

**MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE GUILDHALL MUCH WENLOCK AT 7.00 PM ON THURSDAY 3 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Present: The Mayor, Cllr T Pinches, in the Chair.

Councillors: Mrs P Daffurn, Mrs A Dugdale, Mrs L Durbin, Mr M Grace, Mr E W Humphries, Mr T Lathe, Mr R Stuart, Mr D R Turner and Mr P M Whiteman OBE.

In attendance: The Town Clerk, Mr R D May.

The Mayor's Chaplain, the Revd Stephen Lowe, said prayers.

Prior to the official agenda and in accordance with standing orders a member of the public (Mr Ron Skelley, Chairman of the Much Wenlock Allotments Association) addressed the council on agenda item 10, the proposal to let the cemetery field for allotment use. Mr Skelley advised the council that Wenlock Estates had offered a field off Farley Road for allotment use. However, he said that the field was considered unsuitable for a number of reasons and that, therefore, the council's cemetery field was the favoured option. Mr Skelley also expressed appreciation for the engagement with the council's working party and that he thought that their work had led to a well-balanced proposal that responded to the issues and observations previously raised.

**182 Welcome and Apologies:** The Mayor welcomed the two new councillors, Mrs Pat Daffurn and Mr Robert Stuart. The Town Clerk reported that both councillors had previously made their formal declarations accepting the office of town councillor and agreeing to observe the council's code of conduct.

The Town Clerk reported that he had received no apologies for absence.

**183 Meeting agenda**

Cllr Whiteman raised a point of order. He said that he, like all Much Wenlock town councillors, had received a letter from Shropshire Council advising that the Standards Committee had received an allegation that he had failed or may have failed to comply with the town council's Code of Conduct. Cllr Whiteman reported that he had sought advice on the letter, with reference to the meeting's agenda, from a legal officer in Shropshire Council's Legal and Democratic Services Department. The legal officer had advised that the two agenda items, namely:

- Item 11 (Corn Exchange Community Notice Board – To discuss and decide upon the issues of ownership and the management of the Corn Exchange Community Notice Board with reference to a letter from Wenlockeye claiming ownership of the notice board and asking the Town Council to comment on the action of the Town Clerk in taking control over its administration); and
- Item 23 (Email complaint dated 10 August 2009 from a member of the public about the actions of the Town Clerk with reference to taking over the administration of the (community) notice board, which the complainant considers to be a blatant silencing of the electorate. The complainant also considers it to be a breach of his Human Rights)

should be deferred for one month while the allegation against councillors was considered. Councillors discussed the matter and, notwithstanding the fact that councillors had not been advised on the specifics of the allegation, it was

**RESOLVED:** to defer discussion on items 11 and 23 for one month.

Approved

**184 Declarations of Interest**

**Personal**

Cllr Whiteman declared a personal interest in all matters relating to Shropshire Council (as a member of Shropshire Council). He also advised that he would not speak or vote on local planning applications as he was a member of Shropshire Council's Regulatory Committee for the south of the county.

**Prejudicial**

None

**185 Future meeting**

The Town Clerk advised that Linda Monteith, Community Regeneration Officer (Southern Area) for Shropshire Council, had made a request to address the council on her work. The council agreed that the session should be at 6.45 pm on Thursday 3 December 2009.

**186 Additional Urgent Business:** The Town Clerk issued an updated agenda with additional urgent items under Finance, Correspondence and Planning.

**187 Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting of 30 July 2009 were approved with a correction to reflect the fact that the council had had no objections to the planning applications discussed.

**188 Matters Arising**

**a. The Wednesdays-only local bus service 860 (Bishop's Castle to Telford / Wellington via Much Wenlock) (Min 170a):** The Town Clerk reported that another operator M&J Travel of Craven Arms) was taking over the 860 service. The service would run fortnightly, on Tuesday, with the first service running on Tuesday 15 September.

**189 Finance**

a. The Town Clerk presented the monthly accounts for approval. The financial statement, as reported in the cash book, was as follows:

<b>Payee</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Balfours	Commission and charges re Linden Lodge	79.06
HM Revenue and Customs	PAYE and NIC	849.30
Shropshire Council	Pension fund contributions	646.28
Shropshire Council	Guildhall non-domestic rates - Aug 2009	346.00
Shropshire Council	Corn Exchange non-dom rates - Aug 2009	294.00
Shropshire Council	Cemetery non-dom rates - Aug 2009	66.00
Norvid Cleaning Services	Window cleaning services	25.30
Smith York Fine Art Publishing Ltd	Guildhall exhibition panels	276.00
Central Networks	Street lighting maintenance	147.74
Cash	Petty cash	50.00
Roger Evans Associates	Reimbursement for office improvements	335.89
Wenlock Health and Safety Ltd	Property risk assessments	517.50
Severn Trent Water Ltd	Water rates	171.28
Severn Trent Water Ltd	Water rates	330.65
Severn Trent Water Ltd	Water rates	8.37
B L Corfield	Cemetery grass-cutting and maintenance	1,116.00
PN Design Ltd	Production of Better Welcome specification	615.25
BT Payment Services Ltd	Telephony services	203.40
BT Payment Services Ltd	Telephony services	55.80
BT Payment Services Ltd	Telephony services	55.80
R D May	New lock for community notice board	27.00
E.ON UK Energy Services Ltd	Street lighting maintenance	57.85
WPS Insurance Brokers & Risk Services Ltd	Insurance premium	6,758.59
Oce (UK) Ltd	Copier service cost	11.34
npower	Electricity bill - cemetery	23.13
Shropshire Council	Pension fund contributions	646.28
HM Revenue and Customs	PAYE and NIC	859.90
Balfours	Commission and charges re Linden Lodge	79.06
Salaries, Wages and AVCs		7,519.38
<b>Total</b>		<b>22,172.15</b>

**b. Archive items submitted to Halls for auction – update**

The Town Clerk advised the council that the recent auction of some archive volumes had failed to attract any bidders. The auctioneers had suggested re-offering the lots without a reserve. After a discussion the council agreed to the Town Clerk's recommendation to retrieve the volumes from the auctioneers.

**c. Opportunity to fund a Much Wenlock entry in the 2010 Coach Driver Club Yearbook**

The Town Clerk introduced the item stating that Shropshire Council had decided not to fund the Bridgnorth and Much Wenlock entries in the Coach Driver Club Year Book. (Bridgnorth District Council had previously funded the entries). The Town Clerk suggested that the matter could be viewed as a town promotion. Councillors then discussed the matter and recognised that it was important that coach drivers had the correct information about the town (contact information, parking options and points of interest). It was

**RESOLVED** That a listing in the Coach Driver Club Yearbook 2010 be funded (£109 plus VAT). The Town Clerk asked councillors to advise him any errors or omissions in the current entry.

**d. Town Council Property Condition Survey**

The Town Clerk introduced the item by reporting that 18 invitations had been issued to companies and partnerships, many local, inviting them to submit a tender for carrying out surveys of the council's properties. Seven tenders had been returned. The Town Clerk recommended that a task and finish group be set up to assess the submissions received with the aim of making a recommendation to the October Town Council meeting. Cllr Turner, who had been involved in drafting the terms of reference, recommended that three councillors be involved. After a discussion it was agreed that Cllrs Turner, Durbin and the Mayor be involved in assessing the tenders.

**190 Correspondence****a. Invitation from Shropshire Council to participate in Rights-of-way user survey**

Councillors discussed the item and agreed that it was more appropriate for individuals to complete but asked the Town Clerk to ensure that the Wenlock Footpaths Group intended to submit a response.

**b. Letter from resident re problems with Bus Service 436**

Councillors discussed a letter from a local resident that stated that the 436 service was occasionally failing to run through to Barrow Street leaving some passengers stranded and asked for the council's assistance in raising the matter with Arriva (the operators) and Shropshire Council. The Town Clerk read out a response from Shropshire Council that stated that two officers had investigated the matter on 25 August and had found the 14.37 service running as scheduled. The council agreed that the matter should be pursued and asked the Town Clerk to make representations to Arriva, Shropshire Council and the Traffic Commissioner for the West Midlands Traffic Area. Councillors also asked that a request for feedback from the public be sought through the council's Wenlock Herald notes.

**c. Letter from Shropshire Council re electoral fees for town and parish councils**

The Town Clerk reported that Shropshire Council had written to all parish and town councils advising of proposed electoral fees for town and parish councils. The letter advised that election costs in 2009/10 would be absorbed by Shropshire Council and that the proposed fees had been revised following representations from a number of councils. A table showing the proposed recharge costs along with those of the former district and borough councils was circulated. The Town Clerk reported that a contested election could cost the town council around £2,300 if polling cards were issued and advised that the indicative costs would need to be taken into account when the council deliberated over the 2010/11 Precept.

**d. Invitation from Shropshire Partnership to comment on its Sustainable Community Strategy**

The Town Clerk asked if the council would like to respond comment on the Sustainable Community Strategy document. Councillors discussed the matter and agreed the document merited a response but agreed to take the matter under item 12 –Shropshire Core Strategy.

**e. Letter from the Head at William Brookes School inviting the Mayor and councillors to meet an Australian delegation who, like WBS, are competing in the 2009 International Youth Forum.**

Councillors welcomed the invitation and agreed to hold a civic reception for the party in the Guildhall. The Town Clerk was asked to reply accordingly, the reception to be held at a mutually-convenient time and date.

## 191 Planning

Cllr Whiteman did not speak or vote on the following planning applications.

**09/01062/FUL:** Construction of wall to rear of boundary to contain private amenity area at Field Barn, Bourton, Shropshire (RJM Micklethwaite)

The council agreed it has **no objection** to this application.

**09/01638/CON and 09/01658/CON:** Demolition of existing farm buildings / existing Dutch Barn in association with the re-development of the surrounding traditional agricultural buildings (Application 04/0543) at Hill Farm, Bourton, Much Wenlock (RJM Micklethwaite)

The council agreed it has **no objection** to this application.

**09/02035/FUL:** Retention of existing demountable nursery unit for a further period of 10 years and installation of 1no additional bay at County Primary School, Racecourse Lane, Much Wenlock (Mr Norrie Porter).

The council agreed it has **no objection** to this application but asked that a flood risk assessment be conducted and produced. The council would be interested in knowing when Shropshire Council intends to replace the demountable with a permanent structure.

**09/02122/FUL:** Erection of first floor extension over existing garage to form bedroom at School House, Bourton, Much Wenlock (Mr and Mrs Peagam)

The council agreed it has **no objection** to this application.

## 192. To agree representation on Working Groups and outside bodies

Councillors discussed its representation and agreed the following with immediate effect:

- a. Pedestrian, Traffic and Street Scene Working Group – Cllrs Humphries, Durbin and Daffurn
- b. Guildhall Development Working Group: Cllr Daffurn as an additional representative
- c. Bridgnorth Citizens Advice – Cllr Daffurn
- d. Priory Hall Management Committee – Cllr Daffurn to replace Cllr Lathe
- e. Cooke Charities - Cllr Durbin – 4 years from 2009
- f. Much Wenlock Almshouses – Cllr Humphries – 4 years from 2009

## 193 Proposal to let the Cemetery Field for allotment use

Cllr Turner introduced his proposal referring to his supporting paper and that of the Much Wenlock Allotments Association that had previously been distributed to councillors. He described the actions taken since the working group's investigation was approved at the 7 May council meeting. Cllr Turner said that the group's proposal had endeavoured to take into account the following:

- The Town Council's duty to help provide allotments if there is a demand
- That allotments provide a sustainable source of healthy local food as well as exercise and education
- That allotments provide an important biodiversity habitat for native flora and fauna
- The growing waiting list for allotments in Much Wenlock
- The objections raised at the 7th May council meeting

Referring to the issues table in the supporting paper, Cllr Turner stated that the group decided to make no recommendation to the council on the matter of greenhouses and hedges and added that the community orchard was a separate matter than could be dealt with at a later date. To simplify the debate the group had decided to submit three proposals rather than a single composite proposal.

70/09

Councillors then debated the proposals. Some councillors were opposed to the proposals stating that the site was inappropriate, the soil was poor, that Wenlock Estates should be approached to find another site and that there were planning issues to overcome. Other councillors spoke in support of the proposals. It was suggested that any hard standing should be porous and that the agreement should cover dispute resolution and actions to be taken if the exercise did not turn out to be a success. Cllr Turner advised that the Allotments Association were aware of the quality of the soil and would be responsible for resolving any planning matters. After further debate the proposals were put to the vote and it was

**RESOLVED:** That the Council approves the revised proposal of the Much Wenlock Allotments Association to lease the field adjacent to the Town Cemetery for a period of 21 years, subject to rent review and landlord's break clause every three years, such break clause to be instigated by the Council only at twelve months' notice.

It was further

**RESOLVED:** That this Council enters into a lease, including clauses that will ensure the enforcement of the stated issues, which will enable Much Wenlock Allotments Association take occupation of the site from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010.

Cllrs Humphries and Whiteman asked that their votes against the proposal be recorded.

It was further

**RESOLVED:** That the Working Group brings a draft lease and a recommendation to this Council by November 2009 in respect of the annual rental payable for the field.

Cllrs Humphries and Whiteman asked that their votes against the proposal be recorded.

After a discussion on other site options it was

**RESOLVED:** That the Working Party review the suitability of the Farley Road field site and approach Wenlock Estates to identify other possible sites for allotments.

Councillors then discussed the matter of greenhouses on the cemetery field allotment site and it was

**RESOLVED:** That greenhouses would not be permitted on the cemetery field allotment site  
Cllr Humphries did not vote on this matter.

It was agreed that the questions of hedges and orchard on the cemetery field allotment site should be deferred to a later date. The Town Clerk was asked to write to the two known objectors advising them of the outcome of the meeting. The council thanked Cllr Turner for his work on this matter.

### **194 Shropshire Core Strategy**

Cllr Turner introduced this item referring to his paper that had previously been distributed to councillors stating that the document merited the council's scrutiny and response. He advised councillors of the scope of the document and suggested that the council might want to concentrate its efforts on a number of topics, viz: Spatial Strategy for Local Centres, Community Hubs and Community Clusters; Ironbridge Power Station; Tourism and Culture; Affordable Housing Policy; Transport and Accessibility; and any issues that influence flood management policy.

Approved

Cllr Turner then recommended the formation of a working group to review both the Shropshire Council Core Strategy document and the Shropshire Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy document with the aim of preparing a paper for review and approval by the council at its 1 October meeting. Councillors discussed the proposal and agreed that the review should also consider 2012 and Gaskell Field matters. After further discussion the council agreed to a working group comprising Cllrs Turner, Grace, Stuart and Durbin to review the documents and produce two papers for review at the 1 October meeting. The Town Clerk was asked to obtain hard copies of the documents for the working group.

**195 To discuss a proposed grant application for a new slide in the play area**

Cllr Durbin introduced this item referring to the draft LJC application that had previously been distributed to councillors and stated that the play area would benefit from a replacement slide. The Town Clerk advised that the suggested Town Council contribution should be £600 – circa 10% of the total costs. After discussion it was

**RESOLVED** That the Town Council submit an application for an LJC grant for a replacement slide for the play area, with a town council contribution of £600.

**196 Much Wenlock 2012 Legacy Group:**

a. Update on the Gaskell Field consultation exercise. Cllr Grace introduced this item referring to a paper that had previously been distributed to councillors. He reminded councillors that at the Town Council meeting on 30th July councillors had received a report from the Legacy Group summarising progress by Pleydell Smithyman (PSL) on the Gaskell Field work. PSL had organised a public consultation event in the town on 4th July in addition to further invitations for the community to express its views on the Field. A report on the outcomes of the public consultation process has been produced by PSL. The report was a factual statement and analysis of the responses received. Cllr Grace recommended that the report be made available to the public, with a copy placed in Much Wenlock Library and an e-version posted on the Council's website. The purpose would be simply to make the report available to the community for their information. The report does not make recommendations for the future enhancement or management of the Field. Cllr Grace reported that PSL were now working on their final report on the Field to the Council and its partners; this would help inform any management plan, the type of maintenance regimes and any bids for additional funding for the Field. It would also help inform discussions with the Shropshire Council and the School regarding the design and management of the new school and any successor to the current joint use arrangements.

Cllr Grace said that the report on options for the Field would clearly be of interest to the whole community but its main purpose would be to advise the Gaskell Recreation Ground Board of Management and Town Council as the managers of the Field. The Board and Council would need to consider their priorities and it was therefore suggested that the final report be considered at a special meeting of the Gaskell Recreation Ground Board of Management, with members of the 2012 Working Group also invited to attend. The proposed date was 8th October 2009.

After a discussion the council agreed that the Report on Consultation be made publicly available and that a special meeting of the Gaskell Recreation Ground Board of Management should be held on 8th October to receive the consultants' recommendations.

b. Update on the Much Wenlock 2012 Tourism Impact Study Report.

The Town Clerk reported that the final version of the report reflected neutralising comments submitted by the Town Clerk and Cllr Grace; these reflected the council's views on the ownership of town archive materials.

**197 Much Wenlock Archives: conservation, digitisation and cataloguing work**

The Town Clerk reported that the Shropshire Museums Service, with support from Shropshire Archives Service and the Town Council, had been successful in a bid for funding from the Esmee Fairburn Trust for work on the conservation, digitisation and cataloguing of the Much Wenlock archive collections. The conservation and digitisation work would be carried out in the specialised conservation and digitisation studios at Shropshire Archives in Shrewsbury. To complete the work the Archives Service propose to temporarily transfer to Shropshire Archives the William Penny Brookes and Wenlock Olympian Society-related material during September and the Wenlock Agricultural Reading Society material during October and November. This would enable both the conservation and digitisation work to be completed. The cataloguing work on the un-catalogued material within Much Wenlock archives will take place at Much Wenlock in November. After a discussion the council agreed to the request for the temporarily transfer of the records to Shropshire Archives to conduct the proposed conservation and digitisation work.

**198 Flood Management Working Group report**

Cllr Turner introduced this item referring to a supporting paper and the minutes of the recent meeting of the working group, both of which had been previously distributed to councillors. Cllr Turner referred to the presentation given by the working group at the Annual Town Meeting and to current issues, including the fact that Much Wenlock is not acknowledged by the Environment Agency as a flood risk problem area and that the hydrologists' report has not yet been presented to Shropshire Council. Cllr Turner said that the working group was keen for the Town Council to address a number of issues identified by the working group. Councillors then discussed the matter and welcomed the report and asked Cllr Turner to advise the working group that the council fully recognises the importance of the work carried out by the working group and would like it to produce a flood management manifesto for the town listing up to 10 key issues that needed to be addressed and that the council could progress. The Town Clerk was asked to write to the Chief Executive of Shropshire Council seeking the release of the hydrologists' report. Cllr Turner then asked the council to revise the membership of the working group and it was agreed that the group should comprise two town councillors and up to four residents, to include one from an outlying area (eg Bourton or Wig Wig) and that only if the outlying qualification cannot be satisfied should anyone else be invited to join the working group.

**199 Reports from representatives on outside bodies and Shropshire Council**

Cllr Whiteman reported that the remedial work on Harley Bank had not yet started but that the planned works would not require a road closure. He also reported that Merrywell Lane was being dressed and that additional bollards would be installed on Sheinton Street in Much Wenlock.

**200 Date and agenda items for the next meeting**

Councillors asked for the following to be included in the next agenda:

- Much Wenlock 2012 Legacy Group – report re the sponsorship opportunities study

**201 Finance**

It was

**RESOLVED:** The financial statement be signed and expenditure to the value of £22,172.15 be approved.

**202. Confidential Business: In view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was**

**RESOLVED:** The press and public be excluded from the meeting pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

**203 Much Wenlock Archives – ownership matters**

The Town Clerk introduced the item and reported on recent discussions involving Cllr Dugdale, the town archivist and himself. Cllr Dugdale then spoke on the subject, referring to her supporting paper and draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) that had previously been distributed to councillors. Cllr Dugdale said that after some deliberation it was now recommended that the council should attempt to reach agreement with the Wenlock Olympian Society on archive ownership (and other matters) via a memorandum of understanding. Councillors discussed the proposal but agreed that a fallback approach was needed if the MoU approach failed. It was agreed that an independent assessment of the legality / provenance of the 1950 minutes should be obtained – clarifying if the minutes represented a legal transaction of the assets. Cllr Dugdale was asked to bring a legal opinion and revised MoU to the October council meeting.

**204 Better Welcome Working Group - Proposal**

The Town Clerk and Cllr Lathe provided an update to the council on the status of the invitations to tender for orientation boards and interpretation panels. The council was advised that following the production of the specification, six invitations had been issued and four quotations had been received. The team reviewing the quotations planned to report and make a recommendation to the council at its next meeting the following week. A list of locations and points of interest was distributed and the Town Clerk and Cllr Lathe were asked to add the Methodist Church to the list of places of interest that would be included on the Orientation Boards. It was also suggested that the boards and panels should conform to a common style that needed to be developed and adopted for street furniture and council property. The Town Clerk urged any councillor who wanted to influence the project to participate in the working group.

**205 Date of the next meeting**

The next monthly council meeting will be at 6.30pm on Thursday 1 October 2009 – in the Guildhall. The main agenda will be preceded by a presentation on affordable housing by Jake Berriman, Head of Strategy and Policy at Shropshire Council.

The meeting closed at 10.50 pm.

Signed ..... Chairman

1 October 2009

Approved