

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of Droitwich Spa Town Council held at the Community Hall on **Monday 27 September 2021** at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor WT Moy (Mayor)
Councillor G Beale
Councillor Mrs C Bowden
Councillor E Bowden
Councillor GR Brookes
Councillor Mrs JM Chaudry
Councillor G Duffy
Councillor Mrs K Fellows
Councillor J Grady
Councillor NR Griffiths
Councillor RP Hopkins
Councillor AH Laird
Councillor CM Murray
Councillor AM Sinton

APOLOGIES for absence: Councillors DM Craigie, A Humphries, DJ Morris & RJ Morris.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

2 Members of the Public joined the Meeting for the duration of open session

Mr Ashlea Stone – Chairman & Founder of the Community Pantry and supported by Mr Richard Whittall gave an overview of the work of the Group supporting vulnerable people and those affected by food poverty in Droitwich Spa and the surrounding area. The Town Clerk confirmed that the email report received earlier in the day from Mr Stone had been circulated to all Elected Members prior to the Meeting and that the two connected proposals for the Community Hall premises presented by Mr Whittall on 20 September, formed part of the agenda and support papers for the meeting (agenda item number 12).

-ooo000ooo-

112. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor G Duffy declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 12 for the Community Pantry. This is for the reason that he is involved with the management of the Chawson Barns Hall which is the existing venue used by the Pantry Group for their operations in the Town and wider Community. Councillor Duffy confirmed that he would abstain from any vote connected for agenda item 12 at this meeting.

113. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 21 JUNE 2021

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 21 June 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

114. MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2021

Councillor NR Griffiths read out a statement on behalf of Councillor A Humphries who was not present. The Town Clerk requested through the Chairman that the statement be provided in email format to enable attachment with the minutes for this meeting, which was acknowledged.

Councillor A Hopkins read from a prepared statement and made comments regarding the EGM and Neighbourhood Plan Management Group. This was interrupted through the Chairman after Councillor Hopkins stated that he was currently waiting for the result of a PCR Test having returned from abroad. The Assistant Town Clerk reminded Councillor Hopkins that to accord with reasonable health precautions for himself and everyone else present he should not be attending this meeting whilst a personal Covid 19 Test result remained unknown. Councillor Hopkins was respectfully requested to leave and he withdrew from the meeting at 6.10pm. The Chairman advised Councillor Hopkins that his statement should be provided for Officers to attach with the Minutes for the meeting in due course.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Extra ordinary Meeting of Council held on 13 September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. 11 voted in favour and 2 against.

115. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor WT Moy updated the following information.

I am happy to report that due to the lifting of some Covid-19 restrictions my mayoral engagements are returning to a state of some normality. These have included some informal duties along with civic duties, to include the Mayor of Worcester's Inaugural Banquet in the Guild Hall, Worcester.

Due to a short holiday and other conflicting commitments, I am pleased to say my Deputy Mayor, Councillor George Duffy, has carried out some important engagements on my behalf. The feedback from these duties carried out by my Deputy has been very favourable indeed and I feel Cllr Duffy will be well placed to take over the Mayorship in May 2022.

I am now also in a position to re-instate some of my own charity functions which began with my riverboat cruise out of Stourport-on-Severn. This was well received and I did manage to raise a small amount to go towards my charitable fund.

Jane and myself are currently working on my next and final dinner dance to be held at Droitwich Golf Club on 20th November 2021. Invitations will be going out next week. There will be a three course meal followed by an amazing band to which we can all dance the night away! All Councillors will, of course, be invited and I would like to think myself and my charities can count on your support.

Stand by Mr Deputy Mayor, I feel sure you will be called upon many more times in the remaining 9 months of my tenure.

Thank you all!

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

116. POLICING IN DROITWICH SPA

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

Firstly, can I apologise for not being able to attend the Council meeting in person, unfortunately I'm on leave. If there are any queries or question please don't hesitate to contact me.

It's been a busy few months for my team as everything has got back to 'normal' and we try and re-engage with our community after the difficulties caused by lockdown.

There have been a few burglaries in Droitwich with two clearly separate modus operandi. Recently there were two burglaries on Mayflower Rd with access being gained at the rear of the properties and Jewellery and a handbag being stolen. Then overnight 22nd-23rd Sept two houses were targeted in Henley Drive and Pilgrim Rd where the target was believed to be keys for cars parked on the driveways. Enquiries are continuing into these offences.

Over the summer we've been out and about in Droitwich using the Mobile Police station and running 'pop-up' surgeries in the Library and in the Westlands Community Centre. We plan to continue doing these and will advertise them at the locations themselves, as well as on Facebook and via the Neighbourhood Matters messaging system.

We also ran bike marking events in the Lido and at the Leisure centre in Droitwich. Having mentioned Neighbourhood Matters, can I ask that Councillors sign up to messages (if not already done so) and also ask that they mention it to any contacts they have. It is far more interactive than our old messaging service and will be increasingly used as a method of getting information out into the community. Sign up is simple and via: www.neighbourhoodmatters.co.uk

We've been doing regular speed enforcement in roads identified by the Council and community as being of concern. This includes Salwarpe Rd, Tagwell Rd, Primsland Way, and Westwood Way.

Some good news from last month is the sentencing of Jack Evans age 22 years from the Westlands Estate who was jailed for Possession of Crack Cocaine and Heroin with Intent to Supply. This was following the execution of a warrant in December 2020 by my team where drugs to the value of £6,800 were seized. He was sentenced to four years imprisonment in total.

Following reports of thefts and attempted thefts from insecure cars my team were out patrolling on bikes and in plain cars overnight at the beginning of Sept. Though we didn't catch the thieves we did catch a suspected drug dealer so a positive result. We're going to be using the bikes to patrol areas that are difficult to access by vehicle, including the Westlands Estate.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

117. HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE

The Chairman introduced and welcomed the newly elected Head Girl – Maddie Rollit & Head Boy – Tom Griffiths from Droitwich Spa High School.

Maddie reported that the High School and Students were now becoming more accustomed with the new term and School year. The overall sense was one of community, working together and looking forwards after all of the disruption attributed to the Covid 19 pandemic since March 2020. Different initiatives were being tried including the option for pupils to wear their own personal choice PE kits. This has been a well- received innovation this term. Another very positive project for the School Community is the Charities week and connected events which this year includes Task Master Game Show, Teachers performing music videos and a masked singer competition. School trips have now resumed for different work and year groups. Destinations include Snowdonia, Shropshire and Swanage up to now.

Tom reported that the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme has now restarted. Both Maddie and Tom had recently completed the practice expedition and were looking forward to undertaking the main exhibition for the awards in due course.

Councillor AM Sinton suggested that the High School may wish to consider a public speaking completion similar to an event he was due to attend in his capacity as Vice Chairman of Wychavon District Council taking place soon at Prince Henry's High School in Evesham.

On behalf of the Town Council - The Chairman, Councillor Sinton & Councillor Mrs K Fellows each commended Maddie & Tom for their excellent reports and wished them all the very best for their Headship's Year.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

118. YOUTH COUNCIL UPDATE

The Town Clerk explained that the Youth Council activities had been reduced due to the national lock downs and disruption caused by the Covid 19 pandemic. Councillor RJ Morris and the High School Head Teacher had recently arranged for the Youth Council activities to be resurrected from January 2022. A further update will be provided from the Youth Council when their activities can fully resume next year.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

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

1. Planning Committee – 26 July 2021 [*circulated previously*]
2. Resources Committee – 26 July 2021 [*enclosed*]
3. Planning Committee -13 September 2021 [*enclosed*]
4. Community & Amenities Committee -13 September 2021 [*enclosed*]

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

120. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT & ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

To confirm that pursuant to minute references 41 & 42 of the meeting of Full Council that took place on 21 June 2021 the sign off and approval opinion from the External Auditor has now been received. There were no actions, issues or recommendations arising. The notice and documents are now displayed which includes being appended on the Town Council website to accord with procedures. The confirmed AGAR document is attached for information.

Councillor Am Sinton & Councillor GR Brookes commended the Officer Team for the work in achieving this audit result for the previous year.

RESOLVED That the information was noted. There were no questions arising.

121. WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMUNITY LEGACY FUNDING

To confirm the following project and application updates *[for information]*

- (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.
- (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 WD 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. From launch and in response to user feedback some fine tuning and further enhancement of the APP is ongoing in consultation with Mr Paul Matthews – Service Provider. The final third payment draw down and full sign off is anticipated later in October. A schedule of School Visits and Assemblies is being arranged by the Heritage Team with Joe Chambers to profile the App, Video and overall Heritage Centre offering into October. A business launch event to introduce the App and Video to the local staycation and tourism sector is being planned for later in the autumn.
- (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 scheduled for demolition and site clearance in readiness for the new build beginning late September. Further updates will follow through regular liaison with key stakeholders at the Football Club and Wychavon District Council.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

122. THE COMMUNITY PANTRY FOOD BANK

To acknowledge receipt of an enquiry and two proposals for support options using the Community Hall facilities from Mr Richard Whittall on behalf of the Community Pantry Food Bank. Supporting information is attached as presented & received. The scope and options for supporting the Community Pantry are being taken forward by Wychavon District Council over recent months. An initial feasibility site meeting took place at the Community Hall premises on 12th August 2021 attended by Wychavon District Council Officers, representatives of the Community Pantry and the Town Clerk.

Consideration for options to support the Community Pantry in the Town are ongoing and being coordinated through WDC. Further consideration towards feasibility and scope is recommended to be delegated through the Community & Amenities Committee with representation from all of the key stakeholders involved *[details attached for information- as received]*.

Councillor AM Sinton proposed the following motion.

“The Council recognises the importance of the Community Pantry project for the town. It addresses a tangible need for many of our residents and is a complex and emerging issue which merits further serious investigation in order to assist in achieving a positive solution to the practical problems involved. It therefore delegates the authority to the Town Clerk to

continue to liaise with the various stakeholders and interested parties involved including Wychavon District Council and explore the feasible options with a view to him presenting a report to the meeting of the Community and Amenities Committee on November 8th 2021 when an informed decision as to any DSTC involvement in the project will be made“

Councillor GR Brookes seconded the motion and added the following statement.

Mr Mayor, it will give me great pleasure to second this motion moved by Cllr Sinton in response to a request from a member of the public. But before doing so I would like to say a few words to emphasise that proper procedures need to be followed, and I am concerned that the document headed “The Community Pantry Food Bank” already contains what appear to be misunderstandings and I would like to correct two before we move on.

Firstly, it states, “As there is little land available in Droitwich Spa the Town Council suggested the Community Hall as an option. The option would be rent-free....”

This is simply not correct. No such offer has been made.

It would not be possible to make such an offer since this Town Council manages two parks, two public buildings, an accredited museum, civic planting and other good things for our town on a very limited budget. The Community Hall can only be maintained using the income from its lettings. This is illustrated with the reduction in lettings as a result of Covid. Our Town Clerk has only been able to balance the books by offsetting costs against the reduction in expenditure elsewhere as a result of Covid.

Secondly it states, “As in both proposals the larger kitchen which was on offer could then be used for storing school uniforms etc. and baby goods.”

To be clear, this kitchen is not on offer at this time.

Mr Mayor, as a person who personally abhors waste of any kind, but especially food waste, I am pleased to second this motion and will do anything I can in practical terms to try to help make this idea work here.

RESOLVED That the Town Council recognises the importance of the Community Pantry project for the town. It addresses a tangible need for many of our residents and is a complex and emerging issue which merits further serious investigation in order to assist in achieving a positive solution to the practical problems involved. **It therefore delegates the authority to the Town Clerk to continue to liaise with the various stakeholders and interested parties involved including Wychavon District Council and explore the feasible options with a view to him presenting a report to the meeting of the Community and Amenities Committee on November 8th 2021 when an informed decision as to any DSTC involvement in the project will be made“**

There were 12 votes in favour with one abstention.

123. TOKYO OLYMPICS & PARALYMPICS MEDAL WINNERS 2021

Following the tremendous achievements of local swimming participants at this summer’s Tokyo Games to consider appropriate & befitting recognition through Droitwich Spa Town Council. The medal winners linked to Droitwich Spa are,

- Matthew Richards – Gold Medal Winner – Men’s 4 x 200 metre freestyle relay.

- Rebecca Redfern- Silver Medal Winner – Women’s 100 metre breaststroke SB13.

Councillor AM Sinton suggested that the medal winners be invited to accompany the Mayor in turning on the Towns Christmas Lights at the ceremony and event scheduled for Saturday 27th November 2021. This may include a small reception and individual parchment scrolls bearing the Town Crest to be arranged to mark the occasion, In general discussion the suggestions were unanimously supported.

RESOLVED That both medal winners are formally invited by the Mayor to support the Switch – On of the Christmas Lights on 27 November 2021. Consideration to be made for inclusion of a small reception and parchment scrolls to mark the occasion.

124. THE PLATINUM JUBILEE QUEEN’S GREEN CANOPY

To be advised of the above initiative and attached communication received from Lt Col Patrick Holcroft LVO OBE – Lord – Lieutenant of Worcestershire. The acknowledgement response from the Town Council Office is also attached.

To consider any suggestions for supporting the Queen’s Green Canopy project locally as a component of the Platinum Jubilee arrangements already being taken forward for June 2022. These matters can be delegated through the Community & Amenities Committee as appropriate.

Councillor GR Brookes explained about an idea to make provision for an area of additional Municipal planting and new trees on Town Council land adjacent to the Spring Meadow public open space on Primsland Way. This could be complimented with a suitable commemorative plaque or signage to mark the occasion of the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee for June 2022.

Councillor AM Sinton updated that whilst the Queen’s Green Canopy initiative was being presented through the Lieutenancy Office for Towns and Parishes to take the lead, it was appropriate to include wider stakeholder involvement with Wychavon District Council. The District Council own and maintain Lido and Vines Park in the Town which both present very suitable locations for inclusion in the planting options for new trees. In general discussion the consensus reached was to consider all options being delegated to the Community & Amenities Committee as part of the arrangements being made for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations for June 2022.

RESOLVED That consideration for all options for the Queen’s Green Canopy initiative be delegated to the Community & Amenities Committee as part of the wider arrangements for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations being planned for June 2022.

125. THE PLATINUM JUBILEE LIGHT A BEACON CAMPAIGN

Pursuant to the latest CALC & NALC bulletin (edition 21-15) circulated to Members on 10 September 2021, the following extract from the Nalc Chairman’s update refers to suggestions for lighting a beacon to celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee next year.

“Local councils have been asked to play a part in the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee by lighting beacons on 2 June 2022. I know for many years local councils have lit beacons as part of their celebrations for other national events, and I would encourage you to get involved – find out more, including a guide to taking part” *[link and attachment provided with Calc bulletin 21-15 for information]*.

Councillor AM Sinton suggested that a beacon is considered for the designated date of Thursday 2nd June 2022 at the high point of Dodderhill Church overlooking the Town Centre and Vines Park. This location was used to locate a search light over the Town for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in June 2012. In general discussion the consensus reached was to consider all options being delegated to the Community & Amenities Committee as part of the arrangements being made for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations for June 2022.

RESOLVED That consideration for all options for the beacon be delegated to the Community & Amenities Committee as part of the wider arrangements for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations being planned for June 2022.

126. THE WEST PROJECT & BEYOND - PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS IMPROVEMENTS

- (a) To note that two further Project Reference Group Meetings have taken place on 22 July 2021 and 22 September 2021. WDC and the Project Consultant are leading with Artists being commissioned to finalise the public art and design for the murals. Discussions are taking place with WCC Highways & Street Lighting to address surface and drainage aspects, as well as the fitting of LED Lighting. The works schedule for the wider project commences through the autumn with provisionally three underpasses in the West as phase one. It is anticipated that the Station and the 2 Ombersley Way underpasses which are the Town Council funded component of the project will proceed in phase 2 or 3 next spring.

The Town Clerk updated that the artwork for the Ombersley Way underpasses will include contributions from West Acre Middle School and St Joseph's Primary School both working with the commissioned artists. The Railway Station artwork will involve students from the High School and local business representatives working with the commissioned artist. The Town Clerk acknowledged the generous contribution from Councillor GR Brookes through his WCC Divisional Highways Allowance towards the costs of the LED lighting component for the project.

- (b) Final confirmation of approval to allocate the remaining balance of the New Homes Bonus fund (£13,356) for the project from Wychavon District Council is attached. This follows formal authorisation by the Wychavon Executive Board on 28 July 2021.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

127. COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor GR Brookes updated on the following County Council matters, including input on behalf of the WCC Ward for Councillor RJ Morris.

A funding bid has been made to the Department for Transport for £750,000 to enable construction of a crossing at Westlands Roundabout as part of the DfT active travel capital funding. We won't know whether the bid has been successful until late autumn. From Marc Bayliss area, the Cones are still situated at Copcut/A38 but works have been progressed and the junction is now moving through the four levels of Road Safety assessment

by external organisations. This is expected to be completed imminently. The path from Addyes Way to the bus stop should also be completed this weekend and opened next week – once it is settled.

Out of frustration and annoyance over progress of these works Cllr Morris asked County Scrutiny Committee to look into developer led highways work such as A38/Copcut and he can now confirm that this has been passed as a scrutiny task activity with the following goals:

- 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.

Imminent Pathways/Roads resurfacing:

- Hunters End on Westlands
- Grafson Place
- May Tree Hill and Holly Close
- Vines Lane (Tree works)

Works are now timetabled well into 2022/3

Cllr Morris Divisional funds:

Two allocations agreed from his budget:

Dolphins Swimming Programme to support 12 weeks of dedicated coaching.
Supporting a start-up fund for the new Westlands Residents Association

Cllr Brookes Divisional Funds:

Two allocations proposed from his budget:

Proposed further support for the work by SOBBs to bring back a brine baths in Droitwich.
Proposed support for the Queen's green canopy planting.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

128. DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor AM Sinton updated on the following District Council matters.

- West Summit held to support partners & agencies form a clear action plan to transform support for Westlands

- Pillar (At Wychavon Civic Centre) is opening its doors to businesses between 10am-2pm on Thursday 14 October for remote workers, Businesses that move into one of The Pillar's five offices will have access to a support package of advice, mentoring and grant funding from Worcestershire Growth Hub.

At the event businesses have an opportunity to meet members from the hub including Worcestershire Business Central's Business Engagement Manager who will be on hand to offer advice on starting, running, growing, and funding your business. Advisors from Enterprising Worcestershire will be available to provide support for new and early-stage businesses. Businesses can also hear about apprenticeship grants from the Economic Regeneration team.

- There will be a fourth round of the Community Legacy Grants. It will be particularly aimed at Parish and Town Councils who did not receive grants in the earlier rounds.
- The delayed timetable for the SWDP review has been confirmed by the three Councils.
- The Town Prospectuses have been subject to some delay but will be published in the next few months.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

129. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS AND ONGOING RESTRICTIONS

To confirm that whilst restrictions are currently lifted since July 2021 the National situation regarding Covid 19 continues to be closely monitored. This position is likely to remain fluid for the coming months and especially because of the onset of autumn & winter with additional seasonal challenges for the Health Service. All Town Council and Committee meetings will remain at the Community Hall for the shorter term in order to enable reasonable precautions, greater spacing and ventilation. Adherence to Government guidance will continue to be maintained at all times. It is hoped to return to the Council Chamber at St Richards House as soon as the pandemic situation improves. The option remains to use Zoom /Teams for virtual discussions, although these are currently prohibited for use for any decision making Council Meetings *[for information]*.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

130. LAND HOLDINGS KIDDERMINSTER ROAD

To confirm that pursuant to minute reference 51 of the meeting of Full Council held on 21 June 2021 that GJS Dillon – Commercial Property Consultants has now been instructed to advise on a sales and marketing strategy for the Kidderminster Road land. Their advice recommends an associated professional Planning Report covering the feasibility of developing the land and an access statement. This aspect is currently being taken forward by Avon Planning Services. Further updates will be provided in due course *[for information.]*
 The Town Clerk added that the Planning Report had been received as at 24 September 2021 and will be presented through the Resources Committee on 11 October 2021.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

131. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor Payments were presented to the Council totalling £33,626.75. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts for payment be received and the expenditure totalling £33,626.75 as now appended be approved and duly passed for payment.

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm.

Chairman of Council -----
 13 December 2021