

Minutes of the meeting of the Town Council held in the Guildhall, Much Wenlock on Thursday 7 December 2006 at 7.00 pm

Present: The Mayor, Councillor D M J Gibbon JP, in the Chair

Councillors: G D A Bowden, D N Hill JP, E W Humphries, W J Jones, Mrs M E Thomas, Mrs B Ward, P M Whiteman OBE, Mrs A Williamson.

Mrs A Downes Town Clerk

The Revd Stephen Lowe said prayers.

288 Apologies: Councillor Mitchell was absent.

289 Declarations of Interest:

Councillor Whiteman declared a personal interest in all matters relating to Bridgnorth District Council (District Councillor).

Councillor Bowden declared a prejudicial interest in the request for a donation by the Much Wenlock and Bourton OAP Committee (wife is a member of that committee).

Councillor Jones declared a prejudicial interest in the request for a donation by Priory Hall Committee (member of that committee).

Councillor Gibbon declared a personal interest in all matters relating to Bridgnorth District Council and Shropshire County Council (District and County Councillor). He declared a personal interest in all planning applications as a member of the Planning Committee at Bridgnorth District Council. He declared a prejudicial interest in the application for a donation to the Much Wenlock and Bourton OAP Committee (wife is a member of that committee).

Councillor Hill declared a prejudicial interest in the item concerning the request for funding by the Friendly Bus (member of that committee).

Councillor Mrs Thomas declared a personal interest in the report submitted by the Steering Group of the Much Wenlock Town and Parish Plan (member) and a prejudicial interest in the financial statement (recipient of cheque).

Councillor Mrs Ward declared a personal interest in the report submitted by the Steering Group of the Much Wenlock Town and Parish Plan (member) and a prejudicial interest in the donation to the Christmas Fair (member of that committee)

Councillor Humphries declared a personal interest in the payment of the subscription to the Bridgnorth and Shifnal Area Committee of Parish and Town Councils (member of that committee).

290 Additional Business: The Town Clerk advised that there would be items of urgent business in correspondence (SCC Modification Order 2006, Disabled Parking on St Mary's Lane Car Park) and in Planning (FUL/06/982, FUL/06/993, ADV/06/999 and TCA/TRE/06/104).

291 Minutes: The minutes of the meeting of 2 November 2006 were signed as a true record.

292 Matters arising from the minutes:

Feral Pigeons: The Town Clerk reported that she had spoken to Wellington Town Council who were very satisfied with the service provided to reduce the number of pigeons in their town. It was

RESOLVED: The services of a pest control operator K A Law be engaged at a cost of no more than £1000.

An item will be placed in the Wenlock Herald informing residents of Much Wenlock that the Town Council is paying for the pigeons to be dealt with this year but it is hoped property owners will co-operate and birdproof their properties to protect and prevent pigeons roosting.

293 Finance: The Town Clerk presented the monthly and petty cash accounts, and the financial statement as reported in the cash book, as follows:

Bridgnorth District Council	364.00
B L Corfield	701.00
Christmas Lights Group	100.00
British Telecom	223.03
JDM Accord	91.65
Priory Hall	20.00
Balfours	75.64
Viking Direct	69.85
Beverley Fry	1.80
E Midwinter	11.48
Ms V Bellamy	122.69
K Milner	6.29
Housman Society	154.21
G Taylor	4.50
K Jones	17.96
Mrs V Roberts	3.15
P Lingwood	33.30
Judy Wilson	144.00
Mrs A Downes	25.16
Mrs E Thomas	23.00
Oce Imagistics	16.86
Earl Haig Fund	100.00 (Section 137 Payment)
Cash	50.00
Mrs A Downes	1396.39
Mr A Firmstone	371.44
Shropshire County Council	564.36
Inland Revenue	583.24
Viking Direct	63.38
Mrs D Whitfield	254.13
Viking Direct	47.22
Oce Imagistics	13.22
RMW Electrical	305.50
Bridgnorth District Council	381.50
B L Corfield	1467.00
Florian Fire	458.25
Norvid	23.50
Technical Services	52.88
E.On	75.25
Norman Shuker	355.00
Signs and Labels	97.43
Penny Farthing	21.46.

It was

RESOLVED: The financial statement be approved and signed.

Donations to organizations/charities: Under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 it was

RESOLVED: A further £100 be donated to the Christmas Fair Committee.

(Councillor Mrs Ward left the room whilst this decision was made).

£200 be donated to Priory Hall Committee towards the provision of a hearing loop.

(Councillor Jones left the room whilst this decision was made).

The donation of £100 to the Earl Haig Fund be ratified.

£100 be donated to the Wenlock Herald.
£50 be donated to Relate.
£50 be donated to Samaritans.
£100 be donated to Hope House Children's Hospice.
£200 be donated to the Live Arts Festival
(Councillor Bowden left the room whilst this decision was made).
£100 be donated to the Much Wenlock & Bourton OAPs Committee
(Councillors Bowden and Gibbon left the room whilst this decision was made)
£100 be donated to Bridgnorth Crucial Crew.

It was

RESOLVED: To make a donation of £100 to the Bridgnorth Furniture Recycling Group once they have formed an official committee and all necessary legal requirements are in place.

It was

RESOLVED: To make a donation of £100 to the Friendly Bus and consider a further donation at the meeting to confirm the rate estimates for 2007-8.
(Councillor Hill left the meeting when this decision was made).

The applications from 'No Panic', Bridgnorth & District Citizens Advice Bureau, Axis Counselling and Vitalise were noted.

Subscription to SALC: It was

RESOLVED: The annual subscription of £30 be paid.
(Councillor Humphries did not vote on this resolution).

Charity Accounts: A meeting had been held. Further information was awaited from the Charity Commission concerning amalgamation of the charities and a further report will be made at the next Town Council meeting.

Rate Estimates: A meeting to discuss and set the rate estimates would be held on 11 January 2007 at 7.00 pm.

Society of Local Council Clerks: It was

RESOLVED: The renewal for 2007 for the Town Clerk's membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks for £150 be paid.

294 Agenda: In view of the attendance of the public at the meeting it was

RESOLVED: To take agenda items 7(e) and (l) at this juncture in the meeting.

295 Children's Play Area: A letter and petition had been received requesting urgent consideration of improvements to the children's play area on the Gaskell Recreation Ground. A meeting had been arranged on 19 December 2006 by a resident of Much Wenlock with the Head of Leisure and Amenity Services of Bridgnorth District Council and the District Councillors and Town Clerk had also been asked to attend. In the interim, the Town Clerk had obtained a list of people in the town who would be interested in setting up a committee and had sent for catalogues and information from play equipment firms. Bridgnorth District Council has funding from the Lottery, money is available from a local developer to offset a planning policy requirement and this committee could also access Lottery money. It was agreed that fencing round the area and improvements to the toilets could also be included within a scheme. It was agreed that Councillor Humphries as Chairman of the Gaskell Recreation Ground Board of Management would be invited to attend this meeting.

296 Much Wenlock Traffic Management Plan: One of the recommendations in the Much Wenlock Town and Parish Plan was the preparation of a Traffic Management Plan and the small group looking into traffic matters had prepared a Draft Much Wenlock Traffic Management Plan, a copy of which had been circulated to all Town Councillors. It was

RESOLVED: The Traffic Environment and Parking Committee of the Town Council meet with the Committee of the Much Wenlock Town and Parish Plan to discuss the Draft Much Wenlock Traffic Management Plan and form a united approach to traffic matters when discussions take place with Shropshire County Council.

It was agreed the Mayor would chair this meeting.

It was reported that the Traffic Study by Shropshire County Council would be undertaken in the Spring and be available in June 2007.

297 Traffic in Much Wenlock: Councillor Gibbon reported that a public meeting to discuss traffic problems in Much Wenlock had been held on 7 December 2006. The matters raised will be referred to and discussed by the Traffic, Environment and Parking Committee.

298 Correspondence:

Post Office – Collection times from post boxes: Philip Dunne MP had corresponded with Royal Mail concerning the times of post box collections from rural areas including Farley, Easthope and Weston, whose residents now have to catch the last post at Much Wenlock at 5.30 pm.

Post Office Card Account – letter from Countryside Alliance concerning the Government decision not to renew the Post Office Card Account beyond 2010. It was

RESOLVED: A letter be sent to Jim Fitzpatrick MP, Minister responsible for Post Offices, confirming the Town Council's support for the retention of the Post Office Card Account.

Notification: from Shropshire County Council that the road between Hughley and Presthope will be closed to traffic for five weeks from 7 December 2006.

Invitation to Housing Strategy Consultation Event on 14 December 2006 at Severn Centre, Highley.

Gaskell Arms Corner Roadworks – copy letter from the owners of the Gaskell Arms Hotel to Shropshire County Council concerning the roadworks to improve the Gaskell Corner on the A458 Road. Councillor Gibbon reported that this scheme will be considered by the Scrutiny Committee in March 2007. It was

RESOLVED: The Gaskell Arms Hotel be informed of the Town Council's concern that the roadworks had affected their business so badly and suggesting that they may have a claim to reduce business rates payable during the period of work.

A copy of this letter will be sent to Shropshire County Council.

It was also

RESOLVED: The Town Council supports any business that has suffered due to the roadworks undertaken by Shropshire County Council at the Gaskell Corner, Much Wenlock in any claim they may make to reduce their business rates over the times the works were in progress.

Linden Lodge: The Town Council's tenant at Linden Lodge had itemized all repairs required. The Town Clerk will establish who is responsible for internal redecoration and report to the next meeting.

Shrewsbury Transport Innovation Fund Study: Details of public meetings arranged about this Project.

Safer Routes to School: Town Councillors were pleased to learn that the footpath from Hunters Gate to Racecourse Lane was to be resurfaced over the School Christmas holiday period.

Bridgnorth District Local Plan 1996-2011 – a copy of this was now available to see at the Town Clerk's Office.

Draft Parish Housing Needs Survey – the draft survey form for the Parish Housing Needs Survey had been circulated to Town Councillors for amendment or suggestion. It was confirmed that this survey would be circulated to every household in the Bridgnorth District.

PACT Meeting – it had been suggested at the recent PACT meeting that more disabled parking spaces be provided on the St Mary's Lane Car Park. Councillor Gibbon reported that the provision of disabled spaces was being considered by officers of Bridgnorth District Council.

The Shropshire County Council (Parishes of Barrow, Acton Round, Much Wenlock, Broseley and Buildwas) Modification Order 2006. This had been received from Shropshire County Council who

would be informed that the Town Council considered that the footpath in Order Map 7 to be superfluous and unnecessary as this area already has sufficient footpaths.

Items circulated included BDC Environmental News, Neighbourhood Watch Newsletters, Shropshire Hills AONB News and Views, Winters Edge 2007 – events in Much Wenlock, Public Transport News November, ITF News October; BDC Members Bulletins, Parish Plans Networks Evening on 18.1.07.

299 Planning: Planning Applications were dealt with as follows:

LBC/06/854 (55 Sheinton Street) – The Town Council has no objection;

FUL/06/891 (11 Walton Avenue) – The Town Council has no objection;

FUL/06/932 (12&14 Stretton Road) – the Town Council is strongly opposed to this retrospective application – the site is at the rear of residential properties, is totally unsuitable for commercial or industrial use and it is suggested this business should be sited a short distance up the Stretton Road on land allocated for such use in the Bridgnorth District Local Plan. There is great opposition locally to how the land is being used at present – it is clearly visible from Wenlock Edge and is an eyesore on the edge of a historic town and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The access to the site is over land in the ownership of Bridgnorth District Council and the applicant does not have as right of access over this road to the application site. The proposed access is also very near to the junction of Stretton Road with the A458 and it is a totally unsuitable and dangerous manoeuvre for large lowloaders and commercial vehicles to back up this road (which they have to do as there is insufficient turning space on the site). The residents of Havelock Crescent and Stretton Road should not have to endure noise and dust, fumes, inconvenience and disturbance at all times of the day and night at the rear of their properties and the access road is being broken up and churned into a sea of mud making it impossible for them to use the back access to their houses.

FUL/06/948 (5 Wyke) – The Town Council has no objection.

FUL/06/958 (43 High Street) – The Town Council has no objection;

FUL/06/961 (The Dingle) – The Town Council has no objection;

FUL/06/972 (Woodhouse Farm) – The Town Council has no objection.

FUL/06/975 (13 Victoria Road) – The Town Council objects to this application. The site is outside the Development Boundary of the Town and further vehicles should not be allowed to exit on to this very dangerous and busy A458 Victoria Road.

FUL/06/982 (19 Bourton) – The Town Council has no objection provided the public footpath is not obstructed by the erection of this garage.

FUL/06/993 (36 Barrow Street) – The Town Council objects to a house being built on what is one of the remaining small spaces in the street scene of Barrow Street. If allowed, it will increase the traffic pressures on an already congested street.

ADV/06/999 (Police Station) – The Town Council has no objection.

TRE/TCA/06/100 (New Road/Chapel Close) – The Town Council does not object to the removal of these trees provided replacement trees are planted elsewhere on the site.

TRE/TCA/06/104 (Mardol Cottage) – The Town Council has no objection.

300 Resignation: Mrs Muriel Palmer had resigned from the Town Council with immediate effect. Town Councillors wished to place on record their thanks for her dedicated service to the Town Council. Her hard work and enthusiasm in helping provide facilities for the youth of the town and in providing Broadplace were very much appreciated and the Town Council wish her and her family well in their new life in Scotland.

301 Unitary Authority for Shropshire: Several Town Councillors had attended the Annual General Meeting of the Shropshire Association of Local Councils at which this item had been debated. Various points of view had been put forward for discussion. Bridgnorth District Council had since voted not to support the formation of a Unitary Authority for Shropshire. Councillor Humphries reported that he

would be attended a meeting of the Executive Committee of SALC and will report back to the next meeting of the Town Council.

302 William Brookes School – An Opportunity for the Future: Following news that William Brookes School was to be rebuilt and improved, Councillor Bowden had produced a paper with his ideas on how this could be better achieved by building a new school on another site in the town. The proposals for the school had been welcomed by the school governors, parents and children at the school, and the community generally. It was confirmed that Shropshire County Council will be consulting with all interested parties in the town, including the Town Council.

With regard to Councillor Bowden's paper, it was agreed Councillor Thomas would take a copy to present to the Governors at William Brookes School and Councillor Gibbon will present a copy to Shropshire County Council and the Head of William Brookes School.

303 Fire Risk Assessments: In view of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Fire Risk Assessments had been carried out on the Guildhall and Corn Exchange and the Reports were presented. Various recommendations had been made and actioned upon. The Town Clerk will obtain the cost of training in fire safety awareness etc.

304 The Guildhall: The Town Clerk had met with Mr R Sandbrook at the Guildhall and his report was awaited.

305 Corn Exchange: The lighting under the Corn Exchange was inadequate and complaints had been received from stallholders. It was

RESOLVED: The lights be replaced with floodlighting and costs for this be obtained and the work carried out as soon as possible.

306 Gaskell Recreation Ground: Draft minutes were circulated. The Ground had now been registered as a charity with the Charity Commissioners. The Cricket Club wish to progress with the planning application for a new cricket pavilion and requested a decision on the grant of a lease from the Gaskell Recreation Ground Board of Management. The Board of Management had made the following recommendation "The Gaskell Recreation Ground Board of Management recommends to Much Wenlock Town Council that with immediate effect a Working group be set up comprising representatives of key stakeholders to discuss future plans for the Gaskell Recreation Ground".

It was

RESOLVED: The Mayor, Chairman of the Gaskell Recreation Ground Board of Management, and Chairman of the Joint Use Management Committee meet with representatives of the

Cricket Club, Football Clubs and Bowling Club.

The Mayor offered to make the necessary arrangements.

307 2012 Olympics and 'A better welcome for Market Towns' initiative: Councillor Mrs Thomas reported on the initiative – an application has now been sent to Advantage West Midlands and a decision will be received by Christmas. A tender notice has been published seeking a consultant to look at Olympic Heritage and Tourism and it is hoped this consultation will be completed by May 2007.

Councillor Bowden said it was vital that leading up to 2012, a full exchange of information should continue between the Town Council and Wenlock Olympian Society, and Councillor Mrs Thomas as a representative on the Sub-Regional Group and that regular reports be made to the Town Council by Councillor Mrs Thomas and Councillor Gibbon (starting in February 2007).

Councillor Mrs Thomas reported that 50 small oak trees from acorns of the De Coubertin Oak Tree are being grown at Kew Gardens. Mr John Tuer, local representative of the International Tree Foundation, is

interested and willing to set up a Tree Trail and plant an avenue of oak trees in the town to create a lasting legacy for the 2012 Olympics.

308 Youth Projects: No new information.

309 Items for next Agenda:

1. Commemorative trees;
2. Unitary Authority for Shropshire;

310 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.

311 Administrative Assistant: The Town Clerk reported that Ms Vivien Taylor had been appointed as Administrative Assistant in the Town Clerk's Office and had commenced work on 21 November 2006.

Signed Chairman

4 January 2007