

# Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held at St Richard's House, Victoria Square, Droitwich Spa on Monday 17 October 2016 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor A Humphries (Chairman)  
Councillor R Murphy (Ex-officio)  
Councillor S Best (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor R G Beale  
Councillor L Evans  
Councillor A H Laird  
Councillor Mrs K Tomalin  
Councillor T J Noyes

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Mrs C Bowden, G R Brookes, Mrs A Hawkins, Mrs M A Lawley and A Roberts.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Councillor A M Sinton, committee member and Councillors Ms J Bolton, Mrs S Harris and R J Morris.

## 145 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor S Best declared an interest in Agenda Item No 10 – Asset of Community Value Nomination: The Hop Pole, 40 Friar Street, Droitwich Spa WR9 8ED.

Councillor R E Murphy declared an interest in Agenda Item No 11 – Accounts for Payment, No 10894 – Second instalment of the Mayoral Allowance.

## 146 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 AUGUST 2016

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Resources Committee held 1 August 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 147 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMUNITY & AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2016

The Committee considered the recommendations set out below.

Minute 110 - St Richard's House Maintenance Programme

RECOMMENDED That Resources Committee be requested to endorse arrangements be made for the tarmac resurfacing of the frontage of St Richard's House to include essential repairs to potholes and general erosion around the water drainage culverts. All work to be sought in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Councillor T J Noyes advised that the works required attention and it was incumbent upon the Town Council to make good the frontage of St Richard's House. Councillor G R Brookes referred to the grant-aided works undertaken by Ringway (the County Council's contractors) for Coventry Almshouses Charity. The Town Clerk advised that it was unlikely that this charitable grant was open to local councils.

#### Minute 113 - Land Holdings

**RECOMMENDED** That the report be noted and Resources Committee be requested to allocate a sum of £40,000 within the Town Council's Estimates for this work.

Councillor T J Noyes confirmed that he had done some investigations with regards to any grants that may be available but without success. The Town Clerk advised that she hoped to meet with the soon to be appointed Land Drainage Officer at Wychavon District Council and would be in a position thereafter to advise as to the success or otherwise of grant aid.

Councillor L Evans queried the sum involved and was advised by the Town Clerk that this was an educated estimate on her part, based on previous jobs. It was hoped that the works could be phased over a period of three or four years, but in any case it would be reviewed at the time of the Estimates and confirmed or otherwise as part of that due process.

**RESOLVED** That Minute Nos 110 and 113 of the Community & Amenities Committee be approved.

#### 148 EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT

Grant Thornton UK LLP had given the Council an unqualified (ie clear) report and confirmed that the information in the Annual Return was in accordance with proper practices and that no matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that the relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met. The formal notice had therefore been displayed.

However two matters that did not affect their Audit Opinion but which the External Auditor wished to be drawn to the attention of Droitwich Spa Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2015 were

- period for the exercise of public rights
- requirement for separate Minute relating to Annual Governance Statement prior to the approval of the Annual Accounts.

The details were noted.

**RESOLVED** That the report be noted and the Town Clerk and her team be congratulated upon the successful audit.

149 INTERNAL CONTROL POLICY

Each year the Council reviewed its Internal Controls Policy. The Committee noted that the latest changes had been to improve the Heritage Centre's procedures and to increase the number of Councillor Signatories. These changes had been successful. There are no further changes to the Internal Control Policy recommended at present.

RESOLVED That the report be noted and no changes be made to the Council's Internal Control Policy at the present time.

150 STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

There was a commitment to review these annually.

With regard to the Standing Orders, recent changes related to, inter alia, the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, which gave the public new rights to film and report council meetings, including meetings of committees and sub committees, using digital and social media, together with the recording of significant decisions.

With regard to the Financial Regulations, the Town Council needed to show that it had reviewed its Financial Standing Orders with particular reference to the NALC model and the Governance and Accountability (England) - Practitioners Guide 2014.

As advised previously, councils were able to make electronic payments and also there had been a change nationally to the 'two signature rule' for council payments in that there was no longer a legal requirement for two councillors to sign every cheque. Statutory Instrument 2014 No. 580 gave details of the Legislative Reform (Payments by Parish Councils, Community Councils and Charter Trustees) Order 2014 which removed the requirement for every cheque or other order for the payment of money by a parish or community council to be signed by two members of the council. (The Order also removed a similar requirement for every cheque or other order for payment of money by charter trustees to be signed by two charter trustees). This was made under the provisions of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 (c. 51) and removed a burden on parish and community councils and charter trustees and facilitated the use of electronic means of payment. However robust financial checks and oversight was still of great importance and therefore it was proposed that there continued to be no changes to the requirement for two Councillor Signatories on each cheque/direct debit/standing order.

With regard to electronic payments, the Town Council held a 'Council Credit Card' following consideration of this matter by the Resources Committee on 10 June 2013. This was issued to the Town Clerk to give more options for effective purchasing, with existing controls on spending to remain and any purchases included in the normal payment listing presented to Council or to the Resources Committee.

The Town Council did not utilise internet banking at the present time other than to allow for the account(s) to be reviewed.

Councillor L Evans stated he was 'uncomfortable' with there being a 'Town Council Credit Card'. The Town Clerk advised that this had been obtained in accordance with the express wishes of the Town Council and had been limited by her to a sum of £1,000 in accordance her delegated powers. The application for the card had been

signed by the requisite number of councillors and during the four years it had been in existence had only been used about four or five times, one of which was for the standpipe for the garden contract (from April 2016 the service having changed from Severn Trent Water to Aquam Water Services who no longer dealt with cheques). She supported the maintenance of the cheques system wherever possible, also the retention of the two councillor signatories. It was wise to be cautious.

RESOLVED That, having reviewed the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, plus the NALC Model Financial Regulations, no changes be made at the present time.

151 RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

This document was also reviewed annually. Previous changes reflected the staffing redundancies/new structure and that payroll administration was dealt with by Wychavon District Council. Reference to Business Interruption Insurance had been included. The reference to the Corporate Homicide and Corporate Manslaughter Act 2007 included within the enhanced insurance cover was noted and that identification of the financial risks facing the Council should inform and enable councillors to have regard to such matters when considering future expenditure and setting its budgets.

RESOLVED That the Council's Financial Risk Management Policy be approved.

152 WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL – DIAMOND JUBILEE COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARD

The Committee considered nominations for the Award. Councillor R J Morris had nominated Patrick Davis, organiser of the Food & Drink Festival. Councillor T J Noyes nominated Councillor Mrs C Bowden, who had run the Stroke Club for over 14 years.

Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED That the nomination for the Wychavon District Council – Diamond Jubilee Community Recognition Award for 2016/17 be Councillor Mrs C Bowden, who had run the Stroke Club for over 14 years; and the nomination for 2017/18 be Patrick Davis, organiser of the Food & Drink Festival.

153 ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE NOMINATION: THE HOP POLE, 40 FRIAR STREET WR9 8ED

*[Councillor S Best had declared an interest in this matter.]*

A nomination had been made for the Hop Pole public house to be designated as an Asset of Community Value under the Localism Act 2011. The Town Council had been asked for its views.

Councillor Murphy, who was a member of Wychavon District Council's Localism and Community Funding Advisory Panel, confirmed that any such nomination required substantial evidence to enable acceptance on the List of Assets of Community Value.

Councillor Best advised that the Hop Pole provided hot meals every day, with homemade Shepherd's Pie and Chips costing £3, an excellent facility. This had been done for some 7 years, the only day of closure being Christmas Day when the landlord provided meals for the local needy. It was in the CAMRA Good Pub Guide. Families were welcomed and regular events took place. Councillor T J Noyes advised that he knew of several neighbours who visited the Hop Pole on a regular basis. Councillor Mrs A Hawkins advised that she had been asked upon many occasions as to its location, it was an asset to Droitwich.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor T J Noyes, seconded by Councillor S Best, and

RESOLVED That the nomination of the Hop Pole, 40 Friar Street, Droitwich Spa WR9 8ED as an Asset of Community Value under the Localism Act 2011 be supported.

#### 154 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor accounts in the sum of £5,118.34 were considered for payment, along with a supplementary payment in the sum of £973.20 as appended.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts appended be received and the expenditure totalling £6,091.54 (£5,118.34 + £973.20) be approved and duly passed for payment.

#### 155 URGENT ITEM – DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH – POSSIBLE FUNDING CUTS FOR LOCAL PHARMACIES

*[The Chairman considered that this item should be dealt with as an urgent matter given the consultation period upon the impending cuts to pharmaceutical services.]*

Councillor Brookes advised upon Department of Health proposals for efficiency cuts regarding funding levels for pharmacies, the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (PSNC) having been advised it faced cuts of 12%t in the current financial year (equating to £113m in the final three months) with further cuts of £200m (7 %) in 2017-18.

Councillor Brookes referred to his wife having been a local pharmacist prior to retirement and outlined the many and varied services provided by local pharmacies. There were very real concerns that the valued services provided by local pharmacies to the local communities would be lost. There had been already too many cuts to this service.

Councillor Beale referred to the delivery of tablets from the north of England.

Councillor Brookes suggested that a letter be sent to the Secretary of State for Health and the Local Member of Parliament expressing concerns. Councillor L Evans advised that he was not qualified to make any judgements as to the economics of the matter and therefore would abstain from voting.

RESOLVED That the Town Clerk be requested to write to the Secretary of State for Health and to Nigel Huddleston MP expressing concerns over the impending cuts to the funding levels for pharmacies, and requesting immediate reversal of the proposals.

*[Councillor L Evans requested that his Abstention from voting in this matter be so reported.]*

156 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

RESOLVED That the press and public be now excluded from the meeting under the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by virtue of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involved personnel matters.

**CLOSED SESSION**

157 HERITAGE MANAGER (JOB-SHARE) VACANCY – APPOINTMENTS PANEL

*[The Chairman considered that this item should be dealt with as an urgent matter given that Mrs R Butler had advised of her impending move to Sandwell Borough Council.]*

The Committee considered options available to the Town Council and gave consideration to the setting up of an Interview Panel for this post.

RESOLVED That the Interview Panel for the Heritage Manager (Job-Share) position comprise:  
Councillor A Humphries, Chairman of Resources Committee;  
Councillor A M Sinton, Chairman of Community & Amenities Committee; and  
Mrs Pam Craney, Town Clerk  
and that the arrangements for dealing with the job-share vacancy as now reported, being to maintain the current arrangements, be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Chairman of Committee .....  
12 December 2016

Chairman of Council .....  
31 January 2017

**RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING 17 SEPTEMBER 2016 – MINUTE NO 154****REFERS****Creditor Payments List**

<b>Cheques for signature 17 October 2016</b>		
10893	The Royal British Legion	£100.00
	Donation - Remembrance Sunday	
10894	Cllr R E Murphy	£1,500.00
	Mayoral Allowance - Second Instalment	
10895	Hedgerow Publishing Limited	£31.79
	TIC Purchases	
10896	Merlin Office Supplies Ltd	£71.50
	Stationery, cleaning equipment and Washroom facilities	
10897	John Ellis Associates Limited	£625.00
	6 Monthly Health & Safety Consultancy Services	
10898	PR Support Services	£315.50
	Handyman Duties - September 2016	
10899	Hinton Pest Control Limited	£180.00
	Rat Treatment at Copcut Park Allotment Site	
10900	Aquam Water Services	£5.40
	Water Usage - Standpipe	
10901	Top Cut Mowing Services Limited	£96.00
	Work carried out at Copcut Park	
10902	Dudley's Coaches Limited	£820.35
	Ticket sales in August & September 2016 less commission	
10903	Wychavon District Council	£180.00
	Road Closure - Friday Charter Market	
10904	Scribe 2000 Limited	£354.00
	Scribe 2000 Annual Software licence	
10905	R T Harrison	£360.00
	Handyman/Caretaker duties September & October 2016	
10906	Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce	£166.80
	TIC - VW Membership Renewal	
10907	Julie's Pantry	£275.00
	Refreshments - Civic Service Sunday 16th October 2016	

10908	Paul Jones	£37.00
	TIC Purchases	
	Sub-Total	£5,118.34
<b>Supplementary Cheques for signature 17 October 2016</b>		
10909	PPL	£78.31
	Music Licence TIC - 9 November 2016 to 8 November 2017	
10910	Vaughtons	£630.14
	Honorary Freeman & Alderman Medals	
10911	David Whyman Map Sales	£48.75
	TIC Purchases	
10912	Avidean Limited - Droitwich Print	£216.00
	Civic Service Booklets	
	Sub-Total	£973.20
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£6,091.54</b>