

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of Droitwich Spa Town Council held by Audio Conference Call on **Monday 15 June 2020** at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor WT Moy (Mayor)
Councillor RG Beale
Councillor Mrs C Bowden
Councillor E Bowden
Councillor GR Brookes
Councillor Mrs JM Chaudry
Councillor DM Craigie
Councillor G Duffy
Councillor Mrs K Fellows
Councillor NR Griffiths
Councillor RP Hopkins
Councillor A Humphries
Councillor DJ Morris
Councillor RJ Morris
Councillor CM Murray
Councillor AM Sinton

APOLOGIES for absence: Councillor J Grady.

The Town Clerk confirmed by roll call in alphabetical order all Elected Members in attendance and as listed.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

There were no questions received.

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28. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor WT Moy and Councillor RG Beale both declared an interest in Agenda Item 10 for consideration of the arrangements for the Mayor & Deputy Mayor for the remainder of the Municipal Year due to the Pandemic restrictions. This was in the context that they currently maintain the Civic positions from the previous Municipal Year term.

Councillors A Humphries, NR Griffiths, CM Murray and RP Hopkins were reminded and then declared non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 14 – Neighbourhood Plan Options, in so much that they attend meetings of the Neighbourhood Plan Group.

29. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 27 JANUARY 2020

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 27 January 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor WT Moy read out the attached report. The information was noted.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

31. POLICING IN DROITWICH SPA

The Town Clerk referred to the report provided by Sergeant Sarah Kent in advance of the meeting. The report had been circulated to all Members earlier in the day and there were no questions arising. Councillor RJ Morris expressed appreciation towards the work of the Police during the difficult time of the Pandemic restrictions.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

32. . TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THJE UNDER MENTIONED MEETINGS

1. Planning Committee – 10 February 2020 [*circulated previously*]
2. Resources Committee – 10 February 2020 [*circulated previously*]
3. Planning Committee -2 March 2020 [*circulated previously*]
4. Community & Amenities Committee- 2 March 2020 [*circulated previously*]
5. Resources Committee – 2 March 2020 [*circulated previously*]
6. Planning Committee -8 June 2020 [*circulated earlier on 15.6.20*]
7. Resources Committee – 8 June 2020 [*circulated earlier on 15.6.20*]
8. Community & Amenities Committee-8 June 2020[*circulated earlier on 15.6.20*]

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meetings as listed above be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

33. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT- YEAR END 31 MARCH 2020.

To receive and approve the recommendations of the Resources Committee [*Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2020 refers*] pertinent to the Town Council's Annual Governance Statement made as part of the Annual Return report for year ended 31 March 2020. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information was noted and the Annual Governance Statement duly approved.

34. ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL RETURN REPORT- YEAR END 31 MARCH 2020

To receive and approve the recommendations of the Resources Committee [*Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2020 refers*] pertinent to the Town Council's Accounts and Annual Return report for year ended 31 March 2020. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information was noted and the Accounts and Annual Return Report duly approved.

35. PROGRAMME OF COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2020-2021

To adopt a Programme of Council and Committee meetings for 2020/2021 (*circulated with agenda*)

RESOLVED That the information was noted and the programme of Council & Committee meetings duly approved.

36. TO CONFIRM THE COUNCIL'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAYOR & DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE ENSUING MUNICIPAL YEAR.

To confirm the Council's arrangements for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year. During the onset of Covid 19 and the lockdown restrictions in April 2020 a consensus was reached through the Leader that these would remain unchanged for now. With elapsed timescales it was necessary to consider the positions and connected matters including the Mayors nominated charity and the Bank Mandate.

Councillor A Humphries questioned whether there was a precedent for reviewing the Civic Office arrangements. The Town Clerk explained that arrangements differed between Councils including the term of Office sometimes extending over more than one year. Many Councils were proceeding to consider and ratify the arrangements for Civic Office due to the elapsed timescales of the Pandemic restrictions. Councillor RG Beale confirmed that he was happy to maintain the position of Deputy Mayor until May 2021 and of Mayor Elect for the next Municipal term. Councillor WT Moy confirmed that he would be pleased to continue as Mayor for the same period until May 2021. Councillor Mrs J Chaudry commended Councillor Moy for carrying out the position of Civic Office diligently since May 2019.

RESOLVED That the information was noted and the arrangements for Mayor and Deputy Mayor be maintained in principle until the next Municipal Year beginning May 2021. Due to the emerging situation with the Pandemic restrictions the arrangements are to be further reviewed at The next scheduled Full Meeting of Council on 28 September 2020.

37. TO APPOINT THE COUNCILS STANDING COMMITTEES FOR THE ENSUING MUNICIPAL YEAR.

To appoint the Council's Standing Committees for the ensuing year together with the Chairmanship of each and their Working Parties and Panels. During the onset of Covid 19 and the lockdown restrictions in April 2020 a consensus was reached through the Leader that these would remain unchanged for now. Councillor AM Sinton requested that any Members wishing to change membership positions on any Committees speak with him separately. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information was noted and the arrangements for the Council's Standing Committees maintained until the next Municipal Year beginning May 2021.

38. TO APPOINT TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES ONTO OTHER BODIES FOR THE ENSUING MUNICIPAL YEAR

To appoint Town Council representatives onto other bodies. During the onset of Covid 19 and the lockdown restrictions in April 2020 a consensus was reached through the Leader that these would remain unchanged for now. There were no changes or questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information was noted and the arrangements for the Council Representatives on other Bodies be maintained until the next Municipal Year beginning May 2021.

39. TO BE ADVISED OF THE LEADERSHIP OF EACH POLITICAL PARTY ON THE TOWN COUNCIL

To be advised of the Leadership of each political party on the Town Council. There were no changes or questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information was noted and the arrangements for Leadership of the Political Parties on the Town Council be maintained for the next Municipal Year beginning May 2021.

40. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING OPTIONS

Neighbourhood Planning Options – To advise that Councillor AM Sinton and the Town Clerk represented the Town Council to host the CALC- Larger Councils Forum at St Richards House on 12th March 2020. Councillor Sinton chaired the meeting including an agenda item on Neighbourhood Plans.

Interesting and relevant contributions had been put forward from peers representing various local Councils. The Malvern Town Officer had helped explain the work and attributes connected with their project including community involvement, delivery, timescales, logistics, consultation engagement, professional input and costs. Malvern shares many dynamics and similarities with Droitwich Spa including infrastructure, population size and growth, green spaces, heritage, rural proximity, business and commerce. Their appointed Consultant is the same as engaged for the unsuccessful Droitwich Spa project during 2018, and positive complimentary feedback was expressed as to his professionalism & pivotal role for their successes.

Councillor A Humphries expressed disappointment that he had not been consulted about the CALC meeting on 12th March 2020. Councillor AM Sinton explained that he had chaired the meeting and added the Neighbourhood Planning discussion point to the agenda under any other business. Councillor Sinton also added that representation from the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Group would be invited to attend any future Town Council meeting that was to include a delegation from Malvern to share any best practice and collaborative learnings. Councillor RJ Morris added that a representative from Malvern Town Council had initially supported Droitwich Spa back in 2016 on the subject of Neighbourhood Plans and it would be useful to receive further information from them on their experience with the project after the elapsed time and progress made.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

41. COVID19 - Heritage Centre & Museum at St Richards House.

To report that the Centre remains closed whilst further Government advice and guidelines are expected. Preliminary risk assessments are being carried out following Government, CALC and the Town Council's Insurance provider's professional advice to consider options for social distancing and safe future operations when reopening is permissible. This will require some reconfiguration of layout and enhanced technology measures to be considered as well as wider provision of PPE for staff and volunteers. This is an emerging situation and in the meantime options and cost implications will be collated for future informed consideration.

The Town Clerk added that arrangements were proceeding to arrange an additional pc and work station so that the two Heritage Managers do not have to share office equipment. Risk Assessments have continued and appropriate measures are progressing to acquire PPE and a Perspex serving screen. It is hoped to resume operation of the gift shop and Tourist Information Centre for enquiries staffed by the Heritage Managers shortly. It is not possible to resume opening of the Museum and Radio Room exhibits or engage volunteer staff until further guidance and advice is received regarding lifting of the restrictions.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

42. HONORARY ALDERMAN STATUS FOR EX-COUNCILLOR MR EDGAR HARWOOD.

The Town Clerk updated that arrangements to progress to confer Honorary Alderman status on ex-Councillor Mr Edgar Harwood had been deferred due to the Pandemic restrictions for gatherings. Arrangements will proceed once the Covid 19 restrictions are relaxed and guidance issued to convey physical meetings and ceremonies. Following resolution to proceed tentative plans had been made to proceed as part of the Annual Mayor Making Meeting agenda originally scheduled for 11 May 2020. A revised date will be notified in due course.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

43. COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor GR Brookes made reference to his report on County Council matters which had been circulated separately to all Members earlier in the day. There were no questions arising. Councillor Brookes expanded further on some matters including the return to schools across the County. This had seen encouraging numbers of children returning and reflected the tremendous preparatory work put in by County Council Officials during a difficult time. For example the Risk Assessment document required completion of 75 pages of information and measures to enable children to return to school safely after the pandemic lock down. On connected matters it was confirmed that Worcestershire County Council do maintain good supplies of Personal Protection Equipment for users.

Councillor RJ Morris endorsed all points made and added that the County Council had adapted very well to the Covid 19 restrictions. The resumption of schooling remained a key focus and other functions including the Highways Department were starting to

increase capacity as well. Councillor Morris explained that Covid 19 may be in the Community for a while and the adapted practices, including some remote working arrangements will most likely be necessary for some time in the future.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

44. WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor AM Sinton made reference to the Wychavon District Council latest Covid 19 bulletin. This had been circulated by Councillor Sinton to Members before the audio conference call meeting. The same report had also been circulated through the Town Clerk earlier in the day to all Members. There were no questions arising.

Councillors Sinton and RJ Morris explained further that a key focus was to assist the economy to start back from the lockdown restrictions. Measures include support for Town Centre businesses, and encouraging the community to shop locally. Further initiatives include the continuation of free car parking in the Wychavon District pay and display areas for the month of June and consideration to relax some of the governance for trading outside shop premises. Councillor Morris explained that any retailer who wished to take advantage of trading outside their premises to help enable more social distancing capacity, should contact Worcestershire Regulatory Services in the first instance. This is to ensure that the guidance and protocol is followed and Regulatory Services will support by assessing each request and location individually on application.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

45. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor Payments were presented to the Council totalling £ 1,165.08 together with Supplementary Payments totalling £205.98.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts for payment be received and the expenditure totalling £ 1,371.06 (£1,165.08 + £205.98) as now appended be approved and duly passed for payment.

The meeting ended at 6.50 pm.

Chairman of Council -----
28 September 2020