

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of Droitwich Spa Town Council held at the Community Hall on **Monday 13 December 2021** at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor WT Moy (Mayor)
Councillor Mrs C Bowden
Councillor E Bowden
Councillor GR Brookes
Councillor Mrs JM Chaudry
Councillor G Duffy
Councillor NR Griffiths
Councillor RP Hopkins
Councillor AH Laird
Councillor DJ Morris
Councillor RJ Morris
Councillor CM Murray
Councillor AM Sinton

APOLOGIES for absence: Councillors RG Beale, Mrs JM Chaudry, DM Craigie, J Grady & Mrs K Fellows.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

4 Members of the Public joined the Meeting for the duration of open session. The Chairman welcomed those attending and asked Mrs Val Humphries and Mr Peter Hawkins to read out their questions which had been pre-notified to the Town Clerk earlier in the day.

1. Mrs Val Humphries read out the following two questions.

Question 1. “I’d like to start by thanking Councillor Sinton for his correspondence regarding accessibility issues of the Droitwich heritage app, but I was very disappointed to read that this is not one of the three issues highlighted for discussion with the developer. Can the council assure me that this issue is being addressed and can it be added to the list being discussed at this meeting?”

Councillor AM Sinton thanked Mrs Humphries for her questions and explained that there were still some snagging issues regarding the running and the usability of the App prevalent since the launch date in August. These are taking time to resolve and will necessitate a change of Service Provider. An assurance was given that the accessibility issues put forward by Mrs Humphries will be included in the brief with the replacement Service Provider for attention.

Question 2. “I was pleased to read in this meeting’s agenda that progress is being made regarding improvements to the subway by the station, however there are still issues with lighting and paving both in and around the subway. Can the town council make representations to all involved with the development to make sure lightning and paving surrounding the subway is improved at the same time I’m very happy to take any Councillors or staff on a walk around the area using simulation glasses, to ease any concerns I am qualified to teach mobility but should warn anyone who takes up my offer that I used to teach children so can be a bit bossy”.

The Chairman asked the Town Clerk to respond to the second question. The Town Clerk thanked Mrs Humphries for her question and explained that the funding for the collaborative Agencies project covered the public art, LED lighting and attention to any surfaces defects of the specified underpasses. The anticipation is that the phase of the project for the Railway Station underpass should proceed in Quarters 1 & 2 in 2022. The approaches and surrounding area infrastructure including street lighting and pavement surfaces are for the main part the responsibility of other Agencies including Worcestershire County Highways & Network Rail. The Town Clerk confirmed that he would update the WCC Highways Officer of the defects and concerns raised by Mrs Humphries.

The Chairman confirmed with Mrs Humphries that she was satisfied with the responses provided.

2. The Chairman asked Mr Peter Hawkins to read out his question. Mr Hawkins read out the following statement and question.

“On 14th December 2020, this council resolved to form a Neighbourhood Plan support group having confirmed support for the project.

There is no sign of the support group being established.

On 15 April 2021, a report expressing concern that the Support Group had not been set up, was presented to the Council.

On 4 May, the Neighbourhood Plan representative at the council was replaced, the only reasons given for this were false. Since then, The Neighbourhood Plan volunteers have not been allowed to contribute to reports on the subject to the Town Council.

The leader of the Town Council and the Neighbourhood Plan representative have refused to meet us. They have shared misinformation about the process and the volunteers.

On 13th September, an Extra-Ordinary General meeting of the Town Council chose to back a motion based on false information, - it resolved to delay the project until the South Worcestershire Development Plan revision is published (September 2023).

It seems that, despite saying that the Town Council supports the Neighbourhood Plan, leading Councillors have actively worked to stop it, wasting hundreds of hours of work undertaken by local volunteers. When will the Council act on this resolution and set up the Support Group?”

The Chairman asked the Town Clerk to respond. The Town Clerk thanked Mr Hawkins for his question and mentioned that the statement read out differed to the pre-notified question that had been received, acknowledged and circulated to all Elected Members earlier in the day (see below).

"On 14th December 2020, this Council resolved to form a Neighbourhood Plan support group having confirmed support for the project. When will the Council act on this resolution and set up the support group?"

The Town Clerk confirmed for Mr Hawkins that his question had been noted and that a response was in the course of being prepared by Councillor GR Brookes in his capacity as the designated Town Council representative for communication with the Neighbourhood Plan Group. The response is connected to the email received from Mr Hawkins last week and consideration will be made towards including the further question put forward this evening. Councillor RJ Morris asked that parties collaborate together on the options for Neighbourhood Planning.

194. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillors DJ Morris & RJ Morris both confirmed non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 9 for Wychavon District Council – Community Legacy Funding. Councillor DJ Morris is a Member of the Wychavon Localism & Community Funding Advisory Panel and Councillor RJ Morris is a Member of the WDC Executive Board.

195. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2021

Councillor RP Hopkins read out the following statement.

AGENDA item 3 regarding the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 27th September 2021. Statement of Councillor Hopkins regarding the request that he should leave the Meeting: I left the meeting amicably at the request of the Mayor because some elected Members of the Council were concerned that I might transmit the Covid 19 virus by not isolating after my recent return from Switzerland. I hope that Members of Council, the Town Clerk, and readers of the Minutes will be satisfied by this statement that I did not break any rules as rule breaking is a sensitive subject at present.

I want to stress that I strictly followed Covid regulations relating to travellers as they applied at the time to arrivals from a green classified country. This required me to take a Test at a registered test station within 2 days of my return flight which produced a negative result. I needed to produce the certificate along with other documents, including proof of double vaccination and an acceptable face Mask, at Check In to satisfy the Swiss Border Police and to board the flight. On arrival in the UK, It was not necessary for me to isolate while awaiting the result of my PCR test which was negative. During the period prior to receiving the result, I took a Lateral Flow Test which was also negative and registered it with the NHS. Following the Meeting on 27th September I supplied senior members of Council and the Town Clerk with copies of the regulations.

The Town Clerk asked whether this statement was a proposed amendment to the draft minutes or was for attachment. Councillor Hopkins asked that the statement be noted. The Town Clerk updated the following brief points.

1. That the facts of the incident on 27th September 2021 are presented in the draft minutes and Councillor Hopkins had been asked to respectfully withdraw from the meeting.
2. The circumstances have been referred to Calc and following their recommendation to the Town Council's Insurer. This has been recorded as a disclosable incident for the reason that many Councils have encountered claims being registered from persons who attended meetings where similar situations have arisen- and resultant claims registered that persons have become infected with Covid 19. The professional opinions of Calc and the Insurer maintain that the Town Council acted entirely properly and responsibly in asking Councillor Hopkins to leave the meeting on 27 September 2021.
3. The Agenda papers and draft minutes are made available 1 week prior to the scheduled meetings for Members. With best intention it would be helpful for any issues arising to be raised in the intervening period before the meeting.
4. The process is that should Councillor Hopkins wish to put forward an amendment of the draft minutes for consideration, then this will require a proposer, seconder and then voting.

Councillor Hopkins confirmed he wished for his statement to be attached with the draft minutes of the 13th December 2021 Full Council Meeting and not to propose any amendment of the draft minutes for the 27th September 2021 Full Council Meeting.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 27 September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The vote was unanimous in favour.

196. MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor WT Moy updated the following information.

Since my last report, I am pleased to say that Mayoral engagements have returned to some sort of normality of late. So much so that I have had occasion to call up on my Deputy – Councillor George Duffy to share the load, which he has done willingly and represented our Town well in my stead. Having said this it would appear that the new Covid variant may change the outlook in the short term at the very least.

As you are all aware, Remembrance Sunday could not go ahead last year in its usual format, but this year given a few minor restrictions we were able to go ahead and pay our respects to the men and women of our Armed Forces who gave their lives for our freedom. We were joined by Deputy Lieutenant Lady Hughes, our local MP Nigel Huddleston and our Townsfolk turned out in their hundreds. Given the difficult circumstances prevailing at the time I would like to congratulate Councillor Humphries, the Local Branch of the Royal British Legion and our Town Council Officers for their organisational skills in making Remembrance Day the Tribute that it deserves.

I did manage to arrange a Dinner Dance on 20th November at my Golf Club in order to raise funds for my chosen Charities. Most of the so called “Chain Gang” attended and I received many congratulatory emails the following day. I would like to thank the Town Councillors who attended and those who could not but gave donations instead.

Our Christmas Lights Switch on Event was set to be resurrected this year again with some minor restrictions, but sadly Covid was upstaged by a severe storm. Mark and our Lengths man Rob arose at 5.00am to be on site at 6.00am in order to meet up with event staff to arrange road closures, set up the fair and traders stalls etc. Sadly, gazebos were blown away as quickly as they were erected and by the time Mark was in his second change of clothes, it was decided that the event should be scaled down for safety reasons. Sharon helped coordinate and Jane was on hand to dress the Mayor. For safety, the Children from Westacre Middle School and the Ising Choir were stood down and most of the traders relocated indoors. The lights plunger was moved to underneath the St Richards House canopy and our Guest – Rebecca Redfern was able to switch on the lights in relative comfort.

Finally, I would like to thank all Members of the Town Council and our dedicated team of Officers and staff at St Richards House for all of your support during my term in Office and to wish you all a safe and Happy Christmas.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

197. DROITWICH SPA TOWN BADGE – PIPES & DRUMS BANNER OF THE QUEEN’S GURKHA SIGNALS.

To be advised that following an enquiry and request from local resident Lt Col Simon Smith, Commanding Officer of the 30th Signal Regiment based at Gamecock Barracks in Nuneaton, the Town Badge has been incorporated into the design of the Regimental Banner for use during parades and ceremonial events. The Mayor accompanied by the Town Clerk received Lt Col Simon Smith at St Richards House on 13th September 2021. The banner will be maintained by Lt Col Smith in his Office for the duration of his period of command. The attached images show the ceremonial banner now in place in the Officers Mess at Gamecock Barracks.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

198. POLICING IN DROITWICH SPA

The Town Clerk updated the following report provided in advance by Sergeant Sarah Kent.

Police Report

This is my report for the meeting tonight:

You may be aware that the Community Charter has been in place for around six months. The Charter encourages Parish and Town Councils to report their top three policing priorities to us, ensuring we spend time addressing key issues raised by the community.

One issue raised is speeding. As you can imagine, this features in the priorities of all the areas we are responsible for looking after. A number of roads in the town have been highlighted as causing a concern including Primsland Way, Addyes Way, Westwood Rd, Worcester Rd, Celvestune Way, The Holloway, Lyttleton Rd and Salwarpe Rd. My team have liaised with the Road Safety Team gaining any information they hold about these roads and have completed enforcement activity on a number of them. Primsland Way is being considered for some potential engineering to try and improve the situation in a more permanent way. I'm aware Worcester Rd is being considered as a potential site by the Enforcement Team though this is yet to be confirmed. My team have completed our own enforcement activity on the Holloway in October and again today, speeding tickets have been issued, though today the average speed was 28 mph within the 30mph limit.

Data gathering on Salwarpe Rd averaged at 28.78 mph and Celvestune Way near Bower Hill was 28.9 mph.

Drug activity in the town has also been raised as a concern. The areas mentioned are also amongst places we've identified as needing extra patrols in order to reassure the community that they are safe, especially woman and girls who use those areas. They have been targeted for extra patrols in both daylight hours and the hours of darkness.

Household burglaries have also been raised as a concern. A large proportion of the burglaries reported in Droitwich are car key burglaries where a house is broken into in order to steal car keys and the car is then stolen off the driveway. Three males have been arrested and have been charged with one of these offences, they are also being looked at for other offences and are currently remanded in Prison.

We continue with our regular surgeries in Droitwich Library and the Community Centre on the Westlands.

Finally, a reminder to sign up for Neighbourhood Matters updates and to pass on information about this messaging service to members of the public where possible. Details previously provided.

The Town Clerk updated that due to the Covid 19 restrictions announced on 12th December 2021, Lily Hughes from the West Mercia Team was not able to attend the meeting at short notice for the update that had been anticipated for the "We Don't Buy Crime & the Smart Water" Initiatives. The Town Clerk had obtained the background and supporting information for the presentations which had been circulated electronically to all Elected Members. It is hoped to rearrange the presentation and a questions & answers session with Lily in due course once the Pandemic circumstances improve. Members were encouraged to read through the aforementioned material in advance and direct any questions arising through the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk made reference to the Speeding Statistics report attached to the agenda as follows. Speed Checks Data. – To receive the attached summary of speed checks data for the County Council - Droitwich Spa West Ward taken during September 2021. The information has been provided by Robert Haynes- Traffic Management Advisor, Road Safety, West Mercia

Police. A similar summary has been requested covering any speed checks activity carried out in the County Council – Droitwich Spa East Ward. This will be made available at a later date.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

199. HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE

The Head Girl – Maddie Rollit & Head Boy – Tom Griffiths from Droitwich Spa High School had provided their apologies due to an arranged commitment. They provided the following written report which was circulated at the meeting to all Elected Members present.

High School Report

Charities Week:

Charities week is, and has always been, a memorably enjoyable reminder of the traditions of our school, as well as a step to normality for the students, particularly given this past year's turbulences (in majority due to the Covid-19 pandemic). This year's charities week was in many ways indicative for how we wished for the new school year to progress; we all hoped it will set a positive tone that would clearly show our students the enormous devotion and dedication that older students know the staff put into making the school a wonderful place to be. During charities week, the Heads of House, teachers and staff participate in all the events, most notably in the staff music video, which was considered a triumph across the board. Staff taking part helped guide this year's events in an auspicious direction that was conducive to the success of the school's charities week and made it very fun for the younger years. Overall, the week helped bring about a community spirit that needed to be revived after the continual closures of the school.

The students' donations, the backing of the staff and the financial support of parents enabled us to round this year's cumulative total at a wonderful £3818.90 (the most in the school's history).

Oxbridge Applications:

Concerning university applications, the 6th form are all on track and applications are being finalised and sent off with offers coming back promptly. All three Year 13 applicants to Cambridge University have had successful interviews.

Food Donations:

The 6th Form have, today, set up around the school, spots for food bank donations to be collected by Friday. Already we are looking for more space to hold the food donations until Friday, as the students are pleasantly getting involved.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

200. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE UNDER MENTIONED MEETINGS

Councillor A Humphries raised the following.

“Thank you Chair. I have some questions concerning the Planning Committee Meeting held on Monday 6 December 2021.

I note that there were two presentations to the Town Council at that meeting.

It is my understanding that, at a previous Council meeting, it was agreed that a development containing proposals to build more than 20 houses would be the subject of a public consultation to be organised by the Town Council in its role as Consultees. Also, it is my recollection that the Town Council had been previously advised that a presentation of the nature of the one last week would be against protocol. I wondered if anyone else shared that recollection.

Also, I am advised that the presentations took approximately 1 hour to be delivered.

Therefore, my questions are: -

1. Why did the public consultation not take place?
2. As an alternative, why was it considered appropriate that Redrow should present in this way.
3. Who made the decision that this was the appropriate course of action to take?
4. Why were the presentations allowed approximately 1 hour to be delivered when the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Group were not given the opportunity to make a full presentation on 13 September 2021 and were told any comments they wished to make concerning their project were confined to the public questions section of that meeting?"

Councillor G Duffy and the Town Clerk responded separately and updated on the following points.

1. That there had been two presentations in the open public session prior to the commencement of the Planning Committee Meeting on 6th December 2021. These were from a telecommunications provider for Fibre Optic Broadband and from the Redrow Agent & Company representatives. The presentations had not taken one hour and both were delivered with their separate questions arising within the timeframe documented in the draft minutes (5.20pm to 6.15pm start of Planning Committee Meeting).

2. Both Companies had approached the Town Council and asked to present with an opportunity for questions & answers. Redrow had already undertaken an online public consultation which is reflected in some of the WDC planning portal responses. The Agent for Redrow had approached the Town Clerk in August 2021 and maintained regular dialogue for the arrangements in order to meet their preferred timescales. That was that their presentation coincided with the "valid live" application and the associated consultation period for their proposals. For this reason the notice for their presentation to be held in open public session was included with the arrangements for the scheduled Planning Committee meeting of 6th December. This also included the tabled application for consideration of a DSTC consultation response as part of the agenda for the meeting which followed. The approach and request received from the Developers Agent predates the presentation and the consultation response by DSTC by approximately 4 months.

3. That the Town Council are a consultee only for Planning matters and cannot insist that Developers provide their own public consultation or indeed organise one on their behalf. Wychavon District Council are the Statutory Planning Authority for the area.

4. To clarify that the Town Council resolution for Developers Presentations for over 20 new homes is as follows (Minute Reference 152 of Planning Committee Meeting held on 9th November 2020).

*"RESOLVED That this Council requests that for Planning Applications for more than 20 homes, the Town Clerk be asked to invite Developers or their Agents to engage in an arranged, open and free access public presentation to which members of the public, (and councillors acting as members of the public,) may attend to ask questions and discuss issues arising. This Council asks Developers to demonstrate at their meeting how the infrastructure requirements of their development are to be met and how their proposed development will benefit and enhance Droitwich. **For the avoidance of doubt, this will not be a meeting of the Town Council.**"*

1. Planning Committee – 11 October 2021 [*previously circulated*]
2. Resources Committee – 11 October 2021 [*previously circulated*]
3. Planning Committee – 8 November 2021 [*previously circulated*]
4. Community & Amenities Committee – 8 November 2021 [*enclosed with Agenda*]

- 5. Planning Committee – 6 December 2021 [circulated 9 December 2021]
- 6. Resources Committee – 6 December 2021 [circulated 9 December 2021]

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meetings be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. There were 5 abstentions. These included Councillor AM Sinton for the reason stated that he had not attended the two Committee Meetings that had taken place on 6th December 2021.

201. WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMUNITY LEGACY FUNDING

The details outlined on the Agenda were taken as read as follows.

To confirm the following project updates.

- (a) Edition Two – Droitwich Spa High School, Community Cabin. The final remaining stage of the project was the Official Opening Ceremony and Reception. This took place on Thursday 2 September 2021 and the Deputy Mayor – Councillor G Duffy officiated. Councillor DM Craigie has recently advised that an update from the Management Committee should be anticipated early in 2022 to report on the operational progress and community engagement & use of the facility. The project funding was granted on the condition that the facility is to be offered as a Resource to be used by the wider Community. The Town Council has two nominated representatives on the Cabin Management Committee, these being Councillors DM Craigie & RP Hopkins. The Committee comprises two Elected Members, two High School representatives and two private sector representatives from Droitwich Means Business. The suggested frequency for Management Committee meetings and the reporting of updates is each School term [for information].
- (b) Edition Three – Droitwich Spa Augmented Reality Heritage Trail App. The App and the supporting “This is Droitwich” promotional video were launched on Friday 27 August 2021. The Mayor - Councillor WT Moy presided over the reception at St Richards House which was well attended. BBC Midlands Today TV featured the video including interview footage with Actor – Mr Joe Chambers and Heritage Manager- Mrs Sarah Davies and references to the App. The broadcast went out on Monday 6 September and is estimated to have achieved a viewer’s reach of approximately 2.5 million people across the Region. Disappointingly since launch there have been some functionality issues with running the App. Proactive testing, user feedback and ongoing monitoring has highlighted the issues to be in the following four categories,
 - 1) Compatibility with different I phone and Android devices.
 - 2) The requirement to update the interactive map to the correct 2D version from the original proposal.
 - 3) Some distortion of images, for example the tour guide characters.
 - 4) Some freeze framing and stalling of videos.

Dialogue has been maintained with the Service Provider and consideration for payment of the remaining 40% funding for the project was made conditional on the aforementioned points being fully addressed. A Stakeholders Committee demonstration of the fully working App by the Service Provider was also stipulated for reassurance that all of these interventions have been made satisfactorily. A further meeting took place on 2nd December 2021 to notify the Service Provider of the anticipated outcome

and giving 10 days final notice for completion. Sadly, the outcome is now to move forward with an alternative Service provider in order to address these snagging points and complete the project. It is anticipated that these changes will be effective during Quarter 1 2022 including a relaunch of the App towards Easter. WDC are fully appraised and the changes are expected to be within the scope of the original grant and the remaining funds that have not been drawn down to date. Further updates will be provided in due course [*for information.*]

- (c) Edition Three –Droitwich Spa Community Football Club Pavilion as part of the King George Playing Fields, Ground Fund Project. The Pavilion aspect is now aligned within the main site development schedule. Work is being undertaken by a single leading National Contractor commissioned through Wychavon District Council. The work on site commenced at the end of August and anticipated completion is spring 2022. The existing pavilion and out building have been demolished and the site cleared. Construction phases for the pavilion, stands and pitches are now progressing. For the main part the autumn weather has been favourable and there have been no significant issues affecting progress to plan. At this stage the completion looks to be on track for spring 2022. The Town Clerk will accompany representatives from the Football Club Committee on a site visit during December / January. Further updates will be provided in due course [*for information.*].
- (d) Edition Four – Details attached from Wychavon District Council. It has been suggested that the fourth and final tranche of Community Legacy Funding will encourage applications from those Parishes across the District which have not applied in the previous three rounds or have been unsuccessful with their applications. The fourth edition does nevertheless offer a further opportunity for an application to be submitted from Droitwich Spa Town Council. A mandate to proceed and for a suitable designated project will be required. Some of the criteria and terms & conditions of the scheme have changed for the fourth edition (full details attached). Stage one applications for expression of interest opens on 4 January 2022 until 4 March 2022 with further details to be announced.

Councillor DJ Morris and RJ Morris had declared non pecuniary interests in this item and did not participate in the decision making or voting.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.
To authorise a mandate to proceed for applications (up to 2) for the Edition Four of the WDC Community Legacy Scheme.
For the Town Clerk to investigate suggested project options of a possible collaborative application with Hindlip, Salwarpe & Martin Hussingtree Parish Council for Green Flag Status for Copcut Park.
Also for a tentative project supporting a Community Pump Cycle Track in Droitwich Spa (subject to an agreed site location),
For updates on both options to be provided at the next Full Council on 24 January 2022 (to note expressions of interest runs 4.1.22 to 4.3.22).

202. WEST PROJECT & BEYOND – PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS IMPROVEMENTS

To note that a further Project Reference Group Meeting took place on 10 November 2021. The Town Council has helped facilitate preparatory works including base coat painting and jet washing the three underpasses in the West (Crofters, Paddock & Hunters) which are part

of phase one for the project. The Project Manager has recently enquired whether private sector and commerce groups would like to be involved in the artwork & designs for the public art of the Railway Station underpass. This is the first of the three Town Council funded underpass locations within the wider project, with an anticipated start date of quarter one 2022. The Town Clerk and Councillor RJ Morris have suggested that the Droitwich Means Business, Friends of Droitwich Spa Railway Station and the Rail Users Groups are all approached to gauge interest *[for information]*.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

203.COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor GR Brookes updated the following report,

Although WCC are of course managing our roads, flooding risks, and so on, I thought I would focus just on the topic of Education tonight. Following the Prime Minister's announcement on 8 December 2021, WCC have provided information for all education and childcare settings on implementing Plan B of the COVID-19 Response.

Last week, Will Quince MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for Children and Families, spoke to the National Network of Parent Carer Forums and announced work to launch a pilot which will test how training can increase school staff confidence and capability in using assistive technology. On the Special Educational Needs and Disability Review, he reiterated his previous commitments to publish it alongside a public consultation in the first three months of 2022. Following the recent visit in early November from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to inspect Worcestershire's approach to special education needs and disability we are expecting the final report to be published on the Ofsted website before Christmas. Our SEND strategy (2021-25) and action plan will be updated on the basis of the report to include any actions needed and we will be working closely with the SEND Improvement Board including our health partners and the Parent Carer Forum (Families in Partnership) to confirm our next steps. The "Council for Learning outside the Classroom" and "Canal & River Trust" are launching an exciting new programme specifically for West Midlands schools. The aim is to help students connect with the natural environment, enhance their wellbeing and to support schools to embed all learning beyond the classroom across the curriculum.

I would remind everyone that the Department for Education are providing regular updates on the government's response to COVID-19 and I can provide a link to receive these if wanted.

Councillor RJ Morris updated the following report,

Section 278 O&S Task Team

- You may remember that I asked for County O&S to investigate the Copcut/A38 road work saga. This resulted in an O&S task & finish group on Section 278 (developer led highways work). I am on this group, and we have now had two meetings to look at the processes followed. There is no doubt the timings to agree required works between the developers and highways needs improving. The terms of reference are:

To investigate:

- How to get developer-funded Highways Infrastructure built more quickly for the benefit of residents and road users
 - How the Council can help ensure the planning conditions imposed on developers to build key highways infrastructure by certain deadlines are met.
1. Speeding:
At the last OSPB we looked at speeding issues with the Police, Safer Roads Team and PCC office. There is an agreement to develop a wider toolkit to support our communities, utilising the Police Safety community toolkit.
Town Clerk is supporting with a VAS for Salwarpe Rd which we hope the PCC will pay for
 2. Highways works:
 - Pavement resurfacing scheduled for Chawson, Singer Hill and Camp Hill in February, others are planned.
 - Grafson Place & further stretches of Berry Hill resurfaced
 3. Budget presently being worked on

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

204. DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor RJ Morris updated on the following District Council matters.

- Visited Doncaster's recently, great success story as they were struggling pre pandemic but kept operating through the pandemic and secures orders internationally and are now investing on the business again. They have sold off some land including the historic Roman site which we need to keep a watchful eye over and see if it can support our Tourism offer (*maybe we should ask our Town Clerk to write to Wychavon to ask for an update and support to open up this site*). This was agreed.
- Visited Arena Flowers on Berry Hill, new to Droitwich and has 70+ jobs, they call themselves the most ethical flower distributor.
- Droitwich High Street will be closed this Saturday 18th Dec for Christmas activities: side stall games, Santa Grotto, Reindeer Rodeo, Snow machine and more, most importantly some of the traders will have stalls out and our unique High Street will be a safe environment to shop.

Councillor A Sinton updated on the following

- The 3G Football Pitch and new Pavilion scheme at King George V Playing Fields continues to make good progress to schedule.
- The Town Centre Prospectus report for Droitwich Spa is published imminently. This document contains a lot of relevant information on many aspects of the Town and cross references many existing initiatives, for example details that may be of interest towards further consideration of Neighbourhood Planning options.
- A District matters report will be provided for the next scheduled Full Town Council meeting on 24 January 2022.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

205. CALC ADVICE AND ONGOING RESTRICTIONS FOR COVID 19 INCLUDING CONSIDERATION FOR DELEGATION TO THE CLERK

The following update from Worcestershire CALC (Edition published 29 November 2021) was circulated to all Elected Members on the same date. This covers additional advice to Councils regarding the impact of Covid 19 moving forwards.

Co-vid Advice

With restrictions around face coverings coming back in tomorrow and worries in the future over the Omnicom variant, we are issuing a few pieces of advice to help you stay on top of this change.

Update Risk Assessments

With the latest change there is a need to update your risk assessments around staff working, if you have an office but also meeting risk assessments if you have previously removed the requirement to wear masks.

Delegation to the Clerk

Councillors cannot make a decision on behalf of a Council, the Chairman cannot make a decision on behalf of a Council. However, a Clerk may if the power has been delegated. **We advise that Councils look at their December meetings and place delegation to the Clerk on the agenda.** Councils should look to delegate matters to the Clerk in the case of further and stronger restrictions coming into force in the future. This would be required as there are no changes so far, or currently any planned in the near future to allow Councils to return to virtual meetings.

Precept

We know some Councils have already agreed their precept figures for next year. We would urge Councils though to place the precept for agreement on the December meeting if possible. This would be in case further restrictions come into force for the New Year.

The precept is one things that **CANNOT** be delegated and needs to be agreed by the Full Council.

The Town Clerk updated that he was not aware of any specific delegation powers or compelling other reasons that required further consideration to enable the general continued running of the Town Council. The position can be reviewed if and when further restrictions prevail.

Councillor RP Hopkins commented that he did not support delegation and Councillor A Humphries expressed the same.

RESOLVED That the information was noted. There were no changes considered for delegated powers.

206. WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL STANDARDS & ETHICS COMMITTEE, 20TH OCTOBER 2021. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

Councillor GR Brookes advised as Chairman of the WCC Standards & Ethics Committee that WCC will be adopting the latest Local Government Association Member Code of Conduct as well as Wychavon to maintain a uniform approach. The recommendation is for Droitwich Spa Town Council to take the same approach [*WCC agenda extract and details attached for information with Agenda papers*].

RESOLVED That the information was noted

207. PRECEPT ARRANGEMENTS – WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL 2022/2023.

To be advised of the attached details provided by Wychavon District Council for the estimates, budget setting and precept for the 2022/2023 Municipal period. The draft estimates, budgets

and precept are scheduled for consideration at the Community & Amenities Committee and the Resources Committee on 10 January 2022. Final approval is scheduled for Full Council on 24 January to accord with the WDC final deadline of 26 January 2022.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

208. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor Payments were presented to the Council totalling £3,090.28. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts for payment be received and the expenditure totalling £3,090.28 as now appended be approved and duly passed for payment.

The meeting ended at 18.50 pm.

Chairman of Council -----
24 January 2022