

# **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 23 September 2019** 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 J Grady  
Councillor RP Hopkins  
Councillor A Humphries  
Councillor A H Laird  
Councillor DJ Morris  
Councillor RJ Morris  
Councillor CM Murray  
Councillor AM Sinton

APOLOGIES for absence: Councillor NR Griffiths.

## **PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION**

Mr Patrick Healy of 28 Thatcher's Place, Droitwich Spa attended to raise the following question for Councillor Humphries to respond.

“Given that the Government believes that local communities should have genuine opportunities to influence the future of the places where they live and The Localism Act (2011) introduced a new right for communities to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan, benefiting the community. The Droitwich Neighbourhood Plan group allows the community in Droitwich to have their say where they think new houses, businesses and shops should go, and what they should look like. Therefore the residents in Droitwich can use the Neighbourhood Plan to grant planning permission in areas where they most want to see new homes and businesses, making it easier and quicker for development to go ahead. What steps are being taken to reinstate the suspended neighbourhood plan in Droitwich?”

Councillor Humphries replied as follows,

Since suspension of the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan work in September 2018, various meetings and discussions had taken place between persons originally involved with the Neighbourhood Plan Group Management Committee. Discussions had taken place before and after the Local Elections in May 2019 and continued to consider options towards resurrection of the Neighbourhood Plan project. It is anticipated that a further update will be presented to the Town Council during December 2019.

## 129 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor WT Moy declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Items 11 & 13(2) in his capacity as Chairman of SOBB's.

Councillor RJ Morris declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 13 in his capacity as an Executive Board Member for Wychavon District Council.

Councillor DJ Morris declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 13 in his capacity as a Member of the Community Funding Committee for Wychavon District Council.

Councillor GR Brookes declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Items 11 & 13(2) in his capacity as a member of SOBB's.

Councillor Mrs C Bowden declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Items 11 & 13(2) in her capacity as a member of SOBB's.

Councillor RG Beale declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Items 11 & 13(2) in his capacity as a member of SOBB's.

## 130 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 17 JUNE 2019

RESOLVED            That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 17 June 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 131 MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 29 JULY 2019

RESOLVED            That the Minutes of the Extra- Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 29 July 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## 132 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor WT Moy reported that he had attended many enjoyable events and functions since June, including:

- The Waterside Residents Association 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration which had taken place on Sunday 4th August 2019. A letter of appreciation received from Mr Steve Wilson – Chairman of the Waterside Residents Association was read out and gratefully acknowledged.
- Special mention was made for the Mayors Civic Service which had taken place the previous day on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2019. Councillor WT Moy was pleased that so many local Mayor's and Dignitaries had been able to attend. Appreciation was expressed to all Town Councillors who supported and to Officers for making the arrangements.

Councillor WT Moy reported that he was very much enjoying all aspects of the Mayor's Role as his year in Office continued.

## 133 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 June. Catalytic converter thefts from vehicles had once again emerged as an issue. This may be driven by the fluctuations in scrap metal prices and local incidents have mainly affected vehicles parked at commercial and business premises. The level of damage sustained on the vehicles targeted for this crime is significant and very expensive to repair. Members were encouraged to liaise with constituents about being vigilant towards any suspicious activity or persons around parked vehicles, especially at night. Any suspicious activity should be reported in the first instance and preferably whilst in progress to enable Police intervention.

Sneak in and opportunist burglary incidents have increased significantly on prior year statistics during the summer particularly in areas of the West Estates and Chawson. The Police interpretation for these incidents is very much the same and the suspicion focuses on possibly one single culprit. Members were encouraged to speak with their constituents about taking reasonable precautions including locking doors and closing downstairs windows during the day and even whilst at home. It was reaffirmed that the series of incidents were all opportunist and did not involve damage sustained from breaking and entering. Any suspicious activity including suspected trespass and persons attempting to open doors/windows should be reported preferably whilst in progress to enable police response and possible apprehension.

Incidents of antisocial behaviour have taken place in parks and areas of public open space during the summer, quite often involving youths congregating. The CSO team continue to monitor these activities and endeavour to provide a high profile community presence. It was acknowledged that young persons do naturally congregate from a social perspective but problems do arise with anti-social behaviour when alcohol and drugs (smoking of cannabis) are involved. The Safer Neighbourhoods Team have represented local Policing at many Community events through the summer in Droitwich Spa and neighbouring parishes. This has presented good opportunities to engage with the public and share advice on communications & measures helping to prevent crime in the neighbourhood. Finally an update was provided regarding the realignment of the different National Police forces individual websites. This initiative is to create more uniformity and ease of navigation for accessing the websites. The West Mercia Police website has recently been reviewed with enhancements including reformatting and the addition of a portal to report low level crime incidents online. The anticipation is that this will reduce pressure on the existing "101" telephone reporting process and encourage the public to register low level incidents digitally.

Councillor GR Brookes mentioned an example whereby he had reported an incident of a rogue caller at his property. The prompt Police response had successfully apprehended the suspect and other individuals who were part of an organised criminal group targeting the Town having travelled some distance by minibus. The report had helped achieve a successful conviction for the case. Sergeant Kent acknowledged this example confirmed the merit of reporting suspicious activity in progress. Councillor Brookes mentioned that such instances were regularly posted retrospectively on social media but the best deterrent is direct reporting to the Police whilst the incident is taking place.

Councillor GR Brookes asked whether recent speculation was correct in that the Police were taking a stronger line with vehicles which created an obstruction on footpaths. Sergeant Kent explained that this was a very common nuisance in most Communities

although actual enforcement was more complicated. The definition of the offence is “obstruction of the highway” even when it is the footpath that is inhibited for access. Police enforcement does necessitate a simultaneous statement to be provided by the complainant at the time of the incident of obstruction taking place, which is often difficult to achieve. As previously reported this evening many such incidents are widely featured on social media retrospectively but this cannot enable Police intervention. Councillor Brookes also explained about an emerging digital application for smart phones called “what three words” which encodes geographic coordinates into three dictionary words. This enables the user’s location to be exactly pin pointed and is easier to relay to the emergency services than numerical coordinates. It was suggested that the option may be advantageous for the Emergency Services. Sergeant Kent acknowledged that she was aware of the app and also that the West Mercia Police Command and Control system for registration of all incidents was imminently being replaced. The new system will feature mapping and location monitoring technology to enhance the process of reporting and incident logging.

The Mayor thanked Sergeant Kent for her informative report.

#### 134. 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 very successful summer 2019 - GCSE & A-Level exam results for the High School pupils. From these 11 pupils were considering “Oxbridge” and Medical Course University applications.
- The rebranding and renaming of the 5 School Houses system mentioned in June is now proceeding well. This includes student leading ideas and assemblies as well as the potential for a lasting legacy at the High School.
- The Sixth Form Council successfully organised a Charity Sports Day in the summer which raised £285 for Help for Heroes. The theme coincided with the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the D Day Landings. Plans are progressing well for the annual High School Charities week which supports local, district and national charities. For 2018 the total raised was approximately £3.5k and it is hoped to surpass this value in 2019.

Councillors Mrs K Fellows, AM Sinton and the Mayor each congratulated Katie and Ben on their achievements and thanked them for their informative report.

#### 135. YOUTH COUNCIL – UPDATE FROM YOUTH COUNCILLORS

The Mayor welcomed sisters Rochelle and Olivia Harris as the new members of Youth Council presenting their report to Councillors. It was reported on

- That plans are progressing to work with Wychavon District Council for designs as part of the West Project pedestrian underpass refurbishments and artwork initiative.
- For Environmental Campaign initiatives “The Big Switch off 2019” is a wider project which encourages saving energy by turning off mobile devices including smart phones, i-pads, and computer lap tops during the day. A local “Community Spring Clean Up” is also being planned.

The Mayor reiterated that Rochelle & Olivia, like Katie and Ben all represented an excellent example of the talented youth of Droitwich Spa. He thanked them for attending and congratulated all on providing quality reports this evening.

136. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GROUP – UPDATE REPORT

The Mayor made reference to the Agenda and Councillor A Humphries updated from the attached report. As stated during public participation before the meeting, Councillor Humphries reaffirmed the anticipation for the Neighbourhood Plan Management Group to provide a further update to the Town Council during December 2019.

Councillor RP Hopkins asked whether there would be any publicity to encourage more volunteers to become involved with the Neighbourhood Plan group? Councillor A Humphries responded that this matter was in course and due to be considered at the groups next scheduled meeting in October 2019.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

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

1. Planning Committee - 1 July 2019
2. Community & Amenities Committee - 1 July 2019
3. Emergency Committee - 11 July 2019
4. Planning Committee - 29 July 2019
5. Resources Committee - 29 July 2019
6. Emergency Committee - 2 September 2019
7. Planning Committee - 9 September 2019
8. Community & Amenities Committee - 9 September 2019

Councillor RJ Morris asked through the Mayor for the Town Clerk to explain the composition and purpose of the Emergency Committee. The Town Clerk stated that the Emergency Committee arrangements were determined within the Town Council standing orders and at the Meeting of Annual Council in May. The membership comprised The Mayor, The Leader and all three Standing Committee Chairman (Resources, Community & Amenities and Planning) or their Deputy, together with the Town Clerk. The function is to make consideration for decisions necessary for the essential business of the Town Council during any period devoid of scheduled meetings should the need arise. It was added that the Emergency Committee meetings were called by Elected Members and not at the request of Officers.

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

138. TO RECEIVE A REPORT AND PRESENTATION FROM MR MATT NICOL REPRESENTING THE “DROITWICH MEANS BUSINESS” COMPANY

The Mayor welcomed Mr Matt Nicol and Mr Richard Waltier representing the “Droitwich Means Business (DMB) Company”. The attached slides were explained and presented to Elected Members.

Mr Nicol explained that the Group Members met every two months and some sub groups engaged in specific projects do meet more often. The aim of the Company was to “put Droitwich back on the map” and to link together various Community Groups engaged with different projects towards a common goal. Mr Nicol explained that Mrs Viv Findley had recently stepped down from the Company due to business commitments. Mention was made of tentative plans towards a fringe festival event being considered for local pubs to participate at the Chateau Impney next year. A commitment was made to offer support and guidance for the many existing projects currently ongoing throughout the Community including the “High School Cabin” and the arrangements for the Mayflower 400 Commemorations in 2020.

Councillor GR Brookes thanked Mr Nicol and Mr Waltier for their presentation and acknowledged the importance of good communications. The Mayor endorsed this and suggested that further updates may be appropriate as part of the Agenda for Full Council Meetings in the future.

RESOLVED That the presentation was noted and gratefully received.

139. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM DR ANTHONY KELLY & MR PETER PINFIELD FOR CONSIDERATION TOWARDS THE “DEMENTIA FRIENDLY TOWN “INITIATIVE.

Dr Anthony Kelly representing the Spa Medical Practice and Mr Peter Pinfield representing the Spa Medical Practice, Patients Participation Group attended to introduce the concept of “Dementia Friendly” status for the Town.

Dr Kelly explained that he was speaking on behalf of the four Medical Practices that are components of the Droitwich Spa and Ombersley area. By way of background it was explained that currently it is estimated that up to 850K persons suffer with dementia nationally. Up to 225K persons develop dementia annually and this can lead to death within 3 to 4 years. A wider number of people are affected by dementia through the families and carers of those who have the condition. Locally it is estimated that there are currently 270 dementia patients in the Droitwich Spa area and there are a further 90 new cases anticipated each year. The “Dementia Friendly Town” status can help early diagnosis by raising people’s awareness and the profile of the symptoms. Other benefits include heightened awareness how to interact with persons suffering from the condition and the support for the families and carers involved.

Mr Pinfield explained that his role representing the patients group was to help voices to be heard. The stark reality is emerging that 1 in 4 people will be affected by dementia and may have to care for somebody diagnosed with the condition. The Alzheimer’s Society are prominent in leading the campaign but the formal support of Civic Leaders is required to enable the Patients Group to proactively proceed further with initiatives. Examples of the dementia awareness & support activity planned includes approaching local businesses, training modules and dementia friendly signposting. Agreement to Dementia Friendly Status for Droitwich Spa would be at

no cost or resources for the Town Council and would enable the next stage of the awareness campaign to proceed.

Councillors GR Brookes and AH Laird both endorsed the importance of the suggested way forward, the work of the Alzheimer's Society and the endeavours of the Local Patients Group. Councillor A Humphries read out the following proposal.

“Following the continued success of the Droitwich Spa Dementia Meeting Centre that supports people and families with dementia in Droitwich Spa, discussions have taken place about applying for Droitwich Spa to be classified as a Dementia Friendly Town. Support in principle is requested for this motion from the Town Council which will require no financial or resource assistance from the Town Council. Therefore the Town Council is asked to confirm its full support for the motion to make Droitwich Spa a Dementia Friendly Town.

RESOLVED To support the “Dementia Friendly Town” status for Droitwich Spa.

#### 140 WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL – NEW HOMES BONUS & COMMUNITY LEGACY SCHEME FUNDING

To receive and consider the following options conducive towards an agreement in principle to support and collate formal applications to Wychavon. The Town Council is permitted to support applications for final consideration by Wychavon District Council. Unallocated New Homes Bonus funds for Droitwich Spa currently totals £ 53,369.00 and WDC have requested that suitable allocation is considered before 2020. In addition for larger projects two further Community Legacy fund opportunities are anticipated for Edition 3 in 2020/2021.

1. St Peters Field – Pavilion Project - revised NHB request received September 2019 for £40K. Mr Peter Field and Mr Kevin Bryan attended to update with regard to the revised application and proposed works. Mr Field explained that the immediate challenge was sufficient changing and cloak room facilities for the ladies sports teams using the pavilion. The project hopes to address this requirement as a priority and also to make provision for general repairs, redecoration and possibly an extension to the existing pavilion structure. The Town Clerk explained that to enable consideration for sanction of submission to the WDC Community Funding Committee for their scrutiny a detailed budget, costings and a schedule of the proposed works will be required , as well as 3 separate estimates from contractors.
2. SOBB'S – Lido Park Build Project – The Town Clerk updated that a request had been received on 17 September 2019, lodged by Mr John Dudley representing SOBB's Fund Raising Committee to consider agreement in principle towards a £10K New Homes Bonus contribution. This is to support the principle of a 10% input for a wider £100K Heritage Lottery Fund bid by SOBB's towards the overall project delivery cost , estimated £2.5 to £3 million.
3. West Project and Beyond - Town Centre Underpasses refurbishment project. The Town Clerk updated that pursuant to minute reference 124 of the Community & Amenities Committee Meeting held on 9 September 2019 and the feasibility report sent to all Members on 10 September a provisional proposal is outlined subject to final costings, which are anticipated by November (C & A Committee - 11 November 2019). Wychavon District Council are taking the lead on the project and have invited DSTC to participate as an active stakeholder. To consider funding contribution from NHB similar to the recent match funding arrangement for the West Project public open space area. Indicative costs

for refurbishment of the underpasses range from £3K to £7.5K each depending on the site and location.

The information for all three of the aforementioned New Homes Bonus requests was noted. The Town Clerk explained that further information was necessary for Members to consider an agreement in principle to support formal applications to WDC, specifically for options 1 and 3. The available unallocated NHB Funds for Droitwich Spa also requires consideration as to any appropriate levels of funding whereby the requests exceed the £53,369.00 total available. Councillor AM Sinton asked when decisions had to be made by. The Town Clerk advised that WDC had requested suitable nominations for their consideration by the year end. Due to the necessity for further information to be available for DSTC to make informed consideration the next suitable opportunity would be Full Council scheduled on 16 December 2019.

4. Norbury Theatre- Councillor A Humphries updated that following the Norbury Theatre's preference not to proceed at this time with a "Year 2 Edition, Community Legacy application (originally resolved by Council in June 2019, the anticipation for early consideration towards a "Year 3 Edition, Community Legacy application for 2020 has been requested.
5. High School – Cabin Project. The Town Clerk updated for information the further progress and status for the current Year 2 Edition, Community Legacy application which passed phase one acceptance in July 2019. Work on public consultation has proceeded through August and September conducive towards submitting the main second part application by the November 2019 deadline

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

#### 141 COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor GR Brookes updated that a request had been received from the Police for WCC to consider improved street lighting options in the vicinity of Vines Lane following various anti-social behaviour incidents at night. Councillor Brookes confirmed that he had been able to support this with Divisional Funding towards some new LED lights. It was suggested that Wychavon Members may wish to consider some support towards similar lighting for the nearby "volunteer boat seating" within the Vines Park perimeter which is also subject to vandalism and anti-social behaviour issues.

Councillor Brookes reported on further County Council matters including,

- Hanbury Road and Queen Street footpaths are in a poor state of general repair and currently subject to a full survey and feasibility report of remedial options, similar to the recent scheme for Coleman Row and Ombersley Street leading to Victoria Square.
- Businesses in the vicinity of Queens Street were reported as being unhappy with the restrictions imposed on the kerb line parking spaces adjacent the Hanbury cross roads traffic lights. This measure had been necessary to resolve the obstruction of parked vehicles hampering traffic flow for the junction traffic light signals.
- Councillor Brookes advised that he was scheduled to speak at the forthcoming County Council Meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019 on the matter of support for entrepreneurs in Droitwich Spa. This is anticipated to cover local innovation including Droitwich Salt and the rich local heritage opportunities.

Councillor RJ Morris reported on County Council matters including,

- Divisional Funding allocations have been made to White Socks Theatre Group to help support mental health wellbeing for the age range 7 to 11 years, Droitwich Spa Boxing Club towards their non-touch boxing initiative supporting people affected by Downs Syndrome and The Town Council for a portable VAS for deployment on Westwood Road and Westwood Way.
- Footpath resurfacing was being considered for the West Estate due to the deteriorating condition of infrastructure and to accord with supporting social mobility for the community.
- Speeding vehicles and the ineffectiveness of a portable VAS for Salwarpe Road continues to present concerns. WCC Highways are currently considering engineering options and scope including enhanced signage, road markings, feasibility for a crossing point and cycle paths.
- The Westlands / Boycott roundabout was still being reviewed for feasibility options to provide a safe pedestrian and cycle crossing point access to the Town Centre. Options include automated traffic signals and pedestrian crossings, foot bridges and cycle ways.

Councillor A Humphries updated that the Rail Operator had recently introduced parking charges at Droitwich Spa station which is causing vehicle displacement in neighbouring residential streets from commuters. The concern was raised that local constituents had not been consulted on this matter prior to implementation of the revised parking arrangements at the railway station. He asked Councillor RJ Morris to explain the current position it being a strategic part of the WCC Transport policy. Councillor Morris responded that he had requested a meeting at County and that WCC had not been consulted about the parking changes. An approach has been made by WCC to the Rail Operator to convene a meeting to resolve these matters.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

#### 142 DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor AM Sinton reported on District Council matters including,

- That on the 4<sup>th</sup> October the Wychavon Town Panel would be visiting Droitwich Spa to look at various sites in the morning. This will be followed by a lunch at St Richards House and then a wider stake holder's discussion in the afternoon.
- The anticipated South Worcestershire Development Plan Review will be available during October 2019.
- A recent press article published in the Advertiser Newspaper had inaccurately reported that Wychavon District Council was spending £337K on refurbishment of the Civic Centre Offices in Pershore. The value quoted was destined to support the Civic Centre works together with other Wychavon District Council infrastructure in the District catchment area.
- A District strategic plan is starting to be formulated towards which residents can participate by completion of an online survey. Residents are also being encouraged to vote for their favourite local park.

Councillor Sinton also updated on an enquiry received from former Councillor and Ex - Mayor Mrs Anne Taft which had registered a request during early August 2019 via the Town Council for consideration towards suitable signage to recognise the generous donation of land for public recreational use by Dr Shirley Jones in 1951. This land makes up part of the Lido Park and St Peters Fields which are today owned by Wychavon District Council following transfer from Droitwich Spa Borough Council at the time of the Local Government reorganisation in the early part of the 1970's. The

Town Clerk confirmed that the Heritage Managers were looking to provide any supporting information from the Town Heritage archives to assist Wychavon District Council with further consideration towards the request.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

#### 143 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor Payments were presented to the Council totalling £ £57,933.57. Councillor RP Hopkins referred to cheque numbers 11580 for £19,139.71 & 11592 for £5226.12 both payable to the Festive Lighting Company and requested clarification whether this contract had been subject to tendering. The Town Clerk explained that the Festive Lighting Contract had been subject to tender to accord with standing orders and fiscal policy. The larger payment represented year 2 of a 5 year term and the second value was the enhancement agreed for the Mayflower 400 illuminative event and additional Christmas Lighting provision (year 1 of 4). The amendments were pursuant to minute reference 108 of the Meeting of the Emergency Committee that took place on 2 September 2019 and that had been accepted earlier in this meeting (Agenda Item 10). Councillor RJ Morris abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts for payment be received and the expenditure totalling £ 57,933.67 as now appended be approved and duly passed for payment.

#### 144 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”.*

Councillor RP Hopkins and Councillor CM Murray both abstained from the vote.

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.

#### 145 MUNICIPAL PLANTING CONTRACT

Pursuant to Minute reference number 110 of the Emergency Committee Meeting held on 2 September 2019 to confirm that an initial meeting has taken place with representatives from Acorn Landscapes to gauge interest and discuss options for the Municipal Planting scheme. An estimate and proposals has been compiled following the introductory meeting and was handed to all members by the Assistant Town Clerk for their consideration.

The Town Clerk explained that the proposal included the annual cost detailed in the schedule from Acorn and an initial cost to replace 150 hanging baskets also detailed with the information presented. A contract term of 3 years had been suggested in order to cover the investment in fixtures and transition. The severance period with the existing provider was confirmed as being 2 working weeks which did accord to coincide with the anticipated switch over of summer plants to winter stock. The Town Clerk confirmed that a series of documented discussions had taken place with

Ms Samantha Jenkins from Countrywide since May 2019 to raise various concerns and ongoing issues. Specifically at a meeting on 9 September 2019 reference was made to competitive alternatives being pursued and the possibility of contract arrangements being fully terminated with a commitment to confirm by the end of September 2019.

RESOLVED That the Municipal Planting Contract arrangements in place with Countrywide as detailed in the contract dated November 2018 be Terminated with the requisite two week severance period. That Acorn Landscapes be appointed with effect from 1 October 2019 to undertake the Municipal Planting arrangements in accordance with their detailed proposal for the requested 3 year term.

146 DISPUTE WITH WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL REGARDING  
JAPANESE KNOTWEED CONTAMINATION OF LAND AT WESTWOOD  
LODGE ALLOTMENTS SITE

Pursuant to Minute reference number 106 of the Emergency Committee Meeting held on 2 September 2019 Councillor AM Sinton made reference to the attached response letter received from Wychavon District Council through the Town Council Solicitors (Parkinson Wright) on 20 September 2019.

Councillor Sinton read out the following statement and proposals.

- 1. The Town Council confirms that it will pay the invoice of £1400 for the 5 year KMP. This is to ensure the work is started as soon as possible.*
- 2. The Town Council undertakes to work collaboratively with the District Council and Allotments Association to ensure that the work is completed as quickly as possible.*
- 3. The Town Council is aware that the work will require a “no disturbance zone”. By definition this will have an impact on the facility offered at the allotments. It is therefore suggested that as soon as practicable a meeting is set up between representatives of the contractors, Wychavon District Council, the Town Council and the allotment holders, including a site visit, to ascertain the ramifications of the work to be carried out.*
- 4. The Town Council requests that identical contracts are drawn up with JKL for each council.*
- 5. The Town Council regrets that the issue has resulted in some ill-feeling between the parties concerned. It is therefore suggested that it is discussed candidly at the next liaison meeting between WDC and DSTC. Hopefully this will prevent future disputes of this sort by seeking to improve lines of communication between the Town and District councils. It is also felt that this meeting should be convened as soon as possible*

In general discussion the risk of further Japanese knotweed contamination claims in the future was highlighted, specifically in the context that both Wychavon District Town Council and Droitwich Spa Town Council admit no liability for the current situation. Members emphasised the importance of protecting Town Council interests in this respect. The consensus reached was that the proposed way forward should include the stipulation that an identical contract is drawn up for both Authorities to address eradication of the Japanese knotweed on land at Westwood. The Town Council contract should be ratified by the appointed Solicitor to formalise the desired protection.

Councillor A Humphries asked Councillor Sinton to consider for the future whether the Liaison Meetings with Wychavon District Council can include representation from the other political parties and not only the majority party. Councillor Sinton acknowledged this request and clarified that the Liaison Meeting delegation comprised the Leader of the Town Council, the Mayor and Officers.

RESOLVED That,

1. The Town Council confirms that it will pay the invoice of £1400 for the 5 year KMP. This is to ensure the work is started as soon as possible.
2. The Town Council undertakes to work collaboratively with the District Council and Allotments Association to ensure that the work is completed as quickly as possible.
3. The Town Council is aware that the work will require a “no disturbance zone”. By definition this will have an impact on the facility offered at the allotments. It is therefore suggested that as soon as practicable a meeting is set up between representatives of the contractors, Wychavon District Council, the Town Council and the allotment holders, including a site visit, to ascertain the ramifications of the work to be carried out.
4. The Town Council requests that identical contracts are drawn up with JKL for each council. **The DSTC contract should be ratified or drawn up by the Town Councils appointed Solicitors.**
5. The Town Council regrets that the issue has resulted in some ill-feeling between the parties concerned. It is therefore suggested that it is discussed candidly at the next liaison meeting between WDC and DSTC. Hopefully this will prevent future disputes of this sort by seeking to improve lines of communication between the Town and District councils. It is also felt that this meeting should be convened as soon as possible

The meeting ended at 8.35pm.

Chairman of Council -----  
23 September 2019