

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of Droitwich Spa Town Council held in the Council Chamber, St. Richard's House, Victoria Square, Droitwich Spa on **Monday 16 December 2019** at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor WT Moy (Mayor)
Councillor RG Beale
Councillor Mrs C Bowden
Councillor E Bowden
Councillor GR Brookes
Councillor DM Craigie
Councillor G Duffy
Councillor Mrs K Fellows
Councillor J Grady
Councillor NR Griffiths
Councillor A Humphries
Councillor CM Murray

APOLOGIES for absence: Councillors Mrs JM Chaudry, RP Hopkins, DJ Morris, RJ Morris & AM Sinton.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

There were no questions received.

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206 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were none.

207 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2019

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 23 September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

208 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor WT Moy reported that he had now reached the 7 months point for his year in Office as Mayor and that he was very much enjoying all of the various events & functions which he had attended so far including:

- The Food & Drink festival in June which had recently achieved the high accolade of overall winner in the Festivals and Events category of the "Visit Worcestershire Awards for Excellence 2019". The Mayor expressed sincere congratulations to all involved and especially to the organisers Christine & Mark Cookson.
- Special mention was made for the Remembrance Sunday arrangements on 10 November 2019 where the Town had been honoured by the participation of a D Day Veteran. The Mayor congratulated the Air Training Corps, The Royal British Legion and all who supported on the day. Appreciation was expressed

to Councillor A Humphries in his capacity as Chairman of the local branch of the Royal British Legion for his diligence and work in helping to make the Droitwich Spa commemoration a poignant, special and very well attended event.

- The two lights switch –on events for Mayflower 400- Illuminative on 21 November and the Christmas Lights on 23 November were reported as being very successful. The support of the Head Boy and Girl from Droitwich Spa High School at both events was appreciated and ensured that the proceedings were well received and in the spirit of the wider Community. Councillor WT Moy thanked the Town Council Officers for their work in organising the arrangements including the lighting designs & motifs.
- The Salvation Army Christmas Carols Concert on Saturday 14 December 2019 had been another tremendous event. Councillor Moy expressed appreciation to the Salvation Army and commended them for all of their good work that they do seasonally and throughout the year.
- With regard to the forthcoming Brexit changes in the New Year, the Mayor updated that he wished to take the opportunity to write to the two twin towns of Bad Emms in Germany and Voiron in France to reaffirm the strong links. Letters were suggested to be compiled in conjunction with the two Twinning Associations and to be written in the appropriate foreign language from the Mayor to convey invitations to visit Droitwich Spa as the established twin town at any time.

209 TO RECEIVE A BRIEF UPDATE ON POLICING IN DROITWICH SPA

The Mayor welcomed Sergeant Sarah Kent to the meeting.

Sergeant Kent reported on local crime trends that had been prevalent in the three months that had elapsed since her last update in September. To begin with some good news was relayed in that a new PCSO appointment has been recently finalised to work alongside the existing Officer, predominantly in the Droitwich West area. The new Officer is keen to be involved with Youth and Young person's initiatives. Due to the continued expansion of the town the appointed Police Constables was about to increase from 2 to 3 positions. The new Officer is anticipated to work predominantly in Droitwich West and the Town Centre areas.

The two existing PC's have been busy dealing with many seasonal offences involving shop lifting and the theft of alcohol. Elsewhere there have been some neighbourly disagreements and quarrels in Droitwich West area. Supermarkets in the Town Centre had seen a series of targeted incidents whereby the handbags and purses of elderly persons had been stolen. Best advice offered was to look out for and help vulnerable and elderly persons when out shopping and to make sure that their purses and valuables were not left unattended in /on shopping trolleys and baskets. A simple but effective deterrent measure is the issuing of audible bells which can be attached to bags as a warning against persons tampering.

There had been a spate of thefts at Droitwich Spa Railway station of cycles taken following the bolt cropping of the securing padlocks and chains. Positively the CCTV cover put in place approximately 18 months ago has provided excellent quality footage and imagery. To this effect one recent arrest had been made with the case currently awaiting further progression through British Transport Police.

Information regarding scam alerts was presented for onward publicity. Examples were quoted whereby criminals target elderly and vulnerable people by phone calls claiming to be Police Officers. The callers can be quite convincing and appear well informed often using real Police Officers names obtained from local research. The callers manipulate the victim into thinking that they are receiving Police and Bankers safety

advice to withdraw cash funds from their bank accounts, often to the extent of whole life savings. Couriers are then involved to collect the cash. The levels and endeavours of this deception are considerable and highly organised with potentially devastating impact for the victims. The targeted pattern appears regular and coordinated and there are concerns that Droitwich Spa may encounter similar incidents soon. The Town itself has not been targeted since a few years previously when there were 7 local incidents recorded in one day. Alarming Worcester encountered 5 incidents during the previous weekend. Sergeant Kent urged Members to raise awareness with family, friends and associates especially elderly people in the Community. To help reassure and to affirm the position Sergeant Kent advised on the following connected points,

- The Police and Banks would never contact members of the public and provide safety advice which suggested withdrawing cash from accounts.
- On the same note people would never be asked to disclose their personal banking information covering accounts, balances, pin, password or card details.
- The Police would never telephone people for safety advice and any interactions would generally be face to face or home visits with full identification checks.
- The Police would not arrange for people to call and collect cash from homes or at Banks.

Another positive update was news that a local man had been successfully convicted of a £10,000.00 separate deception case involving a vulnerable victim in the community. The perpetrator had received a one year custodial sentence recently and whilst this was not especially long given the crime impact, the deterrent message was achieved by securing the successful investigation and conviction. The Mayor thanked Sergeant Kent for her informative report.

210. HIGH SCHOOL – UPDATE FROM HEAD GIRL AND HEAD BOY

Katie Bowen, Head Girl and Ben Daniels, Head Boy were welcomed to the meeting. Katie and Ben reported on:

- The Charities Week had been a great success recently. The activities and arrangements had successfully raised £3,513.77 towards 5 charitable concerns, namely Macmillan, Cancer Research, St Richards Hospice, Hope at Home and the Raisa Gorbachev Foundation. Year 9 recently hosted a Senior Citizens Christmas Party for the Community. This had been very successful with gifts provided, a Christmas Dinner served and entertainment by the music department.
- During October the follow up “Big Switch Off event “had taken place after an inaugural similar initiative undertaken by West Acre Middle School. The objective of the event was to turn off all devices such as mobile phones, tablets and lap top computers simultaneously for a coordinated half hour period in the interests of saving energy and promoting green issues awareness. Results are still being collated but the response and participation had been encouraging. It is hoped to calculate the potential energy saving and carry out similar activities of this kind going forward

Councillor Mrs K Fellows and the Mayor both congratulated Katie and Ben on their achievements and thanked them for their informative report.

211. YOUTH COUNCIL – UPDATE FROM YOUTH COUNCILLORS

The Mayor advised that apologies had been received from Olivia and Rochelle Harris who normally represent the Youth Council at Full Council. To this effect Katie and Ben also provided the Youth Council report.

- A meeting had recently taken place with Wychavon District Council regarding the Youth Bus Service. Specifically this was to help consultation on the preferred technology and features offered through the Youth Bus in the Community. Plans were taking place towards events and projects in 2020, including a proposed “Big Spring Clean” and various theatre productions. More details will be advised in due course.
- To conclude both Katie and Ben said that it had been an honour and a privilege to have been invited to accompany the Mayor in switching on the Mayflower 400 Illuminative Lights on 21 November and the Christmas Lights on 23 November. They wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

212. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GROUP – UPDATE REPORT

The Mayor made reference to the Agenda and Councillor A Humphries updated from the attached written report which originated from Mr Mike Lambden.

Councillor Humphries explained that some points in the report were factually incorrect and expanded as follows. References to delegated powers being agreed in a meeting on 11 November 2019 for any Neighbourhood Plan options and the wider use of the Town Council website by the Group appeared to have been misinterpreted. To clarify Councillor Humphries reaffirmed that any delegated powers consideration can only be made through Full Council irrespective of the subject matter and the Town Council website use is agreed only to assist with recruitment of active membership for the NHP Group- if desired.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

213. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE MEETINGS.

1. Planning Committee – 14 October 2019
2. Resources Committee – 14 October 2019
3. Planning Committee - 11 November 2019
4. Community & Amenities Committee – 11 November 2019
5. Planning Committee - 9 December 2019
6. Resources Committee - 9 December 2019

RESOLVED That the minutes of the listed Committee Meetings be approved and adopted.

214. TO RECEIVE AN INTRODUCTION & BRIEF UPDATE FROM MR DEREK KILLINGWORTH , CHAIRMAN OF WORCESTERSHIRE CALC.(COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS)

The Mayor welcomed Mr Derek Killingworth to the meeting. Mr Killingworth thanked the Mayor and Elected Members for the opportunity and by way of introduction explained that he was relatively familiar with Droitwich Spa Town Council having attended Civic functions in his former capacity in the Office of Bewdley Town Mayor. Mr Killingworth updated that he is currently Chairman of Wyre Forest and Worcestershire CALC and also the County Representative & Spokesperson for NALC (National Association of Councils). Membership of Worcestershire CALC was reported as being healthy and growing, currently comprising 144 Parish & Town Councils and in excess of 1200 Elected Members. The mantra & values of CALC are to be neutral of political opinions which is conducive towards making business and operations work harmoniously. The benefits of membership were briefly outlined including support and quality training for Officers and Councillors. Worcestershire CALC are delighted that the Town Council resolved to join in October 2019 and look forward to a positive and mutually rewarding working collaboration going forwards.

RESOLVED That the presentation was noted and gratefully received.

215. WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL – NEW HOMES BONUS & COMMUNITY LEGACY SCHEME FUNDING

Wychavon District Council New Homes Bonus & Community Legacy Funding - To receive and consider the following options conducive towards an agreement in principle to support and collate formal applications to Wychavon District Council. The Town Council is permitted to support applications for final consideration by WDC. Unallocated New Homes Bonus funds for Droitwich Spa currently totals £ 53,369.00 and WDC have requested that suitable allocation is considered urgently and before 2020.

1. St Peters Field – Pavilion Project - revised NHB request received September 2019 for £40K. Presentations from Mr Peter Field and Mr Kevin Bryan received at Community & Amenities Committee on 9 September 2019 & Full Council on 23 September 2019. Further supporting information circulated through the Town Clerk to members on 28 November 2019.
2. West Project and Beyond - Town Centre underpasses refurbishment project. Pursuant to minute reference 124 of the Community & Amenities Committee Meeting held on 9 September 2019 and the draft feasibility report sent to all Members on 10 September. Representation has been made by Mr David Manning from Wychavon District Council at Full Council on 23 September 2019 and at Community & Amenities Committee on 11 November 2019. The Town Clerk circulated the final version feasibility report and suggested scope options including example costings to all members for informed consideration on 12 November 2019.
3. Community Legacy Opportunity -Droitwich Spa High School Cabin Project. To note further progress and status for the current Year 2 Edition, Community Legacy application which passed phase one acceptance in July 2019. Further collaborative working with the High School has progressed including a public consultation campaign. This has enabled final submission of the main second part application on 13 November 2019 to achieve the deadline of 15 November 2019. Safe receipt has been acknowledged by Wychavon and a further update is anticipated prior to 18 December 2019. *[for information only]*

The Town Clerk summarised the aforementioned points 1 & 2 and added further details with regard to the Underpasses project proposals. From the project feasibility reports previously circulated to all Members the following summary split of three suitable potential options for consideration were explained.

Underpass reference 2982- Briar Mill - indicative cost £2.7K to £4.6K

Underpass reference 2983 Ombersley Way- indicative cost £5K to £7.5K

Underpass reference 20 Railway Station- indicative cost £2.7K to £4.8K

All three sites are prominent and extensively used by pedestrians and all age groups. The references 2982 & 3 both serve West Acre Middle School and the High School. Reference 20 is essentially the main pedestrian gateway route to the Town Centre for rail users. The higher bracket indicative cost combined total is £ 16.9K. From the unallocated total of £53,369.00 NHB funds available the suggested course for applications would look like,

£40,000.00 allocation to St Peters Field Sports Pavilion refurbishment and improvement project.

£13,369.00 allocation the three underpasses as detailed. From the indicative higher bracket costing of £16.K this would represent a shortfall of £ 3531.00.

The Town Clerk updated further that this scenario had been discussed at the Wychavon District Council & Town Council Liaison Meeting which had taken place on 2 December 2019 and for which delegates comprised Councillor Bradley Thomas (Leader – WDC), Mr Jack Hegarty- Managing Director-WDC, Councillor WT Moy – Mayor of Droitwich Spa, Councillor AM Sinton (Leader of DSTC) and the Town Clerk. A further suggestion arising and noted from that meeting was consideration for Wychavon District Council to absorb the indicated £3531.00 shortfall in order to deliver and support both suggested projects.

RESOLVED That the remaining unallocated NHB Funds for Droitwich Spa be allocated in principle for two applications to Wychavon District Council for further consideration – as follows
St Peters Field Sports Pavilion repairs and improvements £40,000.00
Underpass Project (West and Beyond) £13,369.00 with the possible £3531.00 shortfall being considered to be absorbed by WDC. The Underpass site proposals are numbered 2982 & 3 and 20 in the original report.
For the Town Clerk to collaborate with Wychavon Officers and the St Peters Field Sports Association Group to take forward the applications promptly.

216 COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor GR Brookes updated that the County Council welcomed feedback on any of the services they provided particularly on matters reported for attention through the Worcestershire online hub portal , for example Highways repairs , foot path maintenance and street lighting issues. There were no further pressing matters to update. Reference was made to the winter Highways gritting regime now being operational as winter weather set in.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

217 DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor AM Sinton was unfortunately absent from the meeting and to this effect the agenda items which he had intended to report on were deferred until the next Full Council Meeting which takes place on Monday 27 January 2020. These items were a general update covering Wychavon District Council matters and a brief resume of the main points arising from the Liaison Meeting with Wychavon that had taken place earlier this month on 2nd December 2019.

The Town Clerk updated on the request received from former Mayor and Councillor Mrs Anne Taft in May 2019 for consideration by WDC for a suitable commemorative plaque for the donation of St Peters Fields by Dr Shirley Jones to be used for the recreational use of the people of Droitwich Spa. This project is currently being considered for matters of final design, location and formatting. It is understood that a lectern styled information plaque is proposed for a suitable location in Lido Park. Final details are anticipated soon and it was reported that the Heritage Centre and Dr Shirley Jones family have been actively involved in sourcing background information and historical detail.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

218 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor Payments were presented to the Council totalling £ £3,959.84 together with Supplementary Payments totalling £1,105.00.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts for payment be received and the expenditure totalling £ 5,064.84 (£3,959.84+ £1,105.00) as now appended be approved and duly passed for payment.

219 TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider the exclusion of the Public and Press by passing the following motion:

“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 involves financial and legal matters”.

RESOLVED To exclude the Public and Press by virtue of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves financial and legal matters.

220 STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS – HERITAGE CENTRE & MUSEUM

The Town Clerk updated that regrettably Mrs Debbie Watkins had secured an alternative position at the Black Country Museum. This is her preferred career path and the opportunity was too good to miss. As such Debbie had provided her resignation dated 18th November 2019 with an anticipated final working date of 4th January 2020. The job share arrangement for the Heritage Managers does accrue some additional hours which is generally expected to be taken as time off in lieu (TOIL). The accrued toil time for Debbie had necessitated an earlier finish date as at Saturday 7th December 2019. It is anticipated to cover the vacant position through the routine rostering of the volunteer staff, additional hours worked from the remaining job share position and support from the Town Council

Officers during the intervening period of recruitment. This is thought to extend through January & February 2020 subject to interest in the vacancy and a suitable candidate being available.

The Town Clerk explained further that with the seasonal arrangements for Christmas & New Year an advertisement to recruit a replacement member of staff would be best placed in January 2020. This will hopefully generate wider interest in the position and good quality applicants for shortlisting to interview and further consideration. The option to look at scope within the draft budgeting and precept provision (Municipal Year 2020/2021) to enable a full time member of staff to work alongside the remaining part time Heritage Manager, as an alternative to job share was suggested. This suggestion would enable greater capacity especially in support of several emerging projects, for example the Mayflower 400 Event, proposed Museum refurbishment and in general Heritage special initiatives. It was also noted that stability for the Heritage Centre staffing was important given that this was the sixth job share recruitment intervention necessary within the period 2012 to 2019.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.
That consideration and scope is included with the draft budget & precept arrangements to ascertain viability of both part time and full time recruitment options to fill the vacancy.
To proceed with a suitable recruitment drive in January 2020 to accord with the preferred option and budgeting capacity.

221 COPCUT PARK – BOUNDARY DISPUTE WITH WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Copcut Park boundary demarcation with Wychavon District Council and proposed land transfer to formalise ownership, liability and maintenance responsibilities. The Town Clerk circulated a map of the proposed land transfer segment and showing the demarcation line between the two Authorities land holdings at Copcut Park. It was confirmed by the Town Clerk that the proposed arrangements do appear correct and reasonable to resolve the dispute amicably. A further site visit had taken place on 12 November 2019 to walk through the proposals with the Surveyor from WDC. The Town Clerk explained that all costs were being absorbed by WDC apart from the legal responsibilities attributed to achieving the formal conveyance aspects of the land transfer to DSTC and the necessary deed of variation arising from change of ownership required by the HM Land Registry. The Clerk requested that Elected Members kindly consider an authorisation in principle to instruct Parkinson Wright the Town Council's preferred Solicitors to undertake the necessary conveyance process and connected HM Land Registry deed of variation procedure.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.
To authorise Parkinson Wright Solicitors to represent the Town Council for the matter of formalising the land transfer at Copcut Park from Wychavon District Council (as mapped) to the Town Council. To include Suitable arrangements for the deed of variation of change of ownership to be ratified and lodged thereafter with HM Land Registry. Instructions to proceed once notified further from Wychavon District Council.

The meeting ended at 7.16 pm.

Chairman of Council -----
27 January 2020