

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of the COMMUNITY AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, St Richards House on Monday 11 September 2023 at 6.56 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs C Bowden
Councillor E Bowden
Councillor SJ Brazier
Councillor PD Clements
Councillor DI Davidson
Councillor GA Duffy
Councillor VP Humphries
Councillor RJ Morris
Councillor Mrs K Fellows (Ex officio)

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT, GR Brookes, J Grady, & RP Hopkins

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor AM Sinton.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none received.

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125. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None received.

126. To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 3 July 2023

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community & Amenities Committee held on 3 July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

127. St Vincent de Paul Society - To receive the letter attached with the Agenda expressing appreciation and dated 28th July 2023, received from Penny Gilfeather – Secretary of St Vincent de Paul Society with regard to the Community & Amenities Grant awarded in July 2023 towards the Bereavement Café Project [*for information*].

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

128. Community Grants - To receive and consider the recommendations made by the Grants Appraisal Committee from the meeting held on 4th September 2023 [*schedule attached with Agenda*].

The Town Clerk updated that the conditional aspect for a suitable venue for the recommended award to the Civic Society for the John Heminge 400th anniversary theatrical performance in November 2023 had now been confirmed. To this effect the Civic Society representative had notified that the Droitwich Spa High School Theatre had been confirmed for the performance.

All three recommendations on the attached schedule were unanimously accepted for award.

RESOLVED That the information be noted and to award the three Grant applications for projects as outlined on the attached schedule. In summary these are £500.00 each to Droitwich Spa High School Allotment Team, Droitwich Spa Youth Falcons Football Team and Droitwich Spa Civic Society.

129. Community Public Access Defibrillators - To receive an update from Mr Peter Richards – Chair of Trustees for Droitwich AED. This is conducive with the standing Town Council resolutions towards adoption of 5 CPAD's in the Town Centre. Costings and Insurance liability options have previously been ascertained and a coordinated approach is now required to agree the final suggested locations, together with taking forward full implementation and hand over dates.

The Town Clerk introduced Mr Peter Richards, who presented background on his work through Droitwich AED in providing and maintaining many public access defibrillators in the Town and local area. By consensus it was proposed and agreed for the Town Council take over the sponsorship arrangements and financial support for the five defibrillators taken over by the Police Team in Droitwich Spa. These are in place as mobile units within the fleet of Police response vehicles, although the ongoing cost provision is a challenge for the Police resourcing. The operational cost per annum is £75 for each defibrillator It was agreed that Peter would invoice the Town Council through the Town Clerk to make the arrangements for the ongoing operational sponsorship and formal adoption of these 5 existing units.

Councillor RJ Morris thanked Mr Richards and Droitwich AED on behalf of the Town Council and the Community for their essential work and long standing in helping to provide lifesaving cover.

RESOLVED That the Town Council adopt the 5 Public Access Defibrillators already in place with the Towns Police Team response vehicles fleet. Sponsorship to be paid to cover the annual operational costs of £75.00 per unit (Invoice total £375.00 per annum).

130. West Midlands Mayors Weekend Event – Community Picnic in the Lido Park – Sunday 10th September 2023– Pursuant to Minute reference 95 of the Community & Amenities Committee Meeting that took place on 3rd July 2023, the promotional and programme details attached with the Agenda have been featured through August. The Town Council are grateful for the supplementary grant funding available through the special National Lottery fund and to all participants for their contributions and support [*for information*].

It was reported that the Event had been very successful.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

131. John Heminge 400th Anniversary 2023. - Pursuant to Minute reference 97 of the Community & Amenities Meeting that took place on 3rd July 2023, arrangements are progressing as follows [*for information*].

- (a) An inscription and plaque are being finalised for installation at St Peters Church. The Town Council express appreciation for the help and support provided and the permission granted in principle by the (DAC) Diocesan Advisory Committee and Reverend Laura Handy. The actual 400th Baptism Anniversary for John Heminge coincides with the Christmas Lights Switch on Date of Saturday 25th November 2023. A plaque unveiling ceremony is being arranged for early afternoon at St Peters Church on the same date. Publicity and full details will follow in due course.
- (b) The Arrangements for a dedicated exhibition and freely accessible display of the First Folio at the Heritage Centre/ Museum. This is considered important to mark the anniversary year and in keeping with the strong local connections, Civic Pride and Legacy. It is hoped to feature advance publicity to align with other national arrangements for the John Heminge 400th Anniversary, similar to those aspects taking place in Stratford upon Avon and London. The confirmed date for the Heritage Centre exhibition as part of the current forward plan is 11th September to 18th November 2023.

- (c) The Christmas Lights Switch on Event on Saturday 25th November 2023 will feature the John Heminge anniversary theme. This includes the acclaimed Droitwich Spa born Actor- Mr Ross Armstrong appearing in Shakespearean Costume to suitably mark the occasion as part of the Switching on off the Lights Ceremony. Full Publicity details will follow in due course.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

132. Westwood Lodge Allotments Site. To report that Westwood Lodge allotment site has been affected by the following issues during July and August 2023 [*for information*].

- (a) Repeated breaking & entering with thefts of property from sheds and greenhouses. These have been multiple incidents on several occasions. The Town Council are supporting tenants by liaising with the Police (Dedicated Rural Crime Officer) , reminding of security and access protocols, general awareness and due diligence to prevent opportunities for crime and the fitting of replacement site gate locks. A site meeting with the Police Officer is scheduled for 5th September 2023.
- (b) On Friday 14th July a thunderstorm lightning strike felled a large tree on adjacent land owned by Westwood Lodge Estate. The fallen tree breached and blocked the nearby County Council public footpath route leading from Westwood Road, damaged perimeter fencing to the Allotment Site and dropped high voltage power cables. The incident necessitated a Fire & Rescue response due to a fire, and National Grid attended with standby generators over several days whilst repairs were made and the power network in part of the West Ward restored. There were no reports of injury but the fallen tree lay twisted and unstable. This was being used as a means of illegal access to the site by unknown persons to break in to sheds and undertake criminal damage in the aftermath of the incident. Due to the immediate security, liability and public safety risks, Town Council contractors removed the fallen tree from the public footpath and reinstated the boundary fencing during the same weekend. Full cooperation and liaison was maintained throughout with the Emergency Services, National Grid and the WCC Countryside Team.
- (c) Pursuant to Minute reference 93 of the Community & Amenities Committee Meeting held on the 3rd July 2023, the Allotment Association Communal Shed/ Cabin has been inspected on 18th July 2023 by the Town Clerk and the Acting Chairman of the Allotment Association (Droitwich Spa Branch). The structure was confirmed to be intact but in need of repair and maintenance. An approach has been made to the Local Allotment Association and their response is awaited. The immediate issue remains a brick built chimney stack which requires renovation or removal. Further updates will be provided in due course.
- (d) Arrangements have been made to let one half plot at the site to the Droitwich Spa High School for Student Communal Gardening as part of the curriculum from September 2023. This follows an enquiry and request raised through Councillor RJ Morris and the High School. The arrangement has been well received and the site is ideally located within walking distance of the School, Campus for Student Groups to attend.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

133. D Day 80 Anniversary Event – 6th June 2024. Pursuant to minute reference 48/2023-24 of the Community & Amenities Meeting held on 12th June 2023 and minute reference 94 of the meeting of the 3rd July 2023, a Registration has been submitted on 14th August for the Town to be part of the official Pageantry Office anniversary arrangements. Key details at this early stage include the National Beacon Trail format similar to the late Queens Platinum Jubilee in June 2022 and the reading of the International Tribute at 9.15pm on 6th June 2024. An approach has been made to the 2516 ATC Droitwich Spa Cadets Squadron and the Royal British Legion - Droitwich Spa Branch inviting their participation. The full arrangements will be finalised over the next few months with publicity and updates to follow. To other special considerations for the date in 2024 are the National Fish and Chips Day coinciding with the 6th June 2024 and the 50th year of Droitwich Spa Town Council [*for information*].

Councillor Val Humphries confirmed that the Royal British Legion would be holding a Service at the Towns War Memorial on the date of 6th June 2024, with full details to be announced in due course.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

134. Public Art Murals – Ombersley Way and Briar Mill Underpasses – Pursuant to minute reference 49/2023-2024 of the Community & Amenities Committee meeting held on 12th June 2023 arrangements have now been completed in July to apply anti-graffiti protective coating to the public realm mural art work. To date this is proving successful in protecting against further graffiti and anti-social/vandalism issues. The Artist returned to repair the art installations simultaneously with the anti-graffiti coating being applied. Similar remedial works are being coordinated for the lighting ducts and ceiling sections of the King Georges/ A38 underpass which has been targeted with similar issues. This will effectively sign off the repairs and project work for these three underpass locations *[for information]*.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

135. Holocaust Memorial Day- 27th January 2024- Pursuant to Minute reference 47/2023-2024 of the meeting of the Community & Amenities Committee held on 12th June 2023, to update on the current position.

The Town Clerk explained that Councillor Val Humphries had notified on 18 August 2023 that she was no longer able to lead on this initiative. Councillor Humphries asked that more Councillors be involved in making the arrangements. The Town Clerk clarified that the original resolution reached as follows from the Community & Amenities Meeting held on 12th June 2023 (Minute 47/2023-2024 refers),

RESOLVED That the information be noted. To delegate support for the arrangements for a Holocaust Memorial Event for Droitwich Spa (Friday morning 26th January 2024) to a Working Group comprising Councillors VP Humphries (Lead) , RJ Morris & GA Duffy. To note that the invitation to join the Working Group is extended to all Councillors and any interested co-opted persons

RESOLVED That the information be noted and the Town Clerk make contact with the existing delegation Elected Members for arrangements to meet and discuss the position at an early opportunity.

136. Droitwich Spa Community Hall Room Hire - To update on the Scribe System enhancements recently resolved through the Resources Committee to enable automated and online self - service reservations for hirers. This is proving very effective for room hire and Community usage of the Hall and full mid- year - point income & expenditure to budget will be reported on next month through Resources Committee. A print of the website notice link and information page is attached and similar banners are currently being arranged for temporary display outside the Community Hall and St Richards House *[for information]*.

Councillor GA Duffy suggested that the room booking system details may be of interest to the Chawson Barns Hall for their Committee to consider similar.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

137. Friday Weekly Charter Market –

(a) To consider arrangements to review progress and forward plans for the Market arrangements in keeping with the resurrection of the operation from April 2023 and a six months update. The recommendation is to delegate responsibility to a Working Group to meeting with the Operators from Blue Bell Events during the period up to calendar year end. Revenue scope and options will need to be considered as part of the annual estimates, budget setting and precept in January 2024 to commence from April 2024. From resurrection in the spring, the Market has been operating on a revenue neutral arrangement as a new venture, subject to the aforementioned review taking place. To consider the delegation for the Working Group and timescales to arrange a meeting with Bluebell Events representatives.

(b) A wider collaboration between the Farmers Market, the Charter Market and Traders from the High Street as a joint venture is being suggested for dates in the autumn. Tentatively these dates are Saturdays 7th October and 25th November (Christmas Lights Switch on Day). Further details will be provided as the arrangements progress.

RESOLVED That the information be noted. For the Town Clerk to liaise with the Market Operators to arrange a review meeting. This should be timed to coincide with the calendar year end 2023, and simultaneous work at that time for the precept setting, estimates and budgets for income & expenditure – for the period commencing 1st April 2024.

138. German Twinning 40th Anniversary with Bad Ems 2023- To advise that the German Twinning Association have recently been presented with a special commemorative flag from Bad Ems for the 40th anniversary year in 2023 of the links with Droitwich Spa. To mark the occasion a Civic Flag Raising Ceremony is arranged for 11.00am on Saturday 16th September outside St Richards House. The Twinning Association have prepared the attached press and media statement for advance publicity. It is anticipated that the new Flag will be flown for several weeks during September & October 2023 and then again in May 2024 to coincide with a scheduled visit from a delegation visiting from Bad Ems *[for information]*.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

139. Information Page Guide for Town Council & Committee Meetings on Town Council website – The attached update has been prepared to help provide further and guidance for people to access Town Council Meetings. This highlights some of the recent enhancements including the You Tube Live Stream and Recording of all the meetings *[for information]*.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

140. Wychavon Parish Games - To receive and consider correspondence provided by Susan Collins dated 1st March 2023 and representing the Wychavon Parish Games Organisation. Due to the May 2023 Local Elections and the backlog of business for C & A Committee Meetings in June and July, it has only been possible to table this item in September. This will determine that any consideration for membership and participation is now for the 2024 period going forwards due to the elapsed timescales.

To consider formation of a Working Group of the Community & Amenities Committee with delegation to take forward community engagement for Droitwich Spa to participate in the arrangements for the 2024 Wychavon Parish Games . If proceeding to consider Membership and Chairmanship of the Working Group *[copy correspondence and 2022 Competition Results Data attached with Agenda dated 1st March 2023]*. Councillor RJ Morris reaffirmed that the Ward Layout for Droitwich Spa made the arrangements for local Droitwich Spa Teams to register and participate in the Wychavon Parish Games more complicated than many Parishes. He suggested piloting the interest for take up and teams participation within the Central Ward and for a Working Group delegation to take forward engagement through local pubs and the Working Men’s Club. This was agreed by consensus.

RESOLVED - That a Working Group Delegation approach local pubs and the Working Men’s Club in the Central Ward of Droitwich Spa to gauge interest and desire to participate from local teams in the 2024 Edition – Wychavon Parish Games. Delegation to comprise Councillors – Mrs C Bowden , E Bowden , GA Duffy , D Davidson & S Brazier.

The meeting concluded at 8.00 pm

Chairman of Committee
6 November 2023

Chairman of Council
25 September 2023