

MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE GUILDHALL MUCH WENLOCK AT 7.00 PM ON THURSDAY 5 NOVEMBER 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 T Lathe, Mr R Stuart and Mr D R Turner.

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

The Revd Stephen Lowe said prayers.

239 Apologies: Cllr Mr P M Whiteman

240 Declarations of Interest

Personal

Cllr Humphries declared a personal interest in planning application 09/02701/FUL.

Cllr Daffurn declared a personal interest in item 7b re location of town council meetings – as a member of the Priory Hall Management Committee.

Cllr Grace declared a personal interest in item 6 re litter on the Gaskell Recreation Ground as a governor of William Brookes School.

Cllr Durbin declared a personal interest in item 23 re the Property Condition Surveys.

Prejudicial

Cllr Humphries declared a prejudicial interest re a payment item in the Financial Statement.

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

242 Minutes: The minutes of the meeting of 1 October 2009 were approved with the following corrections:

- Page 77/09: "The Revd Jan Ashton said prayers."
- Sentence at foot of Page 83/09: "Cllr Whiteman did not vote on the proposal."
- Min 226, 2nd paragraph first sentence – removal of "was".
- Min 231: "to be circulated to councillors" to be added at end of second sentence.
- Min 237: Second sentence to read "... contact a named Queen's Counsel for free legal advice regarding ..."

243 Matters Arising

a. Much Wenlock Flood Forum meeting on 4 December 2009 (Min 198): The Town Clerk, referring to a letter from Shropshire Council, reported that the next meeting of the Much Wenlock Flood Forum would be held at 9.30am on Friday 4 December 2009 in the Guildhall, Much Wenlock. Councillors agreed that the council should be represented at the meeting by the Mayor and the councillors on the Flood Management Working Group – with the expectation that Cllr Whiteman would also receive an invitation as the Shropshire Councillor.

b. Shropshire Council Car Parking Enforcement (CPE) Review proposal (Min 220d):

The Town Clerk reported that, following the site meeting between councillors and Shropshire Council officials, Shropshire Council had issued revised proposals for parking restrictions in Much Wenlock. The proposals had been distributed to councillors. After a discussion, councillors approved the proposals. Shropshire Council will now progress the CPE review.

c. Community notice board (Min 222): The council agreed to take this item under confidential business.

244 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	S137?
Cancelled			
Shropshire Council	Pension contributions	685.03	
HM Revenue and Customs	PAYE and NI	913.74	
B L Corfield	Cemetery grass-cutting / maintenance	1,268.00	
Norvid Cleaning Services	Window cleaning services	25.30	
Vivien Bellamy	Wages	250.00	
Cash	Petty Cash	50.00	
British Gas Business	Supply of gas to Guildhall	46.29	
Mr M Macintyre-Read	Supply of poster for Guildhall exhibition	25.75	
Lyreco UK Ltd	Stationery	10.29	
Shropshire Council	Contribution to Joint Use Scheme	1,068.50	
Quick Skips (Telford) Ltd	Hire of skip at cemetery	86.25	
Parsons Removals	Collection / delivery of volumes to Halls	68.00	
E.ON UK Energy Services Ltd	Street lighting maintenance - Q3	925.52	
Veolia ES (UK) Ltd	Annual duty of care admin charge	34.50	
npower Ltd	Street lighting energy consumption	1,383.20	
Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal	S137 Donation	100.00	Y
E.ON UK Energy Services Ltd	Street lighting - non-routine maintenance	96.98	
Shropshire Council	Pension contributions	652.74	
HM Revenue and Customs	PAYE and NI	828.02	
Viking Direct	Stationery	24.08	
E.ON UK Energy Services Ltd	Street lighting - non-routine maintenance	31.52	
E W Humphries Electrical Contractors	Electrical services	73.60	
Bank interest charge		1.35	
Shropshire Council	Corn Exchange non-dom rates - Oct 2009	294.00	
Shropshire Council	Guildhall non-domestic rates - Oct 2009	346.00	
Balfours	Commission etc re Linden Lodge	79.06	
Wages and Salaries		7,556.42	
Total		16,924.14	

The Town Clerk distributed copies of the Monthly Accounts and Balances report which showed expenditure to date for the current financial year. He advised that forecast expenditure would be included in next month's report when he would make recommendations re movements from reserves. The Town Clerk invited the newer councillors to contact him if they had any questions concerning the report.

b. To agree a date for Precept-setting meeting: Councillors agree to hold the Precept-setting meeting at 7.00pm on Wednesday 13 January 2009 in the Guildhall.

c. Association of Burial Authorities - Annual subscription renewal: It was RESOLVED: That the annual subscription (£90) for membership of the Association of Burial Authorities be paid.

d. Shropshire Association of Local Councils (SALC) AGM on 5 December 2009

The council agreed that Cllr Humphries should attend the SALC AGM and it was **RESOLVED:** That the cost of Cllr Humphries' attendance at the SALC AGM be paid.

The Council agreed to nominate Mrs Dee for the position of President and Cllr Humphries for the position of Vice President.

e. External Audit update: The Town Clerk reported that the External Audit of the council's accounts had been completed successfully – without qualifications or remarks that needed to be drawn to the council's attention. The Town Clerk reported that the relevant pages from the accounts had been posted on one of the notice boards under the Corn Exchange. Councillors congratulated the Town Clerk for his work on the accounts.

f. Local Joint Committee (LJC) grant application – and related order for refurbishment of the embankment slide for Gaskell Play Area

Cllr Humphries declared a personal interest in this matter, as a member of LJC21, and did not speak or vote on this matter.

The Town Clerk reported that he had received confirmation from Shropshire Council that the council's application for a grant of £5,380 towards the refurbishment of the embankment slide for Gaskell Play Area had been successful. Cllr Durbin advised the council that, including this grant, a total of £53,000 will have been spent on upgrading the Gaskell Play Area. The Council recorded its thanks to Cllr Durbin for her work preparing the LJC grant application. The Town Clerk reminded the council that it had agreed to make a £600 contribution towards the work (Min 195). It was then

RESOLVED: That the council agrees to place an order with Ray Parry Playground Services for the refurbishment of the embankment slide for the Gaskell Play Area and approves a council contribution of £600 towards the cost of the work.

245 Correspondence

a. Remembrance events: The Town Clerk advised that the Remembrance Services would be held on Sunday 8 November in Holy Trinity Church at 10.50am and at Bourton Church at 3.00pm. There would also be a short Act of Remembrance under the Corn Exchange at 11.00am on Wednesday 11 November.

b. Enquiry re location of council meetings: The council discussed an enquiry re the location of council meetings which asked if they could be held at Priory Hall. Councillors discussed the matter and agreed that the council chamber was a more suitable venue for its meetings, that it had been used for meetings since its construction and agreed that the council should continue to hold its meetings in the Guildhall. The council agreed to continue to investigate access improvements at the Guildhall including the feasibility of installing a lift and that an offer be made to a local resident to provide assistance so that he could attend council meetings. It was also agreed that Priory Hall should be considered as the venue for the next Annual Town Meeting.

c. Request from e.on for permission to replace an overhead power cable near to the Town Cemetery: Councillors discussed the request from e.on to replace an overhead power cable with an underground cable and agreed that it would be desirable to schedule field drainage improvements at the boundary with Oakfield Park properties at the same time as the proposed works. Councillors agreed that the wayleave agreement should be signed and asked that the Town Clerk investigate wayleave payments. The council agreed that the Flood Management Working Group should be asked to identify drainage improvement options.

d. Action for Market Towns: Following an invitation from Shropshire Council, councillors agreed to participate in the Actions for Market Towns initiative as a result of Shropshire Council becoming a Partner Member of AMT.

e. Request from Chamber of Trade for permission to switch on the Christmas Lights
Councillors agreed to a request from the Much Wenlock and District Chamber of Trade to switch off the Christmas lights on the morning of Friday 4 December – and to officially turn them back on in the evening at around 7.00pm. The event is part of the Chamber's festive events.

f. Shropshire Council's Urban and Rural Speed Limits policies:

Councillors agreed that the council's Pedestrian, Traffic and Street Scene Working Group should review the proposals and bring recommendations to the next council meeting. It was also agreed to publicise the matter in the Wenlock Herald and on the council's notice board.

246 Planning

09/02701/FUL: Ref Shadwell Quarry Farley Road Much Wenlock

Use of land for leisure and recreational purposes including the stationing of 53 no holiday caravans with access tracks and associated parking. Erection of a reception/office building and erection of a building for recreational and educational purposes with associated bin stores and parking areas, with provision of divers platform; pontoon; timber walkways and viewing platforms at Shadwell Quarry Farley Road Much Wenlock.

The Town Council agreed that it supports the application in principle for leisure use and the provision of holiday accommodation, but the council has a number of concerns that either need to be addressed by conditions or requests for additional information from the applicant. The Town Council is concerned that the site would evolve into a park home site.

Issues requiring more information:

- The planning documents include a manager's bungalow – but this does not appear to be listed in the application.
- The planning documents provide insufficient information on the proposed development's sewage capacity and drainage route(s).

Conditions: (to control tenancy and occupancy of the site):

- The site should be closed for a minimum of two months of the year.
- Occupancy of the caravans should be restricted to holiday / leisure use.
- Individual tenancies should be restricted. Long-term tenancies should not be permitted.

Conditions: (other):

- The total number of caravans permitted on the site should be restricted – with preferably fewer than 53 permitted. (The planned 53 seems high for the site).
- A restoration clause is needed.
- Permeable surfaces should be used under the caravans.

Section 106 Planning Agreement / Obligation: Given the scale of the proposed development, the nature of the site and the impact the occupants will have on local services and infrastructure, the Town Council asks that a Section 106 contribution be sought from the applicant for the provision of new public toilet facilities on the Gaskell Recreation Ground and, potentially, contributions to traffic calming measures on the adjacent A4169.

The Town Council agreed that the application should not be determined until a transport assessment has been carried out.

Cllr Humphries did not vote on this application.

09/02763/FUL: Erection of replacement boundary wall at Hall Farm, Bourton, Much Wenlock
The Town Council agreed that it supports the application but asks that a condition be imposed – that the holes / gaps in the boundary wall be retained permanently and should not be blocked.

09/02927/LBC: Conversion of outbuilding to provide annexe accommodation at Ashfield Hall, 49 High Street, Much Wenlock.
The council agreed that it has no objection to this application.

Cllr Humphries declared a prejudicial interest in the following application and left the room.

09/03067/ADV: Application under Section 73a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the erection of 2no. Non-illuminated advertisement hoardings (Retrospective) at the Wheatland Garage, Bridgnorth Road, Much Wenlock.
The council agreed that it has no objection to this application.

Cllr Humphries returned to the room.

247 Litter on the Gaskell Recreation Ground

Cllr Durbin, referring to a paper prepared by herself and Cllr Pinches, reported that the litter problem on the Gaskell Recreation Ground was reaching distressing and unacceptable levels and constituted a health hazard, particularly in the Play Area. She said that it could reasonably be assumed that much of the litter was being generated by local school children. Councillors agreed that there was a problem, that the current litter-picking operation was not working effectively and that the problem should be addressed under the Joint Use Agreement. The Town Clerk was asked to write to the Manager of the Leisure Centre asking for steps to be taken to improve the litter-picking regime at the Gaskell Recreation Ground – and that the letter should be copied to the Deputy Headteacher at Williams Brookes School.

248 Town Council community engagement and communication proposal

Cllr Turner, referring to a paper prepared by himself and Cllr Grace, said that members of the Town Council recognised the need for residents to be kept informed about the progress of current issues, meetings and consultations. He outlined how the council currently engaged with its electorate and suggested how it might move towards becoming more open in the way it conducts its business, involve the community in the challenges that it faces and become better at communicating its achievements. Getting better at communicating with the community would do a number of things for the council, including; improving the understanding of where the council has influence and where it does not, help encourage constructive comment and ideas which can inform council decisions, build support and credibility for the things the council considers priorities and generally to improve the sense of engagement with local democratic processes. Cllr Turner said that he and Cllr Grace recommended that that the council should establish a small working group to make recommendations to the council on how it can improve the effectiveness of its communications and engagement with the community. The working group's first task might be to consider best practise by rural town and parish councils of similar size and how this might be translated to Much Wenlock and to create an inclusion and communications policy for the council to consider.

Councillors discussed the proposal and it was pointed out that many residents did not have access to the internet and therefore the council's website. It was

RESOLVED: That a working group comprising Cllrs Turner, Grace, Pinches, Daffurn and Lathe be set up to make recommendations to the Town Council on how it can improve the effectiveness of its communications and engagement with the community.

249 Pedestrian, Traffic and Street Scene Working Group – Report and recommendations

Cllr Durbin, referring to a paper issued to councillors, reported on the initial meetings of the new working group and its recommendations.

The working group had considered and agreed Shropshire Council's recommendations for new locations for dropped kerbs in the town, viz: Queen Street outside and opposite the bus shelter, Southfield Rd where footway leads down to junction A458, Southfield Rd opposite No. 5 where footway leads to High Causeway and Oakfield Park Junctions and footway exits onto A458. Councillors were asked to inform the working group if they had other locations in mind that would benefit from the introduction of dropped kerbs. Cllr Durbin stated that the working group recommended to the council that the proposed locations for dropped kerbs be accepted and that the town clerk should be asked to write to Shropshire Council approving the locations.

Cllr Durbin also advised the council of a local resident's concerns about negotiating sections of the pavement along Station Road near the playground and along Sheinton Street between its two junctions with Station Road with a wheelchair due to the camber of the pavements. Cllr Durbin stated that the working group recommended to the council that the town clerk be asked to write to Shropshire Council Highways Department asking them to inspect these sections of pavement.

Cllr Durbin then advised councillors of a recent walkabout with the Local Police Officer who had made recommendations towards improving the movement of traffic around the town centre especially for visitors and drivers of coaches and delivery vehicles who are unfamiliar with Much Wenlock. The recommendations were:

- Move weight limit sign on corner of High St and A4169 30 feet further into High St entrance for better visibility add 'narrow road' or width restrictions;
- Junction Back Lane and High St; on facing lamppost two directional arrow sign or direction Shrewsbury/ Bridgnorth, white lines need repainting;
- Bottom of High St remove or re-site red/white 'no entry' signs and poles as they cannot be read by drivers. They are visible only from the doorway of Rainbows End; - The 'no left turn' sign in Barrow St. is poorly situated and is the main cause of traffic entering the High St at the wrong end.
- Bottom of St Mary's Lane and Barrow St.; the cluster sign is badly damaged. The same cluster of signs could also be reorganised to include 'narrow road' or width restriction.
- Width restrictions added to major directional signs
- Queen Street damaged toilet sign.

After a discussion the council agreed that the town clerk should write to Shropshire Council Highways Department requesting that he investigates the working group's recommendations and requests.

Cllr Durbin then advised that, in response to a recent email from a local resident, it was noted by the working group that the English Heritage sign at the top of Queen Street directs coaches to the Priory. It was also noted that coaches have increased in size and weight in the twenty years since the sign has been in place. After a discussion the council agreed that the town clerk should write to English Heritage requesting a review of their signage in view of the concerns about coach routing and recommending the alternative parking at Station Road.

250 Proposed process for agreeing priorities and items for inclusion in the 2010/11 Budget (Finance Committee Min 34)

The Town Clerk, referring to the draft minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 29 September and a position paper previously issued to councillors, reported that the Finance Committee had discussed the approach to be adopted for agreeing the council's priorities and the preparation of the 2010/11 draft budget and its supporting papers. It had been agreed that the Town Clerk should prepare a steady-state budget to include the routine income and expenditure items and that any additional expenditure proposals from councillors, committees and working groups should be prepared and submitted in a standard format to the Town Clerk. Each submission should be in the form of a business case outlining the opportunity or problem, the desired outcome, costs and benefits. These items would be included in the precept pack and discussed at the precept-setting meeting in January. After a discussion the council agreed to the proposed approach.

251 Recommendation to change the name of the Finance, Property and Town and Guildhall Promotion Committee (Finance Committee Min 39)

Councillors agreed to change the name of the "Finance, Property and Town and Guildhall Promotion Committee" to the "Finance Committee".

252 Much Wenlock 2012 Legacy Group

Cllr Grace advised councillors that the partner members of the Legacy Group had affirmed their support for establishing the proposed William Penny Brookes Foundation. He reported that Advantage West Midlands were providing funding to enable Oaks Consultancy to set up the Foundation and continue their work on the sponsorship activities. He advised that Shropshire Council will provide resources to administer the contractual arrangements with Oaks who will be asked to set up the Foundation. Councillors agreed that Cllrs Pinches, Grace and Dugdale should represent the Town Council in the initial discussions and that the Town Clerk should write to Shropshire Council seeking them to provide legal advice on the implications for the Town Council of participating in the proposed Foundation.

253 Letting the Cemetery Field for allotment use - change of lease term

Cllr Turner introduced this item referring to a paper issued to councillors and a previous council resolution (ref Minute 193):

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.

Cllr Turner stated that further investigation had revealed a legal constraint on local councils engaging in leases of more than seven years' duration. Moreover, he advised that the Land Registry states that a discontinuous lease granted on or after 13 October 2003 for a term of more than seven years is subject to compulsory registration. Cllr Turner then recommended that it was simpler, cheaper and more convenient to agree to lease the field to Much Wenlock Allotments Association for a term of six years and that the Association has indicated that it is content with such an arrangement. He then reminded the council that Para 36 of the council's Standing Orders required that a resolution could only be reversed by a special resolution bearing the names of at least three members of the council. Referring to a paper supported by himself, Cllr Pinches and Cllr Durbin, Cllr Turner then proposed that the council should rescind the resolution and further proposed a term of six years and otherwise on similar terms. Councillors then discussed the proposal and it was

RESOLVED: That the Town Council rescinds the following resolution (ref Minute 193):

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 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 six years, subject to rent review and landlord's break clause after three years, such break clause to be instigated by the Council only at twelve months' notice.

Cllr Humphries asked that his vote against the proposal be recorded.

254 Letting the Cemetery Field for allotment use - draft lease and rental

Cllr Turner introduced this item referring to a paper previously issued to councillors. He reported that, as requested by the Town Council, the Allotments Working Group had reviewed the suitability of the Farley Road field site. Site visits indicated its unsuitability on a number of grounds including location, topography and access onto the A4169. Cllr Turner also reported that, following a formal enquiry by the Town Clerk, Wenlock Estates had confirmed that that they had no alternative land available for allotments.

Cllr Turner then went on to talk about the proposed agreement relating to the letting of the cemetery field to the Much Wenlock Allotments Society for allotment use. He said that the draft agreement reflected the spirit of the issues discussed and agreed at the Town Council meeting and had been produced jointly by the Working Group and the Allotments Society. The draft reflected the shorter lease term agreed under the previous agenda item and had been drafted in a broad manner that provides the Town Council with the ability to act in the case of any nuisance or annoyance. Cllr Turner stated that the onus for obtaining consents (such as planning consent) was entirely one for the Allotments Society. He added that the Allotments Society would produce site rules governing the use of the allotments; changes to these would require Town Council agreement. Cllr Turner proposed that solicitors should be instructed to advise the Council and finalise the lease and the proposed grant of the lease should be advertised in a local newspaper. Regarding income from letting the field, Cllr Turner proposed that rent be stepped for the first two years - £150 in year 1 and £250 in year 2. The full rent will be payable from £336 from year 3 and thereafter.

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Cllr Turner stated that in addition to the Council's duty to help in their provision, allotments provided healthy local food, exercise and education.

Councillors then discussed the proposals. It was proposed and agreed that the draft lease be amended:

- (at Para 2.5 to add): The Tenant will be responsible for enforcing Site Rules
- (at Para 2.13): "non-cultivation" to be replaced with "neglect."

After further discussion on possible constraints to the Town Council entering into the lease agreement it was

RESOLVED: That the Council approves the draft agreement, with paras 2.5 and 2.13 duly amended, between Much Wenlock Town Council and Much Wenlock Allotment Society for occupation of the Cemetery Field for use as allotments – subject to confirmation that there are no constraints to the Town Council entering into the agreement.

Cllr Humphries asked that his vote against the proposal be recorded.

It was further

RESOLVED: That the Council agree that the rent payable for the Cemetery Field under the above lease be £150 p.a. for the first year, £250 p.a. for the second year and £336 the following year.

Cllr Humphries asked that his vote against the proposal be recorded.

It was further

RESOLVED: That, subject to confirmation that there are no constraints to the Town Council entering into the agreement, solicitors be instructed to draft a lease for a term of six years having the same effect as the draft agreement approved by the Town Council.

Cllr Humphries asked that his vote against the proposal be recorded.

It was further

RESOLVED: That the proposed grant of the lease be advertised in a local newspaper.

255 Date and items for the agenda of the next meeting

The next meeting will be at 6.45pm on Thursday 3 December 2009 with a presentation from Linda Monteith, Community Regeneration Officer (Southern)

It was agreed to include grants and donations on the agenda.

256 Finance

It was

RESOLVED: The financial statement be signed and expenditure to the value of **£16,924.14** be approved.

257. 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.

Approved

258 Much Wenlock Archives – Motion to rescind the resolution in Min 148 of 2009

Town Council Minutes. Cllr Dugdale introduced the item referring to a motion signed by three councillors seeking, in accordance with paragraph 36 of the council's Standing Orders, the rescission of the resolution noted in Minute 148 of the council's minutes of its meeting held on 11 June 2009. Cllr Dugdale stated that resolution had been found to restrict, if not prevent, discussions relating to the archives at subsequent meetings. After discussion it was **RESOLVED:** That the resolution in Minute 148 of the minutes of the Town Council meeting of 11 June 2009 be rescinded.

Cllr Turner asked for his abstention to be recorded.

259 Much Wenlock Archives – Memorandum of Understanding and Legal Opinion

Cllr Dugdale introduced the item referring to papers previously issued to councillors proposing that the Town Clerk be authorised to communicate the draft Memorandum of Understanding to the Wenlock Olympian Society and that a council delegation comprising Cllrs Dugdale, Humphries and Pinches meet Wenlock Olympian Society representatives to seek an agreement going forward. It was noted that Oaks Consultants were aware of the need to resolve issues about archive ownership. After a discussion it was **RESOLVED:** That the Town Clerk should communicate the draft Memorandum of Understanding to the Wenlock Olympian Society and seek a meeting between Town Council and Wenlock Olympian Society representatives to discuss the document.

Cllr Turner asked for his abstention to be recorded.

Cllr Dugdale then, referring to a paper previously issued to councillors, advised the council on the matter of legal opinion. Councillors agreed to note the points made.

260 Property Condition Surveys

Cllr Turner introduced this item referring to a paper previously issued to councillors. Cllr Turner reminded councillors that at its meeting on 2nd April 2009, the council approved a proposal "to issue invitations to a number of property professionals to tender for property condition surveys of the council's properties, with the aim of understanding the wants of repair and costs over a 5-year period in order that budgeting can be carried out in an informed manner, and help avoid peaks and troughs of expenditure." This work had emanated from the Finance Committee meeting held on 10th March 2009 and the working group originally comprised Councillors Durbin, Yeats and Turner. At the Town Council meeting of 3rd September, a Task and Finish Group comprising Councillors Durbin, Pinches and Turner was appointed to assess the submissions received and make a recommendation to the Town Council. Of the seventeen firms invited, seven responded positively. Subsequently five firms were short-listed and a number asked to provide additional information. The submissions of the short-listed firms were then subjected to detailed scrutiny which has culminated in the Task and Finish Group recommending Balfours LLP as the firm that most closely meets the council's criteria for this piece of work. Cllr Turner also recommended that the work be initiated swiftly to inform the production of the council's 2010/11 budget. Councillors then discussed the proposals and it was

RESOLVED: That the Town Council engages Balfours LLP to carry out this work including surveys, valuations, provision of Energy Performance Certificates and a recommendation for work over a five-year period on a priority basis, on the terms provided in their quotation.

It was further

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk invites Balfours LLP to an introductory meeting and then instructs them to immediately programme surveys in order that an early report can be made to the Town Council.

261 Better Welcome Project

a. Proposal re Market Stalls: Cllr Daffurn introduced this item referring to a paper that had been distributed to councillors. She reported that the project team was recommending the purchase of 14 new tables for the Guildhall Buttermarket to replace a variety of wooden tables. Cllr Daffurn referred to a list of surplus items that would need to be removed to accommodate the new tables and proposed that these be sold as a single lot. The Buttermarket also currently housed a Wenlock Olympian Games commemorative stone which would need to be removed and re-located. Cllr Daffurn also proposed the procurement of 10 polypropylene fire-retardant chairs. Cllr Daffurn reported that the stallholders of the three events held in The Buttermarket were pleased at the prospect of new tables and chairs. Cllr Daffurn then referred to the quotations received and recommended that the tables and chairs be purchased from Caltel Ltd. Councillors were advised that most of the funding for the chairs and tables would come from Advantage West Midlands through the Better Welcome for Market Towns Project.

Councillors discussed the proposals and it was

RESOLVED: That the quotations from Caltel Ltd for table and chairs be accepted.

It was also

RESOLVED: That the surplus items in the Buttermarket be disposed of by sale.

Councillors were asked to consider the best location for the Wenlock Olympian Games commemorative stone. The Town Clerk stated that he would consult the Wenlock Olympian Society on the matter.

b. Proposal re Queen Street: Cllr Durbin introduced this item referring to a paper that had previously been distributed to councillors. She reported that the project team was recommending landscaping improvements in Queen Street adjacent to the public toilets and near the town bus terminus. Referring to a plan Cllr Durbin stated that the proposed improvements comprised a finger post, two hanging baskets and a tree c/w tree guard. Councillors were advised that most of the funding for improvements would come from Advantage West Midlands through the Better Welcome for Market Towns Project. Concern was expressed that the proposal related to Shropshire Council land. Cllr Durbin advised that the proposal had been approved by an officer from Shropshire Council's Environmental Maintenance Department. The Town Clerk reminded councillors that the Advantage West Midlands contributions were only available for work completed in 2009. It was then **RESOLVED:** That the council agrees in principle to commissioning the signage and landscaping improvements in Queen Street subject to their approval by Shropshire Council.

c. Proposal re signage improvements: Cllr Lathe, Chairman of the Better Welcome Group, introduced this item proposing some signage improvements in the St Mary's Lane Car Park. He advised that he did not yet have detailed proposals. After a discussion the council agreed in principle to signage improvements in the St Mary's Lane Car Park subject to their approval by Shropshire Council.

d. Proposal for a variation in the order for Visitor Information Boards

Cllr Lathe reported that work on the Orientation Boards and Interpretation panels was progressing but that the working group recommended a variation to the order for the Orientation Boards – to commission round municipal frames instead of the square posts. This would result in an increase of £550 in the cost of the work– but would result in more

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attractive structures. The council was advised that the overall cost of this element of the Better Welcome Project would remain within approved expenditure (ref Min 236). After a discussion it was

RESOLVED: That the order for Better Welcome to Signs of the Times be varied to commission municipal frames instead of the square posts at an additional cost of £550 plus VAT.

Cllr Grace asked for draft designs to be presented to the council.

262 Guildhall Development Working Group: The supply and installation of 12 specialist stays for the Court Room display cabinets.

Cllr Durbin, referring to the quotation distributed to councillors, advised that the display cabinets needed replacement stays for health and safety reasons. After a discussion it was **RESOLVED:** That the quotation provided by John Sugden for the installation of specialist stays for the Guildhall Court Room glass display cabinets be accepted (£250 labour cost plus 12 specialist stays at c £30 each).

The Town Clerk left the room.

263 Complaint from a member of the public about the behaviour of the Town Clerk

The Town Council discussed a letter of complaint from a local resident. The Council agreed to note the letter but decided that no action needed to be taken. The council decided that the letter of reply should be sent by the Mayor. The council also agreed that the council's Pedestrian, Traffic and Street Scene Working Group should investigate the provision of disabled parking spaces and related matters in the town.

264 Complaint from a member of the public about the failure of the Town Clerk to remove signage from the Gaskell Recreation Ground

The Town Council discussed the related email and agreed that there were no grounds for the complaint but that the issue should be forwarded to the Manager of the Gaskell Recreation Ground. The council also agreed that the Gaskell Recreation Ground Board of Management would consider signage matters when it decides on improvements.

265 Complaint from a local resident re action of Town Clerk in removing an article by the local resident from the community notice board – which the complainant states is a breach of the Act related to the European Convention in Human Rights.

The Town Council discussed the related email and agreed that there was no substance to the allegation that would warrant further action.

266 Complaint from a local resident re action of Town Clerk in inserting a press release on the Town Council notice board that included the resident's name - which the complainant states is a breach of the Act related to the European Convention in Human Rights.

The Town Council discussed the related email and agreed that there was no case to answer on the grounds that the Town Council had instructed the Town Clerk to issue the press release and erect it on the Town Council's notice board. The council noted that the press release included verbatim extracts from the related Shropshire Council Decision Notices – which are themselves public documents.

The Town Clerk returned to the room.

Approved

101/09

267. Community notice board (Min 222): The Town Clerk reported that he had received a quotation from a local carpenter for constructing and erecting a replacement community notice board. He also reported that he was awaiting confirmation that the donor (who wished to remain anonymous) would pay for the notice board. Councillors agreed that once confirmation had been obtained then he should place the order with the carpenter.

The meeting closed at 11.15 pm.

Signed Chairman

3 December 2009

Approved