

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 27 April 2015**, at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor G R Brookes (Mayor)
Councillor M C J Barratt
Councillor R G Beale
Councillor J F Cook
Councillor Mrs P E Davey
Councillor L Evans
Councillor E Harwood
Councillor K Jennings
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 Mrs E A Taft

APOLOGIES for absence: Councillor A M Sinton.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

Mr Ed Butcher, The Forge, Woodfield Road

Mr Butcher was not in attendance at the meeting. Mr Butcher's submission paper (*now appended*) was circulated at the meeting and had been sent previously to Councillors on email.

The Town Clerk advised that a response had been received from Fortis Living who had been unable to send a representative to attend being in the process of reviewing the development projects which involved further research. Once the research had been completed Fortis Living had requested a meeting with key Councillors and resident representatives. The proposed date was @ 20/21 May 2015 following the Annual Council meeting on 18 May when Committee Chairmen would be appointed (nb Local Government Elections scheduled for 7 May 2015).

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295 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor G R Brookes, Mayor, declared an interest in Agenda Item 10 - 800TH Anniversary of the Signing of the Droitwich Charter Event – Request to release Funds, inasmuch as he had set up the Droitwich Salt Company Ltd.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 23 February 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

297 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor advised:

- (a) He was pleased to report that the Sainsburys Local in Worcester Road had put in place the measures agreed to minimise the impact of their operations on neighbouring houses. The Mayor stated that he considered this to be a good achievement as the first response was that they were not minded to meet with the Town Council.
- (b) The Friday Charter Market was firmly on the tourist map, he had been advised by the Heritage Manager that a coach party from Wrexham on a 'Mystery Tour' had visited Droitwich Spa following confirmation that the market was being held.
- (c) The Road Closure Order pertaining to High Street for the 800th Anniversary of the Signing of the Droitwich Charter Event had been approved by Wychavon District Council and plans for the event were in progress with support from a number of local organisation.
- (d) He had performed the unveiling ceremony of the plaque marking the late Nellie Copson's house, together with Antiques Roadshow expert Henry Sandon MBE. A video of the event had been made and was available to view on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_d3w_yuKk4&feature=youtu.be
- (e) Hanbury Road improvements were due for completion 22 June 2015. He was convinced that the intervention of the Town Council had been instrumental in this achievement and as this was the last meeting of the current administration prior to the Local Government Elections, he urged the future Council to 'bear in mind that they will have the power to make things happen and ask them to act accordingly on behalf of all the residents and businesses of Droitwich Spa'.
- (f) He referred Members to Wychavon District Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report 2014 – 2015 (to be considered by the District Council at its meeting the following day) and in particular the comment upon Neighbourhood Plans, whereby the identification of additional development was required.
- (g) A report of the visit to Eastleigh Borough Council undertaken by representatives from Wychavon District Council on 23 January 2015, to assist in debate in empowering local councils, was available on the Wychavon website.
- (h) All present at the meeting were invited to partake of light refreshments in the Mayor's Parlour at the close of the meeting if they so wished.

298 TO RECEIVE A BRIEF UPDATE ON POLICING IN DROITWICH SPA

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:

- Thefts from stores
 - such thefts were from the larger multiples in the main and was a national problem. A recent case involved two males, who were each

charged with nine offences in Droitwich Spa. One had been suspended and the other had been imprisoned for a significant period.

- Thefts from persons
 - there had been one occurrence and an arrest had been made and sentencing had ensued.
- Drugs Warrants
 - a warrant had been executed and a person was on bail pending analysis of the substance found.
- Thefts from vehicles
 - such thefts had decreased but still occurred, in many cases vehicles were left unlocked. The advice was to lock cars and to remove all valuables.
- Robbery from persons
 - there had been one attempted robbery and one that had been achieved. A person had been charged and was to appear in court shortly.
- Burglary from dwellings
 - Four had taken place of which two had been detected.

Other matters reported included:

- ‘Operation Protect’, an event to enhance the profile of the Police which involved the combined workforce of Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police and aimed to show that every single member of the workforce was committed to public protection 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- The Police would be manning a stall together with the Neighbourhood Watch at the forthcoming St Richard’s Boat and Car Festival.
- There was no update available on the future of the Droitwich Police Station, it was still functioning although there was no longer a ‘front desk’.

In response to questions from individual councillors, it was noted that:

- The responsibility for the safe operation of the Hanbury Road improvement works lay with Worcestershire County Council as the Highways Authority and with the contractors carrying out the works. It was not possible to utilise police officers to ensure free-flow of traffic but Sergeant Kent would review the situation with a view to cones being extended along the south side of Hanbury Road to maintain a clearway.
- The Mayor had invited the Police to take a stall at the 800th Anniversary Charter Signing Event.
- With regard to the recent fire at the Coney Meadow Reed Bed, a wildlife haven, there was no evidence to support that this was intentional arson.

The Chairman thanked Sergeant Kent for her report.

299 YOUTH COUNCIL – UPDATE FROM YOUTH COUNCILLORS

The Chairman welcomed Katie Bowen and Adam Ware to the meeting. They reported jointly upon the recent projects in hand for the Youth Council, including:

- The creation of the Youth Council’s logo, a copy of which was circulated at the meeting. The colours incorporated within the design were representative of the elements of the community.
- Sponsorship was being sought from BP plc to enable tee-shirts with the logo to be produced.
- There would be a Youth Council stall at one or more of the town events.
- It was hoped that discussions with Norbury Theatre would result in the setting up of a Youth Cinema with films screened applicable to ages. The basement at the Theatre was not in use currently so enquiries were being made with a view to its being brought into use for youth facilities.
- The setting up of a website and social links were being explored.
- It was hoped to provide a ‘waiter service’ at the Bands in the Park concerts which would assist with the intergenerational aims of the Youth Council.
- Plans were in hand for an ‘Open Evening’ to promote the Youth Council.
- Links had now been achieved with Witton and Westacre Schools, and several ideas were being explored for eg mock elections.
- With the assistance of Councillor R J Morris the Youth Council were promoting the ‘youth vote’ ie encouraging those who had only recently attained the age of 18 to exercise their vote in the forthcoming Local Government Elections.

Both advised that all matters raised in response to their report would be considered by the Youth Council at its meeting on Wednesday 29 April 2015.

The Chairman thanked Katie and Adam for their attendance and the Council members showed their appreciation for their excellent report with a round of applause.

300 HIGH SCHOOL – UPDATE FROM HEAD GIRL AND HEAD BOY

Louis Holliday, Head Boy and Rebecca Hesk, Head Girl attended the meeting along with Donald Pickworth the incoming Head Boy and Charlotte Hesk the incoming Deputy Head Girl (Allie Wilson the incoming Head Girl having submitted apologies for absence). It was noted that the pupils were in the middle of examinations.

Louis and Rebecca reported upon the new science laboratories and other project works that had recently taken place to enhance the building. ‘Politics Day’ would take place on 30 April.

There was a short debate as to the need for community involvement with the school and the important place the High School had within the Town.

The Mayor referred to the Young Enterprise scheme and the possibility of having a stall at the events and the Charter Market.

The Chairman thanked Louis and Rebecca for their informative report and wished them all the very best with their exams and for the future. This was supported by a round of applause from those present.

301 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 MARCH 2015

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

302 MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY & AMENITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2015

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community & Amenities Committee held on 9 March 2015 be approved and adopted.

303 MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2015

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

304 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 APRIL 2015

Arising from consideration of Minute No 283, Planning Application No W/15/00619/PN, Councillor T J Noyes reported that Planning Officers had confirmed that the application was likely to be recommended for refusal and therefore as Local District Ward Member he would not be calling the matter forward to the District Council's Planning Committee.

Arising from consideration of Minute No 283 (2) and (3), and in response to a question from Councillor R J Morris, the Town Clerk advised upon the response of Fortis Living in this regard [*see Public Questions Session reported above on page 1.*].

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 13 April 2015 be approved and adopted.

305 MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 APRIL 2015

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Resources Committee held on 13 April 2015 be approved and adopted.

306 NEW TOWN GUIDE AND ASSOCIATED WEBSITE

Councillor K Jennings proposed that formal acknowledgements be made in connection with the new Town Guide and associated website.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor K Jennings, seconded by Councillor Mrs E A Taft and

RESOLVED That formal acknowledgement and thanks be made to Mrs Christine Moreton of Digital Marketing Ltd for masterminding the excellent Town Guide and Tourism website www.visitdroitwichspa.com and for the excellent support received for this project from Mrs Janet Yates, Business Partnership Manager, Wychavon District Council together with the financial support received from the District Council. Also for formal thanks to Mrs Sarah Davies and Miss Rebecca Pye, Heritage Manager (Job-Share) and Mr Mark Keld, Assistant Town Clerk – Community & Amenities for their hard work in achieving this project.

307 800TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE DROITWICH CHARTER EVENT – REQUEST TO RELEASE FUNDS

[Councillor G R Brookes declared an interest in this item and remained in the Chair for its consideration.]

Pursuant to Minute No 266, Community & Amenities Committee meeting held 9 March 2015, the Town Clerk advised that Councillor Brookes has not yet successfully set up the Community Interest Company (CIC) that he had intended would provide the above-mentioned event but had confirmed registration of a company entitled ‘The Droitwich Salt Company’ with Companies House. At the present time this was not sufficient to enable the Town Clerk to make the payment of £8,000 earmarked for the afore-mentioned event (£3,000 from DSTC and £5,000 being Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Local Ward Member monies via County Councillor Mrs P E Davey) as per the agreed way forward.

In view of the forthcoming Local Government Elections there would not be authorised cheque signatories in place for several weeks and therefore the Town Council was requested to consider making this payment of £8,000 to ‘The Droitwich Salt Company Ltd’ but with the proviso that relevant insurance details were submitted in advance of the release of the cheque and that after the event an audited set of accounts was submitted with any surplus funds from the £8,000 returned to the Town Council.

In response to questions, Councillor G R Brookes confirmed that:

- The Droitwich Salt Company Ltd has been set up as a company limited by guarantee and comprised himself, Matt Nicol of Nicols Estate Agents and Mr Sandy Laird from the Rotary Club.
- It was still intended for this company to be a Community Interest Company, but the formalities were taking some time. Parkinson Wright Solicitors were dealing with the legal documentation and he was meeting with accountants shortly to set up the financial matters.

- The Community Interest Company would have a slightly different name from The Droitwich Salt Company to reflect that it was a CIC.
- The specific aims of the CIC and the 'Asset Lock' were the main differentials between the CIC and a limited company.

Councillor Mrs P E Davey confirmed that she had specific commitments and responsibilities in connection with her WCC Local Ward Member monies as these were public funds and had to be audited thoroughly etc.

The Town Clerk advised that the cheque had been made out to The Droitwich Salt Company for the afore-mentioned reasons that she had stated above and suggested that specific requirements be put in place to ensure that these monies were only used for the 800th Anniversary of the signing of the Droitwich Charter Event.

It was therefore proposed by Councillor K Jennings, seconded by Councillor Mrs P E Davey, and

RESOLVED That, in view of the forthcoming Local Government Elections when there would not be authorised cheque signatories in place for several weeks, the earmarked monies of £8,000 be paid to 'The Droitwich Salt Company Ltd' towards their arrangements for the 800th Anniversary of the signing of the Droitwich Charter Event with the proviso that relevant insurance details be submitted in advance of the release of the cheque and that after the event an audited set of accounts be submitted to the Town Clerk together with any surplus funds from the £8,000 these to be returned to the Town Council.

308 COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

1. REPORTS ON COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

(a) Hanbury Road - Highways Improvements

County Councillor Mrs Davey referred to the announcement made by Councillor G R Brookes earlier in the meeting (*Minute No 297(e) above refers*). She was pleased that matters were progressing although it was an arduous process.

(b) Car Parking outside schools

County Councillor Mrs Davey advised that cars parked outside schools caused problems which were exacerbated further by parents delivering and collecting their children to and from school. This was a general problem throughout the County and was in the process of a review to see what could be done to alleviate matters.

(c) Tagwell Road Parking Restrictions

[Minute No 287, Planning Committee meeting 13 April 2015 refers]

County Councillor Mrs Davey reported that the amendment to a two-hour waiting restriction had been accepted and was progressing.

(d) Local County Councillor Ward Monies

County Councillor A P Miller reported that he had arranged for £500 from his Local County Councillor Ward budget to be sent to the Town Council to assist with grounds maintenance/lengthsman matters. The Town Clerk confirmed receipt and thanked County Councillor Miller.

(e) Police & Crime Commissioner

County Councillor A P Miller confirmed that the Police & Crime Commissioner had set up a scheme for prison inmates to prepare for employment by utilising the workshops at each of West Mercia's three prisons which produce goods such as garden furniture and wooden boxes, to provide inmates with skills and training as part of their rehabilitation. A 'not for profit' Social Enterprise Scheme provided an opportunity to sell the products made by the inmates. All money generated supported rehabilitation programmes.

(f) Public Realm Enhancements

In response to a question, County Councillor Mrs P E Davey confirmed that the Public Realm Enhancements Scheme for the town was progressing.

309 DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

1. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

Councillor Mrs G Noyes advised that as it was the run-up to the Local Government Elections there was little to report. However she was pleased to announce that road closure orders for street parties to commemorate VE Day were exempt from charges.

Reference was made to the number of candidates standing for election, and the matter of uncontested seats. Councillor K Jennings reported that in contrast to Evesham and Pershore, where there was no poll taking place, it was his opinion that Droitwich Spa had a healthy democracy which would stand the town in good stead for the future.

310 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

The Town Clerk advised that No 10588 should be £11904.24 and not £14,232.59 and that there were two supplementary payments, namely:

- No 10592 to Regional Digital Marketing for promotional material to support the www.visitdroitwichspa.com website in the sum of £500 of which a donation of £250 had been received from Wychavon District Council via Mrs Janet Yates, Droitwich Spa Business Partnerships Manager.
- No 10593 to Merlin Office Supplies for Washroom facilities in the sum of £81.55.

Thereafter Creditor Payments were presented to the Council in the sum of £24,064.51.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts for payment be received and the expenditure totalling £24,064.51 as now appended be approved and duly passed for payment.

311 END OF ADMINISTRATION – MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENT

The forthcoming Local Government Elections taking place on 7 May 2015, the Chairman closed the meeting by paying tribute to the councillors that were not standing for re-election, as follows:

“Councillor Mike Barratt

Mike was already a councillor when my wife and I moved here over 30 years ago. He has been our Mayor five times in addition to all the other offices he has held. He also found time to serve as a JP for ten years, as well as being involved with two local schools and the scout movement. He gave me valuable encouragement and support, taking me canvassing at the last election. I thank him on behalf of the town for his 32 years of service to us all.

Councillor Mrs Pam Davey

Pam also helped and supported my introduction to politics. As both town and county councillor, and now Chairman of the County Council, Pam has played a pivotal role in developing and shaping the future of Droitwich Spa for many years. As you would expect from her long service and experience she has a keen eye to business and has helped me on many occasions by suggesting the best way to deal with a particular situation. If re-elected, I shall certainly be turning to her for advice in the future. She will of course continue to be our County Councillor so I look forward to seeing her continuing to take an active role in town matters.

Councillor Edgar Harwood

Always ready to support the town and its events, I well remember first seeing him as our Town Crier at an event soon after we moved here. He has a long and distinguished career from his early involvement with the canals right through to the present day. Although a member of the opposition, and not afraid to express differing political views, I have always been impressed by his readiness to give this council cross-party support when it was in the best interests of the town to do so. I am very grateful that he will still continue to support the town. For example, he has kindly offered to take a part in the upcoming Royal Charter Day and other events, saving us the cost of a PA system!

Councillor Ken Jennings

Four years ago, when I decided to stand for election, Ken Jennings was involved with recruiting candidates, including myself, for the Conservative Party. It was only at the last minute that I found out he was also standing for election. I am very pleased that he did – he has a tremendous breadth of experience in local government and his election was very opportune at a time when the Town Council was facing many difficulties. His help, advice, knowledge and experience all proved invaluable in helping to steer us through a difficult period, and guiding this council to the firm

footing it now enjoys. On a personal note, I am very grateful for his help as mentor to me as a new boy. He encouraged and supported me as I learnt the ropes, with a kindly word, help and advice, and I thank him for that. I am very disappointed that he is not standing for re-election but I fully understand and respect his decision. He has not enjoyed the best of health for some time as you know, and does not wish to do less than full justice to the job of councillor. However I am concerned that we should not lose him entirely and I have asked him if he possibly can, to remain involved with some activities for the town, such as the new CIC being set up, when his health permits.

Councillor Peter Pinfield

Peter is another stalwart of the Town Council. He has served West Ward for 34 years variously as county, district and town councillor. Another champion of the canal restoration, he leaves a great legacy from his council work for future generations to enjoy. I am very pleased that he is continuing to play an active part in our community with Healthwatch – from what we have seen in recent press coverage, this is a valuable and necessary resource for Worcestershire. I wish him every success with this.

Councillor Mrs Anne Taft

Councillor Mrs Anne Taft has supported this town and its events for many years. Having a passion for older cars, I always enjoy the car event and I'm looking forward to this year's. Although born in Droitwich, and having been our Mayor, I understand she has now moved outside of the three mile area so cannot continue as a town councillor. She will be missed as a councillor, but I hope that she will be able to continue her involvement with events and that we will still see her around the town.

To those who have served this town well over the last four years, and are standing for re-election, I wish you every success. With the loss of at least eight members of the present team, the new council will obviously be different. However I hope that the newcomers will see that we have left a strong council and provided a sound footing on which they can build. I will close by reminding everyone that this council has demonstrated that we can achieve much if there is the determination and will so to do.

Councillor Brookes then acknowledged the support all Councillors had received from the Town Clerk and all members of the Office Team at the Town Council.

Councillor J Cook also thanked everyone for the support he had received since his co-option onto the Council and made special reference to the support from Mark Keld, Assistant Town Clerk.

The Meeting ended at 7.16pm.

Chairman of Council _____

22 June 2015

APPENDIX – PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

SUBMISSION FROM MR BUTCHER, THE FORGE, WOODFIELD ROAD

Pridzor Close Planning Application Refusal Goes to Appeal

I am drawing to the attention of Droitwich Spa Town Council the situation concerning a refused planning application in the Hillend area.

Residents of Pridzor Close, Pridzor Road, Woodfields Road, and Woodfields should be made aware that Fortis Housing have begun appeal proceedings to The Planning Inspectorate following the refusal of planning permission by Wychavon District Council in March of Fortis's application to demolish the Garage Block in Pridzor Close, and replace it and the current car-parking area with two Social Housing Bungalows.

In it's refusal decision, the Wychavon Planning Committee minutes said.....

Quote... Wychavon District Planning Cttee case 14/02610. Decision Document

"The introduction of two dwellings would result in the loss of nine existing garages and seven off-road parking spaces. Such a loss would exacerbate an existing on-street parking issue along the surrounding road network and therefore **would compromise highway safety.**

Further to this the Framework, in paragraph 9, states that pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of, not only the built, natural and historic environment, but also in people's quality of life. **The loss of the garages and parking spaces would cause harm to the local area, would not improve the quality of the local residents and has failed to take local circumstances into account.**

In light of this is considered the proposed development would not respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas and therefore would be contrary to paragraph 9 and 10 of the Framework and save policy GD2 of the adopted Wychavon District Local Plan (June 2006)." **End Quote**

In it's appeal submission, Fortis Housing has made no substantive changes to its plan, and relies upon the following statements,

QuoteThe Planning Inspectorate Case ref APP/H1840/W/15/3010669, Appeal Statement

3.4the applicant sought pre-application advice from the Planning Authority. A written response was received on 17th December 2013 from David Addison, identifying the following issues:

· The demolition of garages – it is anticipated that the majority of these garages will be predominantly for storage rather than for car parking.

3.8 The garage block is considered to be in poor state of repair and Fortis Living are not considering replacing it as it reaches the end of its useful life.

3.9 The garages are tenanted (all tenants being 1 week's notice) and are rented by a mixture of Fortis Tenants and private tenants. Five of the garages are rented to Fortis tenants and two of those tenants are Pridzor Close residents.

4.10 The appellants argue that as a private landowner they are at liberty to withdraw the provision of garaging/storage and the informal car parking if they so wish. They do acknowledge there is a demand for such facilities as the garages are fully let, but they do not have the financial capacity to continue providing them, given the state of repair of the garage block, and they are under obligation to explore what land within their ownership has the potential to be redeveloped to provide affordable homes.

COUNCIL MEETING 27 APRIL 2015 – MINUTE NO 310 REFERS

Cheques signed 27 April 2015

10587	Smart Office Solutions (Cotswold) Limited Photocopier Usage - 31 Dec 2014 to 31 March 2015	£327.29
10588	Wychavon District Council Recharge for salaries - March 2015 & payslip service 2014/15	£11904.24
10589	Bourne Decorators Limited Works completed on Electric Box - Victoria Square	£783.58
10590	The Droitwich Salt Company Limited Earmarked monies for Droitwich Charter Event	£8,000.00
10591	G R Brookes Mayoral mileage - January to April 2015	£139.50
10592	Regional Digital Marketing Promotional material to support Tourism website and Town Guide booklet (£250.00 being donated from WDC)	£500.00
10593	Merlin Office Supplies Limited Washroom facilities	£81.55
	TOTAL	£24,064.51