

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held at the Community Hall on Monday 11 October 2021 at 18.31 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs K Fellows (Chairman)
Councillor RG Beale
Councillor EJ Bowden
Councillor GR Brookes
Councillor RP Hopkins
Councillor WT Moy (Ex officio)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Mrs C Bowden, G Duffy, J Grady, AH Laird, RJ Morris, CM Murray, AM Sinton

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors, Mrs JM Chaudry & A Humphries.

144. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received.

145. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 JULY 2021.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Resources Committee held on 26 July 2021 at the Community Hall be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

146. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 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. The confirmed AGAR document was attached with the Agenda for Full Council on 27 September for information. Procedures determine that the outcome is referenced through the Resources Committee as well as Full Council *[for information]*.

RESOLVED- The information was noted.

147. KIDDERMINSTER ROAD LAND HOLDING

To confirm the attached Development Appraisal Report (September 2021) -provided with Agenda, and carried out by Avon Planning Services Ltd. This is the first component of the wider Marketing Prospectus and up to date valuation options being produced for the Town Council through GJS Dillon – Commercial Property Consultants. The Planning Report and Prospectus will enable the Town Council to make further informed consideration for options for the land in due course. Further details will be provided as they become available

RESOLVED- The information was noted.

148. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY NEIGHBOURHOOD FUND

To be advised of confirmation for receipt of £7,614.76 from Wychavon District Council as at 30 September 2021 as part of the above funding initiative. This payment originates from the development of 9 new homes on land at Woodland Way, Droitwich Spa, WR9 7GP. In accordance with regulatory requirements the money must be spent within 5 years of receipt, or if not returned to the District Council. Details of the regulations for use of the funding are outlined in the attached letter.

The current Community Infrastructure Levy receipts are outlined on the attached summary sheets including originating dates. Suitable consideration for use of the funds should be made at an early opportunity [*covering letter, confirmation of 30 September 2021 payment & breakdown of the two separate accumulated CIL fund receipts all attached for information and reference*].

To note that a suggested suitable project for possible consideration towards funding contribution options is the Westlands Children's Play Ground. This is a collaborative venture in the West Ward and existing lead stakeholders include Wychavon District Council & Platform Housing. The Town Clerk clarified that the CIL derived from the Woodland Way development is actually within the Droitwich Spa South East Ward and not within the West Ward of the Town which had been incorrectly reported with the agenda papers.

Councillor RJ Morris commended the Westlands Children's Playground initiative as being a very positive community project. He did suggest that for the time being consideration should be to defer deciding on recipient project options for the accumulated CIL funds. This is for the reason to enable the full impact of the new developments on the existing community and its infrastructure. The requirement to allocate the funding to a suitable project within 5 years of receipt was also noted.

Councillor RP Hopkins commented that following a West Ward Residents meeting that he had recently attended, his opinion was that Platform Housing expected the Town Council to contribute CIL funding to the Westlands Playground project. There were no further comments made on this opinion.

RESOLVED - To note the requirement to allocate CIL monies received for suitable projects within 5 years of the receipt date. To defer a decision for any allocation for the time being in order to gauge the impact of the new developments on the local community and existing infrastructure following occupancy of the new housing.

The Vote was 5 in favour and 1 abstention from the 6 Resources Committee Members present.

149. REVIEW OF HEALTH & SAFETY

To confirm that a full review of the Town Council provision for Health & Safety arrangements at St Richards House and the Community Hall premises has been completed on 11th August 2021 with the nominated professional consultant – John Ellis Associates Limited. The interim Fire Risk Audit Visit carried out by Hereford and Worcester Fire & Rescue Service that took place for the Community Hall on 18 May 2021 has previously been reported (minute reference 84 of the Resources Committee held on 26 July 2021). A recommendation arising was to review and update to current the Fire Risk Assessment for the premises.

The opportunity has been taken to review and update all of the following documents, including the full Health & Safety Policy. There were no significant recommendations or interventions highlighted. The relevant documents are all attached with the agenda. Thereafter the annual Health and Safety review will continue to accord with ongoing due diligence and procedures

1. Consultants Summary of Health and Safety Visit and Discussions – 11th August 2021
2. Health and Safety Policy
3. Risk Assessments- individual to both premises
4. Fire Risk Assessment – Community Hall
5. Fire Risk Assessment – St Richards House

There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED- The information was noted.

150. NALC recommended Model Standing Orders for England 2018 (revised 2020) & Financial Regulations (2019).

The Town Council formally adopted the recommended Nalc Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in 2020 (Meeting of Full Council held on 27th January 2020, Minute reference 253). These are reviewed annually to accord with Auditors procedures and was last undertaken by the Resources Committee during February 2021 (Meeting of 8th February 2021 minute reference 236). The remaining aspect of populating the recommended template version bespoke for Droitwich Spa Town Council has now been finalised for consideration. Subject to approval this version will then be appended to the Town Council web page and data share file. Unfortunately this finalisation for any adjustments has taken longer than anticipated mainly due to the business interruption of the Covid 19 pandemic in the elapsed period from March 2020. The recommendation from Calc and the Auditors is that the template version should be maintained where possible without deviation from standard practice towards local arrangements. This agenda item review can also fulfil the statutory requirement to review the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations for the current Municipal period 2021/2022 [*populated versions attached with Agenda for consideration for approval*].

The Town Clerk mentioned that following feedback it had been noted that the template Standing Orders & Financial Regulations did generally refer to “he” throughout and it had been suggested that in consideration for equality this should read as “he/she/other or they “. This can be amended where necessary from the template version. It was also clarified that the reference to the Chairman of The Council was in the same context as the Mayor. Councillor RP Hopkins questioned about the arrangements for Corporate Credit Cards. The Town Clerk clarified that the Town Council had neither Corporate Credit nor Debit Cards as there was no requirement for those facilities within the normal current business of the Town Council. The Town Clerk reminded Members of the annual requirement to review the adopted Standing Orders & Financial Regulations , whilst this had been completed on 8th February 2021 for the Municipal Year 20/21, today’s meeting can be considered as the recorded review for the current 21/22 period . There were no further questions or points arising.

RESOLVED - That the presented populated versions of the recommended NALC Standing Orders & Financial Regulations be fully adopted by the Town Council with immediate effect , To confirm and note that the annual statutory review of the Standing Orders & Financial Regulations for the Municipal Year 2021/2022 has also been completed simultaneously as at 11 October 2021.

151. LLOYDS BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

A review meeting took place with Lloyds Bank on Thursday 22 July 2021. This was with the Accounts Relationship Manager in order to take forward various matters including some service level deficiencies, options for accepting retailer card payments , reduced cash handling

for the TIC & Office and the finalisation of the online payment process for remittances below £25,000.00. Pursuant to minute reference 85 of the Resources Committee meeting that took place 26 July 2021, further details are now updated.

1. Service deficiencies identified include incorrect and obsolete signatories remaining on the Bank Mandate despite confirmed requests for updating after Annual Council each Year. This is a repeat failing and has now been actioned again by way of correction from the Bank. A complaint log has also been raised following similar issues identified in previous years.
2. Card Net point of Sale terminals have been arranged and are in place for the Heritage Centre and for the Office. This will enable more flexible payment options and reduce cash handling.
3. Automated Stock Control (Clover) System for Heritage Centre retail sales. The introduction of this online system will create capacity and save time for general stock monitoring and control, as well as the year end reconciliations. The process is now live and training is progressing with the Volunteer Team.

The online remittances option has been progressed by adding an additional Officer to the Digital Banking portal for access. Issues remain whereby clarification is being sought whether Elected Member signatories are able to have “authorisation only” online access without full digital banking access to enable payments to be verified. Elected Members are prohibited from having individual full digital banking access. This factor may prohibit the online payments if a workable solution is not readily available. Precedent advice is being taken forward with Lloyds Bank as well as through Calc/Nalc. In the meantime remittances are being maintained through cheque payments.

RESOLVED- The information was noted.

152. CLIMATE CHANGE –REDUCTION OF CARBON FOOTPRINT IN DROITWICH SPA

To consider the motion presented and provided by Councillor RP Hopkins. The motion was requested by an email received on 6th September 2021.

The Town Clerk explained that the motion was similar to the approach and policies of Worcestershire County Council & Wychavon District Council in working towards reduction of carbon footprint. The Town Clerk updated that he had received a request from the Mayor – Councillor WT Moy who wished to second the motion this evening.

Councillor Hopkins read out the following statement,

“With three quarters of English Councils now having declared a Climate Change Emergency including Worcestershire County Council I believe that Droitwich Spa Town Council should contribute to this initiative.

I attended a Zoom presentation to Parish & Town Councils by Wychavon District Council on “Building a Greener Future” on 30th June this year, as part of their “Intelligently Green Plan”. It was particularly interesting to learn how Norton- Juxta – Kempsey Parish Council have installed solar panels and storage batteries on their property and how initial results indicate that they will eliminate power costs and carbon generation as a result.

What is of particular interest to the Council is that we can request a survey to determine savings potential on our council properties free of charge as part of the “peep scheme”. Should that produce the opportunity for significant cost savings an acceptable pay back helped by grants of up to 40% from the European Union Development Fund available to Councils until September 2022 we should consider making the investment in the interest of our tax payers”. The motion is therefore,

“The Town Council authorises the Town Clerk to arrange for a Peep Survey to determine potential savings to the Council from the installation of solar panels with /without storage batteries on its free hold properties”.

Councillor WT Moy- Mayor seconded the motion and read out the following statement,

“Given as explained in the motion that three quarters of English Councils have declared a climate change emergency to include Worcestershire County Council. I also agree that Droitwich Spa Town Council should contribute to this initiative. Given the results achieved by Norton – Juxta – Kempsey Parish Council coupled with the possibility of a free survey on our own properties as part of the “Peep Scheme” I do believe this Council should authorise our own Town Clerk to arrange for the Peep Survey to be carried out on St Richards House and our other freehold buildings. Should the survey prove positive in our case, then this Town Council could consider making the grant aided investment and play its part in reducing the carbon footprint in Droitwich Spa. If solar panels were to be installed on our properties and proven to be cost effective then the Town Council would be in a position to invest the return in other needy projects based around our Town. I would urge a unanimous show of support for this motion in expectation of the cross-party achievements we have previously enjoyed within this Council. I conclude by commending Councillor Hopkins for putting this motion forward this evening and I have no hesitation in seconding”.

RESOLVED - The information was noted. That The Town Council authorises the Town Clerk to arrange for a Peep Survey to determine potential savings to the Council from the installation of solar panels with /without storage batteries on its free hold properties.

To record that the vote was unanimous for all 6 Members of the Resources Committee present

153. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT.

Creditor accounts in the sum of £2,888.53 were considered for payment [*lists attached with Agenda*].

RESOLVED- There were no further questions arising. That the statement of accounts appended be received and the expenditure totalling £2,888.53 be authorised and duly passed for payment.

The meeting closed at 19.02 pm.

Chairman of Committee

6 December 2021

Chairman of Council

13 December 2021