

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of Droitwich Spa Town Council held by Online Zoom Facility on **Monday 28 September 2020** at 6.00pm.

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

APOLOGIES for absence: Councillor Mrs K Fellows

PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

There were no questions received.

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110. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor WT Moy and Councillor RG Beale both declared an interest in Agenda Item 9 for consideration of the arrangements for the Mayor & Deputy Mayor for the remainder of the Municipal Year due to the Pandemic restrictions. This was in the context that they currently maintain the Civic positions from the previous Municipal Year term.

Councillors A Humphries, NR Griffiths, CM Murray and RP Hopkins declared non-pecuniary interests in Agenda Item 14 – Neighbourhood Planning and Proposed Planning Reforms, in so much that they are members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group.

111. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 15 JUNE 2020

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 15 June 2020 by Audio Conference Call be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

112. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

RESOLVED That the information was noted

113. POLICING IN DROITWICH SPA

The Town Clerk referred to the report provided by Sergeant Sarah Kent in advance of the meeting. The report had been circulated to all Members earlier in the day. The Town Clerk read the report aloud and there were no questions arising. Councillor RG Brookes commended the Police on their stance to begin enforcement measures against persons who refuse to conform with the Covid 19 safety requirements during this difficult time of the Pandemic restrictions.

Police Report

Firstly, Covid 19. Having gone through a fairly 'relaxed' period we're now going back into a time when the Police will be enforcing the rules. Whereas our approach to it in the Spring and early Summer was to engage and educate only then enforce if the first two don't work, this time there seems to be less people willing to accept the rules and the national stance from the Police is that there will be far more enforcement.

During the previous lockdown the only enforceable offences were those committed in public but a large proportion of the reports received by the Police were of people breaching the guidelines in their own homes. This time offences within premises are also enforceable. We won't be forgetting that we police by consent, but I feel the majority of the people who do follow the rules want to see those flouting the rules dealt with robustly.

You will have seen the recent reports of Travellers on the Cricket Club pitch in Droitwich. They were part of the same group that were on the Droitwich Rugby Club earlier in the year. I acknowledge that this was a highly impactful incident for the community and we're working with the club and Wychavon to plan some target hardening to try and prevent it happening again in the future.

The CMS messaging service which we used to send messages regarding crime and suspicious incidents to members of the public is no longer available to us. A new system will hopefully be in place in the future. In the meantime, we aim to put details of crimes on our Droitwich Cops Facebook page each week.

Finally, I've managed to secure a new Police Officer post for Droitwich, taking the team from two to three officers. The role has been taken by PC Joe Brooks is both an experienced officer and an experienced Safer Neighbourhood Team officer having moved from the same role in Worcester City. Joe will be looking after the east side of Droitwich and his area extends to include a large area of rural villages as well.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

114. HIGH SCHOOL UPDATE

The Town Clerk introduced Grace Rogers – Head Girl and Joe Harrison – Head Boy from the Droitwich Spa High School.

Grace updated on various general matters from the High School including restoration of a wooden former Town Boundary Sign now displayed prominently at the main entrance to campus. The Cabin project is proceeding well through construction phases and is anticipated to be finished in October. Planned activities for the new resource are wide ranging and include a programme of Community usage and Adult Learning. Year 8 pupils have settled in well this academic year. A film option representing the school and facilities is being arranged in support of open evening events for new prospective pupils. During early October a school litter pick is being organised to clear the brook area of the school site.

Joe updated more on Covid 19 connected matters including that attendance had been 96% to start the new school year in early September. This had dropped slightly to 90% more recently but this was due to various reasons such as pupils attending University open days, tests, as well as some self- isolating. The School campus is segregated into different zones to enable year groups to maintain their own social bubbles and accord with Covid 19 guidelines. Social distancing and face masks are maintained in the busier communal areas including corridors and reception. The forthcoming charity week is being adapted to follow Covid 19 protocols for the activities and is most likely being extended to two weeks in order to provide additional scope.

Councillor DM Craigie asked for the details of the Litter pick and organiser so that he could arrange to help.

115. YOUTH COUNCIL UPDATE

Councillor RJ Morris updated that in talks with the Head Teacher the decision had been made to defer the start of the Youth Council this school year until the beginning of 2021. A vote of thanks with arrangement of suitable acknowledgement cards was proposed for Katie Bowen and Teacher Joe Humfress who had both recently moved on following considerable dedication and service to the Youth Council. Katie had been exemplary in all aspects including Chairmanship of Youth Council and is imminently due to begin studying English at Oxford University having achieved first class A level results this summer. Mr Humfress was the assigned Teacher to support Youth Council from the High School. Both will be sorely missed and Members were unanimous in expressing appreciation and best wishes for the future.

RESOLVED To arrange suitable appreciation and acknowledgement cards in recognition of support and achievements for Youth Council to Miss Katie Bowen (Lead Student) & Mr Joe Humfress (Assigned Teacher)

116.. TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THJE UNDER MENTIONED MEETINGS

1. Planning Committee – 6 July 2020 by conference call [*circulated previously*]
2. Community & Amenities Committee – 6 July 2020 by conference call [*circulated previously*]
3. Resources Committee -28 July 2020 by conference call [*circulated previously*]
4. Extra – Ordinary Resources Committee for review of finances and budgets by Zoom Facility 7 September 2020 [*circulated previously*]
5. Planning Committee –14 September 2020 by Zoom Facility [*circulated previously*]
6. Community & Amenities Committee -14 September 2020 by Zoom Facility [*circulated previously*]

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

117. TO CONFIRM THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR MAYOR & DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE CURRENT MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020.

Pursuant to Minute reference 36 of the Full Meeting of Council from 15 June 2020 convened by Conference Call. To review and resolve the arrangements in consideration of the ongoing Pandemic restrictions

RESOLVED That the arrangements remain in place until May 2021. Councillor WD Moy maintains the position of Mayor & Councillor RG Beale that of Deputy Mayor.

118. REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY ARRANGEMENTS 2020.

Due to the continuing Pandemic restrictions a virtual meeting took place on 11 September 2020 to collaboratively review the guidelines and consider permissible options. The Meeting was chaired by Councillor Humphries in his capacity as the Chairman of the Droitwich Spa Branch of the Royal British Legion and was facilitated by the Town Clerk. Delegates included Elected Members representing the Town, District and County Councils, the Police and RBL Secretary. To receive an update from Councillor Humphries and the Town Clerk from the meetings output. Councillor Humphries read out and reported on the following.

- The local RBL will contact everyone who has placed a wreath order for 2020 and ask for these to be collected by prior arrangement. Organisations and individuals are to be encouraged to lay wreaths at their own convenience at the Memorial in the week before Remembrance Sunday – 8th November 2020.
- Groups and Individuals can take photographs as they place the wreaths and forward them to RBL Branch Chairman or Secretary. It is hoped to formulate a collage of the photographs representative of 2020.
- For any Groups or Individuals who prefer not to do this, alternative arrangements can be made. For example the RBL Branch Committee have offered to place wreaths in accordance with the recommended guidelines and provide a photograph for confirmation thereafter.
- It is hoped that wreaths will be in place at the memorial by Sunday 8 November 2020.
- Prior to 8 November – the Mayor, the Chairman & Secretary of the RBL Branch and the Chaplain will record a short Remembrance Service in St Andrews Church. This is intended to be broadcast at the appropriate time on Remembrance Sunday using social media streaming. It is important to maintain the Rule of Six during the Service and it is hoped that a Representative from the Office of the Lord Lieutenant for Worcestershire will be in attendance.
- The Service will take the form of prayers and a short address from the Chaplain, delivery of the Exhortation, 2 minutes silence and the Kohima Epitaph presented by the RBL Branch Chairman.
- On Wednesday 11 November 2020 a similar small ceremony will take place at the memorial and conclude with the laying of wreaths by the Mayor and 4 representatives of

the RBL. At all times the rule of six will be followed and socially distancing measures conformed with.

The Town Clerk updated in addition that options were being looked into whether an illuminated poppies motif can be arranged for projection on the frontage of St Richards House for the period of Remembrance fortnight. To ensure public awareness and engagement a joint press and media statement is to be prepared from the Mayor and Chairman of the RBL Branch to explain the arrangements for Remembrance in 2020. It is hoped to release the statement in plenty of time during mid- October, followed by a reminder closer to Remembrance Sunday.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

119. CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON ARRANGEMENTS 2020

Due to the continuing Pandemic restrictions the usual Community Event to celebrate the Christmas Lights being switched on by the Mayor will not be possible this year. Tentative arrangements are being considered for the Mayor to Switch- on the Lights without a formal public gathering but to at least mark the occasion. A small socially distanced ceremony is being arranged for possibly Friday 27 November 2020 in the garden frontage of St Richards House. Further details to be confirmed through the Community & Amenities Committee Meeting on 9 November 2020.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

120. ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT DROITWICH SPA TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE.

Pursuant to minute reference 74 of the Resources Committee meeting held on 28 July 2020 by conference call to receive the enclosed Accessibility Statement and related Website Accessibility Requirements prepared by Mrs Jennifer Fish on behalf of the Town Council. The changes are effective from 23 September 2020 and accord with the Government recommendations. All new content and archived material spanning the timeframe 2018 to date is required to be compliant for government domain websites. A timescale of 31 March 2020 has been suggested to check and amend the archived content back as far as 2018 for the Town Council website. Any content provided externally for use on the website going forward will also be subject to the amended accessibility standards before acceptance. The Town Clerk referred to the Accessibility Statement and guidelines summary circulated with the Agenda. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information was noted and the accessibility statement be adopted as Presented.

121. ANNUAL REVIEW OF RISK 2020/2021.

To accord with the recommendations of the Internal Auditor to review all risk attributed to the business of the Town Council annually. Fully updated Risk Assessment attached to the Agenda including details of the Covid 19 safety precautions implemented this year during the emergence of the pandemic. The Town Clerk explained the documents and emphasised the addition of Covid 19 specific details and an associated risk assessment. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information was noted and the arrangements for the Council's Annual Review of Risk for the Year 2020/2021 confirmed.

122.NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING & PROPOSED PLANNING REFORMS

To note that pursuant to minute reference 96 of the Planning Committee meeting held by Zoom on 14 September 2020, the proposed meeting with Wychavon District Council to discuss these matters has been postponed due to the availability of some of the delegates. A further meeting will be arranged in October and notified.

To receive any relevant information or update from Councillor Humphries in the capacity as Town Council representative for the Neighbourhood Planning Group.

Councillor Humphries presented and read out the attached report.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

123.MUNICIPAL PLANTING

To consider an additional option to the existing contract which suggests planting approximately 33 containers throughout the town centre with spring flowering bulbs to include tulips, crocus, daffodils & hyacinth. Costs for the next spring provision would be £1400.00 inclusive of plants, maintenance and re-composting. Normally the summer plants and winter bedding run back to back May to November with no spring flowers. The quotation is considered very competitive and in line with the usual high standards maintained by the contractors and growers who provide the Town planting. Councillor GA Duffy commended the contractors on the floral displays this year which was further endorsed by Councillor RJ Morris. The consensus in general discussion was that the Municipal Planting had been a real help during the difficult period of the pandemic so far.

RESOLVED That the information was noted. That the quoted £1400.00 addition is accepted to provide for Spring Bulbs planting as presented.

124. COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor GR Brookes updated that the acute trust was now out of special measures. County Council finances were reported to be well under control despite the Covid 19 pandemic and associated factors. Expenditure had so far reached £60 Million for Covid 19 aspects in Worcestershire and £52 Million had been successfully recouped from Central Government.

Councillor RJ Morris explained that during the lockdown period work had continued to successfully install earthwork bund defences to prevent illegal traveller encampments on the Berry Hill Industrial Estate. This project had been funded by a combination of contributors including Divisional Funding and Businesses. For the West Area work is proceeding with a prioritised programme of footpath reinstatement and repairs. This work has been considered to be overdue in places where sections remained in place from the original development phase. As more funding becomes available it is hoped to expand and reprioritise additional areas of the Estates for similar improvements.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

125.DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor AM Sinton referred to the following report.

1. Recent concentration has for obvious reasons been on the recovery from the effects of the Covid pandemic. Wychavon has generally been complimented on its efforts so far. Of particular interest to DSTC is the Community Recovery Fund. Councillors have been allocated £500 each to support a project in their ward. One project being explored is to engage with the Norbury Theatre in providing a virtual entertainment for the Town via You Tube.
2. The Community Legacy Fund is about to enter its third and final stage. Expressions of Interest are required by 7th December. Councillor Morris has put forward the suggestion of a virtual town trail but other ideas are welcome. In the meantime the building of the Cabin Project from the previous successful DSTC bid is progressing well.
3. The SWDP review is reaching a crucial stage and Town Councillors are urged if possible to attend the Zoom meeting on 7th October.
4. The New Homes Bonus scheme is coming to an end. Our remaining allocation is going towards the underpass project.
5. The Travellers are no longer at St Peter's Field. Meetings are being held later in the week with the relevant parties to help prevent a reoccurrence.
6. There will be a liaison meeting between the DSTC and Wychavon in mid- October.

RESOLVED That the information was noted

126.ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor Payments were presented to the Council totalling £ 49,780.84 together with a Supplementary Payment totalling £34,494.00. The Town Clerk explained that cheque number 11791 payable to the Citizens Advice Bureau had been incorrectly detailed as £40,000.00 instead of £4,000.00 on the accompanying summary schedule circulated with the Agenda. This error had now been corrected in terms of the aforementioned total payments for consideration & authorisation. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts for payment be received and the expenditure totalling £ 84,274.84 (£49,780.84 + £34,494.00) as now appended be approved and duly passed for payment.

The meeting ended at 6.58 pm.

Chairman of Council -----
14 December 2020