

# Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of Droitwich Spa Town Council held in the Council Chamber at St Richards House on **Monday 23 January 2023** at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor GA Duffy (Mayor)  
Councillor RG Beale  
Councillor Mrs C Bowden  
Councillor E Bowden  
Councillor GR Brookes  
Councillor Mrs JM Chaudry  
Councillor DM Craigie  
Councillor Mrs K Fellows  
Councillor NR Griffiths  
Councillor RP Hopkins  
Councillor A Humphries  
Councillor AH Laird  
Councillor RJ Morris  
Councillor WT Moy  
Councillor AM Sinton

APOLOGIES for absence: Councillors J Grady & CM Murray.

## PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

There were none.

## 259. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received.

## 260. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2022

Councillor RP Hopkins expressed disappointment that issues he has with the accepted 26 September 2022 minutes remain outstanding despite an amicable meeting that had taken place with Councillors Brookes, Sinton and Humphries, as well as the Town Clerk on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022. The Chairman replied that Councillor Hopkins had been asked previously to explain which specific parts of the September minutes he was referring to. Councillor Hopkins responded that he could not provide that information.

Councillor A Humphries suggested that Councillor Hopkins may prefer to write to the Leader and The Clerk to outline his concerns.

Councillor GR Brookes reaffirmed that the item being considered was the accuracy of the presented draft minutes of the meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 as a correct record of the proceedings. The Chairman then proposed the matter forward for consideration by the vote.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 12 December 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

From the 15 Elected Members present there were 9 votes in favour, 3 against and 3 abstentions (for the reason of not having been present at the December 2022 meeting).

#### 261. MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor GA Duffy updated the following information.

##### Mayor's announcements 23.01.2023

“Good evening all, I hope everyone had a restful, festival holiday period and have followed it with a good start to the New Year. It was certainly a festive one for me with more carol singing than I have ever done before.

Since our last full meeting in mid- December, I have attended 10 events. Starting by joining Gloverspiece School's tradition of a Christmas Show to learn about our national seasonal traditions. I was next treated to a lovely lunch with our outstanding team of Town Council Volunteers and given the opportunity to thank them for running and enabling activities like our museum, festivals and walks.

Before the singing started properly, I was awarding and witnessing the Judo abilities of the learners at Westlands Judo. Volunteering my vocal chords to the season, I sang with at the Castle with the Methodist church for their beer and carols evening where I also made an unintended appearance at Kazuko-kan Judo Club's awards evening who I had sent apologies before realising they were at the castle as well. More singing ensued at the Cathedral for the Blue Lights carol service telling the tale of the Birth of Christ to raise money for emergency service charities. With an almost identical schedule, Worcester News hosted another carol evening the following night where it was good to see many community groups invited from around the county. With a last attempt at a song, I cheered, jeered and sang from the panto audience of Cinderella at the Norbury. Finally, I was kindly invited by our Wychavon District Chair to join him in visiting our High School to learn and educate about our local governments and waste management”.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

#### 262. POLICING IN DROITWICH SPA

To confirm the updated Police Community Charter Priorities submitted on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022 and previously circulated [*further copy attached with Agenda*]. The next scheduled Full Policing update from Sergeant Sarah Kent will be at the Council Meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

The Town Clerk updated the following points from discussion earlier with Sergeant Kent. With regard to the Community Charter, a request for Elected Members to please provide any specific details of concerns & incidents for follow up and investigation. This is relevant for all of the three chosen renewal Charter (as at December 2022) priority areas comprising – Drugs, Anti-Social Behaviour and Speeding. The first two priorities have been emphasised in the request for more information. Also details and reports of the instance for any persons known to be sleeping rough in the area have been requested in order to help facilitate welfare support and urgent assistance for them.

The Town Clerk updated of a matter affecting Town Council land holdings that had arisen over the previous weekend. To this effect a car had been abandoned and destroyed having been set on fire half way along the secluded access road to the Chawson Lane Allotments Site. The fire had melted the Vehicle Identity Number (VIN) as untraceable from the chassis but the incident is possibly connected with an outstanding local vehicle theft from the previous week. The car make and colour are similar and the matter can hopefully be confirmed following forensic inspection by the Police Vehicle Examiner later this week. The Town Clerk explained that once permission had been provided by the Police the arrangements would be made for the safe recovery and scrappage. It was also updated that should the vehicle be identifiable as stolen there would be recourse to cover the costs of recovery and disposal through the original keeper's insurance policy.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

#### 263. COUNCIL ESTIMATES AND PRECEPT 2023/2024.

Full Report and Financial Papers previously attached with Agendas for Community & Amenities Committee and Resources Committee on 16 January 2023. To receive and consider the following:

- a) The recommendations of the Community and Amenities Committee upon the estimates pertinent to budgets within the control of that Committee [*see Minute 238 of Community and Amenities Committee 16 January 2023*]
- b) The recommendations of the Resources Committee for the setting of estimates for the financial year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and to set the precept request [*see Minute No's 251 & 252 of Resources Committee 16 January 2023*]

There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED

That the following recommendations from Committees on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 be fully approved.

1. **That the Resources Committee makes a recommendation to Council to request a requirement of £436,259 comprising £400,140 in precept and a precept support grant element of £36,119.**
2. **That no changes be made to the Fees and Charges for 2023/2024.**
3. **That the Grants Budget (S137 Grants and Sponsorship) be set at £5,000 in line with prior year and as detailed in the Estimates to enable financial assistance for Festivals and Events to be referred to the Grants Appraisal Panel for scrutiny and consideration, with onward recommendation to Community & Amenities Committee. That an additional £2500 be made available from operational contingencies should application demand require.**
4. **That there be no maximum threshold of grant allocation applicable to the Grants Appraisal Panel recommendations.**
5. **That the prepared Town Council estimates and budgets are approved by Full Council on 23 January 2023 for 2023/2024. There were no suggested amendments put forward for consideration.**
6. **That the Budget Requirement submission to Wychavon District Council includes the outlined precept and tax base calculation that is a Band D property level of £46.56 for 2023/24 representing a percentage increase of 0.56%.**

Of the 15 Elected Members present, 12 voted in favour and 3 abstained.

#### 264. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

To receive an update from Councillor GR Brookes in his capacity as the designated Town Council Member with responsibility for the project options, including Communications &

Liaison. Councillor Brooke's summary report covering the period 12 December 2022 to date with accompanying details was provided with the Agenda for information.

Councillor A Humphries asked when the second Steering Group meeting had taken place and whether the membership had increased. Councillor Brookes confirmed that the second meeting took place on 2 November 2022 and had been reported at Full Council on 12 December 2022 and that the Group engagement had increased with local business and commerce representatives.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

265. TO RECEIVE THE DRAFT MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE MEETINGS - To receive and consider the Minutes of the under-mentioned meetings:-

1. Planning Committee – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 *[to follow]*
2. Community & Amenities Committee – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 *[to follow]*
3. Resources Committee – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023 *[to follow]*

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

Of the 15 Elected Members present there were 12 votes in favour and 3 against. The Town Clerk asked for the reason for the objection. Councillor A Humphries clarified that this was for the reason of the precept and that the objections applied only to the Resources Committee minutes, not to the Planning and the Community & Amenities Committee minutes.

266. MEETING OWL TECHNOLOGY UPDATE - Pursuant to minute reference 163 of the Resources Committee meeting held on 10th October 2022, to receive the updated attached with the agenda papers from Councillor GR Brookes.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

267. INTERNAL AUDIT TERMS OF REFERENCE – To consider adoption of the policy document attached with the agenda papers as recommended by Calc as at 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023. Councillor RP Hopkins commented on the challenge correspondence matter previously discussed and the Internal Audit processes. The Chairman reaffirmed that the matter for consideration was for adoption of the recommended Calc Terms of Reference for Internal Audit as presented.

RESOLVED That the recommended Internal Audit Terms of Reference from Calc be adopted.

268. PROPOSAL FOR HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY- 27th JANUARY 2024 – To consider the following proposal and rationale statement provided by Councillor A Humphries.

**That the Town Council approve and support the holding of a Holocaust Memorial Day remembrance in Droitwich as an annual event on 27<sup>th</sup> January commencing in 2024.**

### Rationale

“Droitwich has not yet held such an event although adjacent towns such as Worcester and Bromsgrove now hold these Holocaust Memorial Day Remembrance Meetings on an annual basis.

Holocaust Memorial Day Remembrance is held to remember the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, the millions of other people killed by the Nazis, and later genocides in Cambodia, and other countries around the world.

All political parties both nationally and locally support these annual functions as an opportunity not only to remember the event but more importantly to educate children about the Holocaust by involving them in the provision of music, poetry and readings and schools are happy to help. There would also be a main speaker ideally someone who survived living in a Concentration Camp and as such will be very elderly and in considerable demand to attend civic events around the country.

At present one of our local members knows such people and has attended several of the events supported by local authorities in towns close to Droitwich. The local MPs would be invited together with the Lord Lieutenant and the Mayor and Councillors and whilst it is not a religious service, the local faiths normally help, and the event would also be open to the general public. The cost to the town is nominal but the importance of the event is considerable”.

RESOLVED To fully accept and unanimously support the proposal for Holocaust Memorial Day in Droitwich Spa on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

### 269. PROPOSAL FOR DIGITAL PAPERS ONLY FOR TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS –

To consider the following proposal and rationale statement provided by Councillor A Humphries.

**That this Council immediately stops the practice of posting Agendas and Minutes of meetings to elected members.**

### Rationale

“When this proposal was originally made, it was done so with a view to protecting the environment and saving taxpayers money which would now appears to have been disregarded. Every Councillor has an email address so there is no reason why such documents cannot be forwarded and received electronically.

If a Councillor is struggling to access documents electronically, it is suggested that the Town Clerk arrange some appropriate training for them to deal with this deficit in knowledge.

I struggle to believe that all of us do not want to protect the environment and save taxpayers money”.

In general discussion various amendments were suggested for the motion to be resubmitted for future consideration.

RESOLVED That the presented motion be withdrawn. That the suggested amendments be taken forward for resubmission and informed consideration at a future meeting of Full Council. That the information be noted.

270. COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS - Councillor RJ Morris had provided the following report in advance of the meeting including a request for paper copies to be circulated and provided for Elected Members present through the Clerk.

**1. Bollards and railings around St Joseph & Westacre to support child safety**

Bollards preventing cars driving on pavements are now in place at St Joseph's close. Zig Zag lines and keep clear markings are now on the road on the bridge by Westacre School. More to do as the area between Westacre and Ledwyche has been highlighted to me.

**2. Speeding**

Have done a call out to get more volunteers to support a Town Speed watch programme

**3. Environment**

**1. Solar Together**

Solar Together is a collective buying scheme aimed at the 'able to pay' domestic market. The scheme groups together households interested in purchasing solar PV to take advantage of economies of scale. Solar Together provide a vetting service of all the contractors and products offered to ensure households have confidence in what they are purchasing.

Worcestershire County Council have signed up for the spring '23 auction. Based on data analysis by Solar Together, a direct mail will be sent to around 75,000 Worcestershire households.

**2. Bat Lights:**

£6 million over 2 years is being invested by Worcestershire County Council in LED streetlights of the future. To date, approximately 13,125 streetlights have been converted to LED as part of the on-going 'Rapid LED Roll-Out' programme, leaving less than 8,000 to complete the project in 2023. The project will save energy, reduce carbon emissions and also reduce any impact on protected species such as bats.

In 2019, the Council installed its first stretch of "bat-friendly" street lighting in what was believed to be a UK first. The award-winning project in Warndon, Worcester, set a high benchmark not only in the county but also the country and beyond. Bat friendly street lighting has also been installed in Pershore, with further plans to introduce it on corridors in Evesham, Redditch, and Worcester.

**3. Green infrastructure strategy out for consultation (Consultation process details circulated through Town Clerk 23.01.2023) - Worcestershire County Council, on behalf of the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Partnership, is preparing a revised Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy. The Green Infrastructure Strategy outlines the county's strategic approach to the delivery of green infrastructure.**

**4. Divisional funds update**

|                        |      |
|------------------------|------|
| Food festival          | 1k   |
| Saltfest               | 1k   |
| Westlands Centre Floor | 2k   |
| Wellbeing hub          | 1.5k |
| Repair shop            | 0.5  |
| St Nic's youth group   | 0.5  |
| First Responders       | 1.5k |

Councillor NR Griffiths raised that he had been contacted by a resident who had recently been affected by flooding, requesting assistance. Councillor Morris and the Town Clerk referenced the support process available through Wychavon District Council – Land Drainage - Enforcement Officer, with responsibilities covering flooding incidents support across the District Area. The details and contact information had been received from WDC on 16th January 2023 and provided to all Elected Members by email on 17<sup>th</sup> January (8.20am).

Councillor A Humphries requested that correspondence be provided for him in larger font size and added that he had asked for this previously. There were no further questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

#### 271. DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS

Councillor AM Sinton updated on the following points.

1. That Wychavon District Council had not been successful in their “Levelling - Up Fund” Application to support improvements at Evesham Riverside. Other funding options are being pursued as alternative means of support for the project.
2. Consideration is being made towards supporting local arrangements for the Kings Coronation weekend taking place from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Options being considered include road closure arrangements and funding to support Community Celebrations, similar to in June 2022 for the Late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee. Further details will be provided in due course.
3. A successful Droitwich Spa Place Board Meeting had taken place on 19<sup>th</sup> January hosted by Droitwich Spa Town Council. Mark and Katy had provided a presentation covering the structure of the Town Council, roles and responsibilities and background on projects and strategic priorities. The Place Board had agreed to the Town Councils request to be the channel for its Neighbourhood Development Plan covering business engagement and Private Sector input and consultation moving forward. The Board offered to assist the Town Council in delivering its strategic priorities where they align with those of the Place Board when invited to do so. These projects include the creation of a centric business hub at St Richards House (second floor office space), resurrecting the Friday weekly Charter Market, expansion of Municipal planting, support for events and public realm improvements.
4. An Accessibility Audit has recently been commissioned by WDC to cover areas of public realm in the Town Centres through the District area. This will look at all aspects for making consideration towards uninhibited, open and improved access for all.

There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

#### 272. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor Payments were presented to the Council totalling £12,732.57 (Total expenditure = £12,732.57).

There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts for payment be received and the expenditure totalling £12,732.57 be approved and duly passed for payment. (Total expenditure = £12,732.57).

The meeting ended at 19.22. PM.

Chairman of Council -----  
24 April 2023