

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of Droitwich Spa Town Council held at the Community Hall on **Monday 25 April 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 A Humphries
Councillor AH Laird
Councillor DJ Morris
Councillor RJ Morris
Councillor AM Sinton

APOLOGIES for absence: Councillors RG Beale, DM Craigie & CM Murray

PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

3 Members of the Public joined the Meeting for the duration of open session. The Chairman welcomed those attending. There were no questions notified or presented from Members of the Public. Councillor A Humphries raised the following statement & question.

“Droitwich Spa Town Council condemns the proposal to cut the 144 bus service. Council acknowledges how vital this service is for many of our residents, who use it to commute to Worcester and Birmingham. Council therefore resolves to make our support for this service and commits to lobby the relevant authorities to ensure its survival”.

The question being how Worcestershire County Council propose to take these concerns forward with the Service Operator?

Councillor GR Brookes responded as follows.

“I thank Cllr Humphries for bringing this question to Council. I also thank Cllr Sinton for ensuring that it was before us today.

By way of background I would remind members that this service is delivered by a private company and as such it is up to them as to what services they offer as they consider commercially viable. Also this Town Council has no direct control or influence over matters of this kind.

However Worcestershire County Council does have a Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport. This is Cllr Alan Amos.

I have spoken with Cllr Amos regarding this matter and I was pleased to learn that he is already aware of the situation and taking what actions are possible to try and retain the 144 bus service between Bromsgrove and Birmingham. Negotiations are already taking place to explore possible options. I hope members will understand that matters of this sort are commercially confidential at this time so I cannot share them with you.

However Cllr Amos did tell me that he would very much welcome a letter of support from Droitwich Town Council and I am sure we would all agree for our Town Clerk and Mayor to be requested to write to Cllr Amos at Worcestershire County Council expressing our wish that the service continue if at all possible”.

The Chairman confirmed that a letter of support was already in course of preparation to be sent to Councillor Alan Amos at Worcestershire County Council on behalf of the Town Council over this matter. Councillor A Humphries confirmed he was happy with this outcome.

316. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor RJ Morris confirmed a non- pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 15 – Accounts for Payment, as Chairman of the Community & Amenities Grants Committee for Cheque Remittance 12085 for £1000.00 payable to the Worcester, Birmingham & Droitwich Canal Society for the St Richards Canal Festival grant award.

317. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2022

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 24 January 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The vote was unanimous in favour.

318. MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor WT Moy updated the following information.

“Fellow Councillors since my last report I am happy to inform that given the lifting of Covid Rules and the addition of further Covid Booster programme, normal service on the Chain Gang routine has finally resumed.. There have been many Civic Services and Social functions my Consort and I have attended on behalf of our Town during which I believe we have flown the flag to the best of our ability.

I am pleased to report that following the move of Emily from the Heritage Centre Team to a new Full Time position elsewhere at New Year an interview panel was set up to include the Town Clerk , myself , Councillor Mrs Bowden , Councillor Sinton and Councillor Hopkins in order to select a suitable full time replacement . Mark received many applications which were finalised for five at interview based on suitability for the role. The final choice was Mrs Becky Butler. Becky has worked in the TIC before on a part time arrangement but is able to now take on the full time position following a change in circumstances and home location. Becky is very keen to start and is currently working her notice elsewhere prior to commencing later in May. Another exciting and innovative project for Town Council is to seek out our first ever full time apprentice which would give a young person the chance to forge a career in local Government. Our Town Clerk is currently working alongside Wychavon District Council to make this a

reality. The opportunity will enable a young person to experience procedures in the TIC and our Offices as part of the Council team as well as working towards a business management qualification.

You may be aware that on 24th February 2022 Councillor Brookes and I were kindly invited to help plant a sapling tree in the Doorstep Green area for young Archie Hine.

Archie's Grand Parents had told us that Archie had planted a conker in a bag of sand some years ago which had sprouted and so Archie potted it on several times until it became a superb horse chestnut. It was Archie's wish that his sapling might be planted in the area close to his Grand Parents home to mark his contribution to the "Queens Green Canopy" project. The tree was duly planted and I gave Archie a framed letter of thanks and congratulations signed by the Mayor of Droitwich Spa. The beam on Archie's face said it all and his parents and Grand Parents were very proud. There is good in the world and bad. The bad part in this story is that sadly Mark had to phone me around 10 days later to report that the tree had been vandalised and may not survive. Mark very kindly composed and sent a letter on my behalf to Archie expressing our dismay and promising that we would replace the tree if he so wished. I am not sure whether Archie has replied yet but Councillor Brookes has kindly offered to arrange a replacement tree if required.

On my final topic I would like to thank Councillor Richard Morris for arranging our vigil of solidarity to stand with Ukraine held on 2nd April 2022 at the Lido Park Bandstand. Thanks also to Councillor Bob Brookes for working his magic with his PA system. Whilst arranged at short notice some 200 townsfolk turned out to show their support. I gave a few words as did Richard and the Reverend Nigel Byard led us in prayers. We were then addressed by two young ladies from families directly affected by the conflict. They spoke of their fears and sadness for the people of their home country and families left behind to endure this terrible attack on innocent people. They also gave their heartfelt thanks for our support and that of the UK as a whole. It was a very moving tribute and I gave thanks once again to all who made it possible".

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

319. POLICING IN DROITWICH SPA

(a) Sergeant Sarah Kent updated the following report.

Police Report

A lot of work continues on the Police Charter. The Town Council Police Charter priorities identified are combatting speeding, burglaries and drug activity in the Town.

For speeding the first stage is to engage with the Safer Roads Partnership to take forward data gathering from traffic flow monitoring and consideration towards various means of enforcement. There are several ways to help reduce speeding including formal enforcement and/or highways engineering options working in conjunction with WCC Highways Department. All options are looked at with the individual requirements of the different locations which are highlighted as having issues caused by speeding motorists. Elected Members are encouraged to keep reporting specific concerns of speeding and roads/routes that present such problems on behalf of their local constituents. All such reported incidents and locations are then followed up by the Police Team for assessment as outlined. The Community Speed Watch Scheme has worked successfully towards reducing speeding in some local villages. This process operates with volunteers (minimum six working in teams of three). Training, equipment and support is provided by the Police and all volunteers are subject to Police checks, interview and eligibility vetting prior to joining the scheme. Full details of the Community Speed Watch process has been updated with the Clerk and there has already been some preliminary interest for residents in the area of Celvestune Way through Councillor RJ Morris. To progress further the requisite number of eligible volunteers should be confirmed and then a formal request and mandate to proceed needs to be registered with the Police by the Town Council. The scheme operates with trained volunteers

undertaking data gathering from traffic flow with Police support and guidance. For motorists recorded as exceeding the enforceable threshold speed of 35 MPH, a system generated first warning letter is then produced by post. Second recorded infringements then receive a further letter accompanied by a Police visit to their home. The scheme has been successful as a deterrent measure for many local residents and commuters with the first warning letter being an effective educational measure to help reduce habitual speeding. The deployment of Community Speed Watch is not suitable for every location because it does require safe verge space as an operators working refuge area and clear unobstructed lines of sight for data gathering.

Park patrols in public open space areas is another priority as the longer days and evenings have started. The approach is to make the recreational areas safe and welcoming for everybody and all ages. Younger people are encouraged to be out and active in the spaces. Police vigilance is maintained over outdoor gatherings in order to provide Community reassurance and to reduce any nuisance and/or anti- social behaviour issues that may arise. Droitwich Spa is fortunate to have a large amount of park land, public open spaces and recreational areas although wider coverage can be a challenge on occasions for the local Policing Team. The former Raven Hotel site is included in the parks patrol scheduling due to previous incidents and reports of trespass and unauthorised entry. Elected Members are asked to help and encourage their constituents to report any specific concerns for follow up attention from the Police, covering all parks and open spaces. Reassurance was provided that it is only the minority that present anti- social and disturbance problems in the Community. The process for dealing with the younger age group when problems arise includes anti- social behaviour first letters, second offence warning letters in conjunction with a Police personal visit to their home and thereafter escalation to a multi – agency meetings and consideration towards anti- social behaviour orders. The approach is always to focus on education as the deterrent and improvement factors including engagement with parents to play their part. Graffiti has recently been a prominent issues in the Town Centre area around Victoria Square. Two adolescents have recently been apprehended in connection with this spate of graffiti tagging and the incidents have now diminished.

Other matters include a recent campaign to help protect two wheeled road users covering cyclists and motor cyclists. This high profile initiative involved Police Officers using bikes equipped with cameras. Road users identified as carrying out traffic infringements which potentially endangered cyclists and motorcyclists were then subject to an educational approach to improve their road craft and highlight potential risks.

With the elapsed period of Covid for the past two years it is encouraging that there are so many local events, fetes and school sports days being planned this summer. The Police Team endeavour to attend and support as many of these local events as possible. One well received activity that is presented at School sports events by the Police Team is to undertake a speed watch - whereby the speed of children running is recorded and named individual tickets are awarded that detail the child's actual speed being travelled.

The Chairman thanked Sergeant Kent for her informative report. Councillor GR Brookes asked for clarification of the governance for E Scooters locally. Sergeant Kent confirmed that there was a degree of misunderstanding as to how E scooters can be legally used. Currently they can only be used in the public realm as part of an authorised scheme for which there are none in Droitwich Spa. To this effect E Scooters are only permitted for use on private land in this locality. A Police News update was provided prior to Christmas 2021 to confirm this although it is acknowledged that a reminder and/or further clarification is now required. In general discussion it was commented on that E Scooters presented a potential risk to pedestrians and other road users and as such were only permitted within the controlled

environment of the designated pilot scheme areas, for which there are some elsewhere in the West Midlands but not currently in the area local to Droitwich Spa.

Councillor RJ Morris updated that with reference to Community Speed Watch options covered in the Police Report he did have some local residents in the area of Celvestune Way interested in participating. The specific areas of concern for the road were thought to be near to the crossing point adjacent Copcut Park, approaching Copcut Court and at Bower Hill. Sergeant Kent asked that specific details of the locations and interested volunteers be submitted through the Town Clerk in order to progress to the next stage to implement the scheme.

(b) Update on the “We Don’t Buy Crime” & the Smart Water Projects of West Mercia Police. To be provided by the Local Coordinator - Lily Hughes working alongside colleague Frank Bridgwater, in conjunction with the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), John Campion. The Town Clerk updated that unfortunately Lily Hughes had notified earlier in the day that she was unable to attend the meeting at short notice due to illness. The supporting Police papers had been circulated to all Members by the Clerk earlier in the afternoon. The Town Clerk explained that the volume of supporting information for both Police Initiatives was considerable and asked that Members please direct any questions through him for clarification with Lily. It is hoped to rearrange the opportunity for Lily to present at a forthcoming meeting for the Town Council because two requests in December 2021 and April 2022 have now unfortunately not been fulfilled due to illness and the pandemic.

(c) Mayors Meeting with Assistant Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC), Paul Middlebrough on 22 March 2022 – To confirm that the meeting took place and various matters were discussed including the locally specified priorities previously put forward for the Safer Neighbourhoods Initiative (measures combatting Speeding, Burglaries and Drugs Activity). Other matters updated included OPCC Funding opportunities and the piloting of ANPR technology to help combat speeding which has recently been introduced in neighbouring areas (Shropshire). The Town Clerk updated as read from the agenda. The Mayor added that this had been a very good meeting with the Assistant Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) which had been duly acknowledged in a confirming summary email received from Mr Middlebrough afterwards.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

320. HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE

To notify that the Head Boy & Head Girl reports for Council will recommence in September from the beginning of the new academic year. This is due to the exams season fast approaching and to some scheduling disruption attributed to the pandemic [*for information*].

RESOLVED That the information was noted

321. YOUTH COUNCIL UPDATE

To notify that the Youth Council reports for Council will recommence in September from the beginning of the new academic year. This is due to the exams season fast approaching and to some scheduling disruption attributed to the pandemic [*for information*].

RESOLVED That the information was noted

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

1. Planning Committee – 7 February 2022 [*previously circulated*]
2. Resources Committee – 7 February 2022 [*previously circulated*]
3. Planning Committee – 28 February 2022 [*previously circulated*]
4. Community & Amenities Committee – 28 February 2022 [*previously circulated*]
5. Resources Committee- 28 February 2022 [*previously circulated*]
6. Planning Committee – 14 March 2022. Additional Meeting [*previously circulated*]
7. Planning Committee - 11 April 2022 [*enclosed with agenda*]
8. Resources Committee - 11 April 2022 [*enclosed with agenda*]
9. Community & Amenities Committee - 11 April 2022 [*enclosed with agenda*]

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meetings be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. The vote was unanimous in favour.

323. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

To receive an update and report on Neighbourhood Planning Options from Councillor GR Brookes.

The following report entitled “Droitwich Neighbourhood Plan – Report to Council 25/04/2022” from Councillor Brookes was handed to Elected Members and those members of the public present.

DROITWICH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – REPORT TO COUNCIL – 25/04/2022

Author: Cllr Bob Brookes

There has been no significant progress since my last report despite repeated attempts to engage with the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (DSNPWG) over various matters. The situation regarding key issues is as below:

1. **Funding Application.** The DSNPWG have previously indicated they wish to apply for funding to facilitate progress. The required Locality application process that must be followed was previously explained by our Town Clerk to members of the group at a meeting on 22 Feb 2021. This was a Zoom Meeting also attended by Sharon Abbott, Cllr Sinton, Cllr Hopkins and Cllr Humphries. (Cllrs Hopkins and Humphries were understood to be DSNPWG

members at that time but had resigned by June 2021.) I have also explained to the DSNPWG in subsequent correspondence that Locality require a costed action plan showing how any grant monies will be used as part of any application. I have requested this from the DSNPWG on many occasions so that I could present it to council for approval for Town Clerk to implement and move things on. Unfortunately, no such plan has been forthcoming to date, so without a response from the DSNPWG, no further action has been possible. (See Appendix 1 for sample letter sent to the DSNPWG explaining the position.)

2. **Group Membership.** As I have repeatedly tried to explain, the Planning Process and DSTC's involvement with it must be open and transparent. For this reason, I have repeatedly requested that the DSNPWG provide DSTC, as the responsible lead organisation, with an up-to-date list of members with their street addresses. (This is the minimum information required by WDC of anyone wanting to comment on a planning application so seems an appropriate level of disclosure. It also protects the DSNPWG from suggestions of improper involvement with developers and landowners. See below.) Unfortunately, the DSNPWG have not provided this information. This also makes communication with the DSNPWG difficult since I am not sure who I am dealing with, and I have no way to ensure that everyone involved is receiving my communications and has an opportunity to reply.
3. **Group Member eligibility.** Without a list of members, it is impossible to verify that all involved are residents of Droitwich Spa or qualify for other reasons as is appropriate when producing policies. It has become apparent that at least one known participant does not live within the town, and although they may be eligible for other reasons, we simply do not know. This raises the question as to how many others involved are fully entitled to take part in setting planning policies on behalf of Droitwich Spa residents. DSTC has a statutory duty to be open and transparent about these matters, so needs these details from the DSNPWG to be able to discharge that duty.
4. **Role of Group.** I note that in their email of 8th December the DSNPWG said, *"You will be aware that the NP Management Group will not produce the Neighbourhood Plan. Its role is to facilitate the production of the Plan by engaging residents and the local community."* This was not the impression previously given and came as a surprise. Since DSTC is the lead organisation, by law, it is difficult to see exactly what the group thought they intended to contribute to the process for our town. As already explained, and despite numerous requests, they have not produced the costed plan, needed to bid for funds to resume and continue work on the project, now the SWDPR in draft form will be in the public domain for the consultation period over the summer. It appears they no longer intend to support DSTC to progress this project.
5. **The Group Website** recently advised, *"The Working Group is independent from Droitwich Spa Town Council, comprising local residents who wish to persuade Droitwich Council to restart work on the Neighbourhood Plan."* This totally ignores the published council decision to simply pause work until the SWDPR and the Town Centre Prospectus are published, as clearly minuted. This council's approach has subsequently been commended as sensible and

prudent by professional planning consultants. This council does not need to be persuaded to restart work, and it seems that, whatever its initial intentions were, it now appears that the DSNPWG is becoming a political lobby group who do not intend to make a positive contribution towards the completed NP, but merely denigrate this council and its members.

6. **Nolan Principles.** ([The Seven Principles of Public Life - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)) All public office-holders, including members of this council, are both servants of the public and stewards of public resources. The Nolan principles also apply to all those in other sectors delivering public services. As South Oxford DC advises, *“The Localism Act 2011 gives statutory effect to the Nolan Principles. Therefore, all members of the steering group need to have regard to these. If it is found that members of the steering group have acted inappropriately it could jeopardise the whole neighbourhood plan.”* It would be very disappointing if, after a considerable amount of time and effort, and expenditure of public money, the Neighbourhood Plan was rejected because of inappropriate behaviour by one or two participants.
7. **Constructive Suggestions.** I have made several constructive suggestions to progress work on the plan for the DSNPWG to consider. I am sorry to report that the only two individuals from the group for whom I have been given contact details, have not engaged, or responded positively to look at ways to bring the project to fruition.
8. **Options to complete the Plan.** I have been increasingly drawn to the conclusion that DSTC now needs to look to alternative routes to complete our Neighbourhood Plan as we committed to do. Clearly, the present group no longer wish to take a constructive role in this process so professional input is presently being sought to formulate an action plan that can be brought before council for approval to produce a focused Neighbourhood Plan,
9. **Professional Advice.** The Town Clerk, The Leader, and I have taken initial advice from three accredited planning experts with specific experience of the production of Neighbourhood plans. We are working with professional guidance towards finalising a detailed, costed plan to bring before council as soon as possible. As would be expected, several common themes have already emerged which can be briefly summarised as follows:

Brief Overview of Professional Consultants’ Advice

1. **Requirements.** As one consultant advised, the Town Council is aware of the requirements to complete a Neighbourhood Plan, saying, “It is evident that DSTC is familiar with the statutory provisions regarding NPs, notably with the ‘basic conditions’ which will need to be met if the DNP is to proceed to Examination and referendum; national policy and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG); and the development plan context provided by the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) and the emerging SWDP Review.” DSTC is also aware that it is the responsible body for all matters including finances.”
2. **Size of task.** An issue for Droitwich, compared with many parish plans, is the number of residents to be informed and consulted. Whilst web-based

methods can be used, a traditional paper-based approach is also recommended to ensure that no residents are disenfranchised. Costs will need to allow for delivering letters to, and collating responses from an estimated 20,000 residents aged 18 or over within the designated area. (In addition, businesses, retail, and other central area enterprises will need to be consulted and representatives could form part of a new steering group.) It is anticipated this will take the form of a personal letter from the Leader of the Council to all households and businesses in the designated area. There will also be a need for a structured questionnaire survey to provide a baseline covering social, economic, and environmental matters at the town level. This survey should ideally follow the formulation of a working plan to inform survey questions.

3. **Scope and Policy Options.** It appears that there may have been some misunderstandings and unrealistic expectation of what a NP can do for Droitwich. Firstly, NP planning policies must relate to the development and use of land. This requirement is rigorously policed by Examiners since, when 'made' the NP becomes part of the statutory development plan. The relatively small amount of development land in Droitwich is either already dealt with in the existing SWDP or is expected to be covered in the SWDPR. NPPG cautions that *“Wider community aspirations than those relating to the development and use of land, if set out as part of the plan, would need to be clearly identifiable (for example, set out in a companion document or annex), and it should be made clear in the document that **they will not form part of the statutory development plan.**”*

4. **SWDPR.** The prudence of the decision by DSTC to wait for the SWDPR was recently confirmed by experts as a sensible decision. It is expected that there will be little scope for the NP to add value since the SWDPR will continue to deal with the following matters (already in the current SWDP):
 - 4.1 Development boundary. This covers the bulk of the Neighbourhood Area.
 - 4.2 Housing and mixed-use allocations within the town totalling 226 dwellings on six sites. (SWDP 48), and the completed urban extension to the south of the town at Yew Tree Hill (SWDP 49); (NB two other urban extensions proposed by this policy at Copcut Lane, and Stonebridge Cross Business Park are outside the Neighbourhood Area).
 - 4.3 Green Belt.
 - 4.4 Significant Gap.
 - 4.5 Green Space.
 - 4.6 Conservation Areas.
 - 4.7 Scheduled Monuments.
 - 4.8 Sites of Regional or Local Wildlife Importance.
 - 4.9 Town Shopping Centre.
 - 4.10 Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages.
 - 4.11 Fluvial Flood Zones.
 - 4.12 Green infrastructure.
 - 4.13 The SWDP Preferred Options (2019) already proposed new allocations for Droitwich in addition to existing allocations carried forward. The new

allocations were for housing north and south of Union Lane (indicative capacity 600 dwellings), land at Tagwell Road (112 dwellings) and two other smaller sites; and for employment at Salwarpe Road.

5. **Possible Policies to consider.** NPs commonly seek to designate Local Green Space, as this gives a high level of protection (equivalent to Green Belt) to green areas of particular local importance. The consensus of the discussion with one professional was that such additional protection for green areas in Droitwich via planning policy was unnecessary because all are in public ownership. It is also the case that the SWDP identifies significant green spaces in the town and protects them from development (SWDP 38). On this basis no Local Green Space is suggested for inclusion in the NP. However, on a positive note, 11 possible relevant policies were suggested by a planning expert, and these, together with any others brought forward would need to be reviewed to form the core of a new action plan.
6. **Financial Implications of postponing work on the NP.** It has been confirmed that the emerging WDC Town Centre Prospectus contains much useful evidence-based information to form a significant part of the NP. The SWDPR draft which will be published in due course is expected to provide evidence-based policies again covering much of the work required for a Droitwich NP. It is anticipated that delaying work, as DSTC did, will enable considerable savings over the original estimates, for our council-tax payers.
7. **Next Stage.** It is anticipated that a professionally drawn up action plan with cost estimates to complete the work will shortly be available to present to full council for consideration.

GRB 25.04.2022 V10

Appendix (1)

Most recent letter (redacted) sent by the author, by email, on the 22nd March to the only two confirmed members of the Group who's contact details I have. Both acknowledged receipt of it. (Information regarding the SWDPR was correct at the time it was written.) I have not received any response to this to date.

Cllr Bob Brookes
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By email only.

22nd March 2022

Dear [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and Neighbourhood Plan Group colleagues,
Neighbourhood Plan

I am aware that much work has previously been done, which we do not want to lose, and which we want to build on.

I, and my fellow councillors, are keen to see some further progress towards a Neighbourhood Plan for Droitwich and would appreciate a constructive response as to how I can help you and your colleagues towards achieving this.

Having received no response by 31st January to my email of December 8th, I was concerned to know if you had received it. I then wrote to you again. I also sent you

an email on 1st February with the positive news regarding progress made by Wychavon on the SWDPR. Disappointingly, I have not received anything constructive in your subsequent responses that I can use to build on or progress for you. You have not commented on my constructive suggestions to complete the work or provided any alternative route that DSTC could pursue.

Some key points I would like to work with you to address are:

1. Confirming the Identity of the Members of the DSNP group.

This is simply to accord with the need for DSTC to be open and transparent regarding planning matters and in accord with common practice. You will have noted, for instance, that anyone can make a comment regarding any planning application being considered by Wychavon.

Wychavon advise on their website, "For security purposes, the intention is that all signatures, e-mail addresses and telephone contact details will be withheld from publication on our website. However, these may still be open to inspection by personal visitors at our offices. We do not accept anonymous representations. As a minimum all representations should contain the home address."

DSTC needs to follow the same policy with personal details such as telephone numbers and email addresses, retained on file but not generally made available.

I note that some names are published on your website as a current member list, so it would be most helpful if you were able to kindly confirm these are the total number of current members and provide their street and email addresses to facilitate communication.

2. Funding Application.

The group may feel it is now appropriate for DSTC to apply for some funding from Locality. If so, I would need to have the relevant data from the group to allow our Town Clerk to make the on-line application, since as you know, it can only be made by the Town Council. He would obviously supply the details of the Council itself, including the appropriate bank account. If the group would like to download the application form from the locality website and follow the instructions in Locality's publication, "Guidance Notes for Grant and Technical Support" and provide me with a draft application which I can pass to the Town Clerk, it would enable this to be progressed. Please note that Locality says that this application does require "detailed breakdowns of the estimated costs..." as explained on Page 21.

3. Justification to support Council spend of public funds on a Neighbourhood Plan.

It would be most helpful if the group would provide what they consider to be the major key "wins" for Droitwich, they hope to achieve with a Neighbourhood Plan. To be clear, I am not referring to the general principle of "having your say", but to specific issues the group hope to achieve with their plan. (Bringing forward specific new housing development sites, as was initially proposed by the group, for example.) Will the group's proposed plan now be wide ranging, or deal with a few specific issues only? If the latter, please advise what they are. As "Locality Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap" page B2 says, "This will clearly have significant implications in terms of time and costs."

4. Justification to support a Neighbourhood Plan as the best option.

Please look at the alternative planning options given on "Locality Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap" page B3. I would appreciate if you would comment on these options, please. This is simply to demonstrate the best option is being promoted to council and will help the council make informed decisions regarding the expenditure of public monies.

5. Presentation to Council

If the group provides the information required, I would be happy to meet to discuss and review this in person, if necessary, now that Covid restrictions have been eased. I would be very pleased in my liaison role to support the group's proposals by presenting this information to full council at the next suitable opportunity to enable debate as to whether to proceed to the next step. It would be helpful if the group's requirements to proceed could be concisely summarised to enable me to formulate a suitable motion for council to consider.

I hope that the group will appreciate that I am seeking a constructive and positive response to move things forward and will kindly supply such a response to enable us to focus on cooperative working for Droitwich.

Best Regards,
Bob

Councillor Brookes read and updated the following summary report,

“Colleagues, I present my report regarding the Neighbourhood Plan as circulated. It is quite detailed since there are fundamental issues still to be addressed and resolved to get to a Neighbourhood Plan for Droitwich, and they are set out in my report.

I have found my role to be very difficult. After a year of trying, I still do not have a definitive list of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group members with their street and email addresses, so I still don't know with whom I am trying to communicate. This not only makes communication difficult, but it is crucial that DSTC has this information, since we are dealing with planning matters. A completed Neighbourhood plan is not just aspirational but also deals with land use matters and may have a legal role in subsequent planning processes. As I am sure you all appreciate, a grant of planning permission can change the value of a worthless piece of scrub land into a housing development site worth millions. We as members of the Town Council must be very careful to ensure that anything to do with planning is fully open and transparent and we must follow established protocol for disclosure. If we fail to take appropriate steps to ensure this and it later transpired that we had allowed vested interests to be involved in this process, not only could the work done be invalidated, and wasted, but we would also be subject to possible disciplinary action.

The current arrangements are clearly not workable despite my efforts to progress things. I have been drawn to the conclusion that we now need to look at new ways to complete our Plan, especially, as my report explains in more detail, the present group appear to have no intention to do anything constructive to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for Droitwich.

Having previously supported the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, I am determined this should come to fruition. The Leader, Town Clerk, and I have been looking at the best options available to complete our Plan. My report concludes with some information on the initial progress towards a new costed action plan, with professional input. I anticipate this being brought before council shortly.

Through you, Mr Mayor, I would ask our Town Clerk to provide some additional information on what has happened, and the progress being made towards a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Town Clerk read and updated the following four additional points.

1. “That at Full Council in June 2021 he had presented issues and options for Neighbourhood Planning with Councillor Brookes. This followed a fact finding exercise which had engaged with Malvern Town Council officers & Wychavon Planning, as well as some professional consultant input.
An EGM was requested for Neighbourhood planning matters by two Elected Members in July 2021. This was duly scheduled and took place during September 2021.
2. At both meetings the Town Council reaffirmed and maintained its position to continue to consider and investigate options to resurrect a Neighbourhood Plan project for Droitwich Spa and crucially the alignment with the following two emerging initiatives.
 - (a) The SWDP review.
 - (b) The Wychavon District Council Town Centre Prospectus (to be launched week commencing 2nd May 2022).
3. There had been regular constructive and positive dialogue maintained with Wychavon District Council in the period from June 2021 to date on Neighbourhood Planning options. WDC fully supports the approach being taken by the Town Council and the commitment being maintained to continue to look at all means available for suitable delivery of a NHP project. To enable proper further informed consideration of this matter the recommended next steps are through an EGM being called and held. Timescales at this stage look most likely from later in June and into July/August.”

The Chairman thanked Councillor Brookes for his report and asked that the content be noted. Elected Members were asked to contact Cllr Brookes directly, outside this meeting, should they require further clarification of any points in this document.

Councillor A Humphries asked that a larger font version copy of the report be provided for him. The Town Clerk confirmed that this would be arranged early the next morning. Councillor Humphries also raised that the report had been provided late and in the past he had been criticised for this himself. Councillor Brookes apologised to Councillor Humphries after the meeting and explained that the reason for the late submission was that the report had only been finalised earlier in the day before this meeting.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

324. WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMUNITY LEGACY FUNDING

The Town Clerk confirmed the following project updates as presented on the agenda.

- (a) Edition Two – Droitwich Spa High School, Community Cabin. The Management Committee have recently updated that their scheduled Committee Meeting has been deferred. In the meantime an approach is being taken forward through the Committee to increase engagement for wider Community use and interest in the Cabin Facility. Further updates are expected in due course [*for information*].
- (b) Edition Three – Droitwich Spa Augmented Reality Heritage Trail App. Following a transfer of Service Provider in January work is progressing to realign the App towards a full relaunch in August /September. The necessary steps include configuration of the App operating platform away from the original 3D Gaming structure on to a more user compatible arrangement and some content enhancement. The cost is within the scope of the original Community Legacy Grant award in 2021 and the remaining funds for draw down. Details of the relaunch will be reported later in the summer. Thereafter provision has been made to further enhance and

develop the App as part of the Heritage offering, budget and strategic projects for the current Municipal Year *[for information.]*

- (c) Edition Three –Droitwich Spa Community Football Club Pavilion as part of the King George Playing Fields, Ground Fund Project. Progress on the Pavilion has been maintained and hand over is anticipated to be 9th May 2022 for completion. The improved facilities are looking tremendous and are befitting of a suitable Showcase Pavilion alongside the wider project 3G pitch and associated infrastructure. Details of formal opening arrangements will follow post hand over and sign off *[for information.]*
- (d) Edition Four –To notify that unfortunately there were no suitably advanced projects to enable proceeding to the Expression of Interest Application stage deadline date of 4th March 2022 *[for information.]*

Councillor A Humphries asked whether consideration had been made with the App Project Service Provider to include some additional features towards assisting people with visual impairments. Councillor Humphries also mentioned that his wife had previously raised this point to Full Council. Councillor AM Sinton confirmed that this request had been noted and discussed for taking forward in the course of the meetings with the Service Provider. There were no further questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

325. WEST PROJECT & BEYOND – PEDESTRIAN UNDERPASS IMPROVEMENTS The

Town Clerk updated from the Agenda as presented. To note that a further Project Reference Group Meeting took place on 6 April 2022. This coincided with the start of work for the first of the public art murals on the Hunters Way underpass. The Start date had been delayed due to issues connected with the Omicron variant of the pandemic towards the end of 2021. Preparation work has also been started for the underpasses at Crofters Way and Paddock Way. Artist commissioning and design work is also progressing for the aforementioned two locations, 2 underpasses at Briar Mill adjacent Ombersley Way and the Railway Station approach. Some further disruption has been caused by repeat vandalism incidents necessitating additional cleaning and preparation work (Hunters Way) and supply chain problems for the resolution of lighting defects (Crofters Way). The next Project Reference Group Meeting takes place on 18 May 2022 with further updates to follow *[for information.]*

Councillor RP Hopkins commented that the graffiti affecting the underpass underneath the A38 from the Sports Fields was disturbing and of an offensive nature. He added that many residents had complained to him about the state of the underpass. The Town Clerk confirmed that the extent of the graffiti was known and provision was being made through WCC Highways and through the West Project Group to address the issue. It was also explained that there was a structural defect affecting the sports field aspect of the entrance to the underpass caused by tree root ingress damaging a retaining wall for the A38 embankment. All of these matters are being addressed prior to the public art mural work commencing. Councillor RJ Morris reminded Councillor Hopkins that any offensive graffiti can be logged as a report through the WCC online portal so that it could be dealt with as a priority. There were no questions arising

RESOLVED That the information was noted

326. COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor RJ Morris updated the following report.

Worcestershire County Council update – 25th April 2022

1. Budget

Worcestershire County Council has approved its £373 million budget for the coming year. County council tax will rise by 3.94 per cent – almost three per cent of which will be ring fenced to pay for adult social care.

2. Worcestershire children's first: SEND (Special educational needs & disabilities)

A report, carried out by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Ofsted, assessed Worcestershire County Council for its SEND provision. The report into education provision for children with special needs in Worcestershire has found "sufficient progress" and improvements. It said the council is making "sufficient progress" in eight out of 12 areas. Inspectors said systems had been put in place to effectively monitor vulnerable children and young people. Inspectors said there remain still some concerns about the how inclusive some mainstream schools are across the area.

A scrutiny task group has been set up to look into this.

3. Highway verge maintenance 2022 – see handout

4. Ukraine

Homes for Ukraine Support in Worcestershire:

- The County Council, District Councils and partners have unanimously pledged to do all they can to support families and individuals arriving in Worcestershire from Ukraine as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and the Ukraine Family Scheme.
- The district teams are working tirelessly on the housing checks and County Council teams are doing the same with the DBS checks needed for all Sponsor family members aged 16+.
- A locally built Here2Host dashboard is being developed to allow District and County colleagues to update details on sponsors and guests, this includes confirming when house checks are completed, DBS ID checks and notes around any safeguarding/welfare needs.
- The Council urges charities, community groups, organisations or businesses who are able to offer support to Refugees to register their service on the [Community Services Directory](#) to enable the build-up support networks and signposting.
- Signposting to Welcome guides and checklists are being sent to sponsors and the website is being updated to reflect available support.
- Welcome packs are being collated for Guests and Sponsors that contain a wide range of useful local information provided by District colleagues in addition to information provided by the County Council and other partners.
- District Councils have confirmed arrangements for making an immediate welfare payment of £200 per guest as well as setting up the monthly £350 'thank you' payments for Sponsors.
- All children living in the UK have a right to access a school in England, irrespective of their nationality. The Government's expectation is that if there are school places available in the local area, even if not in the immediate vicinity of the family's home,

the local authority will work with families arriving from Ukraine to enable the children to attend school as soon as possible.

5. Council Corporate Plan

Covers four themes:

1. **Open for Business** will cover the Economy; Economic plan for Worcestershire with the LEP; having a common vision and backed by business; Connectivity; road, rail and digital and Sites; Worcester Six and Redditch Gateway and Malvern Hills Science Park but also town centre; levelling up fund and finally investment in **People**.
2. **The Environment** which will cover **A Greener Future** towards Net Zero, tree planting and local initiatives. **Resilient Transport** with improved pavements and roads; mitigating the effects of flooding and bus services. **Waste reduction** with many changes coming with the Environment Bill.
3. **Children and Families** with the best start in life with education; school places and capacity; aspiration and attainment and vulnerable learners. Transition from Education to Employment, with apprenticeships, connecting schools with business and **Keeping Children Safe**.
4. **Health and Wellbeing** – the largest area of spend within the Council with Adult Social Care and Public Health. The themes are Living Well, Adult Social Care and Health and Care Services.
5. **Corporate section identifies investment in life**, volunteering; flexible and hybrid working; finance and capital investment.

6. Armed Forces

I have been appointed Worcestershire County Council Armed Forces Champion. The main goal is to support the Armed Forces covenant:

[Armed Forces Covenant - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

7. Divisional Fund Spend 2022 – see handout

Councillor GR Brookes advised that he had no further matters to update regarding County Council business apart from the information already given in response to the question on the First Bus Service 144 which had been covered in the open session prior to the start of this meeting. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

327. DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor AM Sinton updated from and read the following report.

District Report 25th April 2022

- Ukraine. As of Wednesday last week they are 85 hosts in Wychavon giving refuge to 221 people. These figures are rising daily.
- Energy rebates. Rebates of £150 for energy will soon be available to residents in Council Tax bands A-D.
- SWDP Review. The envisaged public consultation for July has been delayed again along with the timetable for publication. This is due to problems with the finalisation of the infrastructure delivery plan.
- Town Prospectuses. These will be launched over the next couple of weeks. The Droitwich launch is on 4th May and the prospectuses will become publicly available from 12th May.
- We are still awaiting the decision of the LGBCE review of the Wychavon ward boundaries.

-Brompton e-bikes should soon be available for hire at Droitwich station.

-Plans for celebrating the Platinum Jubilee are well underway throughout the District.

328. WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL STANDARDS & ETHICS COMMITTEE, 20TH OCTOBER 2021. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

As reported at Full Council on 13 December 2021 Councillor GR Brookes advised as Chairman of the WCC Standards & Ethics Committee that WCC will be adopting the latest Local Government Association Member Code of Conduct as well as Wychavon to maintain a uniform approach. The recommendation is for Droitwich Spa Town Council to take the same approach. The draft LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct as reviewed by Worcestershire Councils is attached for information with DLG amendments as at 16th December 2021 highlighted.

To consider for Full Adoption by Droitwich Spa Town Council at a forthcoming meeting and following Worcestershire County Council recommendation. It is expected that WCC will adopt the code in June 2022. *[Full extract and details attached for information with Agenda papers].*

Councillor RP Hopkins commented that he had read the proposals with interest and that in his opinion there should be greater emphasis on consequences should Elected Members not fulfil their responsibilities in public life properly.

There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

329. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor Payments were presented to the Council totalling £1,971.12 and one supplementary remittance of £1,000.00. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts for payment be received and the expenditure totalling £1,971.12 + £1,000.00 supplementary (Total expenditure £2,971.12) be approved and duly passed for payment.

The meeting ended at 19.00 PM.

Chairman of Council -----
20 June 2022