

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of Droitwich Spa Town Council held by Online Zoom Facility on **Monday 14 December 2020** 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 NR Griffiths
Councillor RP Hopkins
Councillor A Humphries
Councillor DJ Morris
Councillor RJ Morris
Councillor CM Murray
Councillor AM Sinton

APOLOGIES for absence: None

PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

There were no questions received.

From 5.45pm and before the formal meeting started the Mayor welcomed Mary & David Stanbury representing the Droitwich Spa Food Bank. The Mayor thanked Mary and David for their tremendous work from inception of the Food Bank in July 2014 to date and also acknowledged their forthcoming retirement from January 2021. Mary explained a lot about the work of the Food Bank in the Town and surrounding area, including many of the challenges and hardship created by the pandemic during this past year. The Town Council unanimously expressed their appreciation towards Mary & David's hard work and dedication, as well as recognition for the vital services provided by the Food Bank for so many local people and families.

Reverend Nigel Byard reiterated appreciation towards Mary and David and the Food Bank as a whole. Nigel concluded with a blessing and seasonal best wishes conveyed to everyone present.

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175. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor RJ Morris declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 10 for Wychavon District Council – Community Legacy Funding, in the context that he is a Member of the Wychavon Executive Board.

Councillor GR Brookes declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 13 for Trees Planting in consideration that he hopes to contribute some Worcestershire County Council -Members Divisional Funding towards the initiative in the New Year.

Councillors A Humphries, CM Murray and RP Hopkins declared non- pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 14 – Neighbourhood Plan Options in so much that they are members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group.

176. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2020 & THE EXTRA- ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2020.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 28 September 2020 and the Extra Ordinary Meeting of Council on 26 October 2020, both by Zoom Facility, be confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

177. MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor WT Moy read out the attached report. The information was noted.

Councillor GR Brookes was invited to speak by the Mayor and proposed a vote of thanks in recognition of the work of the Town Clerk and Officers Team as outlined in the attached report. The proposal was seconded by Councillor AM Sinton – Leader of the Town Council and supported by all Elected Members present.

RESOLVED That the information and reports were noted and a vote of thanks expressed towards the Town Clerk and Town Council Officers Team.

178. POLICING IN DROITWICH SPA

The Town Clerk read from the attached report which had been provided by Sergeant Sarah Kent in advance of the meeting. There were no questions or points arising at the meeting. The Town Clerk reaffirmed that any questions can be put directly by contacting Sergeant Kent or through the Town Council Officers as required.

Police Report

This is the report for the Council Meeting.

Perhaps, now we’re at the end of what is probably one of the strangest years ever experienced, it’s a good time to review crime overall, not in figures but in trends.

Along with everything else about this year the trends in crime feel different to in previous years. Lockdown meant that many more people were spending more of their time at home, even after lockdown this has been a trend that’s continued. As such, the number of house burglaries has fallen in this area. As a large proportion of these offences usually happen during the day when houses are empty I suppose this shouldn’t be a surprise. During both lockdown periods, but especially the first, we were kept very busy with reports of breaches of Covid Legislation. Along with most things in society the majority followed the rules and the minority didn’t. The benefit of having less people ‘out and about’ on foot and in cars was that people out to commit offences were easier to see, and the many people at home provided us with extra eyes out there, telling us what was going on. As such, I strongly suspect crime figures will show an increase in drug offences. This isn’t an actual increase, just more people have been caught as drug dealers were some of the few people still at work...

My team have also been actively involved in keeping in touch with people at risk of domestic abuse. Lockdown was difficult for everyone but especially difficult when you are trapped at home with an abusive partner. We also gathered lists of children who were, or are, at risk at home and tried to maintain a watch over them in the absence of the usual Safeguarding provided by school attendance.

So I can say as a team we've been busy but in a different way to normal.

Over the past few weeks we've been dealing with drugs offences. Two cannabis 'grows' which are believed to be linked have been found in Droitwich with hundreds of plants seized. Investigations are ongoing regarding these offences.

My team also executed a drugs warrant last week in Droitwich and thousands of pounds of Class A drugs were seized along with cash and mobile phones. One male was arrested and released under investigation pending forensic work being completed.

You may have seen on social media that overnight a few weeks ago there were a large number of vehicles and garage doors damaged by spray paint on Chawson. Luckily, the majority of this cleaned off with some time and effort. At the moment no offenders have been identified and there appears to be no motive behind these offences.

There's also been some damage reported to allotments with sheds being broken into at Chawson and a fire at the Copcutt Allotments. At the moment we're waiting to find out what exactly has been stolen, hopefully nothing of high value will have been stored on the allotments as the isolated nature of them means they are difficult to secure.

Over the next few months my team at Droitwich will be boosted with the presence of some extra student officers. The new police training structure includes every student officer spending a few months working with a Safer Neighbourhood Team, learning about longer term problem solving, identifying patterns in offending and dealing with vulnerability. These officer will provide a welcome boost in our numbers.

Finally, I'd like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Peaceful New Year and I hope you all have the opportunity to spend some quality time with your families.

Kind Regards

Sarah

PS 2173 Sarah Kent

Safer Neighbourhood Team, Droitwich and Pershore

RESOLVED That the information was noted

179. HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE

The Town Clerk introduced Grace Rogers – Head Girl and Joe Harrison – Head Boy from the Droitwich Spa High School.

Joe updated that the mock exams had just concluded for years 11 & 13 and the anticipation is to hold a results day on Tuesday 5th January 2021. All students are commended for their attendance and conduct during the mock exam period maintaining the social distancing etiquette throughout. Years 8 & 11 had recently swapped their segregation bubble zones which had enabled the younger ages to experience some of the wider curriculum activities for the first time. The annual charities week has been delayed until February 2021 due to the pandemic restrictions, although filming of certain aspects has already progressed well. Parent consultations evenings have taken place by prearranged phone calls, operating on an appointment basis for three full year groups. An awards ceremony for Year 13 had taken place during November. Joe and Grace presented a wreath at the Town War Memorial for Remembrance this year.

Grace updated on the impact of Covid 19 at the High School. To date there had been 32 positive cases recorded from the start of the academic year last September, which included 7 staff members. The School maintained operational throughout with an effective track and trace system to enable self- isolating. Due to the restrictions and some staff absences Years 8, 9 and 10 had sometimes worked from home using on line learning for one day of the week. The second lock down period had definitely had a positive impact whereby there has been no further positive Covid cases detected for the past 11 days. Councillor AM Sinton asked Grace how safe she felt in the school campus given the pandemic issues. Grace confirmed that she considered the measures in place at the High School including track and trace, one way systems and segregated bubble zones had all made the campus a safe environment for students and high standards of education.

Councillor AM Sinton and the Mayor both congratulated Grace and Joe on behalf of the Town Council for their comprehensive and very professional reports, as well as wishing them very Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

179. YOUTH COUNCIL UPDATE

To note that due to Covid 19 restrictions the next update covering the Youth Council activities is anticipated early in 2021.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

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

1. Planning Committee – 12 October 2020 by Zoom facility. *[circulated previously]*
2. Resources Committee – 12 October 2020 by Zoom facility *[circulated previously]*
3. Planning Committee -9 November 2020 by Zoom facility *[circulated previously]*
4. Community & Amenities Committee- 9 November 2020 by Zoom facility *[circulated previously]*
5. Planning Committee –7 December 2020 by Zoom Facility *[circulated previously]*
6. Resources Committee -7 December 2020 by Zoom Facility *[circulated previously]*

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

181. CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS 2020.

The Town Clerk updated on various changes and arrangements this year due to the ongoing Pandemic restrictions. *[for information]*

The Covid 19 restrictions have restricted options this year and necessitated changes to be made. The following arrangements are in place during December 2020. Close attention and compliance remains to accord with the fluid situation and emerging Government guidance for public safety.

1. Christmas Lighting- The lights are operational from 1st December 2020 until 4th January 2021. This is slightly later than anticipated due to supply chain problems during installation caused by the pandemic.
2. Additional Christmas Lighting. Additional features have been arranged for St Richards House frontage this year. This is to enhance the displays and acknowledge that regrettably no formal Switch On or supporting event is permissible. Following generous financial support from Wychavon District Council additional lighting has been installed as part of the network in the vicinity of St Andrews Church and Salt Barrow Market, adjacent the High Street.
3. A Farmers Market is scheduled on 5th December to take place on Victoria Square. Collaboration with the Worcestershire Farmers Market Group has been excellent again this year and despite the pandemic the monthly market has remained operational for the main part. The Group have received a lot of customer support and special requests for Christmas orders of produce ready for 5th December collection.
4. Arrangements have been made with the Salvation Army Band to play on Victoria Square from 10.00am on the three Saturdays leading up to Christmas – 5th, 12th and 19th December 2020. The rule of six applies to the group of musicians performing.
5. The Charity Cards for Good Causes Group have been in place at St Richards House in the Heritage Centre through November and December. Despite the second lock down interruption, public interest and visitor numbers have been strong. The Town Council are pleased to support this local Community initiative for another year during difficult circumstances.
6. The Salvation Army Band are filming a short piece on Wednesday 9th December 2020 for inclusion with the Norbury Theatre recording to be sent to Nursing Homes over Christmas. The Band are being filmed in Victoria Square and at the frontage of St Richards House where the Festive Lighting displays provide a prominent seasonal backdrop. The Norbury broadcast will be available through You Tube from 21 December 2020. Councillor A Humphries updated about the Norbury broadcast content covering a range of seasonal elements including pantomime, song , dance and musical performances.
7. A joint funded initiative by Wychavon District Council and the Town Council is providing Town Centre retailers with the option of Festive LED Lights for their shop windows during December.
8. The Town Council tourism website www.visitdroitwichspa.com and associated social media is running a “Countdown to Christmas” feature through December until Christmas.

There will be three prizes of locally produced Festive Hampers, taking place during the weeks commencing 7th, 14th and 21st December. Local retailers and producers will be featured each day to promote a “shop safe and local message”, supporting Town Centre businesses and commerce. There were over 10,000 hits for the competition on social media within the first 7 days of the launch from Monday morning 7th December, which is very encouraging and shows the extent of reach and engagement. Take up figures will be reviewed daily for the duration. The Town Council are grateful to Mrs Christine Moreton from the Regional Digital Marketing Company for her help in delivering this initiative to promote local business and commerce, as well as encouraging people to shop safe and local leading up to Christmas.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

182. 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. Sign off of the construction and grant payment draw down phases with Wychavon District Council & High School representatives is scheduled for 8 December 2020. Further details regarding the formal opening and Management Committee aspect thereafter will follow in due course. The Town Clerk updated that the sign off had gone well on 8th December and that there had been no request for the construction contingency undertaking to be drawn down. This was testament to the successful project and the diligence of the High School Management Team. The additional £2.5K capital contribution paid from the Town Council to the project in July has been gratefully received and retained in order to enable increased provision from 6 to 12 computer work stations for the new facility.
- (b) Edition Three – Stage One Application (Expression of interest & proposal) for the Droitwich Spa Augmented Reality Heritage Trail App, has been submitted on 2 December 2020. Agreement to proceed to Full Application received 4 December 2020.
- (c) Edition Three – Stage One Application (Expression of interest & proposal) for the Droitwich Spa Community Football Club Pavilion as part of the King George Playing Fields, Ground Fund Project has been submitted on 3 December 2020. Agreement to proceed to Full Application received 4 December 2020.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

183. TOWN COUNCIL - COMMUNITY & AMENITIES GRANTS 2020/2021

Following prior referral with Councillor RJ Morris (Chairman of the Grants Appraisal Sub – Committee) and Councillor Mrs C Bowden (Chairman of the Community & Amenities Committee) to be advised that the current remaining balance of unallocated funds for this Municipal period is £4000.00. Applications are invited from Community Groups for consideration towards financial support through the Grants / C & A Committee. To note that any applications received will require a completed grants application form and supporting financial papers to be completed and provided as part of the assessment process. This is important in order to accord with due diligence, set protocol and the Auditors Governance standards for all public funding. *[for information]*

Councillor AM Sinton suggested a press release is made for the local papers to help make Community Groups aware of the available funding options.

RESOLVED That the information was noted. That a suitable press release statement be Issued to encourage applications for consideration in January 2021.

184. WEST PROJECT AND BEYOND – PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT.

To note that a Management Committee meeting took place on 19 October 2020 and a wider stakeholder engagement meeting on 2 December 2020. This project has been interrupted by Covid 19 restrictions and the impact is approximately 12 months delay. It is hoped to resurrect all aspects towards a start date of spring 2021. The Town Council maintains a lead interest in the additional three location underpasses through provision of the remaining unallocated New Homes Bonus Scheme funds. The locations are the Railway Station underpass and the two beneath Ombersley Way accessing towards West Acre Middle School and Droitwich Spa High School. Further updates will be provided as the project progresses in 2021.

The Town Clerk clarified that the Management Committee for the wider project comprised Mr David Manning – Community Programmes Manager, Strategy & Communications – Wychavon District Council, Caroline Treadwell- Arts Officer from Wychavon District Council and Mr Peter Rose – Director from Tiller Development, with the Town Clerk representing Droitwich Spa Town Council for the lead on the three component underpasses. *[for information]*

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

185. TREES PLANTING

To help support local ecological and green initiatives including the lowering of emissions, reduction of carbon footprint and the encouragement of pollinator options are being considered to plant additional trees on suitable Town Council land holdings next spring. A feasibility study is currently being taken forward to consider all aspects including habitat, species, quantity, locations and the various funding aspects. It is hoped to collaborate with partner Authorities including Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire County Council, as well as linking to the Nationwide BBC Countryfile project launched on 29 November 2020 called “Plant Britain”. Further details will be reported when options have been fully researched. *[For information]*

RESOLVED That the information was noted

186. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OPTIONS – To receive the following,

- (a) Any available updates from Councillor A Humphries in his capacity as the Town Council nominated representative for the Neighbourhood Plan Group and his responsibility for communications. The relevant updates may include any brief reports, business case details for delivery of a project and associated costing information.
- (b) A proposal of support and statement of intent from Councillor AM Sinton.

To note that any fiscal provision towards a Neighbourhood Plan project including delivery timescales will need to be further considered and carefully determined as a component aspect of the Town Council estimates, budget allocations and precept setting which is being

undertaken during early January 2021. All Town Council strategic priorities and projects are included within this process. *[For information]*

Councillor A Humphries read out the following report.

Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
Report to Droitwich Spa Town Council – 14 December 2020

Work continues on analysing the resident survey and responses are still coming in. It is good to report that there have been several from the young people of the town. It is essential that we have proper input from residents to support future proposed actions.

An open meeting was recently held on Zoom and it is apparent from this that there are plenty of people willing to assist with the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan but many do not wish to be members of committees or working groups. Therefore, based on the analysis from the survey and tasks identified, volunteers will be allocated tasks based on their skills to enable us to generate the content.

The Working Group have an in-depth budget meeting later this week. It is not anticipated that any finances will be sought through the precept for the Neighbourhood Plan. However, there may be a need for a small advance from the Town Council for working expenses which will be repaid when grant funding is received. The application for Locality grant funding will be completed by the Working Group but will need to be submitted by and in consultation with the Town Council to Locality and timing it correctly is vital.

Councillor AM Sinton read out and proposed the following motion.

The Council reiterates its long-standing commitment to offering a Neighbourhood Plan to the residents of Droitwich Spa. It acknowledges the work of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group towards this aim. It thanks all who have been involved in the project thus far but understands that the unprecedented nature of 2020 has inhibited progress.

The social and economic effects of Covid-19 were totally unforeseeable and, although there are positive signs of the pandemic coming to an end in mid- 2021, there still remain many uncertainties and the Council needs to be cautious in making financial and time commitments. However, the Council wishes to progress the NHP and offer residents a resolute and positive outcome as quickly as possible, working with the NHP group, local volunteers and organisations.

In the light of these comments the following measures are proposed:

- In the first instance the Plan should concentrate on the key issues for Droitwich Spa, particularly housing needs, green spaces, the Town Heritage and its design and infrastructure.
- A working group of Councillors should be set up to facilitate increased and focused activity from the Neighbourhood Planning Group. The Council group will meet when required to sign off and authorise action plans for any activities proposed by the NHP group.
- The Council working group should aim to be politically balanced. It will report to each Full Council meeting on progress.
- The Town Clerk should be asked to advise the Council group on the financial and other relevant implications of any proposals put forward.
- The Town Clerk should be asked to explore the possibility of training being provided by Wychavon for Town Councillors and possibly interested members of the public.
- The Council will ensure that the NHP are included as stakeholders in the preparation of the Town Centre prospectus in the first half of 2021. This initiative by the Wychavon Town Centres Advisory Panel should be an excellent opportunity to complement the work of the NHP and provide material for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor GR Brookes was invited to speak and second the motion by the Mayor as follows, Thank you Mr Mayor, I am very pleased to be able to second this motion. It also gives me the opportunity to clarify my position. I have never opposed the production of a Neighbourhood plan per se. My concern has always been that this Council should not embark on any project where the scope and financial implications are not clear. This proposal by our leader fully addresses my concerns in this respect so I am pleased to give it my full support.

RESOLVED That the information was noted and the motion carried as follows.

- In the first instance the Plan should concentrate on the key issues for Droitwich Spa, particularly housing needs, green spaces, the Town Heritage and its design and infrastructure.
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187. COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor GR Brookes updated on the following report.

DSTC County Council Report 14.12.2020

COVID-19 has obviously been a major focus for the County Council. A huge amount of work goes on behind the scenes, with officers monitoring nursing homes and issuing PPE. A number of hot-spots across the County have been effectively dealt with too. As some of you may be aware, my daughter is a GP working on the Track and Trace service. She tells me that in discussion with other GP's Worcestershire County Council is highly rated for its efficiency in dealing with outbreaks.

I have had practical experience of this since my daughter tested positive for the virus which meant we all had to isolate. I'm pleased to say this is now over and I have not shown any symptoms so should be clear.

As Chairman, I have been supporting the campaign to remind the public not to ease up on precautions since the virus is very much still with us. Hands – Face – Space continues to be the rule.

I have also been offering socially-distanced support to encourage start-up businesses and entrepreneurs. You will have seen that Cecil Duckworth, the founder of Worcester Heating recently passed away. His success in founding from scratch what is now a major manufacturer in our county, comes from very clever innovative engineering which completely changed the way gas central heating works.

On a more practical level, I am pleased to say that WCC have increased the spending on pavements from £1.8m to £5.6m giving the Councillors the opportunity to make improvements in their ward. The present three or four pavement gangs will also be increased to twelve in January.

I have been focussing on improving a number of roads and pavements in my ward. One example is the pavement along the Hanbury Road by Horton Mill Court. With the various building works in the area and natural wear and tear, the pavement had become a patchwork quilt after many repairs.

Local residents had been expressing concerns for some time and I was pleased to get it done for them. They were obviously delighted since much to my surprise, they contacted the Droitwich Standard and arranged for a photographer to attend, and there was a very nice photo and write up. I have also been pleased that a number of other residents have phoned me up after their road or cul-de-sac had been resurfaced.

Despite all the unprecedented issues the Council has had to cope with, I'm pleased to say it is very much on budget for this financial year.

Councillor RJ Morris updated about his Divisional Fund allocation which included Westlands First School to support funding basic reading and writing skills, DCVS for their education services and up to 500 wellbeing packs for dispersal to vulnerable people in the community and Norbury Theatre towards heating system repairs.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

188. DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor AM Sinton updated from the following report.

District Council Report 14th December 2020

Much of the current work of Wychavon is clearly geared towards the Covid recovery programme with £1.5 million having been paid out to local businesses who were affected by the lockdown. The Keep It Local campaign is up and running and will hopefully be successful. The Town Centre Recovery Officers Gemma and Curtis have already been very active in Droitwich and made an impact on our Christmas activities. Their contracts have been extended to August 2021.

Other recent developments:

- The Town Centre Prospectus will be produced in the first half of 2021. All Town Councillors as well as stakeholders in the community at large will be invited to contribute.
- The 3G pitch at St George V fields was given unanimous approval at the Wychavon Planning Committee on 10th December.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

189. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor Payments were presented to the Council totalling £ 15,002.69 together with two supplementary payments totalling £1055.00. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts for payment be received and the expenditure totalling £ 16057.69 (£15002.69 + 1055.00) as now appended be approved and duly passed for payment.

The meeting ended at 7.12 pm.

Chairman of Council -----
25 January 2021

Mayors announcements.

Firstly may I say, councils decision to keep me in office for a second term was correct, in so much that my duties have been curtailed to such an extent that my fundraising activities have come to a complete halt and Councillor Beale would have had no opportunity whatsoever to begin his..... I do hope very much that if Covid restrictions are lifted in time I may be able to resurrect my planned river boat shuffle in April, or some other type of event.

Having said this, I am pleased to report I have been able to carry out some Civic duties on behalf of our town.

I had the great pleasure, along with Councillor Richard Morris to escort "The High Sheriff of Worcestershire" around Town to see some of the sights and meet a few local traders, in order to find how they are coping during these difficult times. At the end of the tour, He remarked that "Droitwich is most definitely open for business and looking to the future".

Remembrance Day was difficult but thanks to the organisational skills of Councillor Humphries in his role as Chairman of Droitwich RBL we managed to put a video recording together in St Andrews Church prior to the day.

Happily and gratefully we were joined by Lady Hughes representing The Lord Lieutenants office.

On the day itself, Wednesday 11th Mark walked with me over to the war memorial to lay a wreath on behalf of Town Council where once again, we found Lady Hughes had paid a return visit to lay a wreath.

I was asked to do a lights switch on for the Mayflower Ghost Ship by Alan Davey but sadly I could not carry this out due to Covid restrictions in place at the time. I'm sure however, you have all seen her looking brilliant.

Yesterday morning I was invited to Norbury Theatre to say a few words as part of a Christmas Concert video they are putting together in place of a live performance which obviously cannot be permitted at this time. The performance can be viewed on U-Tube, week commencing December 21st

I think it should be great and well worth a watch.

Under normal circumstances we would be looking forward to hosting our annual Christmas dinner for all the volunteer staff who support the smooth running of The Heritage Centre and Town guided walks, through the year.

The volunteers and our Heritage Managers – Catherine and Sarah, are pivotal to the operation and have once again rallied to help make all the necessary adaptations for safe opening during the Pandemic.

Last Christmas we enjoyed a lovely meal at “The Old Cock Inn” and we hope to reconvene in the spring with a dinner when conditions improve.

I would however like to take this opportunity to wish all of our volunteers a MERRY CHRISTMAS and all the best for the New Year, as well as expressing my appreciation for their sterling work on behalf of The Town Council.

On a final and most important note, I would like to give a huge vote of thanks to our officers.... Mark, Sharon and Jane.

During this dreadful time they have continued to work, either in the office or at home to keep our Town working as smoothly as possible under extreme pressures and difficulties. They have managed exhibitions and functions in St Richards House as safely as possible and of course, contributed greatly to the safe operation of the T.I.C. whilst still carrying out normal duties.

The remembrance poppies dancing around St; Richards house and now the Towns Christmas lights were, and are, a great achievement.

On a more personal note, I would like to thank Mark and Jane for their advice and guidance in helping me safely through my second term in office.

At this point, I believe councillor Brookes would like to say a few words.....Councillor Brookes.

So, I wish you all a very MERRY CHRISTMAS and maybe, with fingers crossed, the beginnings of a Covid free new year.

Thank you Mr Mayor.

Droitwich is a town that punches far above its weight. This is down to the splendid work done by our officers. The public and some councillors for that matter think the Town Clerk simply keeps the minutes of meetings and issues agendas. However once you look behind the scenes one realises just how much is involved to achieve the good things for our town you have just mentioned, together with tight financial control of our sparse budgets, and making sure we councillors are properly advised as to the legal framework under which we must operate.

Mark has brought a multitude of skills to the role. Attending on site with contractors to organise arboreal works, building works, stream dredging, maintenance and perimeter security of our parks, negotiating with contractors to produce the fantastic Christmas lights display, the year-long beautiful floral arrangements, events - the list is endless.

Oh and by the way all the financial and local government official paperwork too!

So much goes unnoticed – building maintenance, Japanese knottweed eradication from our allotments – emergency repairs to bus shelters and so forth.

However the Christmas lights and Floral displays have certainly been noticed and I have been pleased to accept and pass on many compliments from the public.

Mr Mayor, I think all this richly deserves a formal vote of thanks and I so move.

[Leader to second, and Mayor to call for a show of hands in support.]

Motion for Full Council

The Council reiterates its long-standing commitment to offering a Neighbourhood Plan to the residents of Droitwich Spa. It acknowledges the work of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group towards this aim. It thanks all of those who have been involved in the project thus far but understands that the unprecedented nature of 2020 has inhibited progress.

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