

# MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the  
**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**  
 held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock  
 at 7 pm on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022

**Present:** Cllr David Fenwick, Cllr Mike Grace, Cllr Wilfred Grainger, Cllr John O'Dowd, Cllr Daniel Thomas (in the chair), Cllr Chris Tyler

**Town Clerk:** Trudi Barrett **RFO:** Diane Barlow

**In attendance:** Two members of the public

## 1. Chairman's Welcome

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

"Good evening all, and welcome to tonight's Town Council meeting. I hope you all had a lovely Christmas, and I'd like to wish you all a Happy New Year.

I want to start by mentioning the Christmas Fayre; it's a special community event run by a team of volunteers. I've been on the committee before, and it's hard work! The event shows what's best about Much Wenlock, and to take the event on with Covid-19 and the way they mitigated the risk was fantastic. I've asked the Clerk to write a letter of thanks to the committee on behalf of this Council.

I'm pleased to announce that the Town Council has been allocated £5,599 from the Government-funded Welcome Back Fund. This allocation is based on population, and the money can be spent only on support for Christmas events or improvements to the public realm, such as additional street cleaning and repairs to street furniture. The Council intends to spend its allocation on replacing some of the deteriorating Christmas lights and a new planter to replace the damaged one at the end of Sheinton Street.

You will have noticed when coming into this building that the work on the Guildhall Cupola is still ongoing. At last month's meeting, this Council committed to the complete repair of the Guildhall, and it's great to see the Property Working Group getting on with the work at hand, including meeting Shropshire Council's Conservation office in the next few weeks.

Finally, you will have noticed and seen that we are three Council members short tonight as I'm afraid to report I received resignations from Councillors Robert Toft, Mike Atherton and Sam Neal. All three resignations can be summed up by lack of time; it can be hard work being a Councillor, and you have to make sacrifices to do it well. Cllr Toft was part of a range of committees and has been part of community groups in Wenlock for years. Cllr Atherton got involved in climate change initiatives, including the Cemetery, whilst Cllr Neal was part of the very successful Christmas lights switch on. On behalf of this Council, I'd like to thank them for their service and wish them well for the future.

A by-election has been called to fill the vacancies, and if contested, the election will be held on Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> February, and residents will have the opportunity to cast their vote. If there are only three candidates for the vacancies, those candidates will be elected unopposed, and there will be no vote."

## 2. Apologies for Absence

**Members RESOLVED to accept the following apologies: Cllr Marcus Themans – working away, Cllr Duncan White – unwell.**

## 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:

“As Shropshire Councillor, I’m looking forward to the Town Council’s advice surgery, with the first one being this Saturday, 15<sup>th</sup> and the next will be 12<sup>th</sup> February at Much Wenlock Museum. Covid precautions will be taken, and we’ll be there from 10:30 until midday. Councillor Marcus Themans will be joining me this Saturday. I’ve managed to arrange a representative from the Police as well and, together, we should be able to help with most issues. Like my predecessor, we will use the back office room to provide a confidential setting for anything you may need to talk to us about.

This month I’m pleased to see visits from both Highways and Parking Enforcement officers to discuss drainage, flooding and parking proposals. The parking proposals will look at issues regarding access for mobility scooters and parts of town that are exacerbated by on-road parking. The proposals were initially looked at in April 2020 but have been shelved due to the pandemic. I’m pleased to be joined by two Town Councillors who will help me scrutinise the work before it’s put to public consultation in the spring, where everyone will have a say.

I have been told that PC Andy Boardman, will be coming over to the Broseley & Much Wenlock policing team but no start date has been agreed yet. He is currently in the Kidderminster team so knows the area fairly well. The Wenlock team also have PC Karanjit Singh, who is a ‘Police Now Officer’, be supporting our team on an interim basis.”

## 6. Police Report

- a. The Local Policing Team had sent their apologies. Members noted the written report provided.
- b. Members noted the notes from the Local Policing Charter Councillor meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

## 7. Public Session

A member of the public asked whether there would be poll cards for the by-election to raise awareness of the election. This matter was considered as part of minute 8b.

## 8. Resignation of Councillors

- a. Members noted that three casual vacancies had arisen following the resignation from the Council of Sam Neal, Mike Atherton and Robert Toft.
- b. Members noted that a by-election had been called and that Shropshire Council would be making the necessary arrangements. It was noted that the cost of poll cards would be in the region of £1,200.  
**It was RESOLVED to request poll cards for the by-election.**

## 9. Minutes

- a. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2021.**
- b. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021.**

## 10. Town Clerk’s Report

Members **NOTED** the written report from the Town Clerk on outstanding matters and action taken since the last Council meeting. In addition, the Clerk reported that she had attended a meeting of the West Mercia Forest Partnership on 10<sup>th</sup> January organised to discuss a funding bid to Defra for £345,000, led by Shropshire Wildlife Trust, to promote and facilitate tree planting.

## 11. 2022/23 Budget

Councillors expressed thanks to the RFO and other officers for their work on the budget. It was noted that the proposal to increase the precept by 6.58% represented an increase of around 95p per household in a Band D property. The RFO explained that inflation and other expected rises had been taken into consideration in the calculations. The Council was in a fixed price contract for energy and most of the Council’s rental tenants paid their own energy costs. It was noted that over recent years the Town Council had taken on more responsibilities from Shropshire Council, such as funding for the library. Whilst facilities such as the library and public toilets provided a community benefit, the Council was responsible for the ongoing costs. Much Wenlock had a relatively small population from which Council Tax was drawn to cover the cost of these services.

**It was RESOLVED to agree total expenditure of £275,486 and a precept of £221,905.**

The RFO left the meeting.

**12. Appointment of Members to Finance & Asset Management Committee**

It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Fenwick, Grainger and White to the Finance & Asset Management Committee.

**13. Date of next meeting of the Finance & Asset Management Committee**

It was RESOLVED to move the date of the next Finance & Asset Management Committee meeting from 18<sup>th</sup> January to 20<sup>th</sup> January.

**14. Appointment to HR Committee**

It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Fenwick to the HR Committee.

**15. Appointment to Working Groups**

It was RESOLVED to defer the appointment of new members to working groups until March, following the election of new Councillors.

**16. Representatives on Outside Bodies**

- a. It was RESOLVED to defer until March the appointment of a representative to the Bridgnorth & Shifnal Area Committee of the Shropshire Association of Local Councils.
- b. It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Grace as the Council's representative on the Shropshire Hills Destination Partnership.

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

Members noted that meetings had been arranged with Philip Dunne MP and Shropshire Council's Assistant Director Economy and Place and Planning Area Manager to discuss the development at the Ironbridge Power Station. The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Clerk would attend the meetings.

Members suggested that the following matters should be discussed with Philip Dunne MP: the Local Plan and the strategic impact of developments in the area and, in view of the MP's role as Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee, how to manage flooding, land management, biodiversity and advice for the community. Planning reforms might also be raised.

It was noted that a meeting of the Town Council's Strategic Flood Working Group would be held shortly before the meeting with Philip Dunne and might generate information to feed into the discussion.

**18. Shropshire Draft Local Plan (2016 - 2038)**

- a. Members noted the response received from Shropshire Council's Planning Policy & Strategy Manager to the Town Council's request that a main modification be made to the proposals for Much Wenlock in the draft Local Plan, in response to the invitation from the Inspectors to consider modifications. Shropshire Council had declined to make a modification for Much Wenlock.

The Town Council would be able to point out to the Planning Inspectors at the Examination in Public that several requests for change had been submitted to Shropshire Council since May but Shropshire Council had refused to make a change.

- b. Members noted that the Transport Working Group was preparing a transport survey. This could be combined with a survey to capture the views of members of the public on wider development matters. Before the next full Council meeting, the Planning & Environment Committee would start to consider what questions might be asked and arrangements for distribution of the survey.

Members noted that there would also soon be consultation from Shropshire Council on the new parking restrictions.

Councillor Themans joined the meeting.

**19. Expression of Interest for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Funding – Future Working**

Members noted correspondence regarding expressions of interest for CIL funding. It was noted that the current process was not working well and further applications had been put on hold until April 2022.

The Chair of the Transport Working Group advised that they were in discussion with the local Shropshire Council Highways Engineer regarding the possibility of accessing CIL funding for a road crossing on Bridgnorth Road.

**20. 'Made in Shropshire' Markets**

Members considered a report from the recent meeting with a representative of 'Made in Shropshire' Markets. Thanks were expressed to Councillor White for his work on this initiative.

**It was RESOLVED to approve the arrangements for holding 'Made in Shropshire' markets in the High Street on Saturdays 16<sup>th</sup> April, 18<sup>th</sup> June and 20<sup>th</sup> August as outlined in the report.**

**21. CONSULTATION**

- a. Members noted consultation on the Shropshire Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2021-2023, from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022. **It was RESOLVED that Councillor White should respond on behalf of council if he was willing.**
- b. Members noted consultation on the 2022-23 Shropshire Council Budget, from 5<sup>th</sup> January to 16<sup>th</sup> February. **It was RESOLVED that Councillor Thomas should reply on behalf of the Council, including comments that were generally supportive but requesting closer scrutiny of contractors.** It was noted that Shropshire had an ageing population in a large county, with the consequent high costs. The type of housing that would attract more younger people should also be encouraged.

**22. 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. Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership Newsletter December 2021
- f. Shropshire Lieutenancy Town Links Newsletter, Issue 2
- g. Draft notes from Helicopter Noise Liaison Group meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021.
- h. Shropshire Climate Action Partnership Newsletter December 2021.
- i. Shropshire Senior Citizen's Magazine, the Forum, December 2021.

It was noted that the Planning & Environment Committee had received information on a consultation by City Science regarding the production of Shropshire's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan. This could be circulated to other interested Councillors.

**23. Agenda Items for Next Town Council Meeting**

Members were invited to submit agenda items for the next Town Council meeting.

**24. Date of next meeting**

Members noted that the next meeting would be held at 7.00pm on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022 at the Guildhall.

The meeting closed at 8.25pm

Signed .....

Town Mayor

Date .....