# Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of the COMMUNITY AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, St Richards House on Monday 1 July 2024 at 6.24 pm.

PRESENT:

Councillor Mrs C Bowden – Chairman
Councillor EJ Bowden
Councillor PD Clements
Councillor DI Davidson
Councillor Mrs K Fellows
Councillor N Franks
Councillor RP Hopkins

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor S Brazier, GR Brookes, J Grady & VP Humphries

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Mrs J Chaudry, G Duffy, AL Key, RJ Morris & AM Sinton.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS
There were none received.

oo0000oo

81. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS
Councillor N Franks declared a non – pecuniary interest for the reason of the pre- election period and he being put forward for consideration towards standing as a Parliamentary Candidate. Councillor Franks did not participate in any of the voting for this meeting.

82. To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 3 June 2024

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community & Amenities Committee held on 3 June 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

83. Community & Amenities Grants Scheme - To consider the attached schedule of grant applications. For this occasion consideration is to be taken straight to the parent C & A Committee rather than initially through recommendation from the Appraisal Sub- Committee. This for the reasons of scheduling whereby the applications were received later than the marked June Appraisal meeting and in consideration that the next Appraisal Meeting is not until 2nd September 2024 *[schedule of listed applications and available grant fund confirmation attached with Agenda for consideration]*.

The Town Clerk referenced the schedule and explained the two grant applications presented. Due to the current timescale of heightened sensitivity in the pre- election period the stipulation was made that any formal grant offers made will be communicated to the applicants on the 5th July after the General Election date. The remaining grants budget for allocation following offer of the two applications scheduled will be £2,300.00 for the current Municipal period.

RESOLVED That the two grant applications be supported as presented and detailed as follow both under section 145 (power to provide entertainments).

(a) Newland Hurst – Stay and Play supporting people affected by disabilities £200.00
(b) Droitwich Spa & District Horticultural Society – To organise the Annual Flower Show £500.00.

84. Paris Summer Games 2024 – "Good Luck" Messages and Achievements Recognition for Droitwich Spa Olympians & Paralympians – To confirm that prominent banners have been arranged for display at St Richards House to convey a message of support to local swimmers - Matt Richards and Rebecca Redfern. The banners have been displayed from Friday 21st June 2024 and considerations continue for suitable recognition of any medal achievements *[for information]*.

The Town Clerk updated that a third banner conveying good luck wishes will be in place very shortly for Jade Shekells who is in the Olympic Rugby Sevens Team. Jade has attended Westlands First School and the High School as well as playing football for Droitwich Boys & Girls Team.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

85. Proposed Events - Arrangements are being taken forward for two additional events this year. Publicity and further details will follow in due course.

(a) A Bike Night for static exhibition of motorcycles in the High Street on Thursday 15th August (5pm to 9pm). The Event is an Initiative through the Wychavon District Council Place Board collaborating with the Town Council. The Town Council will support with Risk Assessments and Event Insurance cover as well as providing some administration and publicity.
(b) The weekly Charter Market Service Operator has approached to request a special Christmas themed Market to run for two days on Friday and Saturday the 13th & 14th of December 2024. The date is noted for further discussion by the Charter Market working Group during the summer.
(c) The Christmas Lights Switch - On Event takes place on Saturday 23rd November 2024. This date is slightly earlier due to the calendar dates this year and ensures that the illuminations are in place for 5 to 6 weeks until New Year *[for information]*.

Councillor DI Davidson asked how interested participants should get in contact for the Bike Night. The Town Clerk explained that Event publicity will follow shortly once the road closure request has been finalised through the Place Board, but if details can be passed on he would ensure a referral to the exhibitor coordinator.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

86. Victoria Square – Changes to Electrical infrastructure for Christmas Lighting - To note that Worcestershire County Council – Street Lighting ( Environmental Services) have notified the Town Council of an issue with the ongoing power supply for the annual Christmas Lighting components in the vicinity of Victoria Square. Due to renewal of the wrought iron street lighting lanterns, there is a requirement to provide the Christmas Lighting power through an alternative dedicated connection – rather than sourced from the Street Lighting ring main. The existing arrangement and permission has been in place from 2006 and accords with the current specification for the towns Christmas lighting displays. The Street Lighting Team have proposed installation of a dedicated supply pillar to use with the Festive Lighting connection going forwards. The Town Council are grateful to WCC Street Lighting for their cooperation in providing a viable solution and absorbing the cost of the new infrastructure. The

Service Provider and installations sub- contractor for the Festive Lighting have been fully updated in readiness for the 2024 Season *[for information]*.

The Town Clerk updated on the information .There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

87. Vandalism and ASB- To update that recent incidents have affected Town Council assets. The large pedestrian bridge at Copcut Park adjacent Colford Walk has been targeted again with removal and theft of the hand rails. These have been replaced and the fixing bolts ground off to help mitigate against any repeat incidents. Earlier in the year retaining bolts were removed from the same structure floor boards. These matters have been logged and reported to the Police SNT.
The suggestion of a wider forum through the Town Council to better coordinate a multi- agency approach towards reducing ASB and graffiti is proving difficult to organise. There have been some positive engagements with the Droitwich Litter Squad voluntary work, through the Wychavon Place Board, Worcestershire County Council Highways and the Police SNT, although interest and responses from wider Agencies and land owners have fallen short to date *[for information]*.

The Town Clerk updated on the information .There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

88. Edward Winslow Commemoration proposals - To consider the attached suggestions provided by Councillor RJ Morris in consideration for a suitable commemoration for Edward Winslow.
Due to the suggested timescale being close to the period of Remembrance and then Christmas Lights and the various activities leading up to Christmas it is suggested that the consideration is delegated to a working party to decide on the format, available scope and costs provision for any arrangements. To also note that the period from November 2024 – March 2025 is also being tentatively aligned in the operational forward planning for building works for the anticipated improvements to the Heritage Centre. To consider setting up a working Group.

The Town Clerk updated on the information as outlined. It was added that Councillor Morris had acknowledged that the thanksgiving period was a time of several standing commitments for the Town Council this year and that he was mindful to take a community group approach for the lead of any arrangements – looking to support from the Town Council. This was noted in place of any formal delegation for consideration of a working party at this time.

Councillors Davidson and Brookes both made reference to the prestige and significance of the local Edward Winslow link to the Pilgrim Fathers and the America/ the New World .Suggestions and references included,

- Contact with American Towns including Winslow Arizona, Plymouth Town in Massachusetts.
- Contact with the United States Embassy.
- The Town Council has a copy of the Winslow portrait painting in the Council Chamber. Edward Winslow was the only Pilgrim Father to have such a painting commissioned from that era.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

89. Natural Networks Project – To update that the following phases are expected to be taken forward in the next few weeks.

(a) Spring Meadow – Installation of 4 new benches and 1 bug hotel. Construction and filling out with native plant species of two new raised beds next to the pathway entrance from Mulberry Tree Hill.

(b) Copcut Park – Installation of 1 bug hotel, and various high level bird boxes and bat boxes positioned towards the mature tree canopies. The Footpath improvement works are also expected to begin imminently

(c) In general for both areas - Bulb planting, additional trees, Wildflower meadow seeding and other aspects will all follow on a phased basis to accord with the forward plan through until anticipated project completion by December. Further updates will be provided as progress continues *[for information]*.

Councillor Franks offered an oak tree sapling that he had home grown from a Lido Park seedling and Councillor Davidson pledged the same for a Mulberry Tree sapling (to denote Mulberry Tree Hill adjacent Spring Meadow). Councillor Davidson asked for a further Working Group meeting to coincide with the time of the final selection of the various trees for planting later in the year.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

90. To consider the exclusion of the Public and Press by passing the following motion:

*That the press and public be now excluded from the meeting under the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by virtue of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves financial and legal matters.*

The Town Clerk explained that this was for the reason that the next two agenda items covered matters of commercial sensitivity and finance.

RESOLVED That the press and public be now excluded from the meeting under the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by virtue of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves financial and legal matters.

91. Bus Shelter Replacement proposals- To consider the attached report of asset replacement options. The details are confidential for the reasons of commercial and financial sensitivity. Any fiscal provision considerations should be referred through the Resources Committee for ratification following the period of heightened sensitivity for final decision making after the pre- election timescales leading up to 4th July 2024. The next scheduled Resources Committee Meeting takes place on 22nd July 2024 *[report and estimate attached with Agenda]*

The Town Clerk explained the issues with graffiti and ASB referencing the report. He updated that the steel slotted panel designs were somewhat outdated and the commercially available designs for bus shelters are now mainly more open with partial glazing (toughened safety glass over Perspex). Modern Eco designs were more expensive and mainly featured hardwood and glazed construction, which presents some difficulty with applying a lasting protective coating of anti- graf and issues with longevity due to natural wood deterioration. It was acknowledged that the glazed panel components of the example replacement shelters quoted have prevailing issues from the risk of ASB damage and a potential blank canvass for further graffiti. This in turn presents a further risk of ongoing costs for maintenance and repairs. By consensus in wider discussion options for a more bespoke design were put forward for interpretation of scope and costing where feasible. Key factors put forward for consideration of referral to local fabricators for assessment and viability included,

- Simplistic design
- Drilled /Laser cut venting of steel panels as an alternative to glazed sections.

- Possible Eco- grassed roofs
- DSTC branding (e.g Civic Shield /Insignia &/or Local motifs such as a Raven, Salt Pillars)
- Consideration for road safety and visibility for all users – including ease of open directional viewing of approaching buses.

RESOLVED That the information be noted and to refer the options for viability and pricing to a local fabricator. Thereafter to refer the updated information back through the Resources Committee for further informed consideration. To note the offer of support from Councillor GR Brookes to help coordinate in his capacity as Chairman of the Resources Committee and his background engineering knowledge.

92. Community Banking Hub - Pursuant to minute reference 354/2023-2024 of the C & A Committee Meeting held on 26th February 2024 to update that an Interest has been registered with the Link Network Organisation in June as the next part of the process for consideration towards a suitable Community Banking Hub for Droitwich Spa. The Cash Access Consultant has responded and informed that their feasibility studies do not currently support a Community Banking Hub for the town. Their rationale is based on previously carried out public consultation work in the community. The following extract refers,

LINK have previously undertaken a thorough review of the community including analysis of population data, vulnerability measures, current free access to cash, and the level of provision of banking facilities within the immediate area. We have also visited the community in order to gain a more detailed understanding of the local circumstances. Our findings have been measured against set criteria given to us by Cash Action Group to ensure that all requests are treated equally and fairly. This can be found here LINK / Overview of branch closures announced by banks since January 2022

They do acknowledge that the remaining Banking Services including the counter facilities at the Post Office may not be sufficient to support transacting regular business cash and deposits. Link have asked to be kept informed if there are any further significant changes to the financial sector offering locally. This initiative was originally a joint collaboration with the Wychavon District Council Place Board, which have also been informed of the response received *[for information]*.

The Town Clerk explained the position adding that the Link Network feasibility data may originate from a period when there were more operational banks in the Town for the basis of their current opinion. Further consultation and community engagement may be the way to take forward opinion to support a Community Banking hub but this will take time and resources to plan and organise. The Town Clerk confirmed that the response from the Link Organisation had been acknowledged and also that the Place Board stakeholder had been made aware. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information be noted

The meeting concluded at 7.02 pm

Chairman of Committee .....
9 September 2024

Chairman of Council
23 September 2024 .....