

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the re-convened
ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
at 7 pm on Thursday, 12th May 2022

Present: Councillors William Benbow, David Fenwick, Mike Grace, Wilfred Grainger, Marcus Themans, Daniel Thomas, Chris Tyler, Linda West, Duncan White (in the chair)

Town Clerk: Trudi Barrett

There were no members of the public present

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Mayor presented the following report:

Welcome Councillors and members of the community to this full Town Council meeting, my first as the newly elected Mayor. I have been on the Council since 2019 and look forward to my opportunity to make a difference and guide us through the next 12 months. Post Covid restrictions, it was great to continue the long-held tradition of Mayor Making for the town and on 16th October we will be holding our annual Civic Service at Holy Trinity Church.

Since the last full Council meeting several meetings have been held in preparation for our representation at the Examination in Public of the Shropshire Local Plan. I would like to thank all who have contributed, including some residents, with a special thanks to Councillor Mike Grace for co-ordinating this and guiding us through the process.

We recently arranged for the first of three 'Made in Shropshire' artisan markets to be held in the town this year. The event was very successful and brought people to the town who had not visited before, some from far and wide. The number of visitors to the Guildhall trebled on the day and some of the stalls sold out early. There was a lovely town atmosphere with an oompah band playing in The Square to entertain the crowds. The next market will be on 18th June. I will be holding a drop-in feedback surgery at the Guildhall on Monday, 23rd May, between 5.30 and 7.00pm. Traders and residents are welcome to come and discuss their experiences and views of the first market .

2. Apologies for Absence

It was RESOLVED to accept the following apologies: Councillor John O'Dowd – unwell, Councillor Christian Toon – work, Councillor Wilfred Grainger – work.

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. Public Session

There were no members of the public present.

6. Shropshire Council Report

Shropshire Councillor, Daniel Thomas, presented the following report:

FixMyStreet: as part of Shropshire Council's 'Improving Your Roads' programme, the Highways and Infrastructure leadership team were asked to improve how customers can make reports online. The council has become a FixMyStreet Pro user of this service, which allows us to deploy improved functionality, including Shropshire Council's own asset maps, to improve the accuracy of reports we receive, as well as introducing new reporting categories to give people a wider option of services in one place. FixMyStreet also allows people to upload photos when making a report, improving the accuracy of reports, and reducing the need for officers to attend to inspect, which reduces our carbon footprint. FixMyStreet also integrates to 'Confirm', our system for managing highways and street scene services, so all reports will go direct to the right officer or team.

Matters such as potholes ultimately fall under my remit but, as Town Councillors, you and the Town Clerk can make accounts using your Councillor or Clerk email and, when reporting, everyone can see that you have done it and the status. Please don't judge FixMyStreet based on years ago when we were using My Shropshire instead.

Council Tax Rebate: earlier this year the government announced that all Council taxpayers living in properties Band A to D will be eligible for a £150.00 council tax rebate. If you already pay for your council tax via direct debit there's no need to do anything - the £150.00 will be credited to your bank. If you do not pay by direct debit, you will receive written instructions on how to claim the rebate.

Surgery: the next council surgery will be held this coming Saturday, 14th May between 10.30 am and 12 noon at the museum – no appointment necessary. I'll be joined by Cllr Mike Grace and our new PCSO Heath "Ted" Amies, as Steven Breese has been transferred to another area.

Councillor Thomas took questions regarding FixMyStreet: he was asked about the outstanding repairs required to pavements and responded that these could also be reported on FixMyStreet. Shropshire Council was investing further in highways repairs and the results should soon be seen.

There was a facility on FixMyStreet to view issues reported by geographical area. Issues reported could be viewed by the public, which had not been the case with the My Shropshire portal. A link could be added to the Town Council website.

In response to a question about the white marks painted around potholes nearly a year ago, Councillor Thomas replied that the marks indicated that the holes were on the Shropshire Council work log to be repaired. However, Shropshire Councillors did not see the work plan.

The FixMystreet system indicated that updates provided by members of the public were not passed on to Shropshire Council; Councillor Thomas undertook to check this.

7. Police Report

Members noted the written police report provided.

8. Minutes

- a. **It was RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 7th April 2022.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to approve and adopt the minutes of the Annual Town Council meeting held on 5th May 2022.**
- c. **It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 1st March 2022.**
- d. **It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 5th April 2022.**
- e. **It was RESOLVED to adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 26th April 2022.**

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.

Members noted the response received from the Shropshire Council Place Plan officer responsible Much Wenlock regarding the rationale behind the Place Plan boundaries and the review of Place Plans planned for the autumn. It was intended to gather information from town and parish councils by means of a form - Councillors felt that this would not be appropriate and that they would like greater involvement in the process.

Development of a strategic plan for the Council had been pending for some time. Members discussed how to move forward with this and agreed to ask each of the committees and working groups to provide suggestions for items to feed into the strategic plan, with short-, medium- and long-term goals for the Town Council and the town generally. The Clerk was asked to include this as an agenda item for the September meeting to check progress, with October as the target date for responses.

10. Finance & Asset Management Committee

- a. **It was RESOLVED to appoint six members to the Finance & Asset Management Committee: Councillors David Fenwick, John O'Dowd, Marcus Themans, Chris Tyler, Linda West and Duncan White.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to approve the amended Terms of Reference for the Finance & Asset Management Committee with the addition of the aim "To contribute to the development of the Town Council's Strategic Plan."**

It was noted that for next year's Annual Town Council meeting 'at least six' members should be appointed to the committee.

11. Planning & Environment Committee

- a. It was RESOLVED to appoint eight members to the Planning & Environment Committee: Councillors William Benbow, David Fenwick, Mike Grace, Wilf Grainger, Daniel Thomas, Christian Toon, Chris Tyler and Linda West.
- b. It was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the Planning & Environment Committee, with the following amendments:
 - membership of “at least” five members of the Town Council.
 - to add the responsibility “To contribute to the development of the Town Council’s Strategic Plan.”
 - under responsibilities 1 and 2 include “other regulatory bodies such as the Environment Agency”
 - under responsibility 11, add ... monitor “and consult on” the Neighbourhood Plan...

12. HR Committee

- a. It was RESOLVED to appoint four members to the HR Committee: Councillors John O’Dowd, Marcus Themans, Daniel Thomas and Duncan White.
- b. It was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the HR Committee.

13. Discipline & Grievance Panel

- a. It was RESOLVED to appoint three members to the Discipline & Grievance Panel: Councillors William Benbow, David Fenwick and Chris Tyler.
- b. It was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the Discipline & Grievance Panel.

14. Schedule of Future Meetings

It was RESOLVED to approve the proposed meeting dates for the Council year 2022-23.

15. Review/appointment of Working Groups

- a. It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors John O’Dowd, Daniel Thomas and Linda West, plus community volunteers, to the Friends of the Cemetery Working Group.
- b. It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors William Benbow, David Fenwick and Christian Toon, plus Councillor West, the volunteer archivist, to the History Working Group.
- c. It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Wilfred Grainger, Marcus Themans, Daniel Thomas, Christian Toon and Linda West to the Communications, Markets and Tourism Working Group.
- d. It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors William Benbow, Mike Grace, Daniel Thomas and Chris Tyler to the Transport Working Group.
- e. It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors William Benbow, David Fenwick, John O’Dowd, Marcus Themans, Christian Toon and Duncan White to the Property Working Group.
- f. It was RESOLVED to appoint all members of the Planning & Environment Committee, plus invited members of the community, to the Shropshire Local Plan Review Working Group.
- g. It was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors William Benbow, Mike Grace and Chris Tyler plus external experts, a member of the Flood Action Group and invited members of the community to the Strategic Flood Working Group.

16. Review of Terms of Reference for Working Groups

It was RESOLVED to add the following responsibility to the Terms of Reference of all working groups: “To contribute to the development of the Town Council’s Strategic Plan.”

With the above amendment, it was RESOLVED to approve the Terms of Reference for the following working groups:

- a. Friends of the Cemetery Working Group
- b. History Working Group
- c. Communications, Markets and Tourism Working Group
- d. Transport Working Group
- e. Property Working Group
- f. Shropshire Local Plan Review Working Group

- g. It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Terms of Reference for the Strategic Flood Working Group, amended as follows: item 3 - to specifically name the Flood Action Group; item 6 - “to work with stakeholders” to propose options for flood alleviation...

17. Review/Appointment of Representatives on Outside Bodies

- a. **Bridgnorth and Shifnal Local Area Committee of Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC): it was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Linda West and Duncan White.**
- b. **Much Wenlock Almshouses:** it was noted that Cllr Duncan White had been nominated to represent the Town Council in June 2020 for a term of four years.
- c. **Shropshire Council Emergency Planning: it was RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Duncan White.**
- d. **John L Edwards Trust: it was RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Daniel Thomas.**
- e. **Shropshire Hills Destination Partnership: it was RESOLVED to appoint Councillors Christian Toon and Wilfred Grainger.** It was noted that Councillor Grace had been in contact with the organisation and the Clerk was asked to forward copies of the email exchanges.
- f. **Much Wenlock Forester Charitable Trust:** it was noted that Mr Mark Laws had been nominated to represent the Town Council in April 2021 for a term of four years.
- g. **Priory Hall Management Committee: it was RESOLVED to appoint Councillor Duncan White.**

18. Review and Approval of the following Policies and Procedures:

- a. **It was RESOLVED to approve the revised Standing Orders, incorporating a reference to working groups: “The Council or its committees may set up informal working groups and determine the terms of reference for those groups”.**
- b. **It was RESOLVED to approve the revised Financial Regulations.**
- c. **It was RESOLVED to approve the revised Complaints Procedure and Procedure for Dealing with Unreasonable and Persistent Complainants.**
- d. **It was RESOLVED to approve the revised Publication Scheme, with the inclusion of information on charges for photocopying in connection with Freedom of Information requests.**
- e. **It was RESOLVED to approve the revised Communications and Media Policy.** The Communications, Markets and Tourism Group was tasked with reviewing the policy and making any recommendations for changes to full Council. Members noted the need to keep Council and private emails separate and to use Council email addresses for Council business.
- f. **It was RESOLVED to approve the new Privacy notice.**

19. Internal Audit

Members noted that the Finance & Asset Management Committee had reviewed the interim internal audit report dated 18th January 2022 and that the recommendation regarding insurance cover had been implemented.

20. Shropshire Draft Local Plan (2016 - 2038) – Examination in Public (EIP)

Members noted that the Local Plan Review Working Group was continuing with preparations for the EIP. Submissions on matters raised by the Inspectors were due in by 1st June. The Programme Officer had written to the Town Council stating that it appeared the Council could only submit comments regarding Matter 8, Infrastructure and delivery, monitoring and viability. The Clerk would be writing to the Programme Officer the following day to outline the advice given by Shropshire Council’s Planning Policy & Strategy Manager last summer and make the case for allowing the Town Council to submit additional information and speak at the EIP. Shropshire Councillor Daniel Thomas had also written to the Planning Policy & Strategy Manager to seek support for the Town Council to submit statements and speak at the hearings. If there was no change to the Programme Officer’s current position, it was hoped that there would be sufficient representatives from other groups and individuals Much Wenlock at all sessions to make a collective case.

It was RESOLVED that the final statements to the EIP should be circulated to all Councillors for information before submission.

21. Jubilee Beacon Working Group

Members received a report from the Jubilee Beacon Working Group. The beacon would be located in the parkland next to the Priory and had been registered as an official beacon. On Thursday, 2nd June there would be a short, open air Service of Thanksgiving at 9.15 pm, followed by the lighting of the beacon. The Town Council was working with English Heritage, Wenlock Estates and Holy Trinity Church.

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. Friendly Bus Newsletter May 2022
- f. Information regarding Shropshire Council processing of energy rebates for households in Shropshire
- g. Invitation to Zero Carbon Shropshire AGM on 7th May
- h. Confirmation that the Council’s Jubilee tree planting has been added to the Queen’s Green Canopy Map
- i. Shropshire Lieutenancy Town and Community Newsletter Issue 3
- j. West Midlands Community Flood Resilience Calendar of Free Training
- k. April 2022 Zero Carbon Shropshire Green News
- l. St John Ambulance ‘Ask us about mental health’ awareness week, 9th – 15th May training and resources.

23. Agenda items for next Town Council meeting

Members were invited to suggest items for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting. It was noted that a review of the website and ‘20s Plenty’ had been previously requested as agenda items for the June agenda.

24. Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 9th June 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.

25. Condition Survey of Chapel and Lychgate

Members considered quotations for the provision of a building survey of the cemetery chapel and lychgate.

It was RESOLVED to commission Thomas Consulting to undertake the survey at a cost of £850 + VAT + disbursements.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

Signed
Town Mayor

Date