

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of Droitwich Spa Town Council held by Online Zoom Facility on **Monday 19 April 2021** at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor WT Moy (Mayor)
Councillor Mrs C Bowden
Councillor E Bowden
Councillor GR Brookes
Councillor DM Craigie
Councillor G Duffy
Councillor Mrs K Fellows
Councillor J Grady
Councillor NR Griffiths
Councillor RP Hopkins
Councillor A Humphries
Councillor AH Laird
Councillor DJ Morris
Councillor RJ Morris
Councillor CM Murray
Councillor AM Sinton

APOLOGIES for absence: Councillor Mrs JM Chaudry. Also Grace and Joe the Head Girl & Head Boy from Droitwich Spa High School.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

There were no questions received.
11 Members of the Public joined the Meeting for the duration.

The Mayor requested that all participants please mute their devices in order to minimise background noise during proceedings.

The Town Clerk advised that the meeting was being recorded for monitoring and record purposes.

Councillor GR Brookes requested that all non – Elected Members present please turn off their screens in order to enable the efficient running of the meeting, specifically to help identify which Councillors wished to speak on the full screen view.

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281. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor AM Sinton declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 12 for Wychavon District Council – Community Legacy Funding, in the context that he is a substitute Member on occasion of the Wychavon District Council – Communities & Funding Advisory Panel that considers the applications.

Councillor DJ Morris declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 12 for Wychavon District Council – Community Legacy Funding, in the context that he is a Member of the Wychavon District Council – Communities & Funding Advisory Panel that considers the applications.

Councillor DM Craigie declared a non- pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 12 for Wychavon District Council – Community Legacy Funding, in so much that he is employed as a teacher at the High School and is one of the designated Town Council representatives put forward for the Management Committee of the Community Cabin facility which will be in place from the anticipated formal opening date.

Councillor RJ Morris declared a non- pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 12 for Wychavon District Council – Community Legacy Funding, in the context that he is a Member of the Wychavon Executive Board.

Councillors A Humphries, and RP Hopkins declared non- pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 21 – Neighbourhood Plan Options in so much that they are members of the Neighbourhood Plan Volunteer Group. Councillor Humphries is also the designated Town Council representative for the Group and is responsible for communications.

282. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2021

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 25 January 2021 by Zoom Facility, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

283. MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

RESOLVED That the information and report were noted.

284. POLICING IN DROITWICH SPA

The Town Clerk read from the following 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

Hopefully we’ll be able to meet again soon in something close to a ‘normal’ way, in the meantime please do contact me if you have any issues you’d like to discuss.

Overall crime certainly feels like it’s reduced over the recent lockdown months. Household burglaries have certainly reduced in number as have public order incidents, I assume because licensed premises have been closed and people haven’t been able to gather in groups in public. Having said that my team have been busy over the past few months, increasing patrols in areas where there is likely to be Covid Regulation breaches or anti-social behaviour.

Neighbour disputes have increased in number with people clearly spending significantly more time at home and tolerance perhaps being a little stretched following the stresses of the past year.

My team executed a warrant at the end of February at the premises in town which used to be occupied by Henry Brummel’s Store. The warrant was obtained using information provided by the community and a significant cannabis growing operation was located at the premises. Five men were arrested and subsequently remanded into prison awaiting trial, three have since admitted their involvement.

We’ve had a number of incidents reported across Droitwich of men trying car door handles in an attempt to enter unlocked vehicles and steal items from inside. These are overnight

offences and are generally captured on premises CCTV and Ring Doorbells. Some items have been stolen. On some occasions the same people have been seen trying front door handles. This is very concerning and a reminder to keep cars locked and also make sure house are kept secure, during the daytime as well as overnight.

There have been a few thefts of catalytic converters in the town, though significantly more in other local towns. To raise awareness we'll be giving away some catalytic converter marking kits next week to members of the public who are interested and who feel their cars are at risk.

Sgt Sarah Kent
Safer Neighbourhood Team Sgt
Droitwich and Tenbury Wells
West Mercia Police

RESOLVED That the information was noted

285. HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE

The Town Clerk explained that the High School operation has been reduced due to the recent third national lock down, the Easter School Holidays and focus currently towards the mock examinations A further update is anticipated at the next scheduled meeting of Full Council in June 2021. Grace (Head Girl) and Joe (Head Boy) had provided their apologies in advance of this evenings meeting.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

286. YOUTH COUNCIL UPDATE

The Town Clerk explained that the Youth Council activities had been reduced due to the third national lock down, the Easter School Holidays and focus currently towards the mock examinations. Councillor RJ Morris and the High School Head Teacher had recently arranged for the Youth Council activities to be resurrected from September 2021. A further update will be provided from the Youth Council when their activities can fully resume in September.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

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

1. Planning Committee – 8 February 2021 by Zoom. *[circulated previously]*
2. Resources Committee – 8 February 2021 by Zoom. *[circulated previously]*
3. Planning Committee -1 March 2021 by Zoom. *[circulated previously]*
4. Community & Amenities Committee -1 March 2021 by Zoom. *[enclosed with agenda]*
5. Resources Committee -1 March 2021 by Zoom. *[circulated previously]*
6. Planning Committee- 12 April 2021 by Zoom *[circulated previously]*

7. Resources Committee – 12 April 2021 by Zoom. *[circulated previously]*

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

288. FORMER COUNCILLOR & ALDERMAN PETER PINFIELD.

To confirm and reflect on the very sad passing of Former Councillor & Alderman Mr Peter Pinfield as at 29 January 2021. To consider appropriate and befitting memorial options in recognition of Former Councillor & Alderman Mr Pinfield's achievements and tenure of service for the Town and Community of Droitwich Spa.

Councillor A Humphries read out the following statement.

On 29 January 2021, I was deeply saddened to hear of the passing of my friend and political mentor, Alderman Peter Pinfield.

Many tributes have been written about Peter by those who knew him better than me and those far more eloquent than me.

His dedication and commitment to Droitwich spanned nearly 40 years serving on all 3 tiers of Local Government which included leading Worcestershire County Council in the 1990s. Among his many achievements that spring to mind are the Community Hall in the Centre of Droitwich, solar panels for houses on the Westlands estate, his lead role on Worcestershire Healthwatch and many, many more.

When I moved to Droitwich in 2013, I decided to become involved in local politics and joined the Labour Party. I was told by many of the local legacy for the party created by some gentlemen I now like to think of as my 3 wise men – Roy Seabourne, Edgar Harwood and, of course, Peter Pinfield. What an act to follow!

I would not have got to where I am now without Peter's wisdom, advice and kindness all of which he was happy to share and give freely. Simply put, if I become half the man Peter was, I will consider myself very fortunate. You rarely meet a man of Peter's stature in life and I am honoured to be able to say that I have done this.

Outside of politics we shared one other great passion if you'll indulge me – our support of Birmingham City Football Club! A subject we would debate at length both having watched our club in better times!

Droitwich has lost one of its proudest supporters and fiercest advocates but he leaves behind him a powerful, long lasting legacy that will not be soon forgotten and nor should it be.

Our football club's anthem is a song called "Keep Right on to The End of The Road" which includes a line which has the words about journeying on until you come to your happy abode.

Peter – I hope you reached that happy abode and another 3 points in our next game wouldn't go amiss if you have any influence up there!

Rest in peace, my friend, rest in peace.

Councillor Alan Humphries

Monday 19 April 2021

The statement was endorsed by the Chairman. Councillor RJ Morris added the following tribute.

That it was important to recognise that Peter held the Civic Position of an Honorary Alderman for Worcestershire County Council and Droitwich Spa Town Council.

That he had many happy memories having worked alongside Peter in public life for several years. They had had many good discussions covering both general and political matters. Peter was always a true Gentleman and a powerful local politician who served the Community with grace and dignity towards so many achievements. He will be sorely missed.

The Chairman suggested that a blossom tree and suitable memorial plaque be considered as a befitting tribute and legacy for Peter Pinfield and his Family. This suggestion had been put forward by the Town Clerk and also accords with Agenda Item 15 of the meeting for connected matters of tree planting. The suggested location is the front garden of St Richards House effectively the seat of Droitwich Spa Town Council. Councillor A Humphries suggested that the Community Hall – Main Hall room, be named after Peter Pinfield as a further memorial, including a dedication plaque. Both suggestions were unanimously supported with a request for the Town Clerk to approach the Family for their consideration. Further updates will be provided following contact with the Family.

RESOLVED To request that the Town Clerk approach Mr Pinfields Family in order to suggest both of the following memorial options for their consideration..

- A blossom tree and memorial plaque in the front gardens of St Richards House.
- Renaming of the Community Hall – Main Hall Room after Mr Peter Pinfield including a memorial plaque.

289. AGM/MAYOR MAKING – TUESDAY 4TH MAY 2021 AT 6.00PM

To confirm that in order to comply with current legislation in place to permit virtual Council meetings until 7th May 2021, the date of the AGM has been changed. The website schedule of meetings has been updated accordingly. The legislation is being reviewed by the Courts this week to consider whether the virtual meeting format will be permissible going forwards from 7 May 2021 onwards. Further details will be updated in due course. The AGM Agenda will be provided in the normal way during the last week in April. *[for information]*

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

290. 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. Following sign off for the project on 8th December 2020 further details regarding the formal opening and Management Committee aspect are expected from the High School in due course. This has been delayed by the Third National Lock Down restrictions. Dialogue has been maintained with the High School throughout including further support providing iconic historic Droitwich Spa images and contacts for internal décor and identity from the Heritage collection and additional Community grant funding for class room seating.
- (b) Edition Three – Stage Two Application (Full application, consultation & business plan) for the Droitwich Spa Augmented Reality Heritage Trail App, has been submitted on 2 March 2021. The outcome is expected later in April or early May.

- (c) Edition Three – Stage Two Application (Full application, consultation & business plan) for the Droitwich Spa Community Football Club Pavilion as part of the King George Playing Fields, Ground Fund Project has been submitted on 3 March 2021mber 2020. The outcome is expected later in April or early May.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

291. WEST PROJECT & BEYOND- PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

To note that a Management Committee meeting took place on 19 October 2020 and a wider stakeholder engagement meetings on 2 December 2020 & 24 February 2021. 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 and the next Management Committee meeting takes place on 28 April 2021. The Town Clerk also referenced remittance cheque number 11894 under Agenda Item 24 which is for the Consultants Professional fees element of the three underpass being refurbished by the Town Council as part of the wider scheme. This fiscal provision accords with estimates and budgets set for the Municipal Year beginning 1 April 2021. *[for information]*

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

292. COPUCUT PARK UNAUTHORISED TREE FELLING

The Town Clerk updated that this was a sensitive item due to ongoing Police investigations and reminded Elected Members that the meeting was not in private session. It was important not to speculate on the outcome of the Police investigation or to name any connected persons. To this effect it was confirmed that reports of unauthorised and substantial felling & cutting back of trees have been received from members of the public and through Wychavon District Council during March. Following investigation the extent of the felling is confirmed to be significant and appears to originate from allotment tenants taking matters in to their own hands without any referral to or permission from the Town Council. The clearance work is irreversible and presents many concerns including – safety risks, environmental damage and associated liabilities. The work does not accord with Town Council protocols or arboreal policies with any regard. Regrettably attempts to verify who is responsible have been unsuccessful and characterised by denials from the adjacent plot tenants. The Town Council will incur costs in order to make the area safe & clear debris especially from the Copcut Stream which has land holding & environmental liabilities attached. Advice has been taken from the Police and they have taken forward a formal investigation under concerns towards criminal and environmental damage to Town Council property/land. Following conclusion of the Police enquiries the Town Council will need to consider any of the following connected matters and continue to be guided by the Police advice

- Possible prosecution of those responsible.
- Possible recovery of remedial costs expended to clear up and make the area safe.

- Possible eviction of allotment tenants if proven responsible due to breach of their tenancy terms and conditions.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

293. TREES PLANTING

Pursuant to Minute reference 221 of the meeting of Full Council held on 25 January 2021 to confirm that a total of 25 blossom trees have been planted across two sites – Spring Meadow (15) and Copcut Park (10). A further ceremonial blossom tree is anticipated for the garden of St Richards House to mark this project supporting various initiatives and the collaborative enterprise between the Town Council and Worcestershire County Council. It is hoped to undertake the final ceremonial planting as soon as the lockdown restrictions allow. In the meantime links and updates have been taken forward to confirm the planting with National schemes including the BBC Country file project launched on 29 November 2020 called “Plant Britain” and the Woodland Trust tree planting drive. Further details will be advised for the ceremonial planting in due course. This item cross references in part with the proposals put forward earlier under Agenda item 10 of this meeting (Minute reference 287) *[For information]*

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

294. LAND HOLDINGS KIDDERMINSTER ROAD

To confirm that tentative interest has recently been received through a Local Agent regarding the former allotment site & Town Council land holding at Kidderminster Road. The enquiry is understood to be in connection with a Company that stores and distributes industrial batteries. Following a request for feasibility options through the Agent, permission has been granted for supervised site visits and access as necessary. It is understood that the feasibility work includes options for power supply connectivity to the site. Further information will be provided should interest be maintained. The Town Council has a resolution in place over several years to welcome and consider approaches for the sale of this redundant land holding *[For information]*

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

295. MAYFLOWER 400 EVENT

Pursuant to minute reference 251 of the meeting of the Community & Amenities Committee that took place on 1 March 2021 to confirm that discussions are progressing with Mrs Caroline Davis from OPUS Events in order to resurrect arrangements for a community event in 2022. The minute extract from C & A is as follows and the attached written request has been issued to the Arts Council on 7 April for their consideration with regard to the original grant element of the funding provision. Further updates including the suggestions for the format of the proposed event will follow. *[For information]*

251. MAYFLOWER 400

The Committee were updated, how due to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, a decision would need to be made on the already delayed Mayflower 400 Commemoration event. Consideration of contractual obligations with Ms Caroline Davis from OPUS events was also discussed. Recommendations were put forward that as this event had been delayed for almost a year now, it would be ideal to wait until all restrictions from Covid-19 were permanently lifted and the suggestion of changing it to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in the summer of 2022 was discussed favourably.

RESOLVED - The consensus was reached to hold an alternative event to celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee in June 2022 subject to further discussions with Ms Davis regarding contractual obligations

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

296. WORCESTERSHIRE CALC LEARNING CONTRACT CONFIRMATION – TOWN CLERK.

To confirm registration dated 11 March 2021 for the programme of studies for the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA). The modules begin in late April 2021 for approximately 12 months to achieve full completion. The contract has been signed off with the Leader and requires a formal minute reference to be noted. *[For information]*

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

297. INTERNAL AUDITOR

- To receive the interim visit report from 24 November 2020. *[report attached for information]*
- To note that the Year End visit is expected on 22 April 2021.
- To note the following additional recommendation regarding confirmation of the execution of public rights for Year End 2020/2021. This has been requested through the External Auditors as an additional measure for all Councils due to the Covid 19 restrictions in place during that time.

“To draft a letter to the Internal Auditors, which confirms the dates that were applied in respect of the Exercise of Public Rights in 2020-21 (the 2019-20 AGAR) and confirming that the Notice was made available on the Councils website during this period. This letter should be signed by the Chair of the Council and should be subsequently confirmed in Council Minutes.” *[Drafted letter attached for information]*

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

298. TOWN COUNCIL –CONSIDERATION OF A THREE YEAR ROLLING PLAN

To include strategic priorities, projects and fiscal provision. The NALC Model standing orders adopted in 2020 recommend that a formal rolling plan is agreed and reviewed at regular intervals. The onset of the pandemic from March 2020 and associated business interruption have necessitated several initiatives being deferred. The emergence from the restrictions and Municipal Year End financial protocols present a good opportunity to begin considering options and prioritising various matters. Integral aspects are the resurrection of the other income revenue streams and the 2022/2023 estimates, budget setting and draft precept arrangements. The Annual Accounts presented for 2020/2021 are scheduled for Council on 21 June 2021 and provide an opportunity to begin informed consideration for the Plan. The Annual accounts will help determine the fiscal impact of the pandemic given that both the Year End figures for 2020/2021 and prior year 2019/2020 are presented by comparison for the returns. *[For information]*

RESOLVED That the information was noted for further consideration towards setting up a Three Year Rolling Plan from the next scheduled meeting of Full Council in June 2021.

299. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OPTIONS

To receive the following,

Any available updates from Councillor A Humphries in his capacity as the Town Council nominated representative for the Volunteer 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.

Councillor Humphries had been requested by the Town Clerk at 9.30am on Tuesday 13 April to kindly provide his report prior to today's meeting to enable circulation to Elected Members in advance. The report was received by email at 12.01 on the same day as the meeting (19 April 2021). This was forwarded to all Elected Members electronically at 12.11pm by the Town Clerk.

The Chairman made the following statement and took the report now provided by Councillor A Humphries as read.

To accord with the published Agenda (and the request from Cllr Humphries last week at Planning Committee on 12 April 2021) –“to receive an update report through Cllr Humphries on behalf of the Volunteer Group” for Neighbourhood planning options. This is customary for the Full Council meetings agenda. The report is confirmed having been received today at 12.01pm and is appreciated. To confirm that the report has been circulated to Elected Members today at 12.11pm for their information by the Town Clerk.

Within the report the suggested proposals 1 to 4 are noted for further informed consideration by the Town Council. There are no proposals tabled on the agenda for this evenings meeting.

The minutes of Full Council on 25.1.2021 confirm that due consideration for any Steering Group of Councillors for any Neighbourhood Plan project would be after Members Training for planning which is being provided through Wychavon District Council on 26 April. The protocol for Locality Funding has been explained several times including most recently to Councillors Hopkins & Humphries by Zoom on 22 Feb 21 (recording held on file).

The report received from Councillor Humphries is as follows,

Since I last reported to the Town Council, work has continued on the Neighbourhood Plan with nearly 240 hours' worth of free work being undertaken by members of the Management Group and new and existing extremely talented and dedicated volunteers. As with everything else, our ability to carry out work has been impacted by the pandemic and, as restrictions ease, we are all looking forward to being able to engage more with the Droitwich Spa community in a meaningful and positive manner in the continued development of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, time is moving on and, with the information received from Item 9 of the Agenda of the Planning Committee meeting held on 12 April 2021 which, as I pointed out then was not mentioned to me prior to the meeting as a matter of courtesy, there are concerns that the timetable set for the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan will be set back again with a real and tangible danger that it might not be deliverable in the timeframe available. This raises the concern that the work already done will have been wasted by and from people that have given freely of their time and goodwill.

It should also be noted that since the suspension of the Neighbourhood Plan was lifted in June 2019, the Town Council has not expended any physical or financial resource on it, a commitment given by the NP Management Group to require no Town Council funding which is still its intention to honour. Locality monies are available for NP development but for the Neighbourhood Plan to be deliverable in the timetable set by the Management Group, this needs to be applied for by the end of June 2021 at the very latest. If this money cannot be applied for, for whatever reason, the Neighbourhood Plan Management Group would anticipate

having to ask the Town Council to cover whatever amount(s) could have been applied for in order for the Referendum on the Plan to take place in 2023 which has always been the Group's intention.

Further, it was agreed at the Full Council meeting held on 14 December 2020 that a Support Group would be set up to assist in the development of the Neighbourhood Plan; however, this Group has still not met nor is it known what its exact composition is going to be or its Terms of Reference. A Terms of Reference document was provided to the Town Council by the Neighbourhood Plan Management Group for consideration on 17 February 2021.

The Neighbourhood Plan Management Group calls on the Town Council to confirm the following this evening:

1. The membership of the Support Group that the Town Council set up on 14/12/20.
2. That this group will meet no later than 21 June 2021 (preferably sooner) and that arrangements will be in place to enable decisions by the Support Group to be enacted without reference to a Full Council meeting which are normally two to three months apart.
3. That the Terms of Reference, the Project Definition Document and the Grant Application for the Locality monies can be distributed to all members of that Group prior to the first meeting for their consideration, discussion and amendment so all documents can be agreed at the meeting and the Grant Application submitted to Locality to accord with the Management Group's timetable.
4. That if (3) above cannot be agreed, the Town Council agrees to commit to covering the amount that could have been applied for from Locality to enable the delivery of the Neighbourhood Plan to meet its timetable (it is anticipated this would be £3,500.00).

I would remind the Town Council that many of us committed to the investigation of the delivery of a Neighbourhood Plan in our election promises of 2019, now nearly 2 years ago. We have also reaffirmed that commitment in many meetings since then. Time is now running out to enable us to deliver on those promises.

There are some people that may feel that our failure to act on the promises made may bring us into disrepute thus risking reputational harm to the Town Council.

The role the Town Council plays in the local Government structure for Worcestershire is a limited one, but this is something for which the public of Droitwich Spa looks to us to lead on and it is something I strongly feel we should not disappoint them on.

The Neighbourhood Plan represents a fantastic opportunity for the Town Council to be seen to be listening and responding to the residents of our town to deliver an agreed vision for Droitwich Spa.

Councillor Alan Humphries
Monday 19 April 2021

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

300. COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor GR Brookes updated the following report.

Road Closure by Highways England for Motorway Bridge repairs – Hanbury Road
Cllr Morris and myself were involved with trying to mitigate the impact of closing the Hanbury Road at the M5 underpass. There is no convenient alternative route so the closure has an adverse impact on two businesses in particular which rely on traffic from Droitwich – The Rugby Club, and the Eagle and Sun pub. Although WCC officers and others, including Nigel Huddleston's office, made strenuous efforts to have the works start time put back by one hour so as to enable trade for these businesses until closing time, Highways England and

their contractors were very reluctant to agree this. This was obviously disappointing but I am pleased to report that we were eventually successful. I expect that this will be referred to the County Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate what procedures may need to be improved to reduce the impact on local businesses with future critical road closures of this type.

There was a service in Worcester Cathedral for the Duke of Edinburgh – obviously, with Covid, many events that would have taken place had to be abandoned or curtailed. I was therefore very privileged to be one of the few invited to attend this service. On this occasion, I attended in my role as Chairman of the County Council, but of course could not be accompanied by my wife, as my consort, as would usually be the case. It was also agreed with the Lord Lieutenant's office that in addition, I would represent Droitwich Town Council at the event, helping to facilitate the Cathedral's extensive social distancing and compliant measures.

Traffic speeding on Primsland Way – I have been working for some considerable time to introduce traffic calming measures and enhance pedestrian safety. One option was for a lights-controlled crossing near Tesco's. However this has a number of technical difficulties, and also requires a budget in the region of £100,000. County Officers have been investigating an alternative plan to install a number of central pedestrian refuges with 'keep left' illuminated signs along the road. This has the advantage of providing 'pinch points' encouraging traffic to slow, and also addresses the problem that even with one designated lights-controlled crossing, pedestrians will still try to cross elsewhere rather than walk to the crossing. I have had informal discussions with the Police, who are of course a statutory consultee, and they have indicated that this measure would gain their support. I am waiting confirmation, but it does look as though there may be sufficient funding available to complete this work.

Finally I would like to mention that at the last Full County Council meeting which I chaired, there were a number of fitting tributes to the memory of Peter Pinfield, and we had a minute of silent reflection in his memory.

Councillor RJ Morris updated the following points.

1. A38/Copcut – Recent works were for the developer to make changes to highways request. Highways are still monitoring the junction after a number of accidents. Still need to do planting and replace “Welcome to Droitwich Spa” sign. I have taken the whole issue of developer led highways works to County scrutiny as we cannot let situations like this happen again.
2. Friends of Droitwich Railway station – Over 20 volunteers joined a first meeting where we heard presentations from Ian Baxter, Strategy Director of SLC Rail and Consultant to WCC; Peter Chapman, Community Rail Officer (Worcestershire Community rail partnership). We learnt an hourly London service is expected and an increase in other routes and connectivity. Brunel created the line in 1852 and there is still a building of this time. Areas identified for volunteers to be involved: Planting, seating, refreshments, Heritage of the station, gateway to the town for tourism, signal box and input to masterplan – which will include increased parking and hopefully alleviate commuter parking in residential areas.
3. Divisional funds – last three spends were online English teaching for Westlands First School, Well-being packs to support vulnerable people by DCVS and lap tops for Droitwich Spa High School to support remote learning and help improve the digital divide.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

301. DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor AM Sinton reported the following in addition to the points already mentioned in the meeting:

1. Wychavon District Council is continuing to support the recovery from the Covid epidemic. Car parks will continue to be free until 3rd May after which they will be a buy one hour get one free offer.
2. There is a lot of work being done to improve the facilities in the Lido Park. This has included the pruning of diseased and damaged trees, the creation of the new paths which are proving very popular and the widening the main path near the Corbett bridge. In addition for security reasons a new fence and wild flower area have been created at the Tagwell Road entrance to the park. Other welcome initiatives include the resurfacing of the five- a -side area ready for use later in the summer with improved facilities and the opening of the Lido pool earlier than normal on the 1st of May.
3. There continues to be a lot of social media speculation about the Raven Hotel. This includes new drone footage which appeared over the weekend which was very concerning because it showed how dilapidated the building has become. The relevant officers are very aware of public concern about what is going on and will be hopefully issuing a further update later this week.
4. The Town Centre Prospectus is on track to be published in June. I have been very impressed by the work I have seen by CBRE so far and look forward to receiving the full report.

Councillor RJ Morris added:

1. Work is continuing regarding a Youth Centre in Droitwich West.
2. The Community Pantry continues to be doing fine work but is looking for new premises. He asked if any Councillors had suggestions in order to help locate a suitable alternative location.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

302. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor Payments were presented to the Council totalling £6,658.81, together with supplementary payments totalling £2,783.42. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts for payment be received and the expenditure totalling £9,442.23 (£6,658.81 plus supplementary payments of £2,783.42) as now appended be approved and duly passed for payment.

The meeting ended at 7.08 pm.

Chairman of Council -----
21 June 2021

Mayor's announcements 19th April 2021.

Firstly, for the benefit of those who may not be aware, myself, our Town Clerk and council leader have received a letter of resignation from my deputy mayor councillor Graham Beale. As you are all aware, Graham spent a month in hospital over the Christmas period. Graham is recovering well but does not feel he should take up the arduous position as Mayor of this Town for the foreseeable future. I would like to thank Graham for his work and support through the early part of my tenure. Graham will continue his work as a town councillor for which we are all grateful and pleased to hear.

On 25th February, I received a letter from Mr Duncan Kennedy (Chair of Governors for St Josephs Catholic primary school) expressing his thanks for the help and support offered and given by the community of Droitwich Spa following the devastating fire in January which caused significant damage to most of the school. I have written back to Mr Kennedy to suggest that when remedial works are complete, and if they should at that point, consider a re-opening ceremony, I would be most happy to come along to school to deliver a few words of encouragement to the children, members of staff and parents alike.

It came as a great sadness to hear of the passing of former Councillor and Alderman Peter Pinfield on 29th January 2021. Following the suggestion from our Town Clerk, we authorised that a wreath should be ordered and sent to Peter's funeral on behalf of Town Council. Council will further consider befitting memorial options for Peter this evening under agenda item ten.

Following the tragic death of little Alfie from Copcut Rise, Councillor Richard Morris and myself received an invitation to attend a sponsored walk to be carried out by Alfie's friends and schoolmates on 3 April. Sadly, due to Covid restrictions at that time, the walk has been postponed for a later date. The walk is being arranged by the parents of Alfie's friends and schoolmates to raise funds to purchase and erect two benches in the grounds of Witton middle school where the children can sit and contemplate the life of Alfie and the friendship they shared. During the walk, the children will wear T shirts with the words....." Shine Bright Alfie Cheeky Chappy."

When the walk is over Richard and Myself will deliver words of support congratulation and encouragement to all the young people.

Following a communication from the Lord Lieutenants office informing of the passing of The Prince Philip, His Royal Highness, The Duke of Edinburgh, Our Town Clerk arranged for the immediate setting of the union flag at half mast in the gardens of St Richards House, as a show of respect on behalf of the Town.

This was carried out within one hour of the notification and was much appreciated by the Town and it's Council. I have written a letter of condolence on behalf of Town Council, our officers, staff and volunteers in the T.I.C. and, of course the residents of our Town. The letter has been posted on our Town Council website for all to see. There is a copy attached for your information. Further notes and information can be found in item 6 of the agenda.

I feel sure you will agree, the funeral was most fitting , poignant and reflective of a great man.

On a brighter note, Mark has received a further communication from the office of the Lord Lieutenant, that Her Royal Highness, The Princess Ann is scheduled to visit Droitwich Rugby Club on 26th to recognise and thank club members and the wider community for their charitable work during the Covid Pandemic.

Sadly, if this visit does go ahead at that time, local dignitaries will not be invited due to current Covid guidelines. There is however, a possibility that there may be a postponement, if that is the case, then invites may go out in the usual way.

Whatever the outcome, this visit from Her Royal Highness will be a huge boost to the Rugby club and our Town as a whole.

END.