

DROITWICH SPA TOWN COUNCIL

DROITWICH SPA TOWN MEETING LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Annual Droitwich Spa Town Meeting held in the Main Hall, Community Hall, Heritage Way, Droitwich Spa on Monday, 30 March 2015 at 7 pm.

A G E N D A

1. To confirm the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 31 March 2014.
2. To receive the reports of the Town Mayor 2014/15 and the Chairmen of the Council's Standing Committees.
3. To receive items to be referred to the Town Council by members of the public.
4. Communications as permitted by the Mayor.

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The Town Mayor and 13 Town Councillors were in attendance, also Town/County Councillor Mrs P E Davey and District/County Councillor Mrs L Duffy.

Invited representatives present were Mr Ian Marshall, Head of Legal and Committee Services and Mrs Janet Yates, Droitwich Spa Business Partnerships Manager both from Wychavon District Council, also Inspector Jan Heritage and Sergeant Sarah Kent of West Mercia Constabulary.

The meeting was attended by 45 Town electors and 1 non-resident.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE Ms Alex Townley – 'Droitwich Advertiser' reporter.

A public notice convening the meeting had been displayed on notice boards in the Town and at the Community Hall for the required period. Copies of the Agenda, Minutes of the Town Meeting held on 30 March 2014 were available for members of the public, together with copies of reports from the Mayor and the Chairmen of the Town Council's Standing Committees.

The meeting was preceded by a display of the new Town Guide website: www.visitdroitwichspa.com

The Town Mayor, Councillor Bob Brookes took the Chair and welcomed invited guests and members of the public present.

Councillor Brookes made special reference to the attendance of Flt Lt Paul Wilde RAF VR(T), Officer Commanding 2516 Droitwich Squadron Air Training Corps. Flt Lt Wilde had been the winner of Wychavon District Council's Diamond Jubilee Community Recognition Award which acknowledged his unstinting support for the local community. Councillor Brookes advised upon some of Flt Lt Wilde's achievements, including the national success achieved by the Air Cadets and support for local events. This year Flt Lt Wilde had very successfully been Parade Organiser for the Remembrance Day Parade.

Councillor Brookes then introduced the Chairmen of the Town Council's Standing Committees:-

Councillor Ken Jennings, Chairman of Resources Committee;
Councillor Roy Murphy, Chairman of Planning Committee;
Councillor Alex Sinton, Chairman of Community and Amenities Committee;

and advised that there were other members of the Town Council that were in attendance at the meeting, who would be speaking in their capacity as residents.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: were received from: Aidan Stevens from St Andrews Town Hotel.

MINUTES: the Minutes of the Town Meeting held on 18 March 2013 were submitted for adoption and confirmed as a correct record.

REPORTS:

The Mayor invited the Chairmen of the Town Council's Resources Committee, Planning Committee, and Community and Amenities Committee to present their reports, which they duly did, advising of specific matters of interest and drawing attention to certain issues.

The Mayor then read his written report that had been circulated. Thereafter the Mayor invited residents at the meeting (that to include Town, District and County Councillors as residents) to raise any items for discussion.

1. Car Parking in roads in the vicinity of the railway station

[see also No 6 below]

➤ Dave Davidson, 25 Station Street

Mr Davidson advised of the problems in the vicinity of the Omberley Street West area caused by rail travellers parking their cars in the roads surrounding the railway station. Parking for residents and businesses was difficult and action was required to prevent people from parking all day. He suggested that the politicians should sort it out by bringing the Baxenden Chemicals Ltd site back into state ownership and putting a car park there. He also reported upon local knowledge regarding a roman ruin on that site.

The Mayor advised that there were three tiers of local government with Worcestershire County Council being the Highways Authority and in charge of the making of road traffic orders, with Wychavon District Council having the responsibility for on-street parking enforcement (traffic wardens). The Town Council could only determine to put forward the views of residents to the County Council. County Councillor Mrs L Duffy advised that she had looked at the area and that it was possible for the County Council to make Prohibition of Waiting Orders but suggested that Mr Davidson and other residents met with her prior to this as once in force such Orders would be applicable to residents also. Councillor K Jennings confirmed that the Town Council supported the use of the Baxenden site for car parking and a short term solution was hoped for in the first instance, but he did not want to castigate those who parked their cars in the side roads whilst they commuted to Birmingham and other places as they were trying to make a living. Councillor R E Murphy responded that in his capacity as Chairman of Droitwich History Society he was aware of the possibility of roman remains at the site and had contacted the

County Archaeologist in this regard. Archaeological remains had to be taken into account when a planning application was being considered.

➤ Bryan Field, 19 Herriots Court

Mr Field supported the use of the Baxenden site as a car park. He commended the use of public transport to get to work.

➤ Sandy Laird, 222 Worcester Road

Mr Laird advised of a property developer who had built a multi-storey car park which had been a lucrative investment.

2. Pedestrians – A38 Kidderminster Road

➤ Steve Sidaway, 203 Meadow Road

Mr Sidaway reported upon the need for a footbridge, pelican crossing, speed sign or some such methods to assist pedestrians walking into the town centre and having to cross the A38 and associated roundabout.

Councillor Brookes advised that this was being looked at by County Highways Officers as part of the Public Realm Improvements. County Councillor Mrs Duffy suggested that the Police might be able to monitor speeding in this area and Sergeant Sarah Kent suggested that the Safer Roads Partnership be contacted to collect the necessary data to enable an informed response. The Mayor requested that the Town Clerk contact the Safer Roads Partnership accordingly.

3. New Housing and lack of town infrastructure

➤ Kevin Jackson, 51 Oakleigh Road

Mr Jackson was concerned that the town infrastructure and particularly the retail shopping areas were inadequate for the number of residential properties being built and wondered what was being done.

The Mayor agreed with Mr Jackson on this matter and referred to the ‘Mary Portas Report’ (independent review in 2014 of the national state of the high streets and town centres). The Town Council had limited powers and really the matter required individual entrepreneurs. The Town Council had no control over rents but had instigated the weekly Charter Market and would be undertaking an event to celebrate the 800th Anniversary of the signing of the Droitwich Charter. Such things were done to bring visitors into the town and he was sure that they would return to the town in the future.

4. Planning Matters – the role of the Highways Authority

➤ John Brass, 16 Isaacs Way

Mr Brass referred to a ‘tsunami of development’ in the area and that matters such as parking should be part of the planning requirements. He discussed a particular planning application at Copcut (W10/02896/OU and W14/02829/OU) where the developers were seeking to remove the highways conditions placed upon the planning approval and that this should be resisted.

The Mayor confirmed that the Town Council was making representations with regard to the Copcut planning application and that objections could be posted to Wychavon District Council via the www.wychavon.gov.uk website by all who wished to comment on the

application. Councillor R E Murphy confirmed that he was attending the meeting of Wychavon District Council's Planning Committee on Thursday 2 April 2015 to speak against the application on behalf of the Town Council. Members of the public could also speak at that meeting and that the opportunity should be taken. Councillor R M Morris supported the previous speakers and referred to the comment of 'no objection' submitted by Worcestershire County Council Highways Officers.

➤ George Leech, 86 The Worcestershire

In his role as Chairman of the Civic Society Mr Leech reported concerns regarding the two large 'semi-permanent' gates on Copcut Lane.

Discussion ensued as to the role of Worcestershire County Council's Highways Officers with regard to planning applications. It was confirmed that a representative had been invited to the meeting. County Councillor Mrs P E Davey advised that the Officers had strict guidelines applicable to planning application comments and legally there was planning presumption in favour of sustainable development. Highways Officers were always mindful of the possibility of occurring costs awarded against the Authority should a planning approval be won on appeal. She stressed the need for conditions placed on planning permissions to be monitored and referred to situation regarding the McCarthy & Stone/Bellway development (Section 278 Highways Agreement). There was further debate on the roles of the Local Planning Authority and the Highways Authority, particularly with regard to the ability of the Local Planning Authority to depart from the recommendations of the Highways Authority upon planning applications. It was noted that these recommendations were made without political interference. The Mayor instructed the Clerk to invite County Council Highways Officers to the next meeting of the Council on 27 April 2015 and advised those in attendance as to the ability to attend Town Council meetings. County Councillor Mrs P E Davey counselled that County Officers would not be able to attend the meeting owing to the period of 'purdah' on the run up to the Local Government Elections on 7 May 2015.

5. Planning Matters – Fortis Living – Applications for Housing on land used currently for garages

➤ Councillor Bob Brookes, 43 Tagwell Road

The Mayor had made reference to the situation at Pridzor Road whereby the Highways Authority had not objected to the planning application (W/14/02610/PN) for two affordable bungalows on the garage block site. The Local Planning Authority had refused the application despite the Highways Authority having no objections and an Appeal had now been lodged. There was some discussion upon the notifications sent out by both Fortis Living and the Local Planning Authority.

➤ Councillor T J Noyes, 36 York Avenue (on behalf of a resident of 11 Camp Hill)

Councillor Noyes advised that Fortis Living was proposing a similar development for the garages at Bower Hill, Chawson and he felt that this situation should not be supported. Fortis Housing Tenants should be advised fully on this matter.

➤ Pete Smith, 10 Woodfield

Mr Smith spoke upon the lack of notification from Fortis Living.

The Mayor confirmed that a representative from Fortis Living had been invited to the Town Meeting. He would invite them to attend the next Council meeting on 27 April 2015 to account for their actions.

- Sarah Dutton, 20 Camp Hill

Ms Dutton was not pleased with the terminology used by Fortis Living in notification she had received and advised that if the proposal went ahead for the Bower Hill, Chawson garages then there would be 25 cars plus a further 35-40 cars displaced.

6. Planning Matters - Baxenden Chemicals Site & Pipe Supports Site

[see also No 1 above]

- Mr Kevin Jackson, 51 Oakleigh Road

Mr Jackson suggested that the Industrial/Retail businesses sited in Phase 2 of the Copcut development be re-sited at Berry Hill Industrial Estate.

Councillor K Jennings confirmed that this suggestion accorded with the official policy of the Town Council and had been conveyed to the Local Planning Authority. The Mayor made reference to contamination at the Baxenden Chemicals Ltd Site.

- Mrs Yuleen Jewell, Tudor Court, Saleway WR9 7JY *[non-resident]*

Mrs Jewell requested information pertaining to the contamination.

The Mayor confirmed that this information would be forthcoming as part of the planning process for the site.

- Dave Davidson, 25 Station Street

Mr Davidson referred to this site.

The Mayor advised that there was no information at present, it was supposed that the owners thereof were considering options.

7. Police Matters

- Mr Neil Whelan, 12 Rowan Close

Mr Whelan asked for a general update on crime in the Town from the Police representatives at the meeting and was advised that this was not appropriate at this meeting but that the information could be obtained by either looking on the West Mercia Constabulary website www.westmercia.police.uk or by contacting Sergeant Sarah Kent or Inspector Jan Heritage by email.

- Dave Davidson, 25 Station Street

Mr Davidson thanked the Police for the action they had taken regarding the spate of anti-social behaviour in Ombersley Street West, the removal of the main perpetrator having been effected.

The Mayor reminded those present to use the 101 number to report non-emergency incidents. The Police were thanked for their hard work and received a round of applause from those present.

There being no further questions or comments, and no communications for consideration, the Mayor concluded the meeting at 8.37pm. He thanked everybody for their attendance and support and wished them a safe journey home.