

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a **Planning & Environment Committee meeting**
held at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 4th July 2023 at the Guildhall, Much Wenlock

Present: Councillors William Benbow (in the chair), Wilf Grainger, Daniel Thomas, Chris Tyler, Linda West.
In attendance: Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, Ms Jo Jukes.

1. Apologies

Councillor David Fenwick – holiday.

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

There had been no requests to speak.

5. Creating Stepping Stones for Nature Recovery across the Shropshire Hills AONB Partnership and wider

Ms J Jukes gave a report on the above conference, organised by Middle Marches Community Land Trust and Shropshire AONB, which she attended on 12th May 2023 on behalf of the Town Council. The conference aimed to outline opportunities for town and parish councils to understand the Environment Act, as well as the opportunities available to help prepare nature recovery strategies and to develop local plans. It highlighted the importance of individuals and community groups in the recovery process.

The Environment Act 2021 places a duty on local authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity, with agreed policies, objectives and actions. Community involvement is fundamental to achieving this. The conference focussed on creating 'stepping stones' - small, achievable steps forward that would make a difference. Examples included:

- providing and improving habitats, e.g. green corridors, buffer areas, meadows
- managing roadside verges to increase biodiversity
- using community spaces to plant more trees, encourage wildflowers, etc
- carbon capture – retaining existing hedgerows and trees
- ensuring hedgerows are cut in late winter to retain berries
- ponds – retention and creation
- wildflower areas
- migratory birds – providing nesting sites for birds such as swifts and swallows

Ms Jukes was keen to discuss what actions the Town Council might take and which other parties could be involved. She would be willing to work with the Council to try to make progress.

Councillors responded that the Council's land holdings were only the Gaskell Recreation Ground, the Cemetery and the Pound. However, the Council was consulted on local planning applications and could make representations in this way. The Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan also referenced environmental issues and the policies would be considered as part of the forthcoming overall review of the Plan. The Council had little influence over landowners but developing Government policy was directed towards environmental improvements.

The Clerk advised that she had previously contacted Shropshire Council with regard to the management of verges around the town but had received no response. Councillors requested that further attempts be made.

Councillors agreed to give further consideration to the issues raised and thanked Ms Jukes for attending.

Ms Jukes left the meeting.

6. Minutes

It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 6th June 2023 be APPROVED and signed as a true record.

7. Planning Applications

Members considered a response to the following planning applications:

23/02599/TCA Bourton Estate, Bourton, Much Wenlock	To remove 2no. Ash (T1-2), 1no. Sycamore (T3) and 1no. group of Ash and Sycamore (G1) within Bourton Conservation Area. It was RESOLVED to object to the removal of the trees based on the loss of amenity value to the residents of Bourton in the Conservation Area. Councillors cited the Much Wenlock Neighbourhood Plan objective 8, the local landscape and wildlife.
23/02847/TCA 26 Sheinton Street, Much Wenlock	To remove 2no. Ash within Much Wenlock Conservation Area. It was RESOLVED no objections.

8. Planning Decisions

It was RESOLVED to note the following planning decisions:

23/01653/LBC 48 High Street, Much Wenlock	Reinstatement of internal porch by front door - removed in c.2005 as part of previous renovations. Replacement of 2x (modern) doors and 1x internal (modern) door. Replacement of 5x windows to rear aspect of the property. Decision: Grant Permission
23/01477/FUL 14 Stretton Road, Much Wenlock	Single Storey side extension, external insulation and render. Decision: Grant Permission
23/01728/LBC 11 Barrow Street, Much Wenlock	Replacement Windows and Door, along with remedial structural repairs affecting a Grade II Listed Building. Decision: Grant Permission
23/01805/FUL Wheatland Garage, Bridgnorth Road, Much Wenlock	Partial demolition of the existing retail convenience store and construction of extensions, revision to car parking facilities, provision of four electric vehicle charging points, installation of solar panels on extension roof and change of use of the ground floor of 17 St Marys Road to a coffee shop (resubmission). Decision: Refuse Councillors noted that the decision for refusal did not include reference to flood risk or conversion of a residential property to commercial use.

9. Draft Shropshire Local Plan Review 2016 - 2038

Members were advised that Shropshire Council had been expected to reply to the Inspectors questions by 30th June 2023 but nothing had been added to the relevant website apart from information on waste and minerals. As no response to the Inspectors questions on the Duty to Cooperate had been provided so far, Councillor Tyler queried the claim of Shropshire Council that they had fulfilled the Duty to Cooperate.

10. Flooding Issues

- a. Report from the Strategic Flood Working Group: the group had met to reconfirm their purpose and activities. The group considered that the Town Council should issue more frequent public communications about flooding matters and the Council's efforts to address the problems. It was important to engage the community and prompt more interest and action from residents. Shropshire Council needed to work to provide the infrastructure to deal with the unique situation of the town.
- b. With regard to the flooding event on 12th June, Members criticised the lack of a strategic plan to deal with flooding in Much Wenlock. While various measures were under consideration, progress was too slow and the Drainage and Flood Risk Manager at Shropshire Council was under-resourced. Members noted the forthcoming meeting with Shropshire Council's Drainage and Flood Risk Manager regarding the town culvert.

Shropshire Councillor Richard Marshall, Portfolio Holder for Highways, and Mr Andy Wilde, Head of Highways, would be attending the full Council meeting on 6th July in connection with the flooding and would take questions. Members suggested the following topics for questioning:

- How would the Shropshire Council flood team be properly resourced?
- Could the flood action plan in the Mouchel report be reviewed?
- How could WSP be made to operate more efficiently?

Councillor Benbow agreed to formulate questions and circulate these to all Councillors prior to the meeting on Thursday.

Members noted that the Shropshire Council representatives would be meeting members of the Flood Action Group prior to the Council meeting to discuss the inadequate configuration of waste water pipes at the corner of the Bull Ring and Sheinton Street.

- c. There were no other flooding issues for consideration.

11. Transport and Highways Matters

- a. Once a substantive response was received from WSP regarding the Gaskell corner report, a meeting of the Transport Working Group would be arranged.
- b. Members noted that the Council's comments regarding the Gaskell corner feasibility report had been submitted to WSP and acknowledged. A more comprehensive response from WSP would follow in due course.

12. Place Plan

- a. Members considered information from the Place Plan officer for Much Wenlock regarding the review of Shropshire Council Place Plans. A remote meeting would be held with the Place Plan officer later in the week to clarify matters.
- b. Members gave further consideration to the submission of projects for inclusion in the Place Plan. They were concerned that some projects had already been included which should be addressed as repair and maintenance issues.

It was agreed to circulate the project suggestions put forward at the previous Planning & Environment Committee meeting to all Councillors for consideration at the forthcoming full Council meeting.

13. Climate Change and Ecological/Nature Emergencies

Members noted that Plastic Free July was under way and that information on the initiative had been circulated.

14. Consultation*

15. Street Lighting*

16. Street Naming *

19. Footpath Issues

Members noted that discussions regarding the Atterley footpath were in progress.

A response had been received from the landowner concerning the footpath off the Bull Ring. The landowner had no objection to the Council stoning the area by the gate to reduce the bogginess and replacing the existing kissing gate with something pushchair-friendly that did not affect the stock proof fencing of the field.

Councillors welcomed this response, which had been passed on to the Rights of Way officer at Shropshire Council. It was hoped that Shropshire Council would install a replacement gate this year. Improvement of the ground surface by the gate could be added to the list of Much Wenlock Place Plan projects. The Clerk was asked to thank the landowner for the positive response and advise of the Council's intended actions.

20. Footpath/Bridleway Creation Orders*

21. Footpath Diversion Orders*

22. Road Closures*

Members noted the following road closure:

- a. Location: Callaughton Farm junction B4378 to Walton Grange
- Date/Time: 29th August to 1st September 2023, all the time
- Purpose: New water connection
- Agency: Severn Trent Water

23. Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs)*

24. Stopping Up Orders*

25. Speed Limit Orders*

26. Prohibition Orders*

27. Date of next meeting

It was **NOTED** that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 1st August 2023 at 7pm 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.

28. Consultants for Neighbourhood Plan Review

Members considered proposals obtained from consultants to support a review of the Neighbourhood Plan. **It was RESOLVED to recommend a shortlist of three consultants to full Council and, with the agreement of full Council, to arrange short, remote meetings with the selected consultants to inform the final decision.** The same panel of Councillors should meet all consultants and ask an agreed set of questions.

29. Planning Enforcement

Members noted the registration of enforcement issue 23/09704/ENF and an update on enforcement issue 23/09619/ENF.

The Clerk was asked to submit an enforcement concern about removal of a hedgerow.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed.....(Chairperson)

Date.....