

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of the COMMUNITY AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber at St Richard's House, Victoria Square, Droitwich Spa on Monday 1 July 2019 at 6.35pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs C Bowden (Chairman)
Councillor RJ Morris (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor E Bowden
Councillor DM Craigie
Councillor Mrs K Fellows
Councillor NR Griffiths
Councillor CM Murray
Councillor WT Moy (Ex- officio)

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors RG Beale, GR Brookes, Mrs JM Chaudry, G Duffy, J Grady, RP Hopkins and AM Sinton.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors A Humphries and DJ Morris

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

oo00000oo

75 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made.

76 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY & AMENITIES COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 JUNE 2019

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community & Amenities Committee held on 10 June 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

77 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE JAPANESE KNOT WEED OUTBREAK AT WESTWOOD LODGE ALLOTMENTS.

The Town Clerk updated the Committee to the response from Wychavon District Council following their inspection of the Japanese Knotweed that had originated from Westland Open Space; Wychavon owned land and spread to Droitwich Spa Town Council owned Westwood Lodge Allotments. Disappointingly Wychavon District Council did not accept liability for this and said their report did not substantiate these claims and therefore would not pay for the removal and subsequent treatment of the Japanese Knotweed on Droitwich Spa land. The main point of contention is that the DSTC and WDC separately commissioned professional surveys both make reference to established 'JKW' root growth of up to 20 years tenure on the WDC land. The DSTC land is regularly managed and cultivated allotment plots of which there has never been any contamination in the past. Furthermore the surveys draw attention to the recent allotment contamination being within the 7 metre risk zone derived from the WDC land established growth.

The following options were discussed by the Committee and other present Councillors:

- That Councillors RJ Morris and AM Sinton would assist towards a suitable collaborative approach by referring this matter for a second time to the WDC Park's Department. This action is in their capacity as Wychavon District Council elected members.
- That Councillors RJ Morris and AM Sinton will take this matter forward as an agenda item for the Wychavon 'Droitwich Matters' meeting being held on Monday 8 July, to try to resolve the issue. An update was committed for Tuesday 9th July given the urgency to commence eradication of the JKW and suppress and risk of further contamination and counter claims.
- That Droitwich Spa Town Council may consider legal proceedings due to the statutory requirements to manage Japanese Knotweed. These being that, if Japanese knotweed has spread from your land to another property you are legally bound to have this treated as well.
- That we should treat our Japanese Knotweed as a matter of urgency and try to claim the payment from Wychavon District Council retrospectively. To maintain professional standards it was agreed to negotiate further with WDC. Should this prove unsuccessful the option to commence formal proceedings under 'actionable private nuisance' will have to be considered urgently by the DSTC emergency committee.

All Town Councillor's agreed that there was a requirement to deal with this as a matter of urgency to avoid any further contamination.

RESOLVED The Committee resolved that the District Councillor's RJ Morris and AM Sinton would discuss this with officers at the Wychavon 'Droitwich Matters' meeting on 8 July 2019 and report back the following day. Following the outcome of this, the Town Council reserves the option to hold a meeting of the emergency committee, if needed, to determine a way forward.

78 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON SALTFEST 2019 FROM COUNCILLOR CRAIGIE

Councillor Craigie updated the Community and Amenities Committee on the current arrangements for Saltfest 2019. He informed the Member's present how Councillor Laird and himself have been working with Wychavon District Council officers and Mr Simon Berry (Landlord of The Gardeners Arms public house) to ensure this event can continue this year. He anticipated to fill Vines Park with approximately 140 vendors and had currently confirmed 127 of the pitches to date.

Councillor Craigie stated that any suggestions and ideas for the event would be most welcome and also that he would like to put together a volunteer rota for the Councillor's for the two day event to help with marshalling and guidance to the public attending Saltfest. Councillor Morris offered to contact any local groups through Droitwich Spa C.V.S. who may be able attract volunteers to also help. In general discussion various Councillors commended the endeavours and community spirit being taken forward by Councillor Craigie and his group. Some reservations were expressed towards the scale, site layout and governance requirements for the proposed event. Councillor Sinton proposed that as Saltfest is not a statutory Droitwich Spa Town Council managed event that a meeting should be arranged quickly to speak about logistics and practicalities of the event.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Laid and Councillor Craigie would meet with the Leader of the Council, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Communities and Amenities Committee and Town Council Officers to discuss arrangements for Saltfest 2019.

78 MAYFLOWER 400 ANNIVERSARY COMMUNITY COMMEMORATION EVENT

Councillor AM Sinton updated the Committee on how arrangements were progressing for a community event in Droitwich Spa to commemorate the Mayflower's 400th anniversary. The original proposals and background began in July 2018. As such this spans two DSTC administrations and Town Council Officers prepared the accompanying full report circulated with the agenda.

Councillor AM Sinton explained some of the background including the role and input of Mrs Caroline Davis (Director, Outdoor Places Unusual Spaces – OPUS) and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO). For the benefit of all members including new Councillors, the Town Clerk made further reference to the report. To this effect the approach and agreed matched funding arrangements from Wychavon District Council was explained together with the public liability constraints associated with running a large scale public ticketed event. Furthermore the Town Clerk explained the rationale to revert to an alternative community focused celebratory event, following the preference of the Chateau Impney not to proceed with the original proposal for commercial reasons.

Councillors RJ Morris and RP Hopkins supported the community event suggestions and added that it was important to encourage participation from interested community groups, schools and societies. He explained that the Mayflower values could be included into the event programme as working themes. A press article was suggested to gather interest and support towards a working group.

RESOLVED

- That the proposed community event format be agreed in principle for the weekend of 4th & 5th July 2020.
- A delegation comprising the Leader of the Council, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Community and Amenities Committee, together with Town Council Officers meets with Mrs Caroline Davis to progress plans at a suitable opportunity.
- Consideration for a press article including proposals and emerging plans to encourage and invite community involvement.
- Further progress to be reported at the next Committee meeting on 9 September 2019.

79 MAYFLOWER 400 ANNIVERSARY LEGACY PROJECT

The Committee were updated by Mark Keld, the Town Clerk, on the history and options for enhancing the Heritage Museum as a legacy project for the Mayflower 400 anniversary. Key points from the report were as follows:

“In January 2019 capital sale proceeds for the Cockshute Hill surplus landholding were received. These sale proceeds are restricted capital reserves and can only be used towards capital projects. The refurbishment of the museum to enhance the visitor experience does represent a capital project towards investment in a community asset.

Options

From the WDC finance application and related work provisional drawings and costs have been completed for the envisaged museum project. This information is transferable to a self-financed scenario using a proportion of the aforementioned capital reserve. The estimate and provisional works survey anticipates structural build costs of approximately £38k - £40k, plus a reasonable project contingency allowance. This investment would enable the structural reconfiguration and enhancement of the centre. This in turn would integrate and expand the Heritage collection. For example, the radio room artefacts area would benefit from open and free access as part of the main museum. There has been no significant investment in the museum or St Richard’s House by the Town Council since the 1970’s.

Additional features augmented reality, interactive learning, LED lighting and décor can be included in the project and preliminary work has been started for suitable grant funding through eligible schemes (eg. Arts Council schemes). This additional expenditure through grant funding is anticipated to be in the region of £20k.

Contingency & Additional Requirements

Protocol determines that in addition to the estimate already received, two further quotations must be sourced. This accords with Town Council standing orders for all contract expenditure in excess of £25k, subject to an agreement to proceed. To minimise disruption and benefit from economies of scale it is pertinent to also consider the following additional works outside the proposed museum scheme.

- a) The fire alarm and smoke detector system for St Richard’s House is 30 years old on 2019. Whilst it operates sufficiently the professional recommendation is that the system should be upgraded and replaced every 15 years. The public building status and office tenancy arrangements maintain that the Town Council has a statutory requirement to undertake this recommended review.*
- b) To enable the proposed LED lighting inclusion for the project and the fire alarm review for the building a programme of rewiring to current standard will need to be completed.*

Projected Costs

The proposal is to allocate subject to final costings and quotations the following from the restricted capital reserve funds.

- £40k -£50k inclusive of building project contingency for museum structural works.*
- External grant funding up to £20k for fixtures, décor and some learning medium enhancements. Subject to final costs.*
- Additional capital reserve funds for rewiring and replacement fire control system. Subject to estimates to be confirmed. Professional advice will be taken as to the extent and necessity for the rewiring review.*

Timescales

Indicative structural build is 3-4 months without the additional work for wiring and fire systems. A business contingency would need to be drawn up for the partial continued operation of the Tourism Centre during the work which would be best suited for the quieter winter period (eg. January-March 2020). A schedule of works would need to be carefully coordinated to ensure correct environmental control for the museum collection is maintained and this may necessitate moving artefacts offsite for a period. It is hoped to

minimise disruption although considerations will need to be made including public building status, landlord obligations to tenants and core Town Council business.”

Councillor RJ Morris suggested that an approach be made to WDC to work with them with regards further Community legacy funding for this project. The Town Clerk explained that this would be prohibitive for the following reasons:

- The Community Legacy criteria only enables two applications per Parish/Town for each edition of the scheme. Council resolved on the 10 June 2019 to support two applications for edition 2, namely The Cabin Project (Droitwich Spa High School) and The Norbury Theatre. The Town Clerk confirmed that The Cabin Project application was to be submitted this week on 3 July 2019 and further proposals and contact are still awaited from The Norbury.
- As part of the feedback from the unsuccessful Community legacy application lodged in January 2019 an invitation was made to consider reapplying during edition 2. Regrettably the timescales for edition 2 do not enable a tangible application to be made which would support sufficient time to complete the project and accord with the proposed Mayflower 400 anniversary in 2020. Furthermore the Town Clerk explained that should a second edition application be unsuccessful there would be insufficient time and options available to secure a practical alternative means of funding or any contingency.
- The opportunity has arisen from receipt of the restricted land sale proceeds in January 2019 to allocate a proportion of these funds for a suitable capital project, for which the museum scheme is appropriate.

Councillor RJ Morris requested that an approach still be made to WDC requesting Community Legacy support irrespective of the aforementioned explanation by the Town Clerk. He added that Community Legacy funding should be considered for a wider Town centre heritage trail including storey boards and illumination of buildings. The Town Clerk updated that in the context of the museum project two tentative applications for additional funding have been registered and are in progress with the Arts Council by the Heritage Managers. It is hoped that this may derive up to approximately £20 000 in additional funding towards some of the component features for the proposed museum structure, including educational resources, interactive displays and augmented reality.

RESOLVED

- An agreement in principle was reached to fund the museum project proposals from restricted capital reserves to accord with the outline as detailed in the report.
- More detailed and specific costings are to be completed and prepared for reporting at the next scheduled C&A committee meeting on 9 September 2019. These should include three estimates for the structural works with plans, options for renewal and upgrade of the building fire alarms and smoke detection systems – as recommended by the service provider, together with any recommended rewiring work.
- As the preparatory work develops and project work emerges a delegated working committee should be set up comprising the Leader of the Council, the Chairman

& Vice-Chairman of C&A, the Chairman of Resources, Heritage Managers and Town Council Officers.

- Following set up of the working group a full schedule of works for the project is to be agreed. This should include all aspects for delivery of the project including contingency plans, business interruption, method statements and scheduling.
- A press release and related publicity should be considered through the working group to accord with the project schedule as matters proceed.

80 MAYFLOWER 200 ANNIVERSARY GENERAL

It was noted by the Committee that the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk would be attending a meeting on 15 July 2019 in Hereford & Worcester chamber to discuss the wider Mayflower 400 theme and celebrations.

Councillor RJ Morris informed the committee of an initiative which had originated from Plymouth, where the Mayflower set sail from in September 1620. This was to plant 'Pilgrim 400 apple trees' to coincide with the Mayflower 400. Councillor GR Brookes suggested that there were areas of land in Droitwich Spa designated as unadopted and undetermined. These areas are mapped by WDC as part of the 'Blue Map' process. This may present an opportunity for some suitable space for planting of the trees. The Town Clerk explained that DSTC had limited available options for public open space, these being Copcut Park and Spring Meadow, for which both have abundant tree coverage. Furthermore the importance of a maintenance regime and provision of suitable liability insurance was also explained.

RESOLVED That Councillor RJ Morris refers the suggestion to review the WDC Blue Map options through Wychavon District Council for suitability.

The meeting concluded at 7.30 pm

Chairman of Committee
9 September 2019

Chairman of Council
23 September 2019