

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE GUILDHALL MUCH WENLOCK AT 6.30 PM ON THURSDAY 1 OCTOBER 2009

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

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

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

Prior to the meeting, at 6.30pm, Mr Jake Berriman, Head of Strategy and Policy at Shropshire Council addressed the council on the subject of affordable housing. He said that he was pleased to see that the Shropshire Core Strategy and Sustainable Community Strategy were on the meeting's agenda. He then described the background to the development of Shropshire Council's Affordable Housing Policy and said that it would be replaced in due course by the council's Core Strategy. He then described the approaches to the provision of affordable housing within new developments and the different types of affordable housing including self-build. He stated that Shropshire Council was adopting a proactive approach to the provision of affordable housing. In a response to a question about Community Land Trusts, Mr Berriman stated that few had delivered to date and that the process needed streamlining. In a response to a question about how town and parish councils could assist, Mr Berriman stated that they could help identify suitable land holdings, develop local policies and work directly with Shropshire Council. He said that Shropshire Council employed a Rural Enabling Officer whose job included encouraging parish and town councils to get land released for affordable housing. Mr Berriman was thanked for his presentation, he then left the meeting.

The Revd Jan Ashton said prayers.

211 Apologies: Cllr Mr T Lathe (long-standing prior commitment)

212 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.

Cllr Grace declared a personal interest in item 11 as a governor of William Brookes School.

Cllr Turner declared a personal interest in item 11 as a member of Much Wenlock Bowling Club.

Cllr Green declared a personal interest in items 7a and 11 as a member of Much Wenlock Cricket Club.

Prejudicial

Cllr Humphries declared a prejudicial interest in item 25 (Proposal to commission Periodic Inspection Reports for Electrical Installations at the Guildhall and Corn Exchange)

Cllr Grace declared a prejudicial interest in item 7a (Letter from Much Wenlock Cricket Club) as an officer Much Wenlock Cricket Club.

The Mayor declared a prejudicial interest in item 7a (Letter from Much Wenlock Cricket Club) as an officer Much Wenlock Cricket Club.

213 Meeting agenda

Cllr Humphries raised a point of order arguing that, for procedural and legal reasons, Agenda item 26 (*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 taken before

Agenda item 9 (*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*).

After consultation with the Town Clerk, the Mayor ruled in favour of the change to the order of the agenda items.

214. 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.

Members of the public and the Town Clerk then left the room.

215. Complaint against the Town Clerk – ref the 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

The council discussed the complaint and it was unanimously

RESOLVED: The Town Council has considered the complaint and concluded that there is no substance to the allegation that would warrant further action.

It was then

RESOLVED: The press, public and Town Clerk be readmitted to the meeting. Members of the public and the Town Clerk returned to the room.

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

217 Minutes: The minutes of the meeting of 30 July 2009 were approved with a correction to reflect the fact that the meeting had closed at 10.50pm not 11.50pm. Ref Min 188, the Town Clerk was asked to check the correct starting date for the fortnightly 860 bus service and reflect this in the approved minutes.

218 Matters Arising

a. Much Wenlock Traffic Proposals (Min 208): The Town Clerk reported that following the Special Town Council meeting on 10 September, Shropshire Council had confirmed that the public exhibition on the traffic proposals for the A458 etc would be held in Holy Trinity Church from around 10:00am on Monday 19th October 2009 until 2:00pm on Saturday 24th October 2009. Shropshire Council officials will be available to answer any questions between 10:00am and 2:00pm on Saturday 24th October. Posters will be erected to publicise the exhibition.

79/09

In addition, Shropshire Council's Communications Team will issue a press release to appear in the week before the exhibition to the Bridgnorth Journal as well as other media including the Shropshire Star and local radio.

b. Flood management (Min 198): The Town Clerk reported that in a response to the council's enquiry about the status of the hydrologists' report on the Much Wenlock area he had received a reply from Shropshire Council's Head of Technical Services (Environmental Maintenance) that the report was being finalised and that it was planned to ask Philip Dunne MP to chair a meeting of the Much Wenlock Flood Forum in late October to discuss the report with the consultants. It was expected that the report would be available to all forum members before the meeting.

c. Town Council Property Condition Survey (Min 81): Cllr Turner reported that the council's panel had reviewed the tenders received and agreed a shortlist. It was hoped that a recommendation would be presented to the November council meeting.

219 Finance

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

Payee	Description	Amount
npower	Guildhall electricity consumption	601.07
npower	Corn Exchange electricity consumption	259.01
Norvid Cleaning Services	Window cleaning services	34.50
Quick Skips (Telford) Ltd	Cemetery skip hire	86.25
Malcolm Macintyre-Read	Provision of Guildhall poster	25.75
Cash	Petty cash	50.00
B L Corfield	Cemetery grass-cutting and maintenance	936.00
R D May	Floor polish and cleaning pads - Guildhall	34.60
British Gas Business	Corn Exchange gas consumption	42.77
Lyreco UK Ltd	Stationery	1.43
Shropshire Council	Pension Fund - additional lump sum (annual)	1,715.00
Shropshire Council	Corn Exchange non-dom rates - Sep 2009	294.00
Shropshire Council	Guildhall non-domestic rates - Sep 2009	346.00
Shropshire Council	Cemetery non-domestic rates - Sep 2009	66.00
Balfours	Commission and charges re Linden Lodge	79.06
Total		4,571.44

In answer to a question about the state of the council's finances the Town Clerk advised that he would be reporting on this matter at the next meeting.

b. Donation for Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal: The Town Clerk reported that the council normally made a donation to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal and that the local branch arranged the provision of two wreaths. After a brief discussion it was **RESOLVED** Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, a donation of £100 be made to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

c. Request for a donation towards a commemorative peal board: The council discussed a request for a contribution from the Wenlock Olympian Society for a donation towards the cost of a Peal Board that will be erected in the Holy Trinity Church bell tower to commemorate the successful completion of the special peal in celebration of the birth of William Penny Brookes. After a discussion it was

RESOLVED Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, a donation of £75 be made towards the cost of the commemorative Peal Board.

Approved

Cllrs Pinches and Grace left the room. Cllr Whiteman took the Chair.

220 Correspondence

a. Letter from Much Wenlock Cricket Club

The council discussed a letter from Much Wenlock Cricket Club. The club is seeking confirmation and clarification on a number of points concerning the proposed new pavilion on the Gaskell Field. After a discussion the council agreed that it would need to be satisfied about the following before granting the club security of tenure re the proposed new pavilion:

- That the capital cost of building the new pavilion is fully funded from either grant funding and/or the resources available to the Cricket Club;
- That the annual maintenance and operational costs of the new pavilion can be met from revenues generated by the building and its users;
- That the administrative burden of management of the new pavilion will not fall upon the Town Council.

It was also agreed that the council would respond to the following matter and any other related issues after the current Gaskell Field consultation exercise has been completed:

- That the proposed new facility will be suitable for the proposed purpose and of benefit to the users of the Gaskell Recreation Ground, it would be useful to understand what facilities additional to those required for cricket might be attractive to the Town Council and how the Town Council would suggest the additional expenditure to provide these facilities be funded.

The Town Clerk was asked to respond accordingly to the Cricket Club.

Cllrs Pinches and Grace returned to the room. Cllr Pinches resumed the Chair.

b. Re-tendering of local bus service contracts – invitation to comment

In response to a letter from the Passenger Transport Services department of Shropshire Council, councillors agreed that a reply be sent supporting the retention of a number of local bus services including the No 9 and 39 services (Bridgnorth - Broseley - Much Wenlock).

c. Letter from Wrekin Riders BMX Club for support in applying for a grant

The council agreed to write in support of an application by Wrekin Riders BMX Club for a grant to open up BMX racing opportunities in rural Shropshire.

d. Request for comments on a recent Much Wenlock Car Parking Enforcement Review

The council discussed proposed parking solutions developed by the Traffic Management and Regulation Team at Shropshire Council in response to parking concerns raised in the past. Councillors approved a number of the proposals but asked the Town Clerk to pass the following comments to Shropshire Council:

- Objection to the proposal for no loading at any time on the Guildhall side of Wilmore Street Barrow Street
- Objection to the proposed loading bays on Barrow Street and Wilmore Street
- Objection to the proposed no waiting at any time in St Mary's Lane except the one at the back of the public toilet block.

The Town Clerk was asked to request that the proposals be included in the Shropshire Council's Much Wenlock Traffic Proposals exhibition.

e. Letter from a local resident seeking council support for the provision of improved facilities for teenagers in the area

The Town Clerk reported that he had been contacted by a local resident reporting that some local youths were preparing a bicycle jump on the embankment at Station Road and that she was concerned that this could lead to a hazard for dog walkers at night and that a separate recreational area should be provided for the local youths. The Town Clerk reported that he had visited the site and spoken to the youths who had said that they would like an area of land where they could create their own mountain bike tracks. The council discussed the matter and Cllr Durbin advised that natural play areas were being encouraged by Shropshire Council. The council agreed that the Town Clerk should contact Shropshire Council on the matter.

The following items were circulated to councillors: *Phase 2 Heritage Lottery Fund application for Much Wenlock Museum, Shropshire Housing Group Annual Report 2008/09, Parish Pump – September 2009, The Friendly Bus News – September and October 2009, NALC Employment Briefing on 2009/10 Pay Claim, SALC training courses, NALC briefings, Newsletter of the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust. Letter from Shropshire Council with invitation to Maintaining High Quality Education Provision meetings in October. International Tree Forum – local branch newsletter – Oct 2009.*

221 Planning

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

09/02689/FUL Proposed loft conversion, alterations and extensions (revised scheme) at 8 Oakfield Park, Much Wenlock.

Councillors discussed the application and agreed that the revised scheme was an improvement on the previous application (09/00611/FUL) and welcomed the scaling down. However, it was proposed and agreed to **object** to the application as the proposed extension is not subordinate to the main roof line and the development would have an adverse impact on the residential character of the area.

Cllr Dugdale asked that her vote against the proposal be recorded.

09/02405/TCA: To crown reduce winged sections of crown to shape to 18” above fence one laburnum, to crown reduce by 25% one acer crimson king, to fell one eucalyptus, to crown reduce by 20% and crown thin one sorbus, and crown reduce by 20-30% and remove 1 or 2 lower limbs one birch within Much Wenlock Conservation Area at Trees at Rear of 5 Queen Street, Much Wenlock.

The council agreed that it supported the application.

Councillors asked for feedback on Shropshire Council’s planning decisions. The Town Clerk said he would investigate the most efficient and effective way of communicating decisions to councillors.

222 Corn Exchange Community Notice Board

Having dealt with the matter of the complaint against the Town Clerk, the council discussed the related matter 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. The Town Clerk described a sequence of events concerning the community notice board and gave reasons for the actions he had taken, referring to the items that he had removed from the notice board. He said that the matter had been triggered after he had removed an A3-sized colour photocopy of a page from a national newspaper because he judged the article to be probably defamatory and inappropriate for a public notice board erected on town council property.

The council was advised that the article in question had been the subject of legal action and that the national newspaper had offered to settle the matter out of court. In addition, the related national newspaper website article had been removed within 24 hours of its publication. Councillors were reminded that the disputed community notice board had been removed by the local resident who had constructed and erected it.

Councillors then discussed the matter and it was agreed that it was time to move on.

The council discussed the commissioning a replacement community notice board and were advised that a local resident, who wished to remain anonymous, had offered to pay for a replacement community notice board to be erected under the Corn Exchange. The Town Council welcomed the offer but agreed that it should be the property of the Town Council and managed by the Town Council via the Town Clerk's Office.

The council then discussed the administration of the community notice board and agreed to a proposal that notices would be permitted for local organisations and individuals to advertise, free of charge, community and non-profit making events in and around the Much Wenlock area. Further, that notices that, in the opinion of the Town Clerk, would not be relevant to the community and which were likely to cause offence or be discriminatory in any way would not be permitted. A statement of the terms for placing notices should be displayed on the community notice board when it is erected.

Councillors then agreed to the issue of a press release to the Shropshire Star, Bridgnorth Journal and Shropshire Radio detailing the decision of the Assessment Sub-Committee of the Standards Committee of Shropshire Council re the allegations against all councillors, the town council's decision about the complaint against the Town Clerk and the town council's decision on a replacement community notice board and its future administration.

223 Proposal to adopt a Health and Safety Policy

The Town Clerk reported that council's new insurance underwriters had asked that the council adopt a health and safety policy in the near future. The Town Clerk reported that he had reviewed the H&S policies adopted by a number of other Shropshire councils and had selected one that was probably suitable for this council. He had made some minor changes to the document which was then submitted to the council for approval. Councillors discussed the proposed policy and it was stated that it was in line with H&S policies adopted by small businesses. The Town Clerk advised that the policy would require the adoption of new practices. It was then

RESOLVED: That the proposed Health and Safety Policy be adopted by the council.

224 Actions from the recent Gaskell Recreation Ground Board of Management meeting – including consultation on the Proposed Boundary Treatments at William Brookes School

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that the recent Board of Management had agreed, with reference to the Risk Assessment entry re possible trips and falls at seating areas around the Bowling Green, that the Town Council be asked to get quotations for remedial work to the pavements at seating areas at the Bowling Green. After a discussion it was agreed that the matter be referred to the Leisure Centre Manager for action.

Cllr Turner, being a member of the Much Wenlock Bowling Club, did not vote on this matter.

Councillors then discussed the Proposed Boundary Treatments at William Brookes School. The Town Clerk reminded councillors that when they had reviewed a William Brookes School planning application in November 2008 when the council had agreed after a lengthy discussion, that they strongly supported the application. However, the council had serious concerns about the extent, type and height of the fencing and boundary treatment proposed for the new school and the sports facilities. The council requested that fencing and boundary treatment should only be installed where it was strictly needed and that different treatment should be considered for each element rather than imposing uniformity. The council also requested further consultation before the designs are finalised. The Town Clerk also reminded councillors that the Board of Management had agreed to the proposed boundary treatment for the new Williams Brookes School at its recent meeting. However, the Board wanted assurance that suitable access arrangements between the new school and Gaskell Field would be implemented. The Board also sought clarification on the arrangements for opening parts of the perimeter fence for special occasions eg the annual Olympian Games.

Councillors then discussed the matter and a number of objections to the boundary treatment were stated, including that the perimeter fencing was unnecessary, that the security reasons for the fencing had been overstated, that there was insufficient playing area available for school children and that the access between the school field and Gaskell Field had been inadequately defined. It was recognised that the new athletics track required protection.

Cllr Grace then spoke, with reference to a supporting proposals paper, expressing strong objections to the proposed boundary treatment. After further discussion it was

RESOLVED: That the Council considers the 2m high perimeter fencing between the school playing field and the Gaskell Field is unacceptable on the basis that;

1. It will severely limit the accessibility between the Gaskell Field and the School, which is likely to reduce opportunities for future events and community activities that could jointly be held across both spaces and so not allow the optimisation of revenue income in future.
2. The proposals as yet do not explain or provide assurance as to how users of the Gaskell Field will be able to access the Field on an extended basis and so have use of the car park and other school facilities.
3. It will create a visually unattractive barrier across the field(s) that will detract from the openness of the space, and so run contrary to the adopted planning brief which seeks to protect the Area of Minimum Change, and which is in contradiction to the original ambition of the design of the OSP Project that the school will present a welcoming and inspiring environment for children and for the community.
4. It will also create a radically-changed environment that is suggestive of considerable fear of crime and create a 'compound' within which the school sits and which will be the wrong image for this rural school; the Council notes that Much Wenlock is a low crime risk area and that 'Secured by Design' guidance for schools (April 2004) states that perimeter fencing is not required for security purposes in low crime risk areas.
5. It is not needed for the protection of the running track from unauthorised use, provided alternative fencing proposals are designed in and done so in a way to suit the rural parkland environment.

Cllr Whiteman did not vote on the proposal.

225 Shropshire Core Strategy

Cllr Turner introduced this item referring to a paper that had been distributed to councillors and which had been prepared by a working group comprising Cllrs Durbin, Grace, Stuart and Turner. As agreed by the council, the working group had reviewed both Shropshire Council's Core Strategy Policy Directions document and Shropshire Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy. In proposing the response, Cllr Turner gave a summary of the working group's response to the two consultation documents:

1. Much Wenlock Town Council (MWTC) supports the overall vision for Shropshire of Beautiful, Innovative and Community-Focused
2. Vision needs to be drilled down into the Policy Directions paper
3. MWTC affirms its starting position (first slide and Parish Plan statements) of key objectives
4. Policy Directions paper should affirm Much Wenlock's role as a small market town but not assume that it should therefore apply to Much Wenlock the same crude list of policy directions that might be relevant to much bigger and less sensitive 'small market towns' in other places
5. To be properly community-focused, the Policy Directions should start from the community's aspirations and needs, ensuring market development (e.g. whether from the commercial sector or the social housing sector – they all have their markets) is steered to provide these solutions
6. Policy Directions use language which recognises that Shropshire is not starting from a state of balance, it is obvious that employment and housing are not balanced in Much Wenlock and to avoid being a commuting settlement, prioritisation needs to be given to creating employment opportunities
7. MWTC should affirm the reasons why these policy proposals are not appropriate and agree with the rationale and response set out in the slides

Since producing the draft response the working group had agreed that additional comments should be included in the response re supporting bus routes to Telford Central and highlighting the need to recognise the impact of the growth of Telford on areas like Much Wenlock.

Councillors discussed the proposal and it was agreed that the prepared response to Shropshire Council's Core Strategy Policy Directions document, updated to reflect the impact of the growth of Telford and the importance of good bus services to Telford, should be submitted.

226 Shropshire Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy

Cllr Turner introduced this item and proposed that an identical response should be given to Shropshire Partnership as to Shropshire Council's Core Strategy Policy Directions consultation.

Councillors agreed that the prepared response to Shropshire Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy, updated to reflect the impact of the growth of Telford and the importance of good bus services to Telford, should be submitted.

227 Councillors' attendance at meetings

Cllr Turner introduced this item referring to a paper that had been previously issued to councillors. He stated his concerns about the recent attendance record of Cllr Green and that whilst he considered Cllr Green to be a man with considerable experience and skills, these attributes could not easily be exploited by the Town Council if he did not attend its meetings. Cllr Turner then stated that the Town Council had a significant workload with which it could only deal properly if it had the full commitment of its members. The Town Council owed it to the residents of Much Wenlock to be as effective as is reasonably possible. This effectiveness could only be achieved with a full complement of councillors who were able and committed to discharge the duties for which they were elected or co-opted. Cllr Turner said that he believed that the Town Council should form a view on councillors' failure to fully participate in the work of the Council. Recent Town Council vacancies had demonstrated that there are people in the community who are prepared to join the council and to participate in its debates and activities. It was therefore important that the Town Council formed and expressed a view on absences. Cllr Turner then proposed that the council should do this by implementing the following practices:

1. Noting the names of those councillors who are absent from its meetings and its committee meetings
2. Recording whether or not apologies for absence have been received
3. Noting whether such apologies for absence have been conveyed in an appropriate manner
4. Deciding whether or not such apologies are acceptable
5. Communicating by letter with absent councillors if their absence is not deemed to be acceptable.

Councillors discussed the proposal and it was first proposed that the council adopt items 1 to 3 of Cllr Turner's proposal. This proposal was defeated. It was then proposed that the council adopt items 1 to 5 of Cllr Turner's proposal. This proposal was also defeated.

228 Much Wenlock 2012 Legacy Group – Sponsorship Advice

Cllr Grace introduced this item referring to a paper that had been previously issued to councillors. He reminded councillors that at its July meeting the council had agreed to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with its Much Wenlock 2012 Legacy Group partners relating to advice on sponsorship opportunities as a result of the town's association with the 2012 London Games. This was to ensure that the benefits of the advice from Oaks consultancy would accrue to all partners within the Legacy Group and that the partners agreed to working collectively in the light of the advice. Oaks's advice to the Legacy Group's members did not yet extend to identifying specific sums of funding from specific sponsors but did suggest that there could be significant annual income to the town ranging from £135k to £710k per annum over the next three or four years. The report suggested that the funds could come from commercial, statutory and charitable sources. These were not guaranteed amounts but Oaks are reasonably confident that there will be significant potential benefit to the community.

Oaks have also advised that in order to achieve these significant amounts, the partners involved would need to address a number of challenges and organise themselves in new ways. In particular Oaks suggest that the partners would need to provide clarity about the ownership of property rights, to develop an umbrella organisation which would be attractive to sponsors and also to ensure that it supported the delivery of future work with adequate resources. In particular, Oaks recommended that the partners should agree to establish a William Penny Brookes Foundation as a means of organising themselves.

As a consequence of receiving the Oaks presentation and further discussions of the report, the Legacy Group, which met on 16th September, agreed two key actions. Firstly, members agreed to take forward Oaks's strong recommendation that a William Penny Brookes Foundation be formed to take forward the work and to achieve a 2012 legacy. This would be subject to all members taking the proposal to their organisations for discussion and agreement. As the report makes clear the success will be dependent on partners having a clear and common understanding as to how the sponsorship will benefit the community of Much Wenlock. Additionally, if all the members of the 2012 Legacy Group agreed to take the proposal forward, they would need to explore the appointment of trustees. These would predominantly be from Much Wenlock but may need to consider representation from key external partners. Secondly, in parallel with establishing the Foundation, the Legacy Group had also agreed to commission a second phase of collaboration with Oaks to develop an operational plan for identifying and securing sponsorship. Advantage West Midlands have agreed to provide any immediate funding for this second phase, although the terms of a contract with Oaks have yet to be formalised; details will be reported to the Town Council in due course.

Cllr Grace then spoke in support of the proposals in his paper for the council to agree to the principle of establishing a William Penny Brookes Foundation and to work with its partners on the second phase of the sponsorship work with Oaks. After a discussion it was **RESOLVED**: That the Town Council agrees to the principle of establishing a William Penny Brookes Foundation and that it continues to work with its Much Wenlock 2012 Legacy Group partners to develop the detailed remit and purpose of the Foundation, with these details to be considered at a future Town Council meeting.

It was also

RESOLVED: That the Town Council agrees to working with its partners on the second phase of the sponsorship work with Oaks to develop an operational plan and bringing forward sponsorship opportunities.

229 Much Wenlock Flood Management Working Group

Cllr Turner introduced this item referring to a paper that had been previously issued to councillors. He reminded councillors that the council meeting on 3 September had recognised the work carried out by the Flood Management Working Group and asked for a Flood Management Manifesto to be produced setting out the top 10 issues that needed to be addressed. The council also recognised that the working group should include two Town Councillors; there was only one at present.

Cllr Turner referred to the draft manifesto which comprises actions under four headings:

1. Protect and inform local residents
2. Receive the Hydrologists' Report on the catchment and review its implications
3. Planning applications
4. Promote better understanding of river and surface water flooding locally

Councillors expressed reservations about item 1, as the document did not make clear which organisation(s) would have responsibilities for the proposed warning system. It was stated that a number of agencies (eg Severn Trent, Environment Agency, the emergency services and Shropshire Council) already had responsibilities for some of the tasks included in the draft manifesto.

After further discussion it was

RESOLVED: That this Council adopts the Much Wenlock Flooding Management Manifesto dated 23rd September 2009, modified to include the involvement of the Environment Agency, Shropshire Council and the Emergency Services, and that the Council will make every effort to use the Manifesto when addressing flooding issues in the Much Wenlock area.

It was also

RESOLVED: That Cllr Stuart be appointed to the Flood Management Working Group.

230 Reports from representatives on outside bodies and Shropshire Council

Cllr Whiteman reported that remedial work would start on Harley Bank at the end of October. He also reported that there would unfortunately be no immediate improvements to the public toilets in the town as the provision of public toilets is currently the subject of a county-wide review by Shropshire Council.

231 Date and agenda items for the next meeting

The next meeting will be at 7pm on Thursday 5 November 2009. The Town Clerk was asked to obtain copies of the Standards Board's DVD on declarations of interest – to be circulated to councillors.

232 Finance

It was

RESOLVED: The financial statement be signed and expenditure to the value of **£4,571.44** be approved.

233. 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.

234. Administrative Assistant – Confirmation of appointment

The Town Clerk reported that the council's Administrative Assistant, Mrs Wendy Burd, had been employed for three months and that he had completed a probation assessment that was based on the role description and person specification used for recruitment. He advised that the Mrs Burd had met the requirements of the post and recommended confirmation of appointment. He added that Mrs Burd had stated that she was prepared to work additional hours / days and to take minutes of meetings. After a discussion it was

RESOLVED: That the appointment of Mrs Wendy Burd as Administration Assistant be confirmed.

235. Pay rates for council employees

The Town Clerk reported that the pay of two employees (the Town Clerk and the Administration Assistant) was covered by a National Agreement and that the national salary award 2009/10 had recently been concluded. In addition, both employees were now entitled to an additional day's annual leave.

The Town Clerk advised the council that its other employees were on hourly rates that were adjusted each year following the publication of the national minimum wage rates – which are revised wef 1 October each year. After a discussion it was

RESOLVED: That the hourly pay rates for council employees who are not covered by national negotiations should be raised by 9p an hour with effect from 1 October 2009.

236. Better Welcome to Much Wenlock Project

In the absence of Cllr Lathe the Town Clerk provided an update to the council on the Better Welcome sub-project re orientation boards and interpretation panels. He reported that following the decision at the council meeting on 10 September 2009 to select Signs of the Times as the supplier of the orientation boards and interpretation panels, a refined quotation had been received from the supplier. The Town Clerk advised that there were two areas subject to a possible cost increase, artwork and installation – on the latter the council was advised that a local contractor might yet be chosen for installation. After a discussion it was **RESOLVED**: That the council accept the quotation of £13,343.70 excluding VAT from Signs of the Times as the supplier of the Better Welcome orientation boards and interpretation panels, but that a total of £14,000 be allowed to include contingency.

237 Much Wenlock Archives – ownership matters

Cllr Dugdale introduced this item referring to a paper that had been issued to councillors. She reminded councillors that at the 3 September council meeting she had been asked to contact a named Queen’s Counsel for free legal advice regarding the ownership of the Wenlock Olympian Society and William Penny Brookes-related materials in the archives. Unfortunately, she had discovered that the person was away on a cruise. Cllr Dugdale stated that to date no lawyer has been identified who was prepared to offer advice free-of-charge. Cllr Dugdale recommended that the council discuss the proposed Memorandum of Understanding re the archives with the Wenlock Olympian Society. She said that the council could alternatively seek and pay for legal advice to answer questions related to archive ownership – or pursue both routes.

Councillors then suggested that her proposals were not in line with a previous council resolution which either needed to be implemented or overturned by a rescinding resolution. It was also suggested that further action should be deferred until it was established whether or not the proposed sponsorship foundation went ahead.

Cllr Humphries then left the room.

238 Proposal to commission Periodic Inspection Reports for Electrical Installations

The Town Clerk reported that the Corn Exchange and Guildhall had recently been inspected by an advisor from the council’s insurers. Ref the Guildhall, the advisor’s report states that the "electrical installation must be inspected, and tested as necessary, and a 'Periodic Inspection Report for an Electrical Installation' obtained on its condition as prescribed in BS 7671:2008 Requirements for Electrical Installations (IEE Regs, 17th Edition)." The council’s brokers have asked for confirmation of compliance by 10 November. The Town Clerk advised that it would be prudent to have inspections carried out at both the Guildhall and Corn Exchange. Councillors discussed the matter and the quotation provided by a local electrical contractor for carrying out a periodic electrical inspection on each building. It was **RESOLVED**: That the council accepts the quotation from E W Humphries (Electrical Contractors) at a cost of £400 plus VAT for carrying out periodic electrical tests and inspections at the Guildhall and Corn Exchange plus additional payment should any of the work need to be conducted outside office hours.

The meeting closed at 10.50 pm.

Signed Chairman

5 November 2009

Approved