

**MINUTES OF THE MONTHLY MEETING OF MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE GUILDHALL MUCH WENLOCK AT 7.00 PM ON THURSDAY 7 JANUARY 2010**

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

Councillors: Mrs P Daffurn, Mrs A Dugdale, Mrs L Durbin, Mr M Grace, 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.

The Revd Stephen Lowe said prayers.

**01 Apologies:** Cllrs Mr M Green and Mr T Lathe

**02 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**

Cllr Humphries declared prejudicial interests in a payment in the Financial Statement, item 23 on the agenda (The Corn Exchange – proposal to commission some electrical work) and item 24 on the agenda (The Corn Exchange – proposal to commission some remedial electrical work).

**03 Additional Urgent Business:** The Town Clerk issued an updated agenda with additional urgent items under Finance and Correspondence. It was also agreed that, in the absence of Cllr Lathe, the item on litter in Much Wenlock be deferred to the next meeting.

**04 Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting of 3 December 2009 were approved with the following corrections:

- Min 272 to read "Cllr Dugdale joined the meeting (late arrival due to a prior commitment)."
- Min 273: "Cllr Grace took the chair" in place of "Cllr Whiteman took the chair".

**05 Matters Arising**

**a. Property Condition Surveys (Min 260)**

Cllr Turner, referring to a paper previously issued to councillors, reported that, as a result of commissioning the property condition surveys, the council now had a good grasp of the scale of costs that Balfours recommend need to be budgeted for repairs, maintenance etc over work needed over the next five years. Cllr Turner said that a business case had been prepared by the council's Property Management Working Group for inclusion in the Precept meeting papers.

**b. Traffic management on the A4169 update (Min 208)**

Cllr Whiteman reported that Shropshire Council and West Mercia Police have agreed to implement and enforce a 50 mph speed limit from Homer Head to Buildwas with additional overtaking bans on some stretches. The changes will include additional deer warning signs and the installation of warning reflectors along the edge of the road that are designed to deter deer from crossing the road when car headlights illuminate the reflectors. Cllr Whiteman further advised that the proposal would be advertised soon and that any objections would delay the implementation of the changes.

**06 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>    | <b>S137?</b> |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------|--------------|
| SALC                             | Delegate to training course                | 20.00            |              |
| E.ON UK Energy Services Ltd      | Street lighting maintenance                | 31.52            |              |
| Security Wise Ltd                | CCTV maintenance                           | 296.70           |              |
| E.ON UK Energy Services Ltd      | Street lighting maintenance                | 94.56            |              |
| Cash                             | Petty cash                                 | 50.00            |              |
| B L Corfield                     | Cemetery maintenance                       | 328.00           |              |
| E W Humphries Electrical Cont'rs | Periodic electrical inspection - Guildhall | 194.58           |              |
| Gaskell Arms Hotel               | Supply of water for hanging baskets        | 100.00           |              |
| Society of Local Council Clerks  | Annual membership subscription             | 212.00           |              |
| Wenlock Herald                   | Donation                                   | 150.00           | Y            |
| Friendly Transport Service       | Donation                                   | 300.00           |              |
| Much Wenlock Youth Club          | Donation                                   | 100.00           | Y            |
| Hope House Children's Hospices   | Donation                                   | 100.00           | Y            |
| Much Wenlock Festival            | Donation                                   | 1,000.00         | Y            |
| R D May                          | Tub of Icemelt for the Square              | 28.59            |              |
| R Hall                           | Supply of Christmas trees                  | 105.00           |              |
| British Gas Business             | Gas supply - Corn Exchange                 | 341.89           |              |
| British Gas Business             | Gas supply - Guildhall                     | 485.15           |              |
| Wenlock Books                    | Guildhall sales                            | 54.00            |              |
| Mr D Cole                        | Guildhall sales                            | 5.13             |              |
| Ms V Bellamy                     | Guildhall sales                            | 178.88           |              |
| Mr J Moore                       | Guildhall sales                            | 27.00            |              |
| Mr G Russell                     | Guildhall sales                            | 54.00            |              |
| L Diggle                         | Guildhall sales                            | 4.68             |              |
| K Milner                         | Guildhall sales                            | 28.80            |              |
| Housman Society                  | Guildhall sales                            | 273.88           |              |
| V Roberts                        | Guildhall sales                            | 9.45             |              |
| P Francis                        | Guildhall sales                            | 5.40             |              |
| J Murphy                         | Guildhall sales                            | 85.05            |              |
| P Lingwood                       | Guildhall sales                            | 13.50            |              |
| S Milton                         | Guildhall sales                            | 173.25           |              |
| Shropshire Council               | Mayor's Charity annual fee                 | 20.00            |              |
| Ray Parry Playground Services    | Slide refurb @ Gaskell play area           | 6,877.00         |              |
| Shropshire Council               | Corn Exchange non-dom rates                | 294.00           |              |
| Shropshire Council               | Guildhall non-domestic rates               | 346.00           |              |
| Signs of the Times Ltd           | Better Welcome Proj - visitor boards       | 14,284.94        |              |
| Caltel Catering Equipment LLP    | Better Welcome Proj - tables & chairs      | 2,746.09         |              |
| Glasdon Manufacturing Ltd        | Better Welcome Project - seats             | 11,535.14        |              |
| Shropshire Council               | Pension contributions                      | 652.74           |              |
| HM Revenue and Customs           | PAYE and NIC payments                      | 723.42           |              |
| RMW Electrical Services Ltd      | G'hall: Fire alarm etc tests               | 97.75            |              |
| RMW Electrical Services Ltd      | Corn Ex: Fire alarm etc tests              | 230.00           |              |
| Norvid Cleaning Services         | Window cleaning services                   | 25.30            |              |
| Balfours                         | Commission re Linden Lodge                 | 79.06            |              |
| Barclays                         | Bank charges                               | 89.69            |              |
| Salaries, Wages and AVCs         |  | 2,790.79         |              |
| <b>Total</b>                     |  | <b>45,642.93</b> |              |

Approved

**b. To receive the updated Monthly Accounts and Balances**

The Town Clerk, referring to a report that had previously been distributed to councillors, advised that the Monthly Accounts and Balances report had been updated to show December actuals and the movements from earmarked reserves that had been agreed at the December council meeting. He also advised that the accounts showed receipts for the Better Welcome grant from Advantage West Midlands (£25,000) and the LJC grant (£5,380).

**c. Appointment of an internal auditor for 2009/10**

The Town Clerk advised the council that it should now appoint an independent internal auditor for the council's 2009/10 accounts. After a discussion it was

**RESOLVED:** That Mrs Sue Hackett be re-appointed as the council's independent internal auditor for the 2009/10 accounts and that the audit plan used for the 2008/09 accounts should be used for the 2009/10 accounts.

**d. Invitation to join the Shropshire Building Preservation Trust**

The Town Clerk reported a letter from the Shropshire Building Preservation Trust inviting the council to join as a corporate member. After a discussion the council agreed not to take up the offer.

**07 Correspondence**

a. Invitation from Shropshire Council to attend the annual Emergency Planning Briefing on 2 February at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury

Cllr Turner, as the council's emergency planning representative, agreed to represent the council at the annual Emergency Planning Briefing.

b. Invitation from West Mercia Police to participate in a consultation evening re policing priorities on 13 January 2010 in the Shirehall, Shrewsbury

The Town Clerk reported a series of consultation meetings being organised by West Mercia Police to discuss policing priorities.

c. Letter from Shropshire Council re Rural Community Engagement: Hubs and Clusters of Sustainable Communities

The council discussed this invitation to the council to participate in a Shropshire Council rural community engagement initiative. After a discussion the council agreed to be involved and asked the Town Clerk to reply stating that the council would like to be considered as a community hub and be included in Phase 2 of the programme.

d. Invitation from Shropshire Council to participate in consultation on a new Charter for more effective Local Government in Shropshire – responses by end of March 2010

The council agreed that the Charter should be discussed at the February council meeting.

e. Invitation to councillors from the Community Regeneration Officer (Southern Area) to a meeting / gathering of thoughts re the youth of Much Wenlock – to be held at 7pm at the Pinefields Centre on 27 January 2010.

After a discussion the Mayor and Cllrs Durbin and Humphries agreed to attend the meeting.

**08 Planning**

Proposal for a checklist for assessing planning applications

Cllr Grace introduced the item referring to a paper previously issued to councillors. He advised that to get a consistency of approach and streamline discussions on planning applications the Town Council ought to have 'policy positions' on which to base its thinking. As a first step he suggested a number of assessment criteria eg traffic impact, conservation area / tranquillity / landscape impact, potential for community gain, previous related council

decisions that could form the basis of a checklist. Councillors discussed the proposal and agreed that it should be trialled and that suggestions be passed to the Town Clerk who was asked to prepare an initial checklist for use at the February council meeting.

**Notification of appeal re planning application 09/00818/CON** – Demolition of existing garage and store at The Cedars, Victoria Road, Much Wenlock.

The Town Clerk reported that the council could make further representations to the Planning Inspectorate. The council agreed that no further representations were required.

Cllr Humphries declared a personal interest in the above application,

**09/03810/FUL:** Proposed bedroom extension and garage conversion at 6 Forester Avenue, Much Wenlock (Mrs N Kennedy)

The Town Council agreed that it had no objection to this application providing that the development does not lead to an increase to the run-off of surface water. There is a need to avoid increasing the flood risk in the town and its surroundings.

**09/03795/FUL:** Application under Section 73a of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for – Amended design of dwelling subject to planning permission 05/1047 (Retrospective) at Plot 26 Falcons Count Much Wenlock (Bennett Holdings)

The council agreed to object to the application on a number of grounds.

- Pedestrian and Vehicle Access, Roads and Rights of Way. The application states that a new or altered vehicular access is proposed from the public highway and that a new public road will be provided within the site – and this is illustrated on the attached plans. The town council was surprised by this proposal as vehicular access to or from the public car park to the rear was rejected previously by Bridgnorth District Council. The town council understood that access to and from the car park to the High Street would be restricted to pedestrians. It is also not clear from the plans whether the proposal meets highway standards and is adequate for pedestrian and vehicular movement and safety (including emergency vehicles). Given the circumstances and the locality, the town council asks that a Traffic Study be requested from the applicant.

- The proposal appears to require the removal of at least two public parking places (including a disabled space); this is unfortunate given the failure to deliver the agreed number of parking spaces required by the associated S106 agreement.

- Although it may be fairly common for some highway and drainage matters to be conditioned, it may be prudent to require such details to be provided before the application is determined – given the need to ensure a sustainable solution for this site.

- Neighbour and Community Consultation: The council noted that the applicant does not appear to have consulted the neighbours or the local community. Given the history and importance of the site and the proposed development this is a disappointing omission.

Application document section 12 – Foul Sewage

- The applicant does not appear to know whether or not the development will be connected to the existing drainage system.

Assessment of Flood Risk - The application answers “No” to the question as to whether the site is within an area at risk of flooding. The council believes this to be incorrect. David Edwards, Senior Engineer for Highway Asset Management at Shropshire Council, has indicated that GIS mapping shows the site to be in Flood Zone 2. The application therefore appears to require a flood risk assessment in accordance with PPS25 – before the application is determined.

05/10

- The application answers “No” to the question “Is your proposal within 20 meters of a watercourse...” The council believes this to be incorrect as a culverted brook runs under the adjacent High Street and Back Lane.
- The application states that surface water will be disposed of via a soakaway. In order for this to be acceptable the council understands that details of the proposed drainage system, including a soakaway test in accordance with Building Research Establishment (BRE) Digest 365 would need to be submitted for approval.
- Given the above, the answer to the question about increased flood risk elsewhere should perhaps be “Yes”.
- Application Plans – insufficient information: The council is surprised by the absence of a street scene view / plan – to illustrate the proposed elevation of the adjacent listed properties, viz nos 15 and 16 High Street. The absence of such information means that the council cannot take an informed view of the impact of the proposed development on the street scene. It would take skill to design a building that blended in with the adjacent listed buildings – the plans fail to show that this has been achieved.
- Application document section 26 Certificates (Certificate A): The council understands that the proposed development might encroach on the curtilage of 15 High Street, the former Barclays Bank. The council understands that this land might not be in the ownership of the applicant. If this is the case then section 26 has not been completed fully or accurately.

For the above reasons the town council asks that the application be refused. The council agreed that, given the site’s importance, it merits a much-improved design and asks that Shropshire Council encourage the applicant to develop a new design that is more appropriate for the site and that blends in with neighbouring properties.

The council also expressed concern about what has already been built on the site, that some of the partly-built building on Plot 26 may have encroached on the curtilage of 15 High Street, the former Barclays Bank – a listed building; that works carried out by the Plot 26 developer may have breached the 1996 Party Wall Act; that the Plot 26 foundations may have undermined the foundations of 15 High Street – a listed building. For these reasons the town council agreed to ask Shropshire Council to investigate these matters, establish the facts and, if appropriate, take enforcement action.

Cllr Whiteman reported that he had asked for this application to go to committee.

Cllr Dugdale declared a personal interest in the above application and did not speak or vote on the matter.

### **09 Annual Town Meeting: To decide date and venue**

The council agreed that the Annual Town Meeting should be held at 7.30pm on 15 April at Priory Hall. Cllr Dugdale gave her apologies as she would be on holiday on that date.

### **10 Much Wenlock Coffee Bar Club – Cllr Durbin – Doc G**

Cllr Durbin introduced this item, referring to a paper previously issued to councillors. She advised that there is currently no provision for the 15-18 age group to meet on an informal basis away from the streets in Much Wenlock. The Local Police Officer is supportive of the need to provide social space for this age group. The proposal is that the Youth Club Building in Station Road be made available for four evenings a week as a coffee bar club for young people aged between 15 and 18 to meet and socialise. Cllr Durbin explained that the initiative was at an early stage and that the support of Shropshire Council was essential – for the provision of Youth Worker and agreement re the use of the building.

Approved

Cllr Durbin advised that the next steps were to work with Shropshire Council to establish costs and timescale and to report back to the Town Council with further details. Cllr Durbin proposed that the Town Council, in principle, supports the project and considers acting as the community body that can make grant applications eg West Mercia Cashback Fund, the Awards for All Lottery, providing that Shropshire Council agrees to be the responsible Local Authority partner.

After a discussion it was

**RESOLVED** that Town Council, in principle, supports the project to create a Coffee Bar Club for the 15-18 age group at the Youth Club building in Station Road and agrees to act as a community body that can make grant applications, providing that Shropshire Council agrees to be the responsible Local Authority partner.

### **11 To discuss the proposal “That Meetings of the Town Council conclude at 9.30pm and meetings be adjourned to consider any unfinished business”**

Cllr Whiteman said that a number of council meetings had finished late in the evening, with recent meetings closing at 10.50pm and 11.20pm. He suggested that such late finishes could not be described as good practice.

Cllr Humphries then spoke in support, stating that councillors should be prepared to meet for two three-hour meetings a month. He then moved an amendment stating that the meetings should move into committee at 9.30pm.

Councillors then discussed the proposal and amendment and it was stated that agenda-setting could be difficult if some items were likely to be deferred, that members of the public would not be pleased if the items they were interested in were deferred to a later date. Some councillors stated that they preferred not to have adjourned meetings. Councillors agreed to the need to be more efficient at meetings.

Councillors voted on the amended proposal. This was lost.  
Councillors then voted on the original proposal. This was lost.

### **12 Wenlock Edge quarries – future use**

Councillors discussed a report provided by the National Trust who are moving towards a plan with Bardon Aggregates for the sites of the quarries on Wenlock Edge to be transferred from active (mothballed) quarrying to public use. The Town Clerk reported that a public meeting was planned for the evening of Thursday 25 February in Priory Hall when the National Trust's outline plan will be presented. Councillors discussed the need to understand the impact of drainage from the quarries on flood management in the Much Wenlock area. Cllr Stuart agreed to prepare a note on quarry drainage for the Town Clerk to forward to the consultant working with the National Trust.

### **13 Allotments at Cemetery Field – update**

The Town Clerk advised that he had sought and received legal advice on the draft lease agreement. This suggested some changes to the existing text and the inclusion of a number of new clauses. Councillors agreed that, in the circumstances, they would like to review a revised draft at the next council meeting.

### **14 Better Welcome Project update**

The Town Clerk advised that the designs for the orientation boards and interpretation panels had been finalised, the orders for the seats and the Buttermarket tables and chairs had been placed and that the £25,000 grant from Advantage West Midlands had been received.

### **15 Much Wenlock 2012 Legacy Group: update**

Cllr Grace reported that the Legacy Group was working with Shropshire Council to develop a number of Much Wenlock-related items to be included in a Shropshire tourism package bid that is linked to Defra's Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). Cllr Grace, referring to a draft of candidate items, advised that the working group would continue to work with Shropshire Council on the bid.

### **16 Flood Management Working Group proposal**

Cllr Turner, referring to a paper previously issued to councillors, reported on the Flood Forum meeting chaired by Philip Dunne MP and held in Much Wenlock on 4 December. He reported that a substantial Defra funding application, supported by Philip Dunne, will be submitted to support the development of a complete surface and river water model for the Much Wenlock area. This will identify potential solutions but it will take time to collect the necessary data. Given the size of the work invitations to tender will need to be issued.

Cllr Turner also drew the council's attention to a Flood Fair to be held in Much Wenlock at William Brookes School on 16 February. Councillors agreed that the event should preferably be held at a weekend. The event will have stands from a number of organisations including Shropshire Council, the Environment Agency, Shropshire Fire and Rescue, National Flood Forum, Severn Trent, Much Wenlock Flood Management Working Group and flood defence product manufactures.

### **17 Reports from representatives on other working groups, outside bodies and Shropshire Council**

Cllr Whiteman reported that West Mercia Police have advised that they will not support an extension to the 30mph limit through Bourton. Concerning the unpleasant intermittent smell experienced at Farley, Cllr Whiteman reported that the Environmental Health Officer will endeavour to visit the site when the smell is next reported. Cllr Whiteman also reported that Shropshire Council had won an award for the quality of the toilets in the Bridgnorth area.

Cllr Humphries reported that the SALC AGM had proved an informative event. He reported that SALC was dependent on Shropshire Council and that it had been agreed that town and parish council subscriptions should increase by 6% for 2010/11. Councillors congratulated Cllr Humphries for his election as a SALC Vice President.

### **18 Items for the agenda of the next meeting – 6.45pm Thursday 4 February 2010**

- 6.45 Presentation on PACT
- Proposal re Litter in Much Wenlock
- Charter for Shropshire Councils
- Update on Much Wenlock Archives
- Revised agreement re the letting of Cemetery Field
- Flood Management Working Group

### **19 Finance**

It was

**RESOLVED:** The financial statement be signed and expenditure to the value of £45,642.93 be approved.

**20 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.

**21 The Guildhall – proposal to commission remedial work to fire alarm**

The Town Clerk, referring to a letter previously issued to councillors, asked the council to approve work to install an additional fire alarm bell and associated circuitry at the Guildhall. After a discussion it was

**RESOLVED:** That the quotation of £258.40 from RMW Electrical Services Ltd for the installation of an additional fire alarm bell and associated circuitry at the Guildhall be accepted.

Cllr Humphries left the room.

**22 The Corn Exchange – proposal to commission some electrical work**

The Town Clerk asked councillors to consider two quotations for the installation of an additional light switch on the stair outside the intermediate office in the Corn Exchange. After a discussion it was

**RESOLVED:** That the quotation of £93.00 plus VAT from John E Heath Electrical Engineer and Contractor for the supply and installation of an additional light switch on the stair outside the intermediate office in the Corn Exchange be accepted.

**23 The Corn Exchange – proposal to commission some remedial electrical work**

The Town Clerk reminded councillors that a periodic electrical inspection had been carried out at the Corn exchange in December. The inspection report identified some remedial work that was needed. The Town Clerk asked councillors to consider a quotation for the work, advising that the council's insurers had asked for remedial work to be carried out as soon as possible. After a discussion it was

**RESOLVED:** That a quotation of £118 plus VAT from E W Humphries Electrical Contractors for the remedial electrical work at the Corn Exchange be accepted.

Cllr Humphries returned to the room.

**24 Retirement of the Town Clerk / Recruitment of a new Town Clerk**

Councillors discussed a paper with a number of proposals concerning the retirement of the Town Clerk and the recruitment of a new Town Clerk. The Town Clerk had tendered a letter of retirement to councillors on 14 December stating his desire for his retirement to take effect from 30 April 2010.

Councillors discussed the paper and it was

**RESOLVED:** That the Mayor write to the Town Clerk accepting notice of the Town Clerk's retirement, acknowledging the Town Council's appreciation for being given four months' notice and thanking him for his work over the past two years.

It was further

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council agrees to recruit to fill the vacancy of Town Clerk without delay by publishing an advertisement and a press release.

It was agreed that the vacancy should be advertised in or with the Shropshire Star, Job Centre Plus, the Shropshire Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Council Clerks, Shropshire Council and Telford and Wrekin Council.

09/10

Councillors then discussed a draft recruitment policy that had been previously issued for review. Councillors agreed to the need for a recruitment policy and agreed the following changes to the draft document:

- Items 6 & 7 to be merged to read: The filling of the position of Town Clerk and other positions will be the responsibility of a designated Recruitment Panel of council members with a recommendation to appoint being made to a meeting of the Town Council.
- All subsequent items renumbered.
- Item 11 renumbered 10 to read: Contracts of Employment must be ratified by the Town Council.
- Item 13 renumbered 12 to read: Formal staff appraisals will be conducted quarterly during the first year of employment and six-monthly thereafter.

After a discussion it was

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council adopts the Recruitment Policy as amended.

Councillors agreed the proposed Job Description and Person Specification for the post.

Councillors then discussed the appointment of a recruitment panel. After a discussion it was agreed that the recruitment panel should comprise the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and Cllrs Humphries, Durbin and Turner.

The meeting ended at 10.00pm.

Signed ..... Chairman

4 February 2010

Approved