

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of Droitwich Spa Town Council held in the Council Chamber, St. Richard's House, Victoria Square, Droitwich Spa on **Monday 23 February 2015**, at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor G R Brookes (Mayor)
Councillor J F Cook
Councillor Mrs P E Davey
Councillor L Evans
Councillor E Harwood
Councillor Mrs M A Lawley
Councillor R J Morris
Councillor R E Murphy
Councillor Mrs G Noyes
Councillor T J Noyes
Councillor P J Pinfield
Councillor A M Sinton
Councillor Mrs E A Taft

APOLOGIES for absence: Councillor M C J Barratt, R G Beale and K J Jennings

The Chairman sent Councillors Beale and Jennings his best wishes for their speedy recovery to good health.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

There were none.

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239 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations made.

240 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2014

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 15 December 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

241 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor advised:

- (a) He had attended a further 26 events since the last meeting of Council.
- (b) He had noticed that the weekly Charter Market was well-attended despite the inclement weather. Mr Jones, the Council's Market Operator had confirmed that he was taking bookings for a Christmas Market and was also looking to arrange a

special event to celebrate the first anniversary of the Market at the beginning of April.

- (c) He had canvassed the High Street Traders on Saturday 21 February to ascertain views upon a possible road closure to enable a Medieval Market to take place in the High Street on Saturday 1 August 2015 as part of the 800th Anniversary Event of the Town Charter. There had been no one against the proposal although responses had varied from lukewarm to enthusiastic.
- (d) He referred to several articles in the local press, including one in the Worcester News concerning the nomination of Angela Tidmarsh, the tourism officer for Wychavon District Council, who had been nominated Visit England's Tourism Superstar award. It had been reported that Mrs Tidmarsh was the driving force behind the district's Asparagus and Plum Festivals, as well as the Blossom Trail. He was concerned that Droitwich Spa was under-represented when it came to tourism matters at the District Council and therefore had emailed Mrs Tidmarsh to ascertain her plans for the town. It was his opinion that Mrs Tidmarsh's comments back were unsatisfactory, being that the town was already well-catered for and would be taking the matter up with the District Council. It was noted that Mrs Tidmarsh would be visiting Webbs of Wychbold on her campaign trail, but not the town and that it was unlikely that Mrs Tidmarsh had ever visited. The Town Clerk reminded Council that Mrs Tidmarsh had undertaken tourism training with the Heritage Volunteers.
- (e) Matters that he had taken up on behalf of residents were progressing, he was particularly pleased with the outcome for Worcester Road Garage/Sainsbury's Local, a reasonable settlement had been achieved. He would refer to the situation at Hanbury Road and the arson attack on the play area at Lido Park that took place on 2 July 2014 later in the agenda.
- (f) A report by Wychavon District Council Officers upon the visit to Eastleigh Borough Council following the 'Involve and Empower' debate that he had led at the 29 July 2014 Council meeting and a subsequent discussion at the Localism and Communities Advisory Panel meeting on 1 September 2014 had been circulated at the meeting at his request. He had proposed that Wychavon District Council considered setting up a review process to look at ways to further involve and empower town and parish councils to improve the overall service to the local communities and this was to be considered following the establishment of the new council in May 2015 following the Local Government Elections.
- (g) Sales of the Mayor's Calendar had been excellent and he intended to repeat the process the next year.

The Mayor then introduced Mr Richard Whittall, Independent Chairman of King George's Sports Community Interest Company Ltd who made a short presentation upon the setting up, aims and objectives of the CIC, its Mission Statement being "*To work with the local authorities to improve the sporting facilities for all organisations, ages and sports clubs in the community, to enable and support the levels of achievement, and participation for all interested parties new and old.*" Mr Whittall answered questions from individual Councillors and the Town Clerk confirmed that she would circulate details of the presentation to all Councillors after the meeting. The Chairman thanked Mr Whittall for his attendance and wished him well with the project.

The Chairman welcomed Sergeant Sarah Kent to the meeting. Sergeant Kent advised that there were no outstanding trends in crimes. She reported and answered questions upon burglary and thefts, including:

- Burglary from dwellings
 - a prolific offender was currently in prison on remand and it was hoped that a substantial custodial sentence would ensue;
 - there had been some daytime burglaries in January, two of which involved unlocked doors, but none in February to date;
 - unusually there had been two ‘sneak-ins’ being overnight burglaries one of which recorded the offender on CCTV and a press release had been published.
- Burglary Other (sheds and garages)
 - there had been a couple of these monthly;
 - vigilance was urged, particularly from April onwards.
- Thefts from Vehicles
 - thefts from commercial vehicles continued to be an area-wide problem but had reduced. Locks were being drilled out and tools taken, which impacted greatly on the individual and their trade.
- Thefts from stores
 - there were 10 – 12 individuals that accounted for a good deal of the thefts from stores. Offenders received only short sentences of 4 – 6 weeks and served only half, although not a massive problem there was a plethora of CCTV cameras so reporting of thefts would usually have a good outcome.
- Thefts of catalytic converters and fuel were decreasing.
- There was no evidence that the energy-saving initiative currently used by Worcestershire County Council whereby some street lighting was switched off in the early hours exacerbated crime in the selected areas, in fact there was a counter argument that it was easier to spot burglars as they required torches.

Pursuant to Minute 241(e) above the Chairman read out the following statement regarding the arson attack on the play equipment in Lido Park:

“You may recall that last July some of the children’s play equipment in the Lido Park was burnt down. As a result of a deliberate arson attack, a multi-use climbing frame and the special flooring below it were completely destroyed. This resulted in @ £20,000 worth of damage. The response from the people of Droitwich was outstanding in that following the lead given by Matt Nicoll, a local Estate Agent, many thousands of pounds were donated by residents so the equipment could be replaced. I know that there is often public concern regarding the leniency of the sentencing on these occasions and I felt it was right and fair that the offenders should be aware of the cost of the damage their vandalism caused and to be asked to make appropriate efforts to recompense the people of this town for the loss of the amenity. I therefore asked our legal team at Wychavon (being the owners) if they would ask the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to apply for a compensation order in the event that the offenders were apprehended by the Police and a successful prosecution followed. This was duly done and at the trial the CPS made an application for the compensation order. It was very disappointing therefore that the magistrates saw fit to order no compensation. I think a compensation order, even a modest one, would have sent out

a strong message to others for the future. The public perception is that the two offenders were dealt with very leniently and this can damage confidence in the criminal justice system. Whilst I do not of course ask the member of the Police here tonight to make any comment whatsoever I am sure they must be equally disappointed and frustrated at the outcome of their hard work to bring those responsible to account. Anyone considering vandalism should be aware that we will continue to press for compensation and future offenders may not be treated so leniently.”

With regard to indiscriminate car parking in Stalls Farm Road, Councillor J F Cook advised that he had spoken with Sergeant Kent that afternoon. Council noted that the ‘double yellow lines’ parking restriction was enforceable by Wychavon District Council. With regard to obstruction of the highway, Sergeant Kent advised upon the limitations upon the enforcement powers of the Police and confirmed that the Police had not received many calls in this matter. She urged reporting of any incidents and it was noted that photographs were not acceptable. To assist Councillor Cook the Chairman confirmed that he intended to bring the matter of the indiscriminate parking in Stalls Farm Road to the next Droitwich Matters meeting at Wychavon District Council.

The Chairman thanked Sergeant Kent for her report.

243 YOUTH COUNCIL – UPDATE FROM YOUTH COUNCILLORS

The Chairman welcomed Cieran Bowen and Jack Packwood to the meeting. Cieran reported that following a slow start owing to the school holidays and changes to the pupils involved a schedule of regular meetings had now been agreed. One of the main priorities being addressed currently was the promotion of the Youth Council and recruitment of new members. The Middle Schools with the younger children were now getting involved. In addition the Youth Council had identified that there was a need for more things for the youth to do in Droitwich Spa and discussions would take place shortly with the Norbury Theatre to set up a Youth Cinema and for newer films to be screened. The Chairman suggested that members of the Youth Council could volunteer as projectionists to enable a good rapport with the Norbury Theatre.

Councillor R J Morris confirmed that the Youth Council was liaising with the High School and further projects would be reported in due course.

The Chairman thanked Cieran and Jack for their attendance.

244 HIGH SCHOOL – UPDATE FROM HEAD GIRL AND HEAD BOY

Louis Holliday, Head Boy and Rebecca Hesk, Head Girl wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Louis referred to the recent consultation undertaken by the High School Governors upon the extension of the age range to include Year 7 at the High School with effect from September 2016. There had been an overwhelming response against changing the age of transfer to include Year 7 and therefore the status quo had been maintained. It was pleasing that so many had responded to the consultation, whatever views had been expressed.

Rebecca reported that they had attended a meeting with the Mayor and the High School would be assisting with 800th Anniversary Celebrations of the Town Charter by creating a website and looking into the historical aspect.

They advised that it was coming up to exam time. For the next meeting of the Council there would be a new Head Boy and Head Girl in post and it was intended for all four of them to attend.

The Chairman thanked Louis and Rebecca for their informative report and confirmed that he did not want them to be distracted from their studies by their involvement in the Charter Celebrations. It would be possible to link the Charter website with the Town Council's website.

245 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2015

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 12 January 2015 be approved and adopted.

246 MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY & AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2015

Arising from consideration of Minute No 215 and in response to a question from Councillor A M Sinton the Chairman confirmed that he did not intend to give an update on the 800th Anniversary Celebrations of the Town Charter at this meeting.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community & Amenities Committee held on 12 January 2015 be approved and adopted.

247 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2015

Arising from consideration of Minute 226 Councillor R J Morris advised that with regard to planning application W/14/02829/OU Worcestershire County Council as the Highways Authority had no objections to the application and therefore the recommendation of the Planning Officers would be for approval. He requested that the Town Council's comments be presented to Wychavon District Council at the appropriate meeting of the District Council's Planning Committee and Councillor T J Noyes confirmed that he was a member of that Committee and that he would communicate the Town Council's wishes in the matter at the relevant time.

Councillor G R Brookes confirmed that he had requested Planning Application W/14/02610/PN to be called forward to the District Council's Planning Committee for determination.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 9 February 2015 be approved and adopted.

248 MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2015

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Resources Committee held on 9 February 2015 be approved and adopted.

249 COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

1. REPORTS ON COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

(a) Hanbury Road - Highways Improvements

Councillor G R Brookes advised upon correspondence from Stephen Ashton, Senior Project Manager, Corporate Programme Team, Commercial and Change Directorate at Worcestershire County Council. Solicitors for Bellway Homes Ltd had indicated that the Company was unable to dedicate all the land shown in the drawing proposed to be included in the s278 agreement. This had been accepted by the Company and its solicitors who were proposing to seek rectification of the Company's title with HM Land Registry. In the meantime, a WCC solicitor had sent all parties to the proposed agreement copies of the agreement for execution by them once the title issue had been resolved. WCC was unable to indicate that McCarthy & Stone were able to start work until the ongoing title matter was resolved with Bellway Homes Ltd. Councillor Brookes further reported that Timothy Lightfoot, Regional Production Director at McCarthy & Stone had also advised that they had sold their freehold to a freehold reversion company and landowner approval was now required. This had been signed and sent back to the County Council. Councillor Brookes and Councillor Mrs P E Davey confirmed that all parties were committed to waiving of the three month notice period to start between the completion of the award and commencing work on site. It was understood that matters were now nearing conclusion.

Councillors were of the very strong opinion that this case reinforced the view that there should be no occupation of dwellings prior to all essential infrastructure works being completed. It was therefore

RESOLVED That the Town Clerk writes to Wychavon District Council advising that the Town Council wishes the Local Planning Authority to ensure that for the future when planning applications are approved all necessary steps are taken to guarantee that there should be no occupation of dwellings prior to all essential infrastructure works being completed, to avoid a similar situation occurring to that at Hanbury Road.

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(b) Hanbury Road – BT Broadband Cabinet

Further to the previous item Councillor G R Brookes apprised the Council with the response from Stephen Ashton, Senior Project Manager, Corporate Programme Team, Commercial and Change Directorate at

Worcestershire County Council with regard to the BT Openreach Broadband Cabinet in Hanbury Road. Mr Ashton had confirmed that the Cabinet was built on the Public Highway and was in position before the homes were built, the wall and entrance have been built up to the cabinet. BT continued to service the cabinet as long as access was maintained. The Housing Association and private owners had purchased the properties on the basis of knowing the location of the cabinet. It was unlikely that action against the encroachment on the highway would be taken, however the land remained registered as part of the Highway.

RESOLVED That the attention of Wychavon District Council's Planning Department be drawn to this matter with the request that such items be looked at critically during the planning stage to prevent similar instances occurring.

- (c) Councillor J F Cook reported upon complaints he had received from residents about the bus service including the cleanliness and maintenance of the vehicles and the discourteousness of a driver. He confirmed that he had spoken to County Councillor Mrs P E Davey and County Councillor J H Smith, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways. The Mayor advised that Councillor Cook ascertain details of the incidents to enable him to forward the log of complaints by way of a letter to Worcestershire County Council for attention. Councillor A M Sinton confirmed that he also had received complaints about a discourteous bus driver.
- (d) In response to a question from Councillor G R Brookes, County Councillor Mrs P E Davey advised upon the results of the consultation upon the Public Realm Enhancements (a proposed package of investment in transport infrastructure and services for Droitwich Spa). County Councillor Mrs Davey confirmed that the number of respondents had not been very high and that there were some comments that referred to things that has already been done, others that showed a level of intolerance and contradiction. All comments would be placed on the County Council's website. Although time was required for the Officers to draw up a scheme for further consultation it was hoped that the timescale would not be extended.

250 DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

1. DIAMOND JUBILEE COMMUNITY RECOGNITION AWARD

Council was pleased to note that its nomination was successful. The Mayor confirmed that Flt Lt Paul Wilde RAF VR(T), Officer Commanding, 216 Droitwich Squadron was to attend the Town Meeting on 30 March 2015 in order that formal acknowledgement could be made.

2. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Councillor R J Morris advised that out of the eight categories in Wychavon District Council's annual Community Recognition Awards four of the accolades went to Droitwich residents. Beth Whitsey was named Young Volunteer of the Year, Peter Hawkins received the Arts Recognition Award, Phoebe Chan was judged to be the district's Sporting Hero and Sylvia & Arthur Whittaker were given a Lifetime Achievement award for their work with St Richard's Hospice. The Chairman was very pleased to hear this news, particularly as Mr Hawkins had assisted with the preparation of the Mayor's Calendar.

Councillor G R Brookes advised that:

- the District Council's budget had been set at a 1.99% increase in Council Tax which equated to an increase of £2.90 over the year for a Band D Council Tax Payer.
- the District Council now had a robust Five Year Land Supply in place.
- Other matters relating to the visit to Eastleigh Borough Council and the Lido Park Playground civil recovery costs had been dealt with respectively at Minutes 241 and 242 above.

251 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor Payments were presented to the Council in the sum of £7,357.37.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts for payment be received and the expenditure totalling £7,357.37 as now appended be approved and duly passed for payment.

The Meeting ended at 7.30pm.

Chairman of Council _____
27 April 2015

COUNCIL MEETING 23 FEBRUARY 2015 – MINUTE NO 251 REFERS

Cheques signed 23 February 2015

10554	Brown & Fincher 2 x freestanding cookers - St Richard's House & Community Hall	£687.98
10555	Stannah Lift Services Limited Service of Stannah Stairlift	£148.15
10556	House of Marbles TIC Purchases	£254.52
10557	Crumps Florists Flowers - Cllr Ken & Mrs Hilary Jennings	£38.00
10558	Smith of Derby Limited Service for the period ending 31.01.2020 - 60 months	£1,464.00
10559	Mayor of Droitwich Spa Charity Account TIC - Sale of 2015 Mayor's Calendars	£284.00
10560	NAL Limited Feeder Pillar with 4 interlocked sockets-Victoria Square	£4,455.72
10561	Paul Jones TIC Purchases	£25.00
	TOTAL	£7,357.37