

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of Droitwich Spa Town Council held in the Council Chamber at St Richards House on **Monday 22 January 2024** at 6.00pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs K Fellows (Mayor)
Councillor Mrs C Bowden
Councillor E Bowden
Councillor SJ Brazier
Councillor M Brook
Councillor GR Brookes
Councillor P Clements
Councillor DI Davidson
Councillor RCC Deller
Councillor GA Duffy
Councillor N Franks
Councillor J Grady
Councillor RP Hopkins
Councillor VP Humphries
Councillor AL Key
Councillor RJ Morris
Councillor AM Sinton

NOTES

(1) Webcasting Members of the Council are reminded that meetings of the Council are Webcast on the Internet and will be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website. Members of the public are informed that if they attend this meeting their images and speech may be captured by the recording equipment used for the Webcast and may also be stored electronically and accessible through the Council's Website.

(2) This Meeting will be webcast and live streamed on the Internet. It is anticipated that all Full Council and Committee Meetings will be live streamed from June 2023 onwards.

APOLOGIES for absence: Councillor Mrs JM Chaudry

Prior to the Start of the Meeting the photographer attended in order to take the Annual formal photographs of the Mayor and Collectively of the Full Council. There was then the fifteen minutes time allowable for any pre- notified public participation questions or statements. The start of the Full Council Meeting was preceded by Prayers and Reflection led by the Mayoral Chaplain – Reverend Laura Handy.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS SESSION

There were none pre-notified or presented.

296. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor AM Sinton declared a non- pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 11 for the Community Legacy, for the reason that he is a co-opted Member of the Wychavon District Council – Communities & Funding Advisory Panel. Councillors GR Brookes & RJ Morris both declared a non- pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 17 for the Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service (HWFRS) public consultation exercise on the Service's Resource Review proposals- for the reason that they are Members of the Fire Authority.

297. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2023

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on 18 December 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

298. MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Mrs K Fellows updated on various Civic engagements since the last Full Council Meeting on 18th December 2023 including a visit to the Sacred Heart Church, the formal reopening of the Castle Public House and an evening at the Norbury Theatre for the pantomime performance. Information was also provided for a forthcoming Charity fund raising event at the Golf Club in March at which the comedian Jasper Carrot will be part of the entertainment. It is anticipated that the proceeds raised from this Special Event will be shared between the recipient Charities for the comedian and a Youth beneficiary enterprise in Droitwich Spa. Councillor Mrs Fellows reported that her overall designated Mayoral Charity fund raising total for this Municipal Year has now reached approximately £6000.00.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

299. ARMED FORCES COVENANT

Pursuant to minute reference 76/2023-2024 of the Meeting of Full Council on 19 June 2023, the draft Armed Forces Covenant for Droitwich Spa has been submitted to the Ministry of Defence following resolution and signature at Full Council on 25th September 2023. To receive Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Wadland to countersign the adopted Armed Forces Covenant and ERS Bronze Status Award by Droitwich Spa Town Council.

Philip Sinclair, West Midlands Regional Employer Engagement Director introduced Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Wadland and Colonel Richard Maybery. Mrs Kate La Barre Armed Forces Covenant Partnership Officer, Worcestershire County Council and Mr Carl Bilboe were also present with the delegation. Flight Lieutenant Paul Wilde of the 2516 (Droitwich) Air Training Corps Squadron with Cadets- Harry Weinans and Aiden Ley Were also present. Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Wadland – Land Warfare Centre Productivity Emp/CI Lead signed the Armed Forces Covenant document by way of formal acceptance as the Senior Officer representing the Ministry of Defence. The document was also signed by the Mayor – Councillor Mrs Kate Fellows and Councillor RJ Morris representing Droitwich Spa Town Council. Photographs were then taken of all in attendance for the signing ceremony.

Colonel Richard Maybery – Chief Executive of the West Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association thanked the Mayor and the Town Council for adopting the Armed Forces Covenant and for the opportunity to attend this meeting by way of the Acceptance and Countersigning. The Mayor and Councillor RJ Morris responded and expressed appreciation for the delegation attending. The Ministry of Defence Delegation, Cadets and Mrs La Barre all then withdrew from the meeting.

RESOLVED That the information be noted and the Armed Forces Covenant adopted by Droitwich Spa Town Council on 25th September 2023 be formally accepted and countersigned by the Ministry of Defence Official Representative - Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Wadland – Land Warfare Centre Productivity Emp/CI Lead.

300. POLICING IN DROITWICH SPA

The Town Clerk explained that Sergeant Catherine Atkinson had been expected to attend the meeting and had also provided her report. The Report had been circulated on Thursday 18 January, together with further supplementary details regarding ASB earlier in the day before this meeting. The Town Clerk explained that Cathy was unfortunately not able to join this evening but welcomed three members of the Local SNT representing on her behalf. The two Droitwich West PCSO'S present provided an overview of measures being taken forward particularly in the West area and Town Centre to combat the ASB and graffiti issues. An update was also provided on the recent recruitment drive for the West part of the SNT which achieved two PCSO'S joining in the period around Christmas and New Year.

It was reported that identification and/or apprehending those persons responsible for the ASB and Graffiti was a challenge and appeals had been made for more information. Proactively Officers had visited schools and were engaged with a new rota system to enable more visible patrols in the Community. Unfortunately resource cover and availability up to the New Year recruitment had been an issue against tangible progress. Other factors include limited CCTV coverage in many areas and a reluctance from the Community to provide information about those persons responsible over concerns about reprisals. Other proactive measures to help reduce the incidents of ASB suggested included a Droitwich East and West SNT mailbox to help gather information and intelligence, and use of social media. Councillor AM Sinton spoke about the positive impact of Police Officers engaging with Schools and attending assemblies to heighten awareness and encourage liaison within Communities.

The Mayor thanked the Officers for attending and for their contribution to the meeting. The Town Clerk asked that any further questions be referred to Cathy direct or through the Office.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

301. HIGH SCHOOL -To receive an update from the Senior Students Team at Droitwich Spa High School *[if appropriate]*

The Town Clerk updated that there was no report or representation this evening due to the relatively short timescale since the last Meeting on 18th December 2023 and the intervening period of Christmas and New Year holidays.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

302. YOUTH COUNCIL – To receive an update on the arrangements for the Youth Council *[if appropriate]*

Councillor RJ Morris updated that as reported in December 2023, Maisie Truman had recently been appointed as the Community Lead and Youth voice for the High School. Three Youth Council Meetings had been arranged for 2024 so far. This follows the proposal for resurrection of the Youth Council through the School Pyramid. Interest and support from the High School and Middle Schools was very positive. An interactive meeting and discussions are planned in February and will include presentations from the Mayor and Sergeant Cathy Atkinson to the students. It is anticipated that the Mayoral Awards format and criteria will be included in the February Youth Council meeting.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

303. COUNCIL ESTIMATES & PRECEPT 2024/2025

Full Report and Financial Papers previously attached with Agendas for Community & Amenities Committee and Resources Committee on 15 January 2024. 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 Draft Minute 274 of Community and Amenities Committee 15 January 2024*]
- (b) The recommendations of the Resources Committee for the setting of estimates for the financial year 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and to set the precept request [*see Draft Minute No's 288 & 289 of Resources Committee 15 January 2024*].

The Town clerk explained that the draft Estimates, Budgets and Precept had been considered and recommended through the Community & Amenities and the Resources Committee meetings on 15th January 2024. There were no further questions arising.

RESOLVED - (A) To approve the Councils Estimates 2024/2025 for services, fees, commissions & charges within the remit of the Community & Amenities Committee, as well the C & A Committee presented budgets and the arrangements for the Community Grants. To approve the presented estimates as outlined in the 2024/2025 Financial Report pertinent to the Community & Amenities Committee without changes.

- 1. That the Grants Budget (S137 Grants and Sponsorship) be set at £,5000.00 as detailed in the Estimates to enable reasonable financial assistance for Community Groups, Festivals and Events to be referred to the Grants Appraisal Panel for scrutiny and consideration, with onward recommendation to Community & Amenities Committee.**
- 2. That no change is made to Charges, Fees and Commissions for the period 2024/2025.**

(B) To approve the following in respect of the Town Council estimates, budgets and precept 2024/2025.

- 1. That the attached presented estimates be approved by Full Council for 2024/2025.**
- 2. 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 £46.29 for 2024/25 representing a percentage decrease of - 0.58% (reduction of 0.27 p for the year)**
- 3. That no changes be made to the Fees and Charges for 2024/2025.**
- 4. 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.**
- 5. That there be no maximum threshold of grant allocation applicable to the Grants Appraisal Panel recommendations. Guideline of recommendations from £500 to £1K is maintained.**
- 6. That the Full Council approves to request a requirement of £436,259 comprising £400,140 in precept and a precept support grant element of £36,119 to be made to Wychavon District Council .**

304. Investment Policy Review and Options – To coincide from the new Administration in May 2023 and consideration of the ongoing strategic priorities outlined within the Financial Report produced to support the estimates, budget setting and precept calculations in January 2024, it is important to review investment and reserve position options. The following linked

information has been recommended for consideration of suitable options by Worcestershire CALC and the Internal Auditor during 2023.

[The Public Sector Deposit Fund | CCLA](#)

Recent Bank Base Rate increases have started to improve savings rate potential which is relevant for reviewing the investment policy and options. **The recommendation is that this item is now considered at an early opportunity given that Town Council financial reserves are in a positive position and exceed the recommended minimum threshold.** Indicative current yield rates are included within the Financial Report to accompany the budget setting- January 2024.

From the Draft Estimates, Budgets and Precept Report 2024/2025 (reference page 4 ,point 19 , bullet 4 “Investment Return Options “ – to consider the suggestion of investing £100K General Reserve in the Public Sector Deposit Fund/ CCLA on a rolling six months renewal arrangement.

There were no further questions arising.

RESOLVED To invest £100K General Reserve (one hundred thousand pounds) in the Public Sector Deposit Fund/ CCLA on a rolling six months renewal arrangement commencing from the start of the Municipal period 2024/2025 (April 2024) .

305. COMMUNITY LEGACY FUNDING

To confirm that pursuant to Minute Number 232/2023-24 of the Meeting of Full Council held on 18 December 2023, that a funding application (Stage 1 – Expression of Interest) is currently being prepared for submission with regard to the Museum project proposals. It is anticipated to send the application by 17th January 2024 [*for information*].

The Town Clerk confirmed submission of the part one application on 17th January 2024.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

306. COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP FUNDS- To provide information as outlined on the attached correspondence from the Central Government - Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The funding opportunity is open to incorporated organisations or Town / Parish Councils. The Fund overall will run until March 2025 with bidding windows aligned to financial years. More information including the prospectus for bidding round three can be found at www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-ownership-fund-prospectus/community-ownership-fund-prospectus--3

The Information has been provided by the Mid Worcestershire Member of Parliament – Nigel Huddleston. Details have been emailed to all DSTC Elected Members on 7th December 2023 and can be shared through wider networks [*for information*].

The Town Clerk explained that the funding opportunity was designed to support ambitious and significant Community projects.

Councillor N Franks suggested that the COF opportunity may be of interest for the movement to resurrect the Brine Baths facility. Councillor GR Brookes thanked Councillor Franks for his suggestion.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

307. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP) PROJECT REPORT – To receive an update report from Councillor GR Brookes in his capacity as the designated Town Council Member with responsibility for the project, including Communications & Liaison and the Steering Group. The previous report was included as part of Full Council on 18 December 2023 - Minute Number 239/2023-24 refers. A Steering Group Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 18th January 2024 to interpret and progress the consultation results and comments from October 2023. The full details collated in to reports format and dated December 2023 will be attached to the Town Council website, (NDP section) shortly afterwards. Other Key points for the overall NDP project to update on include,

- > An approach made to the WDC Droitwich Spa Place Board on 7th December 2023 to consider viability of existing WDC car parking land as defined within the Droitwich Spa Town Centre Prospectus (May 2022) towards consideration for developable sites for housing.
- > The Design Codes and Guidance Report finalised with AECOM and dated November 2023.
- > Initial structure for outlining suggested policies for inclusion within the draft NDP.

Councillor GR Brookes commented on the Agenda report as presented. He reassured over the continuing good progress for the project and associated positive support from Wychavon District Council Planning Department (the Local Planning Authority). The importance of close alignment between the Local Plan (emerging SWDP Review) and the Droitwich Spa Town Council NDP for the Community was reaffirmed. Councillor Brookes confirmed that three significant component pieces of work had been completed recently and these were now attached in full to the communication portal of the Town Council website within the NDP section, since Friday 19th January 2024. These documents are namely - the Consultation Results and Verbatim Comments summaries of feedback from the October 2023 evidence gathering questionnaire, and the Design Codes and Guidance Report finalised with AECOM and dated November 2023.

Councillor Brookes confirmed that the feedback and results met expectation at this stage of the project and residents would have more opportunities to contribute as the draft plan emerges. The level of responses accords with the Professional Consultant and Examiner principles. Initial feedback demonstrates strong interest from the Community and a Sense of Place & Civic Pride across many themes.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

308. To receive and consider the Minutes of the under-mentioned meetings:-

1. Planning Committee – 15 January 2024 [*provided with Agenda*]
2. Resources Committee- 15 January 2024 [*provided with Agenda*]
3. Community & Amenities Committee – 15 January 2024 [*provided with Agenda*]

RESOLVED That the Minutes of all of the listed Committee meetings be accepted on block.

309. WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL – DROITWICH SPA PLACE BOARD UPDATE – To receive an update on Place Board project work from Councillor AM Sinton [*for information*].

Councillor AM Sinton updated that there had been one further meeting of the Place Board on 16TH January 2024 since the last Full Council Meeting and report in December. Several key initiatives are progressing through the Place Board for this year including the Lido Park enhancements which are soon to be considered by the Wychavon District Council Executive Board, options to resurrect the vintage and classic car rally for the Town, consideration towards additional summer planters in the High Street and links to work with the Heritage Centre.

There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

310. COUNTY COUNCIL MATTERS- To receive reports on County Council matters *[if appropriate]*. The Town Clerk referenced the following prepared report that had been provided by Councillor RJ Morris and circulated to all DSTC Elected Members earlier in the day.

County update

Town Council 22nd January 2024

1. Draft budget

Cabinet has authorised a consultation the draft budget of £429.570 million

Recommend to Council in February 2024 an increase in Council Tax precept of 2.99% and increase in the Adult Social Care Levy by 2.0%.to help plug a £20.4m budget gap.

It comes as the local authority tries to balance its books for the next 12 months and looks to find a way to tackle the forecast overspend.

The county council says it is facing underlying financial pressures in children's services, school transport and adult social care.

2. Pathways

24 resurfaced pathways since 21/22 in Droitwich West

Pathways planned so far for 24/25 budget year: Farriers Square, Farriers Way, Hunters Place and Paddock Way.

3. Westlands pedestrian crossing

Still sorting a funding package

4. Environment

- a) Local nature recovery strategy: Issues & options consultation started 15th January 2024 link: [Worcestershire Local Nature Recovery Strategy | Worcestershire County Council](#)
- b) Natural Networks: Grants now up to 70% up to 15k, delivered in partnership between Worcestershire County Council and Wildlife trust: [Natural Networks Programme | Worcestershire County Council](#)
- c) Flood Management: Flood protection given to properties on Hunters Way and works continuing in Queen St
- d) Home upgrade grant (HUG2): Support for low-income households not connected to mains gas to improve the energy efficiency of their home: [Home Upgrade Grant Scheme \(HUG2\) | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Councillors GR Brookes and RJ Morris commented on the many local footpath improvements being undertaken and scheduled by the WCC Highways Department, despite financial pressures in other areas. Councillor GA Duffy expressed appreciation for the

footway improvements being worked on in the West Ward. Councillor Morris pledged to strive for more of this kind of work towards local Community public realm improvements. Other WCC environmental points updated on by Councillor Morris included the Natural Networks initiative which is progressing well through the Town Council working group delegation with the bio diversity increase in funding potential up to 70% and a new scheme to support low income households that are not connected to the mains gas network.

Councillor DI Davidson for environmental matters commented that the RSPB National Gardens Bird Watch campaign was coming up soon between the 26th and 28th January 2024. He encouraged all Elected Members to participate and confirmed that he would circulate the linked information through the Town Clerk [*emailed to all DSTC Elected Members on 23rd January 2024*].

There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

311. Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service (HWFRS) public consultation exercise on the Service's Resource Review proposals. To update on the attached public consultation details. The consultation ends on 4th March 2024 with recommendations set to be reported to the Fire Authority during June 2024 [*for information*]. Councillor GA Duffy commented that WDC Cllr Dan Birch, Executive Board Member for Wellbeing, social mobility and transformation, (with responsibility for health and wellbeing in Wychavon), had arranged to meet with the Chief Fire Officer and WDC Elected Members regarding the proposals and consultation. This meeting invitation is anticipated to be extended to all DSTC Elected Members. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

312. DISTRICT COUNCIL MATTERS – To receive reports on District Council matters [*if appropriate*]. Councillor GA Duffy referenced the following District matters report that he had provided and that had been circulated by the Town Clerk to all DSTC Elected Members earlier in the day.

Wychavon update January 2024

Wychavon Design Code Consultation

Residents are urged to have their say on a set of documents that will set new standards for future development to ensure they are high quality and beautifully designed. Wychavon has worked with design consultancy Create Streets to produce four new design codes for the district, which act like a recipe for a place.

They contain a set of requirements covering everything from the natural environment and buildings to roads and street lighting. The codes can be used to direct the look and feel of a development and how it should interact with the surrounding area.

The codes have been produced based on feedback from residents during previous consultations about the types of design they support and want to see more of in the place where they live. Workshops have also been held with developers and architects highlighting the importance of the codes and how they will reduce design uncertainty when preparing planning applications.

A four-week public consultation was launched to give residents the chance to have their say on the draft codes. The consultation runs until 11.59pm on 5 February and people can view the codes and take part by visiting www.wychavon.gov.uk/design-codes and filling in the online form. Paper copies of the codes and consultation forms will also be available from public libraries.

Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP)

A reminder that the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) night shelters are open from 24 November to protect our vulnerable people without homes during extremely cold weather.

Please encourage residents to report if they see someone sleeping rough: call Streetlink at 0300 500 0914 or report on their website: <https://bit.ly/3DYn0XU> Remember, if the person is in immediate danger, under 18, or needs urgent care, please call 999 immediately.

Changes to postal and proxy voting

Anyone wanting to apply for a postal or some types of proxy vote can now do so online following a change in the law. New identity verification checks have also been introduced for those choosing or unable to vote in person.

The change brings absent voting in line with voting in person in a polling station where photo ID must now be shown. To make a new application for a postal or proxy vote, residents just need to follow the links to the Government registration system from Wychavon's website. They will need to already be registered to vote and provide their full name, address and National Insurance Number. This is the same as the information required when registering to vote in person. They will also need to provide a copy of their signature which can be scanned or photographed and uploaded to the system.

Postal voters will not need to provide photo ID when applying. Proxy voters will also not need to provide their own photo ID when applying, but the person they send to the polling station to vote on their behalf will need to have valid photo ID. People who registered to vote by post before 31 October 2023 will need to reapply under the new system by 31 January 2026 at the latest. They will then need to reapply every three years.

Wychavon's elections team will be contacting registered postal and proxy voters directly to inform them of the changes and what they need to do. As part of the changes people can now only act as a proxy for two people living in the UK. The changes apply to all UK and English elections including next year's West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner election and the expected General Election.

Links to register to vote or apply for a postal or proxy vote application are available at www.wychavon.gov.uk/elections. People can still register for a postal or proxy vote using paper forms. For a paper form or more information contact the elections team on 01386 565437 or email elections@wychavon.gov.uk.

New scheme lights up Droitwich Spa

A new lighting scheme has been installed in Droitwich Spa high street, as part of efforts to improve the look and feel of the town centre. The overhead chain of festoon lights starts at the Parish of Droitwich Spa Church and zig zags across various buildings before ending at Ace Essentials.

Although they have been installed just in time for Christmas - to add some extra beauty to the high street while shoppers hunt for festive bargains - they are a permanent addition to the town and will be used throughout the year. During the winter, they will be on from 3pm each day and go off at 10pm.

The project has been delivered by Droitwich Spa Place Board, working with Wychavon, and funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. An overhead lighting scheme forms part of the Droitwich Spa Investment Prospectus, funded by Wychavon to help the town continue to thrive in the future. It is the first part of a larger project to improve the town's night time economy.

Councillors call for change to rules on communication poles

Wychavon councillors have called for the Government to toughen up the regulations around the installation of communication poles to prevent blighting communities. Councillors from all political groups unanimously backed a motion at Full Council on Wednesday (6 December) to lobby the Government to give more power back to councils to control how and where communication poles are installed.

Councillors specifically want the Government to change The Electronic Communications Code (Conditions and Regulations) Regulations 2003 so communication companies are forced to share apparatus. The code currently only gives the first operator in an area permission to share its apparatus with another 'where practicably possible' but it does not require it to do so. The move follows the installation of communication poles against the wishes of communities in Broadway, Droitwich Spa and other parts of the district. In Broadway the police had to be involved due to the strength of the protests and one man was hospitalised. Similar protests have been made across the country as more and more poles are installed to support the rollout of faster broadband infrastructure.

Unfortunately, Wychavon does not have any power to stop communications companies from installing poles or to force them to share apparatus, as they are classed as permitted development, meaning they do not need planning permission. The Government's intention to provide access to faster broadband speeds, particularly in Rural areas, is the right one and is to be applauded. But communities and local councils up and down the country need more of a say and control over how this infrastructure is installed.

Flooding and Rainfall

Recent weeks have been disruptive to most with travel and homes being affected by the flooding of the rivers. From earlier this month, it was discovered that the total rainfall for 2023, recorded on the Civic Centre weather station, is 1036mm – this is the first time it's exceeded the 1 metre mark. Looking back through archive local Rain fall totals, this is the highest on record certainly for at least 60 years.

Highlights from our data (since 2008) are record rainfall for October and the second highest December total. We will no doubt find out soon enough how 2023 has gone down nationally and while it may not be the wettest on record across the board, it certainly looks that way for our locality

Call to Action

Does someone in your community want to plant a Community Orchard in Wychavon?

Through the Trees Call To Action Project (TCAP), Wychavon District Council and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund partnered with The Heart of England Forest are offering Wychavon Community Groups & Schools, trees to plant an Orchard.

Orchard planting will be supported by TCAP officers, who offer free advice and guidance throughout the process.

If you are a Community Group or School who may have space for an Orchard and you would like to know more about this offer or if you are considering a community or large-scale tree planting project, please get in touch.

For tree planting advice in your community, please contact our team: TCAP@heartofenglandforest.org

You can find out more about the Trees Call to Action Project here: <https://bit.ly/3QNALQW>

There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

313. To consider a Motion for Creation of a Sustainability Panel .To receive and consider the following motion proposed by Councillor N Franks.

Motion

I call on the Councillors of Droitwich Spa Town Council to vote in favour for the creation of a Droitwich Spa Town Council Sustainability Panel, which can look to provide advice to the Town Council through a large range of activities, including (but not limited to):

- Meet officially around nine times per year.
- Scope the responsibility of the Town Council in terms of CO2 emissions.
- Investigate the amount of CO2 emissions that the Town Council is responsible for.
- Investigate the negative emissions resulting from the Town Council.
- Use the evidence to determine a Carbon Footprint.
- Work with Council Staff to create the procedures to keep an up-to-date record of emissions and report the Carbon Footprint on an annual basis.
- Investigate the various ways to improve on the established Carbon Footprint through energy-efficiency measures, renewable energy projects, bio diversity projects and where possible, other types of negative emissions projects.
- Investigations will not only look at the emissions, but the societal and economic impacts, community engagement, areas of further investigation, technical areas, connecting to other positive ideas in our community or being the starting position for other positive connected projects.
- Evaluate planned works to Droitwich Spa by other public and private entities and make recommendations on environmental improvements.
- The Panel will seek to educate the Town Council through their own investigations and by inviting experts where possible.
- The Panel will look to communicate the investigations to Councillors, so that we can discuss the best way forward.
- The investigations will help the Panel to develop a long-term plan of action, so the Council is ready to take advantage of any opportunity to improve, such applying for grants.
- The Panel will look to get Droitwich Residents involved in the Sustainability Panel's work.

In general discussion various opinions were put forward including concern that the outlined proposal was complex and in part duplicated many existing initiatives and functions that were carried out through the established Committee structure for the Town Council – namely the Community & Amenities and the Resources Committees. As well as potential duplications for some work aspects the proposed detail raised some concerns towards practicality and sustainable delivery through the limited resources of the Town Council operation. Many of the outlined points from the proposal were considered most suitable for separate and further consideration through the existing Committee structure, particularly the Community &

Amenities Committee and connected working delegations and sub-groups. An example referenced was the Natural Networks environmental project for the Community through the C & A delegation. The proposed meeting schedule of 9 times per annum was commented on to be disproportionate with the existing Committee structure meeting arrangements and scheduling balance for the Town Council business.

RESOLVED – **Not** to support the Motion at this time as presented and proposed by Councillor N Franks. (For the proposed motion there were 4 votes in favour, 10 against and 2 abstention).

314. To consider a Motion for An Annual Survey of Droitwich Spa Town Council .To receive and consider the following motion proposed by Councillor N Franks.

Motion

The motion is for Droitwich Spa Town Council, through the most appropriate committee, to undertake an annual survey of Town Council staff and volunteers to ensure:

- They have the required resources they need to undertake their role.
- Their suggestions are recorded and considered for, but not limited to, improving health & safety, work practices, work contract conditions, cost savings & efficiency measures, environmental improvements, as well as satisfaction in the job.
- An Employee Assistance Programme is provided and meets their potential needs.

In general discussion various opinions were put forward including concern that the outlined proposal duplicated many functions already established and in place. Matters commented on included Welfare, Legal, Health & Safety work place support and policy functions, being covered by existing arrangements in place with Professional Consultants, Partners and Sector Agencies – including NALC, CALC, Worcestershire County Council and Wychavon District Council. Mention was made that the small team of Officers had an established open refer up communication channel through the Resources Committee for all staffing and work place matters. The opinion was put forward that the proposed questionnaire would not be appropriate for managing volunteers. This was commented on for the reasons that the Volunteer Team are an established and valued essential part of the Heritage Centre operations and comprises many retired people. Concerns were put forward that the suggested questionnaire could be regarded as too formalised and detract from the ambience of volunteering and companionship within the Volunteers working environment.

RESOLVED – **Not** to support the Motion at this time as presented and proposed by Councillor N Franks. (For the proposed motion there were 4 votes in favour, 8 against and 4 abstentions).

315. To consider a Motion for Remembering Colonel Rainsborough .To receive and consider the following motion proposed by Councillor N Franks.

Motion

I am asking Droitwich Town Councillors to each undertake some research of their own on Colonel Rainsborough. Then, at a later Council meeting, perhaps this March or April, to discuss if the Council would like to provide some form of memorial to Colonel Rainsborough and what form(s) that might take?

Sources of information:

<https://thehistoryofparliament.wordpress.com/2013/04/18/col-thomas-rainborowe-the-poorest-he-that-is-in-england-hath-a-right-to-live-as-the-greatest-he/>

<https://www.londonremembers.com/memorials/thomas-rainsborough>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Rainsborough

<https://spartacus-educational.com/STUrainsborough.htm>

Colonel Rainsborough: " ...for really I thinke that the poorest hee that is in England hath a life to live as the greatest hee; and therefore truly, Sir, I thinke itt's cleare, that every man that is to live under a Governement ought first by his owne consent to putt himself under that Governement; and I do think that the poorest man in England is not at all bound in a strict sense to that Governement that he hath not had a voice to put Himself

under." (Putney Debates record book 1647, Worcester College, Oxford, MS 65. Spelling and capitalisation as in the original manuscript".)

Councillor N Franks suggested other possible considerations that could be made including road naming, a statue or plaque in recognition for Colonel Rainsborough. He added that he had intended for a resident to speak on the subject which had not been possible due to a procedural mis-understanding.

In general discussion various opinions were put forward including concern that the outlined proposal only has a tenuous link with Droitwich Spa and in wider consideration with many other historical characters and personalities connected to the Town Heritage. Several Councillors confirmed that they had undertaken their own research into the subject.

RESOLVED – Not to support the Motion at this time as presented and proposed by Councillor N Franks. (For the proposed motion there were 5 votes in favour, 7 against and 4 abstentions).

316. To consider a Motion regarding the Neighbourhood Plan Project Questionnaire Responses – autumn 2023. To receive and consider the following motion proposed by Councillor RP Hopkins.

At the December Full Council Meeting, I expressed my concern over the poor response to the Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire which was intended to find out residents' views on the future of Housing Development in the Parish in future years up to 2040. I believe that a response from only +/- 4% of the adult population of Droitwich Spa is due partly to the choice to use the Postal Services Junk Mail Delivery Service which was clearly inappropriate as most residents bin the documents immediately without reference to the content which is usually full of Pizza or Curry Ads. This view is supported by the fact that members of the Council from both Conservative and Opposition Groups stated that they, and many residents they know of, had no recollection of receiving the Council's notice in September 2023. Therefore, I do not believe that the Council should accept this result as final without making a further attempt to promote the project.

The Motion to the Council is that the Neighbourhood Plan Group be requested to reopen the Questionnaire to the Public and support this using Social Media Advertising designed to promote the future expected benefits for residents of the parish arising from the project.

In general discussion various opinions were put forward. Councillor GR Brookes reaffirmed that residents would have further opportunities to contribute to the NDP content and there would be more consultation undertaken as part of the defined process before the Final Referendum Stage. It was acknowledged as disappointing that there had been some issues with the Mail Contractors delivery arrangements for the paper flyer, now apparent from some feedback reporting non receipt. This will be considered and built in when making arrangements with distributors for the further consultation stages. Social Media was confirmed to be used for notification of the October 2023 questionnaire and future consultation work alongside website content, printed media and the flyers.

Councillor RP Hopkins acknowledged these points and asked whether he could withdraw the Motion. To accord with procedure Councillor Hopkins and Councillor N Franks both confirmed that they wished to withdraw outlined motion – as the original intended proposer and seconder respectively. Councillor Brookes thanked both for their understanding of this matter.

RESOLVED That the outlined proposal be withdrawn.

The Meeting Closed at 8.08 pm

Chairman of Council -----
29 April 2024