

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
at 7 pm on Thursday, 2nd December 2021

Present: Cllr David Fenwick, Cllr Mike Grace, Cllr Wilfred Grainger, Cllr Sam Neal, 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 his report:

"Since we last met, we had a very well planned and thoughtful open-air Remembrance Sunday event, remembering those who fought in both World Wars and other conflicts. Our thanks go to Wenlock Parish Church for organising it under challenging circumstances. On behalf of our residents, I laid wreaths at Bourton and Much Wenlock.

Remembrance in Much Wenlock was also highly successful in fundraising, with £6,941 raised for the Royal British Legion. As a Town Council, we thank our branch organiser, David Turner, and all who manned the stands and who went round fundraising for this vital charity. The people of our Parish truly gave generously.

The Town Council's Christmas lights committee delivered an exceptional event that has received brilliant feedback from businesses and the public. Nearly 400 people attended the switch-on last Thursday night and were treated to a range of performances from the Primary School Choir, the Young Farmers, the local belly dancing group and characters from Disney. Special thanks must go to Zara and Chris Bowden for providing a PA system, with Zara being the MC for the night, and she did an excellent job. Her grandad, Jerry Bowden, a former Mayor, was involved for many years and he would have been proud of the Council and his family for putting on such a great event.

Thanks are also due to Sean Nicholas from Cuan Wildlife Rescue, Gary Owen from Wenlock Fencing, Andrew and Jack Woodhouse from Northwoods, Paul Laming and the Much Wenlock Lights Fund for the sponsorship and installation of the Christmas trees in the Square and at the end of Sheinton Street. Andrew and Jack Woodhouse also installed the trees in the planters at the top end of the High Street.

Keeping up with the theme of Christmas, Holy Trinity's Christmas Tree Festival has been extended, and you can see great additions from a range of community groups who created trees.

Much Wenlock Christmas Fayre takes place on Saturday, and I think we can safely say it's an event we're all looking forward to."

2. Apologies for Absence

Members RESOLVED to accept the following apologies: Cllr Mike Atherton – unwell, Cllr Grace – delayed.

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:

"I had a very productive meeting with Sergeant Kate Øen, PC Rod Lake and concerned residents about the top of Harley Bank, where there continue to be accidents. We had a good discussion on mitigation and will look to put proposals to Shropshire Council.

Secondly, a nod to Covid-19 protocols which have been brought into place again, I'm afraid to say that Shropshire has the highest rates in the West Midlands and Wenlock & Broseley has the highest rates in South Shropshire. Please exercise caution.

I'd like to thank the Planning Committee for my invitation to their flooding meeting with John Bellis. John confirmed that he had seen work by McCloys showing that a solution to flooding on the site known as Hunters Gate 2 can be found. It is his opinion that the best thing for flooding prevention on that side of town is for the 120 homes to go ahead.

Plans for parking proposals within Much Wenlock which were shelved in 2020 are coming back. I'll be discussing these with Shropshire Council officers and would like a member of the Planning Committee to join me.

December's Shropshire Council meeting has been moved to January due to clashes with the North Shropshire By-election so I will have more to report back on then."

Councillor Grace joined the meeting.

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 4th November 2021.**
- b. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 5th October 2021.**
- c. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Finance & Asset Management Committee meeting held on 19th October 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 reminded Members that the Council office would be closed over the festive season from 23rd December 2021 to 3rd January 2022 inclusive. She also advised that the current roadworks and road closure on Barrow Road would not be operational on the day of the Christmas Fayre.

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

- a. Members considered the response received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities to the request for more information on the decision not to call in the Ironbridge Power Station application. The response stated that the application had been carefully considered against the call in policy and it had been decided that intervention would not be justified. The Department did not give reasons for calling in or declining to call in planning applications.

Members expressed their disappointment with this response.

It was RESOLVED to invite Philip Dunne to visit to discuss town issues, including the call-in request.

- b. Members considered the response received from Shropshire Council to the Town Council's complaint about procedural issues associated with the handling of the application at the Southern Planning Committee meeting on 20th September and the offer of a meeting with the Assistant Director Economy and Place. It was noted that there appeared to be no mechanism for the Town Council to lodge a complaint.

It was RESOLVED to accept the offer of a meeting with the Assistant Director Economy and Place.

This opportunity could be used to raise other relevant issues. The Mayor and Councillor White would represent the Town Council, with other Councillors, as available.

11. Shropshire Draft Local Plan (2016 - 2038)

- a. Members noted a report from the Town Council's local consultation event for Much Wenlock groups, organisations and support services, held on 3rd November 2021.
- b. Members considered the recommendations contained within the report.

Concern was expressed that the views of a number of representatives of local groups, organisations and support services was not necessarily representative of the whole community and that many groups did not have a corporate view. It would be beneficial to extend the consultation to individuals but this would depend on time and capacity. It was noted that this consultation was to inform the Council's presentation to the Examination in Public and was not formal consultation on the Draft Local Plan.

The Planning & Environment Committee would consider how views could be gathered from the wider community, perhaps by means of a questionnaire on the Council website. It would be important to ensure that the consultation carried out by the Town Council was accurately described at the EIP.

It was RESOLVED that the Council:

1. **Considers the suggestions from the community event as a basis for progressing the case at the EIP.**
 2. **Agrees that it should, through the Planning & Environment Committee and its working groups, continue to engage with all interested local groups and individuals 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 the other responsibilities through the appropriate committees and groups.**
- c. Members considered the response received from Shropshire Council's Planning Policy & Strategy Manager to the question why Shropshire Council did not change its mind and alter the Draft Local Plan when requested to do so in June this year. The officer had reiterated the point that Shropshire Council had already undertaken the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission consultation when the Town Council's position had changed, following the May 2021 elections. The late (non-duly made) representations had been submitted for the Inspectors to consider and it would be at the discretion of the Inspectors as to how they treated these comments. The officer had suggested that the EIP was the most appropriate forum to discuss the issues and had advised that the Inspectors had the ability to propose main modifications if necessary to make the Plan sound.

It was noted that the Inspectors initial questions had been posted on the Shropshire Council website. The Inspectors had invited Shropshire Council to make any main modifications now in order to make the Plan sound.

It was RESOLVED to write to Shropshire Council's Planning Policy & Strategy Manager stating that the Town Council had seen the opportunity for a main modification to the Local Plan, as invited by the Inspectors, and now asked Shropshire Council to make a main modification as requested previously by the Town Council. A copy of the request should be sent to the Programme Officer for the EIP.

12. Policing Priorities

At the request of the local policing team, Members considered whether the policing priorities identified in June 2021 were still current:

1. Thefts of vehicles and machinery from gardens and outbuildings, particularly in rural areas.
2. Anti-social behaviour, including drug taking and drug dealing in the town centre.
3. Speeding on rural roads and large vehicles ignoring weight limits.

It was RESOLVED to retain the priorities identified in June 2021.

13. Christmas Lights Switch-on – 25th November 2021

Members considered feedback on the Christmas lights switch-on event on Thursday, 25th November. Thanks were expressed to the working group who had organised the event, to traders and to the public for attending. The event had been a great success with a good atmosphere and much positive feedback had been received. There was some disappointment that shopkeepers had not made more effort to extend their displays onto the street. There were lessons to learn from the event and arrangements for next year would be considered nearer the time.

14. Councillor Surgeries

It was RESOLVED to hold joint Town Councillor and Shropshire Councillor surgeries from January 2022, on the second Saturday of the month (excluding December and August), at the Museum, with a local police officer present when available.

The Mayor undertook to draw up the rota and to contact the Museum to book the dates.

15. Consultation

- a. Members noted the response submitted to the consultation on the Bridgnorth Future Connectivity Plan.
- b. Members considered DEFRA consultation on **amendments to the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016 as applied to groundwater activities and related surface water discharge activities**, which affects the operation of cemeteries (deadline for response 22nd December 2021).

Members noted the SALC response, which provided a useful guide for Town and Parish Councils to respond. **It was RESOLVED that the Clerk should respond to the consultation on behalf of the Town Council, using the SALC response as a model.**

16. 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
- e. Invitation to Citizens Advice Shropshire AGM on 25th November 2022
- f. Together Reducing and Ending Exploitation in Shropshire, Newsletter Autumn 2021
- g. Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Annual Review 2020-21
- h. Friendly Bus – Ways to Support Friendly Bus this Christmas
- i. Healthwatch Press Release: Report outlines the problems described by those facing food insecurity, 11.11.21
- j. Notification of helicopter night flying training phase over Shropshire and its borders from RAF Shawbury from 15th November for approximately five weeks.
- k. Notification of change of contact details for West Mercia We Don't Buy Crime
- l. Local policing charter update
- m. Shropshire Climate Action Partnership Newsletter November 2021
- n. Friendly Bus Newsletter December/January

17. Agenda Items for Next Town Council Meeting

Members suggested the following item for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting: Local Plan Examination in Public.

18. Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting would be held at 7.00pm on 13th January 2022 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.

19. Complaint

Councillors considered progress with a complaint from a member of the public. **It was RESOLVED to approve the draft response.**

20. Report from Property Working Group

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

It was RESOLVED as follows:

- a. **Guildhall**
 - i. To commit to the full repair of the Guildhall.
 - ii. To engage with Shropshire Council's Conservation Officer regarding renovation of the Guildhall.
 - iii. To engage a professional fund raiser to obtain funding for the renovation of the Guildhall.
 - iv. To check the Council's VAT position and any VAT implications of the proposals for the Council's properties.
- b. **Corn Exchange**

To commit to the full repair of the Corn Exchange.

c. Cemetery Chapel

To commission a condition report for the Cemetery Chapel.

d. 10 High Street / 2 Burgage Way

To approve the recommendations contained in the confidential report.

9 Members were in favour with 1 abstention.

The meeting closed at 8.55pm

Signed
Town Mayor

Date