

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
held at The Guildhall, Much Wenlock
at 7 pm on Thursday, 3rd November 2022

Present: Councillors William Benbow, Susan Crooke-Williams, David Fenwick, Wilfred Grainger, John O'Dowd, Marcus Themans, Daniel Thomas, Chris Tyler, Linda West, Duncan White (in the chair)

In attendance: Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk

Mrs Liz Bird, Bridgnorth Food Bank Manager

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Mayor presented the following report:

Since the last meeting we held the Civic Service on 16th October at Holy Trinity Church, which was attended by the High Sheriff of Shropshire and her husband, guests from local community groups and Mayors from several local towns. My wife and I also attended the Civic Service held for the Bishops Castle Mayor last Sunday.

We are progressing with our review of other CCTV systems and are going to visit Shifnal Council to see their system in the coming weeks as the previous appointment had to be cancelled due to a power cut in Shifnal.

Following recent power supply issues in High Street, I have spoken to Western Power Distribution and they assure me that the necessary work needed to permanently resolve the issue will not be done until the new year and that they will notify us in advance of the planned work.

I recently visited residents in Victoria Road to reassure them following an incident of damage and a forced entry into a motor home on the same evening, which are being dealt with by the police.

I recently volunteered with others at the Windmill Trust and did some maintenance work on Windmill Hill and will continue to work with the Trust on future projects.

In the coming days we will have several events to mark Remembrance: at the cemetery with Much Wenlock Primary School at 10.00am on Friday, 11th November, followed by the usual ceremony at 11.00am at the Corn Exchange and on the following Sunday morning at the Church. I hope you will join me to mark this very important event in the calendar.

On 24th November at 6.30pm we will be switching on the Christmas lights in the town and we look forward to seeing the new lights that have been recently purchased with grant funding as well as enjoying some local entertainment.

2. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Christian Toon – family illness.

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 had been no requests to speak.

6. Policing

- a. Members noted with thanks the written police report provided.
- b. Members noted the minutes of a Local Policing Charter Councillor Meeting held on 13th October 2022.

7. Bridgnorth Food Bank

The Mayor welcomed Mrs Liz Bird, Bridgnorth Food Bank Manager, who spoke about the Food Bank:

The Bridgnorth Food Bank was set up in 2013 and covers a 12 mile radius. It is independent and provides support not only with food, but also other necessities. Clients have to be referred and then attend on a Monday to be registered. Clients are asked to provide full details of their circumstances so that the Food Bank can tailor support accordingly. An agreement is issued, which is reviewed every four weeks, however, some clients are supported for several years due to exceptional need. Currently, four families in Much Wenlock are being supported. This week 67 adults and 27 children came into the Food Bank during two hours. The Food Bank is able to facilitate contact with specialist workers in the areas of debt, domestic abuse, mental health, etc.

Between February and September this year the Food Bank gave out 45,000 food and toiletry items. All donations are marked with a black cross so that the recipient cannot return them to a supermarket for a cash refund. Items such as toys and gifts are provided for Christmas. The Food Bank also tries to support clients moving into housing association properties with other items, as when a tenant moves out the association strips the property of everything, including carpets and curtains, so that there is nothing at all left inside for the new tenant.

The Food Bank has a fund raiser on its committee and raises funds through collections, talks and events. Some people donate money on a regular basis. Donations of food and cash are welcome, but nothing containing alcohol. Long life shopping bags are also useful for clients to carry their food parcels. The Methodist Church hold a collection in Much Wenlock on Fridays and there is also a donation box at The Simple Life Unwrapped shop.

The Mayor thanked Mrs Bird for her informative overview of the work of the Bridgnorth Food Bank and said that Councillors would see how they could support the organisation.

8. Shropshire Council Report

Shropshire Councillor, Daniel Thomas, presented the following report:

Buildwas Power Station

The Buildwas Power Station planning permission has now been posted online, and the £350,000 Much Wenlock was promised has been received by Shropshire Council. Shropshire Council is ready to start the feasibility study; at the planning committee on Tuesday, we decided to help shape the feasibility study to ensure a bypass is considered, and it will be.

Electric Charging points for Much Wenlock

I'm delighted to announce that there will be 12 new off-street car charging points in Much Wenlock, with six going in at St Mary's Car Park and six at Falcons Court. The proposed locations have been carefully selected using several factors, including the availability of suitable Shropshire Council-owned car parking, traffic flows, the number of residents without access to off-street parking and the availability of existing EV charge point installations already. A grant pays for 60% of the cost, and the rest will be paid for by CIL and highways budgets.

Highways Improvements

Road improvements on Harley Bank include pothole repair, drainage investigation and repair, and signage repair. Diversions will be in place from 3 to 9 November overnight between 8.00 pm-6.00 am on these days.

Flooding

I organised and attended a meeting with John Bellis and the Town Council's Strategic flood group yesterday to look at the options regarding Flood Resilience Protection at Hunters Gate. I thought it was a very positive meeting that looked at various issues whilst pressing for action to protect people's homes.

Result at South Shropshire Planning Committee

Cllr David Fenwick and I, representing this Council, spoke at the South Shropshire Planning Committee regarding a planning application for an eco-friendly holiday let in Stretton Westwood, and I'm delighted to say our views were heard. We had success, with the permission being granted.

Updates on Traffic Issues

The WSP parking proposal map came in on Tuesday, and we can now progress to the public consultation stage, hopefully, this side of Christmas. Responding to a concern from our recent advice surgery, the mayor and I will meet the relevant officer at Shropshire Council to explore adding parts of Station Road and Sytche Close to the map. I'm awaiting the date of the meeting.

Shadwell Quarry

The second Lawful Development Certificate for the use of the site for the stationing of more than 53 Holiday Chalets that fall within the definition of a caravan has been determined not lawful. As you're aware, I've passed on local concerns about the recent activity and am confident officers are responding.

Surgery

The next Council surgery will be held on Saturday, 12th November, between 10.30 am and 12 noon at the museum. No appointment is necessary. I'll be joined by Cllr William Benbow and a representative from the Police.

9. Minutes

- a. It was **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 6th October 2022.
- b. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 6th September 2022.
- c. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the Finance & Asset Management Committee meeting held on 27th September 2022.
- d. It was **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on 14th June 2022.

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. It was noted that the flag and rope on the Guildhall had become damaged and would require replacement. The meeting to view the Shifnal CCTV system had been rescheduled for 17th November. The application to the Architectural Heritage Fund for a project viability grant for the Guildhall had been submitted and would be considered at a decision meeting scheduled for 12th December.

11. Residents' Survey on Planning and Traffic

Members reviewed the results of the Residents' Survey on Planning and Traffic. This had been considered at the Planning & Environment Committee meeting earlier in the week and would be useful background information for WSP to feed into the feasibility study for the Gaskell corner.

Members considered action in relation to question one of the survey: "Do you think that the future proposals for development in Much Wenlock should be shaped by a refresh of our Neighbourhood Plan that includes further community consultation with residents?" 65% of respondents had replied yes, 28% no and 7% maybe.

It was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan took precedence until the new Shropshire Local Plan was approved. This would happen in the next 18 months, in one form or another. Once there was certainty about the Local Plan, there would be a base to work from with regard to the town's Neighbourhood Plan. Any review should be led by the Town Council, who continued to support the Neighbourhood Plan and were committed to reviewing it at the appropriate time. The natural progression would be for the Council's current Local Plan Review Working Group to move onto reviewing the Neighbourhood Plan at the conclusion of the Examination in Public of the Local Plan. There could be some merit in beginning to consider informally what changes might be required to the Neighbourhood Plan in due course.

It was RESOLVED to refer further discussion of the merits of an informal review of the Neighbourhood Plan to the Planning & Environment Committee.

12. Town Council Website

It was RESOLVED to defer consideration of this item until a supporting paper was provided.

13. 'Made in Shropshire' Markets 2023

- a. It was noted that the markets held during the current year had been successful and well received. The organisation had been pleased with the outcome and could offer three dates for 2023, possibly with more stalls. **It was RESOLVED to hold 'Made in Shropshire' artisan markets in Much Wenlock on Saturdays 15th April, 17th June and 19th August 2023.**
It was noted that Councillor Toon was setting up an email group for traders so that they could be kept informed.
- b. It was noted that road closures would need to be arranged for the markets.

14. 'Get a Word in Edgeways', the Much Wenlock Festival of Words

Members considered information regarding the 'Get a Word in Edgeways' Festival to be held in 2023. **It was RESOLVED to support the event in principle.**

15. Consultation

Members considered a response to the following consultation:

Shropshire Council's Registration Service – lessons learnt from the pandemic

Deadline for response: 30th November 2022

It was RESOLVED to make no response.

16. Correspondence

Members noted the following items, which had been emailed to Members:

- 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. Information from the RSN Rural Market Town Group

17. Agenda items for next Town Council meeting

Members were invited to suggest items for inclusion on the agenda for the next meeting:

- Correspondence from Windmill Trust
- 'Flood Sax' and road closure barriers.

18. Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting would be held at 7.00pm on Thursday, 1st December 2022 at the Guildhall.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

Signed
Town Mayor

Date