Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the meeting of the COMMUNITY AND AMENITIES COMMITTEE held at the Council Chamber, St Richards House on Monday 9 September 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
Councillor RJ Morris
Councillor AM Sinton (Ex officio)

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor S Brazier, M Brook, GR Brookes, G Duffy

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Mrs J Chaudry J Grady & V Humphries

PUBLIC QUESTIONS
There were none received.

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141 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS
There were none received.

142. To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 1 July 2024

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Community & Amenities Committee held on 1 July 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

143. Community & Amenities Grants Scheme - To consider the recommendations arising from the Grants Appraisal Panel Meeting of 2nd September 2024 *[schedule of recommendations attached with Agenda]*

RESOLVED That the two grant applications be supported as presented and detailed as follow both under section 19 (power to provide and equip premises for social and recreational purposes).

(a) Vines Park Bowling Club – A new lawn mower for the bowling club grounds maintenance £1,000.00.
(b) Droitwich Spa High School Allotment (Paul Buckell) – A greenhouse for their allotment at Westwood Lodge site – to progress their project on to the next stage. Will offer a shelter for rainy days and enable the students to grow more of a variety of produce. This strengthens the relationship between students, teachers and the local community. £750.00.

The Mayor commented on the recent sporting achievements of the Bowling Club & Men's Fours Team and read out the attached letter of commendation sent to the Club President on behalf of the Town Council today.

144. Worcestershire Wildlife Trust /Natural Networks

To confirm the following updates *[for information]*.

(a) Spring Meadow – All hardscaping completed comprising two new raised ornamental planted beds, 4 additional benches and 1 bug hotel. Additional sleeper framing of the existing ornamental flower bed adjacent Primsland Road to be completed shortly. Trees purchased for autumn planting. Preparation of the wild flower meadow sections for spring 2025 blooms to start imminently. This will involve taping off & signage of sections for scarifying and surface preparation for seeding. Surplus top layer material will be recycled responsibly as natural habitat on site and there will be no chemical treatment which maintains an ethically green approach and minimal carbon footprint.
Spring Bulb planting to follow this autumn.

(b) Copcut Park- Bat boxes, bird boxes and a bug hotel all installed. Spring Bulb planting to follow this autumn. Footpath hardscaping to start through late September into October. This latter aspect is slightly delayed due to contractors scheduling.

(c) Grant Drawdown and Project Completion - The project remains on track for sign off by the calendar year end. Proof of purchasing, evidence of installations, payment confirmations to Contractors and follow up inspections are all being coordinated with the Natural Networks representatives at WCC and the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

145. Wychavon District Council Community Legacy Grant Opportunities 2024 – Museum and Heritage Centre Application. Pursuant to draft minute reference 232/2023-24 of Full Council on 18th December 2023, to confirm the following progress, *[for information]*.

(a) The Planning Application - For the front porch aspect and minor internal alterations a planning application has been submitted and validated in August (cross reference to Planning Committee listed applications - 9th September 2024). This included preparation of additional details stipulated by the LPA, notably a Heritage Statement & Appraisal in consideration of the proximity to the Conservation Area and the retained listed part of the former Raven Hotel Building, as well as conditions applicable to the local ancient monument listing status for St Richards House. Working with the Architect these aspects have now all been interpreted and achieved for the full planning application now in course for consideration. The anticipated timescale for the process is 2 to 3 months from validation.

(b) Building Works and Costings - The Architect has produced working drawings which will in turn enable full building costs to be calculated and outlined. This will then allow local quotations to be sourced, as well as the statutory procurement opportunity to be posted through Contracts Finder. This process is anticipated to take approximately 2 months and building work is expected to be able to progress through Quarter 1 of 2025. The building costs is integral to accurately determine the capital expenditure part of the project which aligns with the overall Town Council Reserves position and budgeting for the next period 2025/2026.

(c) The Design Aspect - covered in its entirety by the CLG Grant is currently subject to the statutory procurement opportunity which is part way through a six week advertised option running until October. This is in addition to guideline quotations already held from the CLG application stages earlier in the year.

Once procurement is completed the final Design concepts and detail can be arranged for consideration. This process is expected to take approximately 2 more months.

(d) Procurement – Both the Design and Building parts of the project will require a delegated sub- Group to undertake the formal bid consideration aspects. Similar to the other contractual obligations maintained by the Town Council, arrangements will be made to evaluate and recommend the bids through the delegation. From the recommendations - Final Contract Awards will be a requirement for Full Council – likely to be December or January**. To proceed with these arrangements to request consideration now for a delegation from the Community & Amenities Committee for these procurement stages.**

(e) Business Contingency and Interruption Plans- The building work phase is expected to take approximately 6 to 8 weeks and where possible is being aligned at this provisional early stage with the quieter off season winter months for the Heritage operation. There are many considerations to be made including maintaining a limited enquiries service for the TIC, safe preservation of the exhibits collection and coordinating with volunteers. The option of using the Council Chamber for some storage and TIC space is actively being considered which will help mitigate against removal of the collection items from site, as well as creating temporary capacity. The possibility of temporarily relocating Council Meetings to the Community Hall during this time is being considered, similar to the contingency used for the Covid era. Further updates will be provided as plans are coordinated and emerge. All arrangements are currently subject to change due to the different parameters of the Planning process, procurement, contract awards and scheduling of works.

RESOLVED To delegate a working Group comprising Councillors Mrs CA Bowden, EJ Bowden, GR Brookes, DI Davidson and N Franks working with Officers to undertake the procurement processes for the Design and Building work aspects of the Heritage Centre and Museum Improvements Project. To note all of the updated information and the anticipation that the two procurement options should be arranged during the period October to December 2024 conducive to the actual contracts being awarded and works commencing in the first quarter of 2025.

146. Arboreal Inspection and Survey – The last full Arboreal Review was completed in June 2022 and it is important that professional inspections are carried out of all mature trees on Town Council owned land holdings at regular intervals . The recommended timescale is four years, although the frequency of seasonal storms and the mature status of many larger trees requires closer attention and management. These are all key parameters for the annual reviews of All Risk, Health & Safety and Insurance Requirements carried out by the Town Council.

The Town Clerk has met with the Professional Arboreal Consultant on 29th August 2024 to assess the tree stock at Copcut Park, Copcut Allotments and Westwood Lodge Allotments. A full inspection report will be produced and follow in due course together with the usual categorised and marked recommendations. It is anticipated that there are several very large trees at Copcut which will need attention due to defects, disease and/or sizes outgrowing the habitat. A costed estimate of all of the urgent safety recommendations has also been requested to enable an informed consideration of the priority works arising *[for information]*.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

147. Charter Market Review – **A meeting is requested to coordinate for the Charter Market sub Group during the next few weeks.** This is to carry out the next interim review with the Operator and to discuss arrangements for the scheduled Christmas themed two day market on Friday & Saturday 13th and 14th December 2024.

To note that the Farmers Market Group have notified on 2nd September 2024 that they are finishing their operation. This has been a difficult decision for the Group to make and they will write separately to express appreciation to the Town Council for the support provided over the past six years. The final Farmers Market takes place on Saturday 7th September 2024. There may be opportunities for the Charter Market provider on Saturdays going forwards and these can be considered as part of the aforementioned review.

RESOLVED To arrange a further review meeting of the Charter Market Working Group with the Operators and Officers on Friday 4th October 2024 in order to take the aforementioned matters forward. The meeting arrangements to be coordinated and confirmed in due course.

148. Bike Night – Originally scheduled for Thursday 15th August 2024. To confirm that the decision was taken by the Place Board not to proceed with the Event this summer due to difficulties encountered with making suitable Insurance arrangements *[for information]*.
Councillor RJ Morris acknowledged that there had been difficulties with insurance cover which necessitated postponement for this event in August. He updated on proposals to rearrange the Event on one of two possible dates being considered for October through the Droitwich Spa Place Board.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

149. Westwood Allotments – As reported in January 2024 the large communal shed is set to be demolished due to structural integrity issues. The space is to be cleared and a line of additional allotment plots made. This will enable new tenants to be offered allotments from the waiting list held. Works are expected to proceed this month *[for information]*.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

150. Remembrance & Armistice 2024 - The Remembrance Sunday and Armistice dates this year are Sunday 10th and Monday 11th November. Services will proceed on both days timed for 11.00am at the War Memorial on Victoria Square. To note that as reported through the C & A Committee Meeting on 26 February 2024 (Minute 350 refers), the Remembrance Sunday will **not** include a Church Service this year. Information regarding the Remembrance Sunday arrangements has been produced in collaboration with the Parade Commander and Church Representatives which is now included as a referral point as part of the Town Council website. The Town Clerk will attend the usual preparations meeting for the annual Poppy Appeal and Remembrance arrangements which takes place on Saturday 28th September 2024 *[for information]*.

Some members expressed disappointment that the Parade would not disperse from the Victoria Square to the Church this year. The Town Clerk reaffirmed that the proposals had been updated in February following a consideration through the RBL, Parade Commander and Church and that all details were included on the Town Council website. The reason for the change this year is principally the dwindling church service attendance numbers sustained over several years.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

151. Christmas Lights Switch On Event 2024 – The Event takes place on Saturday 23rd November this year. The usual arrangements are in place including a full programme of family entertainment to support the Lights Ceremony. Additional features this year include a Children's LED Lantern Parade and competition initiated by the Droitwich Lions Club, and a Giant Festive Bauble Photo Opportunity fixture (To be placed on Victoria Square). Full details and publicity will follow in due course *[for information]*.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

152. Town Centre Murals – To update the following information.

(a) Plans recently announced for two new pieces of public artwork on the High Street - at Emm's Haberdashery (leading up to Tower Hill) and The Talbot Public House. Following the recent public consultation, decided that one of the murals will feature the town's history & heritage with a 'Salt' theme, while the other's theme will be more flexible to include iconic Droitwich buildings. Following the first meeting of the Steering Group on 8th May 2024 provisional designs were made available for review and feedback week commencing 19th August 2024. Further updates are expected soon.

(b) A community co-design workshop has been arranged by the appointed Consultant working with WDC to identify the theme, content and style for the Union Lane building artwork. The workshop will be facilitated by the commissioned arts engagement agency that will design and install the art work. Cllrs Morris & Duffy and Heritage representatives have confirmed attendance as part of the consultation. The workshop takes place on 11th September 2024 with further updates to follow.

RESOLVED That the information be noted.

The meeting concluded at 6.45 pm

Chairman of Committee .....
4 November 2024

Chairman of Council
23 September 2024 .....