

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of Droitwich Spa Town Council held at the Community Hall on **Monday 24 January 2022** at 6.00pm.

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

APOLOGIES for absence: Councillors DM Craigie & A Humphries.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

There were no members of the public in attendance.

227. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillors DJ Morris & RJ Morris both confirmed non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 8 for Wychavon District Council – Community Legacy Funding. Councillor DJ Morris is a Member of the Wychavon Localism & Community Funding Advisory Panel and Councillor RJ Morris is a Member of the WDC Executive Board.

228. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2021

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 13 December 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The vote was unanimous in favour.

229. MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor WT Moy updated that there were no further announcements to report on since the last meeting on 13th December 2021.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

230. QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILLE CELEBRATION – JUNE 2022.

To consider the following motion for Droitwich Spa Town Council which was passed unanimously by Worcestershire County Council on 13th January 2022.

“This Council acknowledges the unique achievement of Her Majesty, The Queen, in being our longest-serving monarch; it commends her long life of service to our nation, our Commonwealth and many aspects of International life. It requests the Mayor to send loyal congratulations on behalf of our residents and agrees to support them during the 4-day 2022 programme of events, around Droitwich Spa as permitted by the Covid restrictions at the time: supporting tree plantings and other activities and to encourage the use of Council funds appropriately where possible to support the costs of celebrating The Platinum Jubilee.”

The motion was proposed by Councillor GR Brookes and seconded by Councillor AM Sinton with all in favour. Councillor Brookes read out a quotation from the Queens 21st Birthday in 1947 appropriate towards Community spirit and engagement. Councillor Sinton updated that the Town Council arrangements for the Platinum Jubilee were taking shape well and everyone looked forward to the Community Events & Celebrations in June.

RESOLVED That This Council acknowledges the unique achievement of Her Majesty, The Queen, in being our longest-serving monarch; it commends her long life of service to our nation, our Commonwealth and many aspects of International life. It requests the Mayor to send loyal congratulations on behalf of our residents and agrees to support them during the 4-day 2022 programme of events, around Droitwich Spa as permitted by the Covid restrictions at the time: supporting tree plantings and other activities and to encourage the use of Council funds appropriately where possible to support the costs of celebrating The Platinum Jubilee.”

231. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE UNDER MENTIONED COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- 1 Planning Committee – 17 January 2022
- 2 Community & Amenities Committee – 17 January 2022
- 3 Resources Committee – 17 January 2022

Councillor RP Hopkins commented that he wished to put forward a motion at the next Droitwich Spa Town Council Planning Committee Meeting to address the problem with protocol for developers arranging public consultations. This was noted.

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

232. COUNCIL ESTIMATES AND PRECEPT 2022/2023.

Full Report previously attached with Agendas for Community & Amenities Committee and Resources Committee on 17 January 2022 [*for information*]

To receive and consider:

- a) The recommendations of the Community and Amenities Committee upon the estimates pertinent to budgets within the control of that Committee [*see Minute 220 of Community and Amenities Committee 17 January 2022*]

- b) The recommendations of the Resources Committee for the setting of estimates for the financial year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and to set the precept request [*see Minute No's 224 & 225 of Resources Committee 17 January 2022*]

Councillor AM Sinton updated that the outlined parts (a) and (b) were recommended except for the resultant 1.30% (0.61 pence) increase to Council Tax. Following further consideration it was now proposed to maintain a zero increase in precept. This would align with the approach being taken by Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire County Council to lessen the impact of any financial rises for Council tax payers. The effect of the Pandemic, financial hardships and emerging energy price increases were all significant factors for consideration. Councillor RJ Morris seconded the approach and motion to support a zero rise and maintain a stand still position for the precept request for the period 2022/2023.

The Town Clerk explained that a zero increase precept request would be represented as £400,140 rather than £412,000. This would project an estimated addition to balances of £17,852 rather than £29,712- a difference of £11,860. The total 2022-23 Budget Requirement for Droitwich Spa Town Council will be £400,140 precept + £36,119 precept support grant = £436,259. This will result in a Band D charge of £46.30 on the 2022-23 Council Tax Demand, **a decrease of 1.6%** compared with the current year's charge.

Councillor RP Hopkins commented that he did not support the draft estimates, budgets and precept for 2022/23 because of the inclusion in the accompanying financial report of a reference to and some financial provision for Neighbourhood Planning Options. He asked that it be recorded in the minutes that he **does** support a zero increase and freeze in precept for 2022/2023 and the opposition Members present would abstain from the decision making vote.

Councillor GR Brookes raised a point of order that the opposition Members present should not abstain because they either supported the precept position, draft budgets and estimates or they did not. The Town Clerk was asked to note this point and take forward for the minutes. There were no further questions arising.

RESOLVED – There were 12 in favour and 3 abstentions of the 15 Members present. That the information was noted as follows.

That the Town Council request a requirement of £436,259 being £400,140 in precept and a precept support grant element of £36,119. This represents a decrease of 1.6% for a precept of £400,140, with a Band D property decrease from an annual council tax of £47.06 to £46.30, a decreased amount of £0.76 per annum.

2. That the recommended changes be made to Fees & Charges for 2022/2023 (Community & Amenities Committee remit).

3. That the Grants Budget (S137 Grants and Sponsorship) be set at £5,000.00 as detailed in the estimates to enable financial assistance for Groups, Festivals and Events in the Town. To be referred to the Grants Appraisal Panel for scrutiny and consideration with onward recommendation to the Community & Amenities Committee. An additional consideration for a further £2,500.00 to be made available from the general contingency should the demand for C & A grants exceed the allocated £5000.00 (the same arrangement as prior year).

4. That there be no maximum threshold of grant allocation applicable to the Grants Appraisal Panel recommendations.

5. That £15,000.00 towards the planning and arrangements for the deferred Mayflower 400 Event (originally 4 July 2020) now to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Community Event to take place on 4th June 2022, be allocated from the Reserves/Events Budget (with a confirmed commitment of 50% match funded from Wychavon District Council).

233. WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMUNITY LEGACY FUNDING

The details outlined on the Agenda were taken as read as follows.

To confirm the following project updates.

- (a) Edition Two – High School Community Cabin – The High School have advised that a meeting of the Management Committee for the facility is scheduled for the week commencing 17 January 2022. Thereafter updates will be provided for Full Council including through the designated representative Elected Members (Councillors Craigie & Hopkins) *[for information]*.
- (b) Edition Three – Droitwich Spa Augmented Reality Heritage Trail App. A meeting with the newly appointed replacement Service Provider is due to take place in the next few weeks. This is conducive towards resolving the usability issues with the App, enhancing the content and considering options for a relaunch and updated publicity later in the year. Further updates will be provided in due course *[for information]*.
- (c) Edition Four – Full details have been provided at the Meeting of Full Council on 13th December 2021 from Wychavon District Council. It has been suggested that the fourth and final tranche of Community Legacy Funding will encourage applications from those Parishes across the District which have not applied in the previous three rounds or have been unsuccessful with their applications. The fourth edition does nevertheless offer a further opportunity for an application to be submitted from Droitwich Spa Town Council. Some of the criteria and terms & conditions of the scheme have changed for the fourth edition. Stage one applications for expression of interest opens on 4 January 2022 until 4 March 2022 with further details to be announced.

At the Meeting of Council on 13 December 2021 it was resolved (minute reference 201) for options to be investigated further and reported back for the following suggested projects in order to consider application submissions.

- 1. Copcut Park – Connectivity Improvements for Copcut Rise and steps towards achieving Green Flag Park Status. Options for possible collaborative working on a Community Legacy Funding application with Salwarpe, Martin Hussingtree & Hindlip Parish Council.
- 2. Cycle Pump Track options for Droitwich Spa.

For option 1 a response/ contact is currently awaited from the neighbouring Parish. The A38 embankment land which elevates from the Park towards Copcut Rise has been confirmed to be unregistered land status and is not within the ownership or jurisdiction of Droitwich Spa Town Council. This land is significant in that it is regularly being used as a short cut by persons towards the Town Centre. The land is steep uneven woodland with many substantial trees. Due to the unregistered status this land is not subject to any liabilities or any maintenance

regime. WCC Highways have worked with the Town Council to help determine the land holding position, including land registry mapping and enquiries. These factors will all require further consideration in order to proceed.

For option 2 a definitive site and proposals are required including land ownership and location status in order to proceed further with a tangible project and application.

The unregistered embankment land status and connectivity to Copcut Rise were acknowledged as prohibitive factors at this time. Councillor RJ Morris asked that for option 1 the Green Flag Status should still be considered for the improvement of Copcut Park.

For option 2, Councillor Morris updated that there was an existing support Group active for the cycle pump track project although a location and land ownership was still to be determined. The Town Clerk estimated that the second week in February would really be the workable deadline to engage for a viable expression of interest (part 1 application) to be prepared for submission to Wychavon in order to meet the 4th March 2022 receipt deadlines.

Councillor DJ Morris and RJ Morris had declared non pecuniary interests in this item and did not participate in any decision making or voting.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

234.WEST PROJECT & BEYOND – PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS IMPROVEMENTS

The next Project Reference Group meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 26 January 2022. This has now been deferred until 9th February 2022 due to various apologies being received. Further updates will be provided thereafter *[for information]*.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

235.COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor GR Brookes updated the following report,

DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT - BROMSGROVE PILOT

DRT offers a bespoke alternative service to the familiar local bus. It provides a flexible, affordable, and sustainable mode of public transport to access employment, education, health, shopping, and leisure facilities.

Passengers request a journey through an app or sometimes a telephone call and they are collected quickly and within a few metres of their location. Passengers share journeys with others. Journeys may involve a short walk to maximise route efficiency, eliminate lengthy detours, and replicate journey times in a private car.

DRT can be integrated with other transport modes providing a joined-up service for passengers and a ‘one stop shop’ for all transport needs.

Worcestershire County Council commenced a pilot in Bromsgrove in July 2021 for a 12-month period, which is operated with two vehicles, with capacity for 14 passengers and one wheelchair user, and provides a travel option between the town centre and the rail station and other key destinations.

WCC is monitoring the performance of the pilot and collecting customer feedback with a view to rolling out this service countywide.

DRT will now form part of the wider Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). Since the launch in July 2021, the DRT service has been extremely successful and surpassed expectations. As an example, on 10 January 2022, the Council received 300 journey enquiries, with an offer being made on 231 of those and 120 passengers completed their journeys. Both of the two buses on the scheme were running at full capacity.

10. The following key data has been obtained regarding the operation of the pilot DRT in Bromsgrove since July 2021:

*The Council has received a total of 28,000 transport enquiries via the app and has enabled 80% of transport offers to be made.

*The remaining 20% of passengers did not proceed with their bookings.

*For 38% (10,759) of initial enquiries, journeys were made.

*The average customer satisfaction initial feedback provides a rating for the service of 4.6 out of 5.

*To date, the app has been downloaded 1700 times by passengers.

*1100 people who have downloaded the app have subsequently requested a journey.

* The 12-month trial will enable the Directorate to consider advances in technology and further expand the service in accordance with the Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership.

* One of the key elements for future consideration is to identify the influence of DRT on transport methods.

Councillor RJ Morris updated the following report,

Divisional Funds:

- Willow Court Pathways
- Friends Of Droitwich Spa startion fund for planters and notice board showing Droitwich events and activities
- Support towards Westlands Play area improvements for the community. Partnership between Platform, Wychavon, Westlands Residents Assoc and myself.

Platform undertook a Residents Survey, and the Play area came out as the top priority, and improvements are being made. We have quotes for 3 additional pieces of equipment, a climbing trail, and a cycle rack, as well as resurfacing the play area once all is installed.

This money will pay for 1 piece of additional equipment in the project. £1900 to cover the roundabout

WCC O&S Task Groups:

A Scrutiny Task Group to look at Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was set late 2021 with the terms of reference *'to investigate access to and the availability of appropriate mental health services for children and adolescents.*

A Scrutiny Task Group is underway to look at developer-funded highways infrastructure, which is infrastructure which involves changes being made to public highways. Examples include new or changed access into a development site (i.e. a bell mouth, roundabout, signalised junction, right turn lane or a simple priority junction).

The final piece of scrutiny for 2021 examined the issue of significant ambulance handover delays at the county's hospitals, which was highlighted to the Health Scrutiny Committee by the Ambulance Service itself and is recognised as an increasing national problem

Speeding:

It was good to see Police Officers (involving Trainees) again carrying out speed enforcement in and around Droitwich last week. Our Safer Neighbourhood Team are working well with safer roads to focus on hotspots, and we thank them for all their efforts.

Previous analysis by the Safer Roads team has shown Salwarpe Rd to be one of our worst roads for speeding and indeed I took our PCC to observe the road prior to the pandemic. We have received confirmation of a PCC grant and the Town Clerk has given acceptance and I will coordinate with WCC Highways to start the ground works and will also raise a purchase order to obtain the recommended Solar Vas kit.

I thank the effective partnership of PCC, County Highways and our Town Clerk for all his great work and coordination.

Safer Roads have also highlighted Celvestone Hill by the Bower Hill blind junction as an issue, highways are looking at signage and road markings here, but we will also see if a VAS would help reduce speeds

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

236. DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor AM Sinton updated on the following

Following the recommendations of the Town Prospectus Gemma Ranford has been appointed as the Project Place Officer for Droitwich Spa. She has taken up her post in the last few days and has already been in contact with the Town Clerk regarding a meeting. This augurs well for the continued collaboration between the Town and District. The Prospectus will be published in full very shortly.

2. I have been in touch with the Head of Planning regarding the Raven Hotel site planning application situation following the recent bout of adverse comments in social media. I am happy to report that she gave me positive feedback indicating that the application is moving forward and will be coming to Committee in the next few months.

3. The Boundary Commission report on the District Boundaries is open for consultation. This will eventually have repercussions for the Town Council.

Under point 2 Councillor Sinton thanked the members of the opposition Group for not taking part in the adverse social media activity for the Raven Site. Councillor RP Hopkins commented that he was still pressing for a Neighbourhood Plan for Droitwich Spa.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

237. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor Payments were presented to the Council totalling £904.82. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts for payment be received and the expenditure totalling £904.82 as now appended be approved and duly passed for payment.

The meeting ended at 18.40 pm.

Chairman of Council -----
25 April 2022