to fruition, with the planting of wildflower seeds across the top part of the ground. A big well done to the Committee as the wildflowers not only look great but also provide a critical habitat and food source for our pollinators.

As it's Remembrance time, the Poppy Appeal has a stand every day from 9 am – 3 pm, and it's great to see a mix of Councillors and members of the public volunteering to run the stand. The Remembrance service on Sunday, 14th November will be an open-air drumhead service on the Church Green, starting at 10:50 am."

2. Apologies for Absence

Members RESOLVED to accept the following apologies: Cllr David Fenwick – unwell, Cllr Sam Neal – work, Cllr Mike Atherton – family 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.

5. Shropshire Council Report

Shropshire Councillor, Daniel Thomas, presented the following report:

"With great disappointment, our call-in request regarding Buildwas Power Station planning application has failed; we're discussing this later, so I won't dwell on it now. I've had an invitation from the applicants, Harworth, to see the

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options for the Revolution Very Light Railway, essentially an energy-saving hybrid train that it is hoped will be used to connect Buildwas to Telford and beyond without the use of cars.

Our local policing team is asking people to sign up for Neighbourhood Watch Alerts, where you can receive updates on crime and other issues affecting Much Wenlock and its wider area. You can sign up online or with a paper copy, and I will make the details of how to do this available, as the updates are handy.

Last month I mentioned that I was sad to see PC Jess Hindley transfer to another area, but I'm pleased to report that a new police constable for the Much Wenlock area has been appointed, and we'll receive information on who this is and when they start soon.

On the A458 near the entrance to Edge Adventure, the top of Harley Bank continues to have problems with traffic collisions. To help discuss options on mitigating this, I've arranged a meeting with Sergeant Kate Øen, and I hope to have an officer from Shropshire Council present.

The High Street will be closed on Thursday, 25th November for the Christmas lights switch-on event, which is on the agenda for later. "

6. Police Report

The Local Policing Team had sent their apologies. Members noted the written report provided.

7. Public Session

There had been no requests to speak.

8. Minutes

- a. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 7th October 2021, as amended.**
- b. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 31st August 2021.**
- c. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Finance & Asset Management Committee meeting held on 21st September 2021.**

9. Town Clerk's Report

Members **NOTED** the written report from the Town Clerk on outstanding matters and action taken since the last Council meeting. The Clerk advised that a meeting to discuss a strategic plan for the Town Council would be arranged when convenient. The Clerk reported a positive meeting with Grange Fencing to discuss greater community involvement. Members noted that Grange Fencing had agreed to provide parking for the Christmas Fayre park-and-ride scheme.

10. Ironbridge Power Station Planning Application (ref. 19/05560/OUT)

- a. Members noted that the Town Council's request for the application for the Ironbridge Power Station to be called in by the Secretary of State had been refused.
- b. Members expressed their disappointment at the above. The Town Council had worked hard to put the case for Much Wenlock. It was noted that an extra £100,000 of funding had been promised towards improvements for the Gaskell corner, although this was unlikely to be enough. There was little more the Town Council could do at this stage except await the outcome of the feasibility study. Philip Dunne MP might be invited to visit to aid his understanding of the problems and concerns of the town.

It was noted that a complaint about procedural issues associated with Shropshire Council's consideration of the application had not been submitted yet. Councillors considered that this was still worthwhile and the Clerk was asked to lodge the Town Council's complaint.

It was RESOLVED to write to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to ask for a full explanation of the decision not to call in the Ironbridge Power Station application and how it had been possible for such a quick determination to be made.

11. Consultation event regarding Shropshire Draft Local Plan (2016 - 2038)

Members considered a report on the Town Council's local consultation event for Much Wenlock groups, organisations and support services, held on 3rd November 2021, regarding the Local Plan and its Examination in Public.

The event had been well attended, with around 25 people from different groups, including the medical practice, fire service and church. Participants had been invited to share their views to help the Council form its case for the Examination in Public next year.

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Participants had chosen for discussion the themes of transport, water, heritage & tourism, healthcare & education and development. Councillors had facilitated discussion of the themes on different tables and participants had moved around to discuss different issues.

Councillor Tyler had facilitated the theme of Healthcare & Education. There had been a focus on infrastructure problems, the lack of facilities at the medical practice and concerns about expansion of the schools.

Councillor White had facilitated Water - flooding, fresh water, sewage and pluvial water. The discussions had revolved around responsibility and the need to update and maintain current systems, which simply could not cope. Better checks should be made at the planning stage of any developments with developers being held responsible for systems installed so that drainage was adequate for the development. The possibility of natural solutions, including planting were also discussed.

Councillor Grainger had facilitated Heritage and Tourism. There was a strong feeling that more could be made of the town's heritage and assets, including those belonging to the Town Council. Questions about funding were also raised. With regard to the Local Plan, participants questioned whether there had been an opportunity to ensure that new housing would be built in line with the history and heritage of the town and would enhance Much Wenlock. Should free parking be considered? Was the Local Plan the right place to pick up these themes or was it time to look at the Neighbourhood Plan again?

Councillor Thomas had facilitated Development. This had encompassed affordable housing, climate friendly homes, passive house status, the importance of local connections, the type and size of houses. Sustainable development was desired with the right range of housing to attract a mix of people.

Councillor Grace had facilitated Transport. Participants could only see an increase in traffic with implications in terms of air pollution. There was no obvious solution for dealing with this. Options might be the pedestrianisation of the town centre or a bypass. This had not been considered yet in the Local Plan process.

Some additional input had been provided by groups which had been unable to send a representative.

The comments would now be written up and circulated and those who attended would be invited to come back to the Town Council with any further comments.

Members wished to note for the record that there had been no consultation with the community prior to this event. One letter of thanks had already been received.

12. Arrangements for Christmas Lights Switch-on

Members noted that everything was in place for the switch-on of the Christmas lights display on the evening of Thursday, 25th November. Traders in the town would stay open late, there would be some entertainment and arrangements had been made for the sale of food and other items. The event would commence at 5.30pm with the switch-on at 6.30pm. The High Street would be closed between 3.30 and 9.00pm.

13. Consultation

Members noted the following consultation:

Bridgnorth Future Connectivity Plan – deadline for response to Shropshire Council by 21st November 2021.

It was RESOLVED to delegate responsibility for preparing a response to the Transport Working Group. A draft should be circulated to Councillors for consideration before submission.

14. Correspondence

Members noted the following items, which had been distributed via email between meetings:

- a. SALC information bulletins and other information
- b. NALC newsletters and other information
- c. Press releases from Shropshire Council
- d. Rural Bulletins from the Rural Services Network

15. Agenda Items for Next Town Council Meeting

Members suggested the following item for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting:

2022/23 Budget, depending on the deadline for submission of the precept request to Shropshire Council

16. Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting would be held at 7.00pm on Thursday, 2nd December 2021 at the Guildhall.

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.

17. Complaint

Councillors considered progress with a complaint from a member of the public.

The meeting closed at 7.59 pm

Signed
Town Mayor

Date

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MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a **Planning & Environment Committee meeting**
held at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 5th October 2021 at the Guildhall, Much Wenlock

Present: Councillors David Fenwick, Mike Grace (in the chair), Wilfred Grainger, Chris Tyler

In attendance: Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, Cllr Dan Thomas, several members of the public

1. Apologies

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the following apology: **Councillor Duncan White – family matter.**

2. 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.

3. Dispensations

None requested.

4. Public Session

Members of the public were invited to speak on agenda items at the relevant point during the meeting.

5. Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 31st August 2021 be **APPROVED** and signed as a true record.

6. Planning Applications

The following planning applications were considered:

<p>21/03873/FUL Withies Campsite, Stretton Road, Much Wenlock</p>	<p>Proposed siting of 5 glamping pods and 2 log cabins and installation of grass grid access track at existing caravan and camping site.</p> <p>A member of the public outlined his objections to the application, which had also been submitted to Shropshire Council. It was noted that there were 17 objections to the application on the Shropshire Council website.</p> <p>Councillors had met the architect on site and discussed the proposals. The architect had indicated a willingness to address concerns raised and that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a grid would be installed across the bottom of the access road to take away the water - a fence with substantial hedging could be an alternative to the proposed brick boundary wall - the hedging to the right of the entrance would remain, contrary to information in the application. <p>However, none of the above was currently included in the application and no satisfactory answer had been provided regarding the waste run off from the amenity block that was already under construction.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to object to the application on the following grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Overdevelopment of the site. b. Impact on the landscape and visibility of the site from the surrounding area. c. Unsafe pedestrian access along a fast road, and no evidence that the alternative off-road route through Blakeway Hollow would be improved.
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	<p>d. Insufficient evidence that water run-off from the site would be adequately addressed. Run off comes through the limestone layer as well as from the access track and freezes on the road in winter, resulting in dangerous, icy conditions.</p> <p>e. Insufficient information about waste and sewage management from the amenity block.</p> <p>f. Ecological impact and lack of management plan for trees.</p> <p>g. Urban appearance of the proposed brick boundary wall, which would be out of keeping with the surroundings.</p> <p>Councillors recommended that the application be referred to the Southern Planning Committee for determination.</p>
21/04033/FUL Wenlock Edge Inn, Easthope, Much Wenlock	<p>Stationing of 4no holiday letting units, supporting infrastructure and installation of package treatment plant and associated works.</p> <p>Members noted that little information had been provided in the application and that Easthope, Shipton and Stanton Long Parish Council had objected.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to object to the application as insufficient information had been provided to allow Members to make an informed decision.</p>
21/04403/FUL Camping Site, Bourton Westwood Farm House, Bourton Westwood, Much Wenlock	<p>Siting of 1no holiday let cabin to include change of use of land.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED no objection.</p>
21/04254/OUT Wheatland Garage, Bridgnorth Road and no. 17 St Marys Road, Much Wenlock	<p>Outline application for the part demolition of existing retail convenience store and construction of extensions, revision to car parking facilities, provision of two twin electric vehicle charging points, installation of solar panels on roof of extension and change of use of ground floor of No.17 to St Mary's Road to cafe and hot food take-away shop (to include access).</p> <p>Councillors noted objections from members of the public present.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that whilst Much Wenlock Town Councillors welcome the principle of investment, they have significant concerns about the application and object on the following grounds:</p> <p>a. Access and increased traffic congestion.</p> <p>b. Increased noise and impact on neighbours.</p> <p>c. The loss of a residential unit.</p> <p>d. Lack of reference to the electric substation in the garden of 17 St Mary's Road or to the sewage channel which runs behind the house.</p> <p>d. Lack of consultation with neighbours, who have not been notified of the application.</p> <p>e. Inadequate display of site notice, which is in the shop window but cannot be read due to its position.</p>
21/04257/FUL Larch House, Southfield Road, Much Wenlock	<p>New single storey rear extension, with roof modifications, retaining wall alterations, and new Larch cladding to frontage.</p> <p>Members noted that the Conservation Officer had expressed concern about the larch cladding.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED no objection to the application subject to agreement from the Conservation Officer with regard to materials.</p>
21/04343/LBC 48 High Street, Much Wenlock	<p>Removal of ground paving slabs/tiles and wood chippings to the front of the house, and replacement with stones to improve surface drainage affecting a Grade II* Listed Building.</p> <p>It was RESOLVED no objection.</p>

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21/04430/LBC 48 High Street, Much Wenlock	Installation of an extraction system for cooker, requires drilling 150mm hole through kitchen wall to outside rear elevation affecting a Grade II* Listed Building. It was RESOLVED no objection.
21/04572/TCA 8 King Street, Much Wenlock	Fell 2no Leylandii within Much Wenlock Conservation Area. It was RESOLVED no objections subject to replanting with suitable replacements.
21/03022/FUL Rowan Cottage, Farley, Much Wenlock	Installation of board insulation and silicone-based render to stonework elevations. It was RESOLVED to object due to lack of information, in particular, regarding the expected appearance of the building once the work is completed.

The Clerk was asked to notify Shropshire Council that several applications received recently contained insufficient information to enable an informed decision to be taken by Councillors.

b. Members noted the following planning applications, which were for information only:

21/04354/AGR Red House, Homer Road, Wigwig, Much Wenlock	Proposed agricultural building.
21/04526/CPL Shadwell Quarry, Farley Road, Much Wenlock	Application for a Lawful Development Certificate for the use of site for stationing of 53 Holiday Chalets. It was noted that further information on this application had been requested from the Shropshire Council Planning Officer but had not been received yet.

7. Planning Decisions

It was RESOLVED to note the following planning decisions:

21/03340/LBC Guildhall, Wilmore Street, Much Wenlock	Repair or replacement of the cupola on the roof affecting a Grade II* Listed Building. Decision: Grant Permission
21/03060/FUL Wheatland Garage, Bridgnorth Road, Much Wenlock	Raising of the petrol forecourt canopy roof by 0.6m to allow higher vehicles to access the service. Decision: Grant Permission
21/03295/VAR Grange Fencing Limited, Coates Works, Stretton Westwood, Much Wenlock	Variation of Condition No.2 (approved plans) attached to planning permissions 20/02367/FUL dated 10/11/2020 and 20/04960/VAR dated 28/01/21 to allow for increase in size of approved building. Decision: Grant Permission
21/03774/LBC Nailers Cottage, Back Lane, Much Wenlock	Installation of 2no replacement casement windows at ground floor and front door and 1no window at first floor affecting a Grade II Listed Building. Decision: Grant Permission

8. Local Plan Review / Neighbourhood Plan

Members noted that a report from the meeting with Shropshire Council's Planning Policy & Strategy Manager held on 15th September 2021 would be considered at full Council on 7th October 2021.

9. Local Plan Review – Community Consultation for Examination in Public

a. Members considered and approved the list of groups and organisations to be invited to contribute views on the Local Plan proposals for Much Wenlock.

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- b. **It was RESOLVED to hold a consultation event for representatives of local groups on Wednesday, 3rd November, 7.00 – 9.00pm, venue to be confirmed.**

The event would provide an opportunity to share information and views about the Local Plan proposals for the town and bring together opinions to help prepare for the Examination in Public.

The Clerk was asked to write to the groups identified, inviting them to nominate a representative to attend the event. Individual members of the public would be given a separate opportunity to share their views on the Local Plan proposals.

Agenda item 21d was taken next.

10. Highways Matters – Vehicles mounting the pavement on the corner of Queen Street and Back Lane

Members noted concerns raised by a member of the public about vehicles mounting the pavement on the corner of Queen Street and Back Lane, a very tight corner on a narrow road. Previously, assurances had been provided by Spar that their lorries would be re-routed or smaller vehicles used, but this had not happened. Other HGVs also used the route, including those from the sewage works, and it was understood that when the sewage system was upgraded this route was identified for access. The lorries presented a danger to pedestrians, including tourists visiting St Milburga's well, and a threat to an historic building.

It was RESOLVED to write to Spar requesting that the shop use smaller vehicles and to Shropshire Council highways department to raise the issue and request a solution, which might be the installation of a bollard on the corner.

11. Flooding issues

- a. Members received an update from the Flood Group. It was reported that the town's drains had been cleaned during the previous weeks and virtually all were now clear, apart from Farley Road, leading to Shadwell Quarry. When this road was resurfaced in the spring the drains were not covered and consequently had filled up with gravel. Shropshire Council were being urged to schedule the drains for clearing every four months. Ownership and operation of the drain in the George Shut was being investigated.

With regard to the town's flood warning gauges, these gathered information for the Environment Agency but this was not readily shared. Shropshire Council was in discussions with the Environment Agency about the provision of historic and future data.

The Flood Group expressed their concerns about the new application for development at Shadwell Quarry and the potential impact on the water level in the quarry.

Members of the Flood Group had met WSP and discussed modelling work being undertaken for Shropshire Council in connection with a Department for Transport grant scheme to slow water and protect the highway. The Flood Group confirmed that the WSP study would include the land around the A458 to the south of the town above Hunters Gate.

An open meeting of the National Flood Forum was being held 6.30pm in Guildhall on 6th October and Members were encouraged to attend.

- b. Shropshire Council's Drainage and Flood Risk Manager had urged Members to sign up to the flood warning gauge at the Pound as this was at risk of removal. It was understood that Shropshire Council was in discussions with the Environment Agency about retention of the gauge. The committee noted that it was still awaiting a response to queries raised by the Council following the meeting held with John Bellis on 11th August.
- c. Members noted that the drainage plans for application 21/01098/FUL at Scoltocks Yard, Station Road, could be viewed on the Shropshire Council website. Members of the Flood Group remained concerned about the proposals as plans for drainage often changed when work was under way and no building regulations or other inspection was required.
- d. Councillors considered a paper prepared by Councillor Tyler regarding collaborative working with outside agencies on flooding issues. It was proposed to set up a working group to inform the case for examination in public of the Shropshire Council Local Plan and to consider short and long term implications for a land use and development strategy going beyond 2038. The Flood Group was invited to join the group.

The Chairman of the Flood Group stated that the Flood Group aimed to provide an independent view of flooding in Much Wenlock, not to provide support for a particular point of view.

It was RESOLVED to set up a working group involving outside agencies to review published reports and information on flooding affecting Much Wenlock and to propose options for flood alleviation, as well as considering issues of water supply and sewage management in the town.

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12. Trees in the Conservation Area and Across the Town

Members considered information from the County Arboriculturalist at Shropshire Council regarding the retention, protection and replacement planting of trees in the Conservation Area and across the town. It was noted that Shropshire Council received 800 – 900 notices or applications for work to trees each year and had no control over what was submitted, by whom and when. Shropshire Council itself had no co-ordinated plans for planting trees in parks, on streets or any other open space in its possession across the county. The officer had indicated his willingness to work with the Town Council to identify sites for tree planting in the town.

It was RESOLVED to seek advice from the County Arboriculturalist on the options available with regard to applications for work to trees.

It was RESOLVED to suspend Standing Orders to allow the meeting to continue past 9.00pm.

13. Transport Working Group

Members considered a report and recommendations from the Transport Working Group.

It was RESOLVED to refer consideration of the recommendations in the report to full Council as they largely related to the application for the Ironbridge Power Station, which would be considered at the meeting on 7th October.

14. Old Barclays Bank, 15 High Street

It was RESOLVED to defer consideration of this item to a later date.

15. Climate Change and Sustainability

It was agreed to request an update on progress from Councillor Atherton, the Council's champion for developing its response to Climate Change and the Ecological and Nature emergencies, for the November meeting.

16. Consultation**17. Street Lighting****18. Street naming *****19. Footpath/Bridleway Creation Orders*****20. Footpath Diversion Orders*****21. Road closures***

Members noted the following road closures:

- a. Location: King Street, Much Wenlock
Date: 14th December 2021
Time: 9.30 to 16.00
Purpose: Rectify patch in carriageway to stop pooling of water
- b. Location: High Street, Wilmore Street, Barrow Street
Date: 24th October 2021
Time: 8.00 to 16.00
Purpose: Anchor bolt testing

22. Highways matters *

- a. No response had been received regarding outstanding issues from the meeting between the Shropshire Council Developing Highways Manager and member of the public relating to concerns about the cycleway at Oakfield Park. It was noted that the green spaces within Oakfield Park had recently been maintained but no work had been undertaken to the vegetation overhanging the pavement.
It was RESOLVED to thank the Clerk and Developing Highways Manager for their engagement and to pass the matter to the Shropshire Councillor and member of the public to pursue.
- b. Members received a verbal report on the meeting with the Shropshire Council Highways Officer to review the junction of Southfield Road and Victoria Road held on 14th September. The Officer had advised that nothing could be done to this junction without affecting the Gaskell corner. This junction should be included in discussions about the Gaskell corner.
- c. Members noted that a meeting between Councillors and the local policing team to discuss parking on pavements in the town was scheduled for the morning of 7th October.

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- d. Members noted correspondence from a member of the public regarding traffic issues on the A4169, Mardol Terrace and New Road. Councillors would discuss this matter and that of the junction of Back Lane and Queen Street (minute 10) with the local police on 7th October.

23. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)*

24. Stopping Up Orders*

25. Speed Limit Orders*

26. Prohibition Orders*

27. Shropshire Council’s Approach to Planning Enforcement

Members noted a Powerpoint presentation entitled ‘Shropshire Council’s Approach to Planning Enforcement’ by Ian Kilby, Planning Services Manager.

28. Date of next meeting

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 2nd November 2021 at 7.00pm at the Guildhall, Much Wenlock.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the above Act and due to the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted it was RESOLVED that the public and press should not be present.

29. Planning Enforcement

Members noted enforcement issue 21/08152/ENF.

The Clerk reported that Planning Enforcement at Shropshire Council had advised that while an investigation was being carried out limited information could be provided due to the sensitivity of the matter. The Town Council could be added to the contact list for individual enforcement issues on request and would then be updated in due course. When an Enforcement Notice was issued on a site, the Council would receive a letter of notification explaining how to make comments to the Planning Inspectorate. In relation to other cases, the Shropshire Council Systems Administration Team was working on a report so that parishes would be notified when enforcement cases had been closed.

30. Right of Way

Members considered a matter relating to access, including for those walking the Olympian Trail. The Clerk was asked to review arrangements made for the route of the Olympian Trail.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....

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MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
FINANCE & ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
meeting held at the Guildhall, Much Wenlock
at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 19th October 2021

Present:

Cllrs. Mike Atherton, John O'Dowd, Robert Toft, Daniel Thomas

In attendance:

Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, Diane Barlow – Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

1) Apologies

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the following apologies: Councillors Sam Neal and Marcus Themans – work

2) 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.

3) Dispensations

None requested.

4) Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Asset Management Committee meeting held on 21st September 2021 be **APPROVED** and signed as a true record.

5) Town Clerk's report

Members received a written report from the Town Clerk on action taken since the last meeting.
Members **NOTED** the report.

6) Finance

- a. The RFO presented a written and verbal report. She advised that overall expenditure was 24% under budget for April to September, in the amount of £31,372. Income, however, was already at 94.8% of budget for the total year. She highlighted several budgets which were unspent at present: town celebrations £500, climate change £1,000, 10 High Street repairs & maintenance £5,000, 10 High Street rates £4,950 and The Square repairs and maintenance £1,500. Members **NOTED** the report.
- b. Members **NOTED** the balance sheet as at 30th September 2021.
- c. Members **NOTED** the income and expenditure to 30th September 2021.
- d. Members reviewed the bank reconciliations to 30th September 2021. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the bank reconciliations to 30th September 2021.
- e. It was **RESOLVED** to retrospectively approve payments from 22nd September 2021 to date.

7) 2022/23 Budget Setting

Members considered the first draft of the budget, prepared by the RFO. Members suggested increasing the budgets for grants to community groups and councillor training. The RFO was asked to make other minor amendments. The revised draft budget would be presented to the next meeting of the Finance & Asset Management Committee.

8) Grant Awards

- a. Members consider grant awards to local organisations. It was **RESOLVED** to make the following awards:

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Applicant	Purpose	Amount £
Holy Trinity Church	To support maintenance of the green in the town centre	500
Much Wenlock Festival	Towards the cost of running the festival in June 2022	500
Wenlock Olympian Games Live Arts Festival	To pay for membership of the British and International Federation of Festivals and towards annual insurance	465
Much Wenlock First Responders	Towards running costs for the response car	500
Much Wenlock Scouts	Towards cost of replacement cladding for the Scout hut	450
Wenlock Clickers	To assist with venue hire and additional equipment	226
Much Wenlock Young Farmers	Towards room hire costs	100
Royal British Legion	Annual poppy wreaths	50
TOTAL		2,791

- b. It was **RESOLVED** to approve a donation of £250 to the Wenlock Herald to support publication of the Town Council's regular contribution to the magazine.

9) Christmas Lights Switch-on

It was **RESOLVED** to allocate up to £500 from Town Celebrations budget to the Christmas lights switch-on event on 25th November.

10) Guildhall

Members noted that when the cupola had been removed for renovation it had been found that the supporting base was in extremely poor condition and it was likely that additional, unplanned work would be required. The contractor was investigating further.

11) Property Working Group

Members of the Property Working Group would be meeting later in the week and would provide a report at the next meeting.

12) Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance & Asset Management Committee would be held on Tuesday, 23rd November 2021 at 7.00pm.

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.

13) Internal Audit

Members considered quotations for this year's internal audit. It was **RESOLVED** to appoint DM Payroll Services to carry out the internal audit for 2021/22 at a cost of £600.

14) Arrangements for Year End Close-down of Accounts and Ongoing Support

Members considered arrangements for ongoing support and the year-end close-down of the accounts. It was **RESOLVED** to take out a three year contract with Rialtas Business Solutions for support services for the accounting package and year-end closedown of the accounts at a cost of £809 for the first year, with subsequent discounts being offered annually.

15) Security Alarm Maintenance and Monitoring

Members considered quotations for the maintenance and monitoring of the security alarms in the Corn Exchange and Guildhall. It was **RESOLVED** to award the contract for maintenance and monitoring of the security alarms at the Corn Exchange and Guildhall to Security Wise at a cost of £230 per site per year.

09/21

16) Guildhall Repairs

- a. Members noted repairs required to a window frame at the rear of the building, which had been identified by the contractors undertaking the work to the cupola and the Shropshire Council Conservation Officer. **It was RESOLVED to delegate authority to the Clerk to negotiate with Croft Building & Conservation Ltd the price for repairs to the cill and painting of the window to a maximum of £580.**
- b. Members noted the poor condition of a beam at the rear of the building. The Conservation Officer had advised that a structural engineer's report was required and the Clerk was obtaining quotations for a report.

17) Replacement Street Lights

It was RESOLVED to approve the quotation submitted by E.ON to replace the street light outside 10 Swan Meadow at a cost of £849.82 and to install a replacement street light in Queen Street at the junction with Back Lane at a cost of £1,152.34 (new connection).

18) Cemetery Maintenance

Members considered a proposal to change the grass cutting regime at the old cemetery and costs arising.

It was RESOLVED to maintain the current grass cutting regime of a 3 weekly cut to a height of 1 inch, but that Councillor Atherton would explore other options more fully.

It was RESOLVED to approve the quotation from Steve Burton for the following work:

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| - Trim top and sides of ivy on boundary walls and dividing wall in the cemetery late winter | £280 |
| - Remove self-set ash and similar in the bed along the entrance road | £ 50 |
| - Cut back hedge and tree branches to fence between allotments and cemetery | £300 |
| - Rough cut wild flower circles and rake away cuttings in late August | £ 90 |

19) Winter Floral Displays

It was RESOLVED to approve the quotation of £280 from Abbey Nursery for the winter floral displays in the town.

20) Linden Lodge

Members considered the report dated 5th October 2021 from the letting agent for Linden Lodge.

It was RESOLVED to accept the quotation from Will Winton for repairs to the garden fence in the amount of £145.

Members noted that quotations were being obtained for work to the chimney and window latches.

21) Mary Webb Room Rental

Members noted that arrangements were in progress for rental of the Mary Webb room.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....

MONTH	MINUTE NUMBER	RESOLUTION	TASK COMPLETE	COMMENT
May 2021	22	Defer consideration of the Council's policies relating to data protection to a future meeting.	In progress	
24 th June 2021	18	Support the 'Queen's Green Canopy' initiative, raise public awareness and ask relevant committees to consider where trees might be planted	Ongoing	Trees for Gaskell Ground and Old Cemetery under consideration.
July 2021	10	Arrange a workshop of all Councillors to brainstorm ideas and start the process before the summer break	Pending	Not possible before the summer break. Date and arrangements to be agreed
	14	Finance & Asset Management Committee to consider the practicalities of flying the Union flag at the Guildhall	In progress	Advice obtained from Holy Trinity Church team
Sept 2021	10	Approve the Document Retention Policy, subject to the production of and agreement to operational guidelines.	In progress	Operational guidelines to be drawn up
	15	Invite community activists to an introductory workshop in order to explore a Council and community-wide approach.	Pending	
Nov 2021	10b	Lodge the Council's complaint about procedural issues associated with Shropshire Council's consideration of the Ironbridge Power Station application.	Yes	Response received. On agenda for 2 nd December
	10b	Write to the Dept. for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to ask for a full explanation of the decision not to call in the Ironbridge Power Station application.	Yes	Response received. On agenda for 2 nd December
	11	Notes from the consultation event on 3 rd November to be circulated to those who attended with invitation for further comment.	Yes	

Other Activities

- Participation in Remembrance Service under the Corn Exchange on 11th November
- Attendance at Holy Trinity Church Remembrance Service on 14th November
- Attendance at Zoom Clerks' meeting on 19th November regarding DEFRA consultation and implications for cemeteries

Tuesday, November 23, 2021 at 12:34:05 PM Greenwich Mean Time

Subject: RE: Call-in Request - Ironbridge Power Station, Shropshire
Date: Tuesday, 23 November 2021 at 12:06:18 Greenwich Mean Time
From: Astrid Chaplin
To: Town Clerk
Attachments: image003.png, image004.jpg, image005.jpg, image006.jpg, image007.jpg, image008.jpg, image009.jpg, image010.png, image030.jpg, image031.png, image032.png, image033.jpg

Dear Trudi

Thank you for your email of 16 November.

I realise that you are disappointed with the decision not to intervene, however the call in power is used very selectively, in general only if planning issues of more than local importance are involved.

We aim to deal with cases as quickly as possible, and this application was carefully considered against the call in policy and it was decided that intervention would not be justified. In accordance with the Ministerial Written Statement of 26 March 2019 (<https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wms/?id=2019-03-26.HCWS1452.h>), we will not give reasons for calling in or declining to call in planning applications. The call-in policy set out in the statement of 26 October 2012 remains in place.

Regards
Astrid



Astrid Chaplin (she/her)
Planning Casework Officer
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and
Communities
Planning Casework Unit
Tel: 0303 44 48032
PCU General Enquiries: pcu@communities.gov.uk /
0303 44 48050
[gov.uk/dluhc](https://www.gov.uk/dluhc) | @luhc

From: Town Clerk <townclerk@muchwenlock-tc.gov.uk>
Sent: 16 November 2021 14:35
To: Astrid Chaplin <Astrid.Chaplin@communities.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Call-in Request - Ironbridge Power Station, Shropshire

Dear Astrid

Much Wenlock Town Councillors were extremely disappointed with the decision by the Secretary of State not to call in application no. 19/05560/OUT for the Ironbridge Power Station in Shropshire.

The Town Council considered this decision at their recent meeting. They believed that there was appropriate justification to call in the application and therefore submit the following requests:

- a. Please provide a full explanation of the decision not to call in the application for the Ironbridge Power Station.
- b. Please explain how it was possible for such a quick determination of this case to be made.

Response to complaint to Shropshire Council regarding handling of planning application 19/05560/OUT for Ironbridge Power Station

As agreed by Councillors, a complaint was submitted to Shropshire Council on 17th November regarding procedural issues associated with the Southern Planning Committee meeting held on 20th September 2021 and the handling of the above application. The concerns raised were:

- a. That an additional report relating to the Gaskell corner was not available to Committee members or members of the public in good time.
- b. That a member of the Committee arrived at the meeting late, was not present for the whole of the debate and read comments at the end of the meeting from a paper he had placed on the table upon arrival.

On the same day a response was received from a Corporate Complaints/Feedback Officer in Communications and Engagement | Resources at Shropshire Council. This stated that the officer was unable to proceed with a formal complaint raised by a Town Council/Councillors:

“This is due to the complaints process being in place for members of the public/individuals to raise concerns relating to a service or a decision and is not used at an organisational level, where long-term partnerships are in place. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman do not consider complaints from a Town or Parish Council (as public services) and their expectation would usually be that any disputes between parish and town councils and local authorities should be resolved informally.

I am sure you are already progressing your issues through a partnership approach involving Shropshire Council Planning Department, and I hope this will provide a suitable way forward at this stage.”

Following receipt of this message I contacted SALC, who forwarded the above to the Assistant Director Economy and Place at Shropshire Council. On 23rd November, with reference to the above comments, she responded:

“I have nothing further I can add to that in terms of formal procedure. However, I can offer to have a meeting with the Parish Council to review their concerns and discuss a way forward, if that helps.”

Councillors are asked to consider whether to take up the offer from the Assistant Director Economy and Place to meet to discuss the concerns raised.

Trudi Barrett
Town Clerk
25.11.21

Much Wenlock Town Council: Examination In Public – Shropshire Draft Local Plan**MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL****Report to Meeting of 2nd December 2021****REPRESENTING THE COMMUNITY at the EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC of the SHROPSHIRE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN****Introduction**

This report is aimed at informing the Town Council's case in representing the community at the Examination in Public (EIP) of Shropshire Council's Draft Local Plan. In brief the background to the new Council's approach to the Draft Local Plan since the elections in May 2021 includes the following:

- The new Town Council resolved to ask Shropshire Council (SC) to change the Draft Local Plan; that the 'preferred site' allocation be dropped and the future development allocations and strategy for the town be determined through a community-led review of the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan (MWNP).
- SC refused to agree to this request and approved the Regulation 19 version of the Draft Plan. SC's strategic planning manager has advised that it is SC's view that the issues should be contested at the forthcoming EIP.
- Shropshire Council has also approved the planning application for an increased number of houses at the Buildwas Power Station. This is without having any workable resolution to the consequent strategic traffic problems, especially at the Gaskell Arms.
- Councillors met with John Bellis (SC's Drainage and Flood Risk officer) on 11th August 2021 and the outputs were reported to the meetings of the PEC on 31st August and the Town Council on 2nd September 2021; John Bellis subsequently provided a response to a number of questions about the local plan and flood risks.
- Members of the Planning & Environment Committee (PEC) met with Eddie West (SC's strategic planning manager), on 15th September 2021 and the notes of the meeting were reported to the Council on 7th October 2021.
- The Transport Working Group's (TWG) report to the PEC on 5th October provided detailed comments on the significant impact of the Draft Local Plan development and Strategic Corridor proposals in terms of traffic, congestion etc. It suggested that in the absence of any proper mitigation, the Council should ask that the proposal be removed from the Draft Plan.
- The PEC has agreed that it should use the TWG report to inform the case at the EIP. The TWG is currently designing a survey on traffic issues and the findings from this will help inform our actions.
- The Town Council has set up a Strategic Flooding working group to consider the options for whole catchment approaches for the long term future and safety of the town. This work is in progress.
- Recognition by both the Town and Shropshire Councils that we are collectively facing Climate and Nature Emergencies which require new ways of doing things

These decisions and meetings confirmed a number of key items:

- The increase in the scale of the proposal from 80 to 120 at Hunters Gate 2 has been determined by the developers own calculations of viability. This larger scheme has not considered the needs of the town and the lack of suitable infrastructure and essentially ignored views of the community that were contrary to SC's objectives. SC claims it will deliver affordable housing.

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- There are known and significant issues associated with the traffic generated by the proposals at Buildwas, Much Wenlock and Bridgnorth that do not have a resolution in the Local Plan.
- Thirdly that the Shropshire Council has focussed on a developer led proposal for managing flood risk; it has not considered the implementation of other solutions [e.g. those set out in the Mouchel Report of 2011 or more recent national policy steers to use nature-based solutions] that could address the flooding issues facing Hunters Gate and Much Wenlock (MW) catchment-wide.
- Funding is available to resolve current flooding risks.
- It is clear that the draft plan is strong in terms of new development but there is little or no sense at all of creating a sustainable place; SC hasn't considered the integration of solutions for traffic, water and flood risk management, economic futures and tourism etc.

The Community's views on the Draft Local Plan prior to November 2021

In July 2021, the Town Clerk provided a thorough and useful summary of the Council's minutes in respect of the Local Plan Review. The Local Plan was discussed on numerous occasions from 2017 to March 2021. The minutes note numerous comments were made at its meetings by residents objecting to the 'preferred site', including the substantial concerns expressed at the [only] public meeting on 3rd January 2019. These comments were made mostly around three or four themes; additional traffic impacts, the lack of confidence in resolving flooding across the town, the inability of local infrastructure to cope with additional numbers of people and that the local plan sets aside the key policy in the MWNP of small scale and limited development to meet local needs. A small number of comments supported the allocated site, though even these recognised the difficulties associated with the development. The Council also received a number of written objections and these are held on file.

Initially the Town Council acknowledged these concerns and only supported the initial proposal for 150 houses with 80 dwellings on the preferred site at MW012, subject to strong caveats about meeting these needs. However, it is recognisable from the content and tone of the minutes over the past year or two that the Town Council became a defendant of SC's proposals, overtly rejecting engagement with some local groups whilst deflecting adverse comments to Shropshire Council. It also evidently didn't understand, was misled or was confused about its role in being able to use a review of the MWNP to inform the local plan review. We can note the contrast with the leading role of the town councils in Bishops Castle and Cleobury Mortimer who have used neighbourhood planning to engage with their communities to shape the local plan.

Headlines from the Community event on 3rd November 2021

The full transcription of the discussions are in Appendix 1. A number of the comments and suggestions – such as cleaning road signs or the day to day management of land and buildings the Council owns - may not be relevant to the case for the EIP. These are, however, useful feedback on the Council's work and should be considered at the appropriate committees or working groups.

The headline message for each theme is suggested below alongside some further relevant commentary or information.

Transport: The fears of the community about significant increases in traffic, more air and noise pollution and rat-running through the medieval town were made loud and clear in the feedback we received at the community event.

In addition to the well-discussed problems arising from the Buildwas scheme, Shropshire Council's April 2021 profile of the town (see <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/media/20657/market-town-profile-much-wenlock-ev07312.pdf>) endorses these concerns.

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Its profile of the commuting and travel to work in/out of the town states that MW has become one of the least self-contained towns. In the absence of any new infrastructure commitments and improved public transport, it is evident that this will only become worse given the scale of development being proposed.

Infrastructure: The feedback from these discussions identified clear concerns about the capacity of the local health facilities to cope with additional numbers of patients. There were questions about the potential impact of the need for new school facilities at both the primary and secondary schools. The tone was that the town's current facilities are or would become unable to cope with more housing.

Water: This theme covered a wide range of water related topics. There was clear concern about the lack of water supply at times. A significant problem is that there is no strategic plan for managing water and especially flood risk, including using natural solutions, with little being asked by way of assurances from developers and the development process.

Development: The major message here was that the town needs more affordable housing for local people, so mechanisms such as local lettings policies will be important. Housing for older people is required, with the aim of releasing larger homes for families. The size and scale of development generated strong discussion and there is an appetite for having the chance to address the best options for the town through a review of the MWNP.

Heritage and Tourism: A key takeaway from this topic is that the diverse cross-section of the town voiced consistently that the Town Council should help boost the town's profile further. Many felt that the town could benefit greatly with additional investment into existing historic assets and increased advertising of existing attractions. The people feel that development is required, but it must be the right development to enhance the town further. There was a feeling that the Local Plan delivers housing, without first investing in the town's already inadequate infrastructure. This will risk damaging the town's appeal to future tourists and risk damaging the town's heritage permanently. SC should have allowed the iteration of the MWNP by using community engagement instead of overruling it and forcing a single site on the community.

Potential solutions to promote at the EIP

It is clear that there is community interest in debating the future of the town and putting forward its own proposals. Several strong ideas came forward at the meeting, that:

- We ask the EIP to put development on hold until the later part of the plan period, let the review of the MWNP proceed and have a proper evaluation of these big problems, such as the traffic and wider catchment flood risk
- We should develop a longer term vision for the town, to ensure MW continues to be an attractive place, including green routes that connect services and make the town greener
- The capacity of the local infrastructure should be addressed and especially that affordable housing should be a priority in order to sustain the community

Options for next steps

The event on 3rd November was well attended and so endorsed the council's decision to engage with the community ahead of the EIP. Three organisations or individuals have said that they will also be represented at the EIP: the Civic Society, the MWNP Refresh Group and a member of the Flood Group. It isn't clear if all have duly made objections and will be able to attend in person.

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Further work is underway in connection with the transport survey and through the strategic flood risk group. The Council is holding further discussions with SC on traffic and with John Bellis in respect of solutions through the commission to WSP on highways drainage.

We do not yet have a date for the EIP. The feedback from the 3rd November suggests it would be useful to continue a dialogue with community groups and share potential submissions to the EIP. This can be combined with further 'technical' work on options for the town in order to build the case at the EIP.

Recommendations

That the Council:

1. Considers the suggestions from the community event as a basis for progressing its case at the EIP
2. Agrees that it should, through the PEC and its working groups, continue to engage with all interested local groups in the community to build its case for the EIP
3. Should receive and consider a formal proposal and recommendations for approval ahead of the EIP
4. Addresses the 'non-planning' comments that relate more closely to its other responsibilities through the appropriate committees and groups

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Appendix 1

Examination in Public – Shropshire Draft Local Plan

NOTES OF COMMUNITY MEETING – 3rd November 2021

HELD at the Methodist Hall, Much Wenlock between 19.00 – 21.00 hrs.

INVITATIONS AND PARTICIPANTS

The Town Council (TC) sent invitations to a wide range of organisations from within the community to join the meeting. In all some 57 invitations were sent out.

- 23 members of the community attended, representing some 15 organisations. Some attendees were representative of more than one organisation.
- A list of those organisations which were invited and which attended is provided at Annex A.
- Three organisations sent in written comments on the day of the meeting; these are included in the list and their contributions are included in the feedback described below.
- The names of the representatives are not included for data protection purposes. For the same reason, the Council committed to anonymising the comments.
- Participants were asked if they had any objections to photographs being taken. One participant asked not to be included in photos and this request has been honoured.

PURPOSE AND AGENDA

The agenda for the event can be found at Annex B. On behalf of the Town Council, Cllr. Mike Grace welcomed the attendees and described the purpose and proposed format for the event:

The purpose of the event - *To explore community views on the draft local plan ahead of the Examination in Public (EIP) into the Draft Shropshire Local Plan and to help the TC fulfil its objective of representing the community at the EIP.*

- Cllr. Grace gave a brief resume of the role of the forthcoming EIP to assess soundness of the Draft Local Plan and the background to the proposals for Much Wenlock. No date has been fixed for the EIP.
- He noted the almost complete absence of meaningful public consultation over the past 3-4 years. The new Town Council has a mandate and commitment to ensuring the community could influence the Local Plan through its attendance at the EIP.
- Cllr. Grace stated that the Town Council's adopted position is consistent with that promise. That it wants the current proposals for Much Wenlock to be dropped from the Draft Plan and the community to be able to agree future development options through a review of the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan (MWNP).
- He stressed that this was not about halting development but assuring that the development would be of the right scale and type and in the right location and in the spirit of the community's aspirations set out in MWNP.

DISCUSSION THEMES

Through a plenary conversation, attendees of the meeting identified 5 themes they wanted to discuss. These were:

1. Traffic and transport, including air pollution
2. Infrastructure, particularly health and education
3. Water, including supply, sewage and flooding
4. Development, including affordable housing and being climate friendly
5. Heritage and tourism, including quality of place

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One representative asked that the discussions should also consider the important context set by the Neighbourhood Plan. All the participants had the opportunity to discuss each of the themes for about 15 minutes, rotating around the theme tables in an order they decided for themselves. The discussions were facilitated by members of the Town Council's Planning & Environment Committee (Cllrs. White, Tyler, Grainger, Grace and the Mayor, Cllr. Thomas). Copies of S13 (i.e. the section relating to Much Wenlock) of the Local Plan were placed on each table. Summaries of the discussions are set out here.

1. Traffic and transport, including air pollution

Air quality and traffic levels:

- A shared observation of increasing levels of traffic already being experienced in the town
- Generally local air quality probably quite good but pollution from traffic in the town becoming an issue. Suggested that the GPs have noted this as an issue; may be a specific problem if people live near or often use the major junction at the Gaskell Arms
- Air pollution was measured at some point; no knowledge of the results
- Increased length of traffic queuing at the Gaskell corner will raise pollution levels. Need to monitor.
- How do we make the Gaskell corner and Much Wenlock (MW) unattractive to car users? If they slow down, will that increase pollution levels?
- Could MW become an ultra-low emissions zone?

Current traffic issues:

- Indicators of traffic management problems - observed increased driver aggressions, faster speeds through the narrow streets, highways restrictions being ignored. Even the A roads are narrow.
- Access for and mobility of residents who need to use scooters, wheelchairs, pushchairs needs to be considered.
- William Brookes School (WBS) pupils from Broseley are taken by car, travel through the town's streets.

Scale of development and traffic:

- Significant concerns that the development proposals at Buildwas [recently approved scheme for 1075 houses] combined with the Local Plan proposed allocations at Tasley/Bridgnorth, Cressage and Much Wenlock itself would exacerbate traffic issues enormously
- The Buildwas application acknowledged there would be a major impact at the Gaskell Corner, that there was no avoiding the problem and no known solution.
- The Gaskell corner is already a dangerous junction; noted the recent destruction of the central refuge
- Already have issues with traffic cutting through in the town, will increase in future, adding additional risks to residents
- Existing land uses in the town, such as Travis Perkins, is pulling large vehicles into the town
- Additionally have heavy traffic from current (and any new and more) users of land in the quarries around the town. Should we restrict further intensification?
- The Local Plan proposal for a strategic highways route through MW will have a big impact.
- There seems to be little appreciation by Shropshire Council (SC) of the cumulative impact of SC's own proposals and, for MW, especially the impact at the Gaskell Corner.

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Public transport:

- Public transport is too weak; need to encourage less car use and have better bus services. SC should lead the shift to electric buses that will be required in the near future.
- Noted the suggestion of a light rail from Buildwas Bridge to Telford may have implications for MW. The developer at Buildwas needs to be held to commitments like this.
- Would like to see improved transport links as the bus service, in particular from Telford is poor, exacerbating staffing issues [for the business]. Would also like to see more affordable housing in Much Wenlock as staff are currently having to bus in. It would be helpful if they could afford to live locally.

Parking:

- Noted issues of residents' parking causing congestion. Too many people for the town? Do we need a permit scheme?
- New development needs to ensure its garages are big enough to actually take cars.
- Alternative parking capacity for residents required?

Possible solutions?

- Suggested approach for the Draft Plan; ask the EIP to put development on hold until the later part of the plan period, let the review of the MWNP proceed and have a proper evaluation of these big problems, such as the traffic.
- The current MWNP doesn't address traffic as such (it was of its time) and any review must consider the problem
- Is a bypass the option to resolve the Gaskell corner issues? Would there be other benefits e.g. for enhancing tourism experience, flood retention ponds?
- Is part of the solution an alternative traffic system with one way routes, taking cars out of the centre, aligned with ideas for 'green routes'?
- Plus review land uses in the town e.g. relocate Travis Perkins out of town, re-use the land (e.g. for parking).
- Can we ask SC to transfer ownership and income from the car parks as part of future options?
- Traffic management prompts the question as to what the vision is for the long-term? How ensure MW continues to be an attractive place as opposed to simply expanding road capacity and use.
- Can options include the creation of green routes, pedestrianize the centre?
- Can we create green walking routes that connect services, schools and new development? Making town and walking attractive; associate it with trees and the proposed bee corridor. Make the High Street pedestrian friendly?

2. Infrastructure, particularly healthcare and education

Healthcare:

- The surgeries in MW and Cressage are overstretched at present. With the prospect of an additional 750 – 1000 people added via the proposed Local Plan in MW (incl Shadwell Quarry), Cressage, and Broseley (school pupils).
- The surgeries currently cater for 8000, looked after by 6 doctors. Assuming a working week of 40 hours another doctor and nurse will be required.
- No allowance has been made for extra facilities at either MW or Cressage. Where are the extra car-parking spaces to come from to accommodate such an increase in numbers?

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- What potential building site(s) are available to cater for an elderly MW population that wants to downsize? Where is the extra health facility that will be needed to care for these people who cannot afford private care?
- The lack of planning creates severe pinch-points for care in the community.

Education:

- With the addition of 400 extra pupils from the Ironbridge Power Station (IPS) development, bearing in mind the constraints already apparent with capacity on the Linden Field, how will WBS fulfil its statutory requirement for open space per pupil?
- Where is the space for WBS to build an extra 15 classrooms that will be needed to accommodate the pupils from IPS?
- If Hunters Gate 2 is permitted, where will the area be for the expansion of the primary school to accommodate extra pupils?
- A member suggested that WBS would increase its number by 1200 over the long term (but no figures were given to back up this statement).
- There will not be sufficient Telford pupils released back to Telford & Wrekin to offset the extra 400 pupils from IPS
- Infrastructure before development to allow for the expansion of schools, surgeries, open spaces and improve the road network. Improve broadband and Wi-Fi connectivity.

Other facilities:

- There is a need for a zebra crossing at the Sytche Lane/Forrester Gardens junction.
- Pavements must be surveyed and improved to allow for an expected greater use of mobility scooters.
- Road signs should be more visible in order to prevent accidents in the narrow streets.
- A need for more recreational areas (green lungs) in MW
- A new Village Hall is required with a better internal layout.
- Nothing in the proposed Shropshire Local Plan, Much Wenlock section, which would impact on the work in the Old Cemetery. If the proposed development at Hunter's Gate 2 goes ahead, with a promised roundabout on the Bridgnorth Road, vehicular traffic will be slowed and make the entrance and exit to the Old Cemetery much safer.
- The Old Cemetery is perfect for change into a Local Nature Reserve, this does not mean it would not be managed. Take steps to understand how the Old Cemetery is used, rather than making assumptions about how it is thought to be used.
- Focus the Council's precept budget for 2022 with an emphasis on changes to green actions and technologies
- The provision of recreational facilities for the town and in particular the fact that the County Council has divested itself of any responsibility for the Gaskell Ground
- It is only the efforts of the MW Cricket Club members that is maintaining use of the pavilion, which needs to be replaced urgently. Surely the County Council should make a contribution towards the replacement costs?

3. Water, including supply, sewage and flooding

The discussion topics included Flooding, Tap Water, Sewage and Rain Water (Climate Change)

Supply of fresh water :

- ❖ Occurrences where supply is on low pressure or no supply at all and has to be supplemented by tankers brought into town.
- ❖ Will this be affected by the proposed increase of residents?

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- ❖ Can system cope?

Drainage systems :

- ❖ Improve Drain Systems? - currently medieval ! Increase in size of pipes, system split to reduce pressure etc needed to upgrade.
- ❖ Management of all systems - responsible developers for aftercare and prove management of systems.
- ❖ Underground collection tanks needed on all new developments
- ❖ Sewage farm capacity - Can it cope with increase of residents?
- ❖ Need for a more strict check on developers proposed drainage installations before approval to ensure they are capable of doing what they should be able to do - at least 2 incidents in our town where this has either not happened or they have not been checked properly after installation and adopted by Severn Trent.
- ❖ Who is responsible for rain water collection and is it the same agency once it goes down into the system?
- ❖ Who is responsible for the maintenance of the attenuation ponds and checking they are working properly?

Flood management :

- ❖ More use of natural solutions to tackle the danger of flooding.
- ❖ More woodland planting, soil quality, Shelter belts, slow the flow etc - this will need the proper financial incentives to attract land owners to get involved (Funding available?)
- ❖ An assessment of prime sites could be made (funding in precept budget?)
- ❖ Strategic plan needed for management of all water

Other :

- ❖ Use of water to clean road and information signs around the town to include scheduled (correct time of year) hedge trim, so that the signs can be made visible.

4. Development, including affordable housing and being climate friendly

Notes on what development should look like across Much Wenlock for the next few decades.

Affordable Homes:

- A discussion was held about South Shropshire's rule that developments of a specific size must have 20% of the homes as affordable. There was an appetite for Much Wenlock to lead on having more than 20% in its development.
- Cllr Dan Thomas talked about his own experience growing up with friends who would have loved to stay here but couldn't due to the prohibitive nature of housing costs. These people have instead bought houses in Telford or Shrewsbury. His dad had the same experience with his friends; therefore, reversing this pattern would be necessary.
- Discussions were held on what affordable looks like and how affordable homes to buy would attract more 'younger' people rather than ones to rent.
- Affordable homes need to be of good quality, both in their build and the housing association (four associations are operating in Wenlock currently: STAR, Connexus, Wrekin and GPS Property Management). Some housing associations were more generous and considerate than others.

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Passivhaus:

- A discussion was held on the importance of energy-saving homes, with climate change the key issue.
- If homes weren't going to be Passivhaus, they should be Energy Saving A at the minimum with air source heat pumps or other sources instead of gas.

Local Connection:

- The next issue discussed was the importance of local connections and providing houses for local people. It is hard to watch local people be priced out of the market, which happens too regularly in Much Wenlock.
- This discussion led to sustainable development, having the right mix of people in a given settlement. Much Wenlock Mutual Aid worked so well because there was a good mix of people available to volunteer if needed.
- It was pointed out that Callaughton Ash had managed to be affordable, Passivhaus and be offered to people with a local connection. This, therefore, should be seen as an excellent development, but the response of people present was mixed due to people not liking its aesthetic.

Cornovii:

- Cornovii is Shropshire Council's own company, set up to build homes across the county to meet Shropshire's somewhat unique housing needs.
- Cornovii was a potential option in the future for Much Wenlock as they only ever build a good mix of homes with a minimum energy rating of 92/A, are affordable and meet local connections.
- Currently, most of its building had taken place in North Shropshire as the North had held onto more land than the old South Shropshire District Council did. The price of land would be a potential obstacle in Much Wenlock.

Houses for older people:

- It was noted how many older people who lived in Much Wenlock would be keen on an assisted living type of housing, such as McCarthy and Stone; this would allow them to stay in Wenlock and have support but not be in a residential care home.
- This would free up their current homes, allow more homes to be on the market and give people with families more of a chance to move into them.

Neighbourhood Plan & the Scale of Development:

- There was a heated discussion on the scale of development, as some people heavily supported the 25 homes defined as the maximum number in the Neighbourhood Plan whilst others opposed it.
- Refreshing the Neighbourhood Plan would allow this discussion to play out on a broader scale.

These additional written comments were received:

Would like to see more affordable housing in Much Wenlock as staff are currently having to bus in. It would be helpful if they could afford to live locally. He would also like to see improved transport links as the bus service is poor, in particular from Telford, exacerbating staffing issues.

To ensure that the people of Much Wenlock have their say on the development and provision of housing and infrastructure needs, Shropshire Council's local plans must include commitment to the currently agreed policy 'of limited developments to meet local needs' as detailed in the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan.

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5. Heritage and Tourism, including quality of place

A key takeaway from this topic is that the diverse cross-section of the town voiced consistently that the Town Council should help boost the town's profile further. Many felt that the town could benefit greatly with additional investment into existing historic assets and increased advertising of existing attractions. The people feel that development is required, but it must be the right development to enhance the town further. Six common topics kept arising - increase tourism, lack of core facilities, the chosen development site, pedestrianisation of the High Street, lack of TC investment and what is the future for the MWNP?

Increase Tourism: There is a strong feeling that the town could look to further leverage the incredible history and heritage of the town. For example, many felt that the town could do much more to showcase the Olympics and William Penny Brookes history. The question was asked – did we make the most of the 2012 Olympic connection? And how we can ensure we look at this in the future. The Guildhall, the Museum and the Gaskell Field were mentioned many times as items that are undersold to tourists. It was felt not enough has been done by the TC to advertise the Olympic Trail. More should be done to promote the Priory and the local heritage within the town centre - a resident mentioned if this town were in the Cotswolds, its profile (locally) would be very different.

Core Facilities: Lack of necessary facilities to support additional tourism. For example, lack of parking, especially free parking, could significantly boost the town's profile. In addition, a lack of public toilet facilities was raised frequently, which would be a problem if the town boosted tourism numbers.

Development Site: There was clear support for the development generally. There was a strong view that the Local Plan is prioritising development over core infrastructure enablement, which could be to the detriment of the town. Before any development is planned, the core infrastructure should be planned and resolved.

The one single large development site was raised as an issue, specifically around its relationship with the town's heritage. An example given on the night was how a single large 120 house development site adds value to the town heritage? A question that needs answering. The theme being *outside of adding headcount to the town, how does a large single development site add to the town's quality?* In addition, the lack of Council vision and a lack of consultation was raised continually, as many feel we are missing an opportunity to implement the correct development, which in turn adds direct value to the town and its heritage.

Pedestrianisation of High Street: To further boost the attraction of the town, pedestrianisation was raised plenty of times. However, there was a divide between local shop owners and residents on whether this would be a positive or negative move.

Lack of Investment; in Town Council owned assets was raised many times. A few commented that it's less a lack of investment (into the buildings), but more a lack of investment in a strategic long term plan of how to best leverage the assets themselves. The feeling was this could be key to increasing tourism.

Local Plan Review or Neighbourhood Plan? Many in the room were confused by the relationship between these two policies. It was raised many times that the Council need to revisit the MWNP as it's not deemed out of date, especially given it's been overruled at a crucial period in time. The Local Plan mentioned that employment will be addressed using the MWNP - however, the land assigned to this has been converted into what is now the attenuation pond. The Local Plan then mentions the town centre will cater for future business/employment needs. Where will these new businesses and jobs come from? There was a feeling that the Local Plan delivers housing, without first investing in the town's already inadequate infrastructure. This will risk damaging the town's appeal to future tourists and risk damaging the town's heritage permanently.

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The feeling is that SC should have allowed the iteration of the MWNP by using community engagement instead of overruling it and forcing a single site on the community.

Other suggestions/issues to note:

- ❖ With the extra 400 pupils expected from the recently sanctioned Buildwas Development should the town look at turning the secondary school into the William Brookes Centre of Excellence for Sports
- ❖ Many raised why the council does not look at free parking initiatives, Shifnal and Bridgnorth were quoted as examples.
- ❖ The town has 7 free car park spaces. The 15 minutes grace period for parking in the pay and display car parks is not advertised and not known by the locals, let alone tourists. There was a feeling this should be extended to 45 minutes.
- ❖ More parking is needed if the town is to cater for the new development - why does the Local Plan not address this when adding 200 houses?
- ❖ People are parking on pavements due to the lack of appropriate parking available in the town residents.
- ❖ It was raised that there's only 1 café open on Sundays for visitors and locals.
- ❖ With the increased housing and desire to enhance the town's tourism appeal, the TC needs to look at one-way systems and pedestrianisation as a priority. For example, Sheinton Street is now a dangerous route, with school kids and cars passing along the pavement daily.
- ❖ Additional parking was previously introduced on Stretton Road, along with a Park and Ride for tourists. However this is no longer present, and the parking requirement has not been replaced elsewhere.

Conclusion: MWTC to request that the MWNP be reviewed to ensure the Tourism and Heritage related items can be addressed.

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Annex A – Invitations and attendees

Examination in Public Consultation Event – Shropshire Draft Local Plan

Much Wenlock Methodist Hall on 3/11/2021

Invited Organisations

Altogether, 57 groups and organisations were invited. In some cases, this included several from one organisation, e.g. school, governors and PTA, so I'm not sure whether you'd count those separately. Holy Trinity Church and U3A were also asked to pass the invitation on to any groups which might come under their auspices (eg U3A Ukelele group), although Holy Trinity Environmental Group was invited separately.

Priory Hall
Civic Society
Probus
Scouts
Brownies / Guides
Male Voice Choir
Holy Trinity Church (including any associated groups)
Holy Trinity Environmental Group
Methodist Church
Primary School
Primary School Governors
Primary School PTFA
Little Willows Nursery
William Brookes School
William Brookes PTA
William Brookes Governors
Soft Tennis
U3A (including any associated sub-groups)
Cricket Club
Bowling Club
Football Club
Craft Group
Young Farmers
Running Group
MW Neighbourhood Plan Refresh Group
Tree Forum
Friends of the Old Cemetery
Flood Group
Hunters Gate petitioners

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Transport Working Group
Medical Practice
Dental Surgery
Opticians
Homer and Wigwig Community Group
Wenlock Traders
Much Wenlock Festival
Christmas Fayre Committee
Wenlock Clickers
Much Wenlock Forester Charitable Trust
Almshouses
Fire Service
First Responders
Cuan House
Wenlock Priory - EH
Allotment Society
MW Townswomen's Guild
Women's Institute
Wenlock Olympian Society
Twinning Group
Litter Pickers
Leisure Centre
The Edge Arts Centre
Friendly Bus
Zero Carbon Shropshire
Lady Forester Residential Home
Wheatlands Residential Home
Hospice Support Group

Organisations represented at the meeting**Summary**

- 5 Town Councillors
- 23 residents attended in person, representing 15 local organisations with 3 further organisations submitting comments in writing.
- A total of 18 organisations.
- Some attendees noted that they were able to represent more than one organisation.

Much Wenlock Town Council

- ✓ Cllrs. Daniel Thomas, Duncan White, Mike Grace, Chris Tyler, Wilf Grainger

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Community Organisations (one representative unless stated)

- ✓ Civic Society
- ✓ Running Group
- ✓ MW Neighbourhood Plan Refresh Group (2)
- ✓ MW Flood Group and a 'Private Flood Group' (4)
- ✓ Hunters Gate Flood petitioners
- ✓ Medical Practice
- ✓ Wenlock Traders
- ✓ MW Forester Charitable Trust
- ✓ MW Almshouses (2)
- ✓ Fire Service
- ✓ Womens' Institute
- ✓ Wenlock Olympian Society
- ✓ Zero Carbon Shropshire
- ✓ Holy Trinity Church
- ✓ Tree Forum (3)
- ✓ Former Town Councillor and partner (2)

Written contributions were received from:

- MW Cricket Club
- Friends of the Old Cemetery
- Lady Forester Nursing & Residential Home

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Annex B – Agenda for EIP Community Event

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC – SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN

MUCH WENLOCK – DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY VIEW

Community Meeting 3rd November 2021

19.00 – 19.10hrs	<p>Welcome and introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of the event - <i>to explore community views on the draft local plan ahead of the EIP and to help the TC fulfil its objective of representing the community at the EIP.</i>
19.10 – 19.30hrs	<p>Introduction to the Draft Local Plan and its process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What it says about MW, previous consultations, the role of the EIP • The Town Council's position – noting the approach of the current MW Neighbourhood Plan • Groups' current stance on the Draft Local Plan; will they appear at the EIP? • Any questions?
19.30 – 19.45hrs	<p>What are the key issues we want to discuss?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views of the attendees • For example - the scale of development, whole town flooding, traffic, facilities, the consultation process, public transport?
19.45 – 20.45hrs	<p>Round the room/table discussions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We could do this in perhaps two ways; either each table goes through all the issues or we assign a table per issue and then people rotate round, adding comments to those made by previous group(s). • Allow for comments on new or other topics as well. • Capture the comments on flip charts etc. • Feedback from each table – summary of key points
20.45 - 21.00hrs	<p>Plenary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the discussion • Explore appetite for collective representation at the EIP • Next steps e.g. report back verbally to TC on 4th Nov, future meetings/communications?

Response to the question from the Town Council: Why did Shropshire Council not change its mind and alter the Draft Local Plan when requested by the newly elected Town Council in June this year?

Date: Wednesday, 17 November 2021 at 14:32

Subject: RE: Much Wenlock Town Council and Local Plan Proposals

Dear Trudi,

Apologies for the delay in responding to this.

My response to the Town Council's question...

Whilst it was recognised the Town Council's position on the Local Plan changed following the May 2021 elections, this did not alter the fact that Shropshire Council had already undertaken the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission consultation on the Local Plan in early 2021. Post Regulation 19, the Council cannot propose any significant (or 'main') modifications to the Plan before proposing to submit the Plan, unless of course it was felt there was a fundamental issue with the draft Plan which could not be rectified by more minor modifications.

As previously discussed at length with the Town Council, we have submitted the late (no-duly made) representations to the Examination for the appointed Inspectors to consider, and it will therefore be at the discretion of the Inspectors as to how they treat these comments. We now strongly feel it is the Examination which is the most appropriate forum to discuss these issues. The Inspectors has the ability to proposed main modifications if they feel it is necessary to do so in order to make the Plan sound.

I hope this helps,

Planning Policy and Strategy Manager
Shropshire Council

Thursday, November 25, 2021 at 12:38:34 PM Greenwich Mean Time

Subject: Bridgnorth Future Connectivity Plan
Date: Wednesday, 24 November 2021 at 10:57:29 Greenwich Mean Time
From: Town Clerk
To: futureprojects@shropshire.gov.uk
Attachments: image001.jpg

Dear Officers,

Please find below Much Wenlock Town Council's response to consultation on the Bridgnorth Future Connectivity Plan. I believe that my colleague submitted this response last Friday, but I am unsure whether it was delivered. I apologise if you have now received two copies of the Town Council's comments.

Response from Much Wenlock Town Council to the Bridgnorth Future Connectivity Plan.

1. Much Wenlock Town Council is supportive of the transport principles on which the Bridgnorth Future Connectivity Plan (BFCP) is based. From our own experience in Much Wenlock we recognise many of the transport-related issues that are discussed in the BFCP. Amongst these are:-

- i) traffic in towns
- ii) traffic impact on heritage
- iii) parking
- iv) pedestrian movements
- v) accessibility
- vi) public transport.

2. Like Bridgnorth, Much Wenlock is a town in which there is regular conflict and competition between the requirements of pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Therefore we recognise and support the solutions to these conflicts

3. As part of the BFCP consultation exercise we invite Shropshire Council to consider the impact of the Bridgnorth proposals on Much Wenlock as well as all towns and settlements that will be affected by these potential schemes.

4. For example, will the proposed improvements to public transport lead to an upgraded service between Bridgnorth and Much Wenlock; and if so, what impact might this have on the smaller town?

5. Is the BFCP seen as an element of Shropshire Council's Local Plan proposal to designate the A458 between Bridgnorth and Much Wenlock as part of a 'Strategic Corridor'? If so Shropshire Council must also include proposals to upgrade junctions in Much Wenlock in order to accommodate this policy.

6. The Vision and Objectives section of the BFCP states that the intention is to establish Bridgnorth as the destination of choice in Shropshire. Much Wenlock Town Council requests that Shropshire Council fully considers what impact this ambition will have on other, smaller

towns that are without the benefits of their own Future Connectivity Plans. If Bridgnorth is to be the destination of choice, it is from the smaller towns, like Much Wenlock, that many visitors will travel. It is therefore very important that proper consideration is given to the travel modes of these visitors, rather than simply assume reliance on the private car.

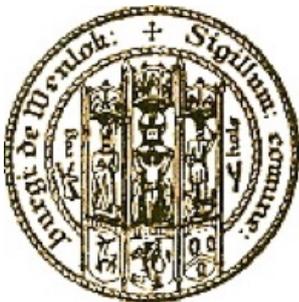
7. Much Wenlock Town Council remains willing to discuss the impact of the BFCP in more detail with officers of Shropshire Council.

Thanks and regards

Trudi M Barrett
Town Clerk

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The Corn Exchange
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Information from SALC regarding the DEFRA consultation

We recently circulated NALC's Policy consultation document (attached) with which those councils operating cemeteries and burial grounds will be concerned. This refers to the **Consultation on amendments to the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 as applied to groundwater activities and related surface water discharge activities**, the consultation can be viewed here:

<https://consult.defra.gov.uk/water-quality/amendments-to-the-epr-for-groundwater>

***** brought this consultation from DEFRA to our notice. Those of you who are members of the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management will be aware that they have recently written to their members to seek their views. Surprisingly the Unitary Authorities and NALC were not aware the consultation had been launched. ***** and others have voiced a number of concerns that will affect all Burial Authorities and cemeteries/burial grounds, some of these being:

- Remaining burial capacity could be reduced by almost 50%. Additionally proposals appear to preclude the use of 'bricked' graves where it is not possible to achieve a minimum depth of soil of at least 1 metre above any part of the coffin
- The impact of any surface water run-off from burial land may be contaminated
- The impact it may have for others such as the diocese who may pre-sell plots and any entity that has responsibility for providing a burial ground/cemetery/church graveyard (also impact on funeral directors)
- Identifying the geology of burial grounds and if they are in a groundwater protection zone
- Changes are likely to come in next Autumn, Defra's consultation runs until 22 December

At a recent webinar arranged by the Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management on 28th October where there was a speaker from the Environmental Agency, ***** raised some concerns which he has kindly shared as set out below:

- Walled Graves: May continue to be used where ground conditions were suitable.
- Doubles and Triples: May still be possible if spaced out and not all in one area.
- 'Use one, miss one': May be possible if an appropriate time had elapsed since the last burial in the plots on either side (14-15 years) and if graves on either side have no interments for a similar period
- Further burials in existing graves ('re-opens') or pre-purchased graves that do not meet the proposed minimum burial plot size of 5m².

There is obviously a need for clear, practical guidelines agreed with the Environment Agency incorporated into the amended Regs.

Additional information from *****:-

"Whether a site has existing planning consent or not, **when** the new Regulations are introduced next autumn they **will** become the governing law. **If the amended Regulations require a minimum burial plot size of 5m² this will supersede any previous consent.** The new Regulations will also supersede the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 where there is a conflict between the two – both are secondary legislation and so of broadly equal standing. However, the doctrine of implied repeal is likely to apply unless specifically excluded – so the newer provisions will supersede the old. Regarding the proposed amendments, whether a location will qualify for an exemption – or even be allowed to carry on being used as a cemetery – depends on (1) the environmental risk level of the site and (2) the number of burials per year."

27 OCTOBER 2021

PC7-21 | ENVIRONMENTAL PERMITTING (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2016

Summary

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has recently launched a consultation into amending the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) 2016 Regulations. Effectively the consultation as it affects those local (parish and town) councils which are burial authorities, has specific regard to amending the regulations around activities which affect groundwater. In essence this consultation will affect all burial authorities and existing cemeteries / burial grounds. Most significantly, if the current proposals are implemented it could reduce the remaining burial capacity of cemeteries and burial grounds by almost 50%.

The government's stated objective with this consultation is to update the Environmental Permitting Regulations to improve the way in which groundwater activities, and some related surface water discharge activities, are regulated. The main consultation document can be downloaded [here](#). The consultation closes at DEFRA on 22 December 2021.

Context

The proposals include an exemption from the permitting scheme for small cemeteries i.e. those with fewer than 100 burials per year. However, to qualify as an 'exempt facility' a cemetery will have to comply with the General Binding Rules (GBRs), one of which is that the minimum size of a grave plot will be no smaller than 5 square metres.

DEFRA also proposes to prohibit burials within 10m of a field drain or dry ditch, or within 30m of a spring or watercourse, or within 50m of certain protected nature sites, or within 250m of any well, spring or borehole used for domestic consumption or food production purposes.

DEFRA also makes certain proposals regarding ground-source heat pumps which can be seen here: [Annex C Draft exemption conditions for closed loop ground source heat pump activities in low environmental risk settings.pdf \(defra.gov.uk\)](#). The proposals if implemented will restrict the installation of such pumps within certain distances of watercourses, springs, and protected nature sites. These

restrictions may impede the drive towards 'green energy', including community-based solutions.

In one local council cemetery NALC has been informed of, a standard burial plot is 4' x 8' i.e. 32sq feet / 3.0 square metres. To increase the size of a burial plot to 5 square metres would mean increasing the size of a burial plot by two-thirds i.e. to 6' x 9' (see GBR 8 in [annex B](#) to the consultation document).

Additionally, the proposed General Binding Rules appear to preclude the use of 'bricked' graves where it is not possible to achieve a minimum depth of soil of at least 1 metre above any part of the coffin (Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Local Authorities Cemetery Order 1977 contains specific provisions for the use of walled or bricked graves where the minimum depth of soil cannot be achieved).

There are also potential implications of amending these regulations for anyone who has or is planning to have a ground-source heat pump and/or a septic tank. There are also implications for communities with elderly sewage systems which have to carry storm as well as foul water.

Respondents from the local council sector are advised strongly to read Annex B to the main consultation document linked above which contains the detail of draft exemption conditions for small-scale cemetery developments in low-environmental risk settings with possible future effect. See [here](#) Annex A a glossary of terms relevant to this consultation.

NALC's current policy positions

NALC will be arguing very strongly to DEFRA that it must be very careful to listen to the evidence presented by local councils and burial authorities as to why these proposals could reduce the remaining burial capacity of cemeteries and burial grounds by almost 50% - and should do all in its power to ensure maximum possible capacity for cemeteries and burial grounds managed by local councils - whilst still improving the way that ground water activities where essential, are regulated.

We will also be arguing that some of the proposals which Annex C refers to regarding ground-source heat pumps may impede the drive towards 'green energy', including community-based solutions.

Consultation Questions

The main consultation questions NALC will be responding to in this consultation are as below and NALC seeks the views of county associations and member councils in response to these questions to help inform its own submission to DEFRA:

Q3a: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to make General Binding Rules available for small-scale cemetery developments in low-environmental risk settings? If this question is not applicable to you, please select N/A.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree
- f. N/A

Please provide details to explain your answer.

Q3b: To what extent do you agree that the draft exemption conditions for small-scale cemetery developments in low-environmental risk settings in Annex B are appropriate?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Please provide details to explain your answer.

Q3c: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to make General Binding Rules available for closed loop ground source heat pump activities in low-environmental risk settings?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Please provide details to explain your answer.

Q3d: To what extent do you agree that the draft exemption conditions for closed loop ground source heat pump activities in low-environmental risk settings in Annex C are appropriate?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Please provide details to explain your answer.

Q3e: To what extent do you agree that the draft exemption conditions for closed loop ground source heat pump activities in low-environmental risk settings in Annex C should apply to all sizes of such activities?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Please provide details to explain your answer.

Q3f: If you think that the draft exemption conditions for closed-loop ground source heat pump activities in low-environmental risk settings in Annex C should include a size threshold (energy in kWh per year), what size limit do you think is reasonable?

Q6: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to add these new rules to the General Binding Rules for Small Sewage Discharges to ensure that multiple discharges should not be located in close proximity to each other?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Please provide details to explain your answer.



t: 020 7637 1865
e: nalc@nalc.gov.uk

w: www.nalc.gov.uk
a: 109 Great Russell Street,
London WC1B 3LD

Your evidence

Please email your responses to this consultation to chris.borg@nalc.gov.uk by 17.00 on Friday 26 November, 2021. County associations are asked to forward this briefing onto all member councils in their area.

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DRAFT Exemption conditions for small-scale cemetery developments in low-environmental risk settings with effect from [Date] [Month] [Year].

The following conditions apply to any burials of human remains, other than a burial of human ashes from crematoria, within any existing operational cemetery or proposed new cemetery development.

1. A burial within a cemetery must not cause pollution of surface water or groundwater.
2. A burial within a cemetery must not be within 10 metres of any field drain, including any dry ditch.
3. A grave must have at least 1 metre clearance between the base of the grave and the top of the water table and must not have any standing water in it when dug.
4. A burial must not be undertaken directly into groundwater.
5. A grave must not be dug in unaltered or unweathered bedrock.
6. A grave must not be dug in an area susceptible to groundwater flooding.
7. A grave must be deep enough so at least 1 metre of soil will cover any part of the coffin or body.
8. A grave plot must not be less than 5m² in area.

The following conditions also apply to any proposed new cemetery development started on or after [Date] [Month] [Year].

9. The cemetery must not be located within a groundwater [Source Protection Zone 1](#).
10. The cemetery must not be located within 250 metres of any well, spring or borehole that is used to supply water for domestic drinking or food production purposes.
11. The cemetery must not be within 30 metres of any spring or watercourse.
12. The cemetery must be located either:
 - 12.1 Entirely on strata which is unproductive strata.

OR

12.2 Entirely on strata which is a Secondary B aquifer or entirely on strata which is Secondary undifferentiated rocks, where the number of burials being less than 100 burials per annum.

OR

12.3 Entirely on a Secondary A aquifer, where the number of burials being less than 50 burials per annum

OR

12.4 Entirely on a Principal Aquifer AND not in a Source Protection Zone 2 where the number of burials being less than 30 burials per annum

OR

12.5 On any combination strata mentioned in condition 12.1, 12.2, 12.3 and 12.4, subject to condition 13.

13. Where a cemetery is, pursuant to condition 12.5, partly located on strata mentioned in 12.2, 12.3 or 12.4, the restrictions on numbers of burials per annum in condition 12.2, 12.3 or 12.4 (as the case may be) apply to the area of the cemetery located on that strata.

14. The cemetery must not be in, or within 50 metres of, a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar site or biological Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and must not be in an Ancient Woodland.

15. The cemetery must not need ongoing active control measures to be in place to protect the environment.

For the purposes of these conditions, the following definitions apply:

Principal Aquifer means “geological strata that exhibit high intergranular and/or fracture permeability. They usually provide a high level of water storage and can support water supply and/or base flow to rivers, lakes and wetlands on a strategic scale.”

Secondary A Aquifer means “permeable strata capable of supporting water supplies at a local rather than strategic scale and in some cases forming an important source of base flow to rivers, lakes or wetlands.”

Secondary B Aquifer means “predominantly lower permeability strata which may in part have the ability to store and yield limited amounts of groundwater by virtue of localised features such as fissures, thin permeable horizons and weathering.”

Secondary undifferentiated means “rock deposits (or strata) with variable permeability and storage properties that are neither consistently Secondary A nor Secondary B.

Unproductive strata means “geological strata with low permeability that have negligible significance for water supply or river base flow. They consist of deposits that naturally offer protection to any aquifers that may be present beneath.”

Groundwater flooding means “When the water table beneath the ground rises and causes water to seep out at ground level. This is often seasonal.”