

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Wem Town Council held in Edinburgh House, New Street, Wem on Thursday 26 January 2012 at 7.15 p.m.

Present:-Councillor E Towers (Town Mayor). Councillors Mrs M J Carson, D Cooley, Mrs P A Dee, P Glover, Mrs C Granger, Mrs M Meakin, C J Mellings, and Mrs N R Wilson. Mrs J M Drummond (Town Clerk).

4 members of public.

The Mayor welcomed all present to the meeting and reminded his colleagues of his charity event on Saturday.

In the absence of his Chaplain the Mayor then asked his colleagues to participate in a period of reflection and a minutes silence for former Councillor and Mayor, Paul Stokes.

12/246      Apologies

Apologies for unavoidable absence were received from Cllrs Mrs T Broom, P Broomhall, J Murray, L E Phillips and C Shingler (prior commitments).

12/247      Declaration of Interests

The Clerk highlighted the list of planning applications to be considered (copy circulated at meeting).

Cllr Cooley declared a personal interest in item 18 as a Trustee of Wem Town Hall Community Trust.

Cllr Mrs Meakin declared a personal interest in item 18 as a Trustee of Wem Town Hall Community Trust and in item 9 as a member of the Working Party.

Cllr Mellings declared a personal interest in item 7 as a Shropshire Councillor.

Cllr Mellings declared a personal & prejudicial interest in the planning application submitted by Meres & Mosses Housing Association as a Board Member of that organisation. Cllr Mellings also declared personal interests in items 11, 12, 17, 19, 20, 24 & 27 as a Member of Shropshire Council.

Cllr Mrs Dee declared a personal & prejudicial interest in the planning application submitted by Meres & Mosses Housing Association as a Board Member of that organisation. Cllr Mrs Dee declared a personal interest in item 9 as a member of the Working Party and personal interests in items 11, 12, 17, 19, 20 & 24 as a Member of Shropshire Council.

12/248      Future Operation of Level Crossing

The Mayor welcomed Mr D Cooke and three colleagues from Network Rail to the meeting.

They thanked the Town Council for this opportunity to give a presentation upon the future operation of the level crossing and went on to give a very detailed power point presentation. It was explained this system (which was being introduced on the Crewe - Shrewsbury line) used the latest technology and had been trialled at Filey in North Yorkshire. The safety systems which would be used were fully explained and it was pointed out that whilst the new system would be commissioned at the end of August 2012 it would 'shadow' the existing system for two to three months to ensure its satisfactory operation.

There was then a lengthy question and answer session.

Several questions were asked about the safety of the system and it was explained the system was 'fail safe' and if there was a problem the signal would remain on red for the trains. The actual operation of the crossing was explained in great detail and how a car stopped on the crossing would be able to exit it before

both barriers closed. It was pointed out the Rail Regulator had approved the scheme which was costing in the region of £20m.

Cllr Mrs Wilson pointed out the current high clearance of the new barriers and Mr Cooke said this issue would be checked.

In response to concerns about metal theft it was explained most of the new equipment was made of reinforced fibreglass.

Several Councillors raised the possibility of retaining the signal box as a museum or for some other purpose.

It was explained because of the costs of maintenance Network Rail would not wish to retain it and public use of it in its present location would raise safety issues. Mr Cooke did say redundant equipment was offered to railway enthusiasts but to relocate the box would be very expensive.

Cllr Glover inquired if the CCTV system would be retained and it was explained the purpose of the present system was to monitor driver behaviour and it would be retained in the future.

Cllr Cooley raised the issue of the unattractive wooden fencing at the crossing. Mr Cooke agreed it needed attention and said some would be replaced by metal fencing.

Cllr Mrs Meakin raised the issue of small farm crossings. It was explained the procedures would be unchanged for the operation of such crossings but that it was Network Rail policy to try and reduce the number of unmanned crossings because of the safety issues.

Cllr Mrs Granger and the Mayor inquired about the possibility of a footbridge by the level crossing. It was explained this was a common request and usually rejected on cost and operational grounds.

Cllr Mrs Carson pointed out the crossing is normally closed for the Carnival. Mr Cooke said this matter had been discussed and a special arrangement would have to be made in future.

12/249

#### Public Participation Time

Mr Johnson asked a number of questions about the future operation of the crossing and said he thought there should be CCTV coverage in the future.

Mr Edwards made reference to an accident which occurred at the crossing a number of years ago and the signal box.

Mr Lloyd suggested the issue of traffic waiting on the crossing could be resolved by changing the road priorities.

The Mayor expressed regret at the loss of employment for the signalmen and asked if the Shrewsbury to Cardiff section was to be upgraded. Cllr Towers also inquired if train frequency could be improved.

Mr Cooke and his colleagues answered these questions and said the changes to the operation of the line would permit increased train frequencies.

The Mayor thanked Mr Cooke and his colleagues for their helpful presentation and assistance to the Council regarding this very important issue and they left the meeting.

Mr Edwards expressed concern about the access along Isherwoods Way to the new service yard for the Co-op supermarket and the fencing erected at the rear of the Town Square. Mr Edwards also expressed concern at the suggestion to name the Town Square after the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations.

Cllr Mrs Dee explained that planning permission had been granted in 2008 for the new service yard for the Co-op and went on to explain the situation regarding the recently erected fencing at the rear of the Square.

12/250 Minutes

Resolved:-that the minutes of the ordinary meeting of Wem Town Council held on 15 December 2011 and of a Special Meeting held on 12 January 2012 be approved as correct records and signed by the Mayor.

12/251 Matters Arising

*HMYOPI Stoke Heath – Community Works*

The Mayor reported he had arranged for two governors of Stoke Heath and their colleague to visit Wem earlier that day and they had participated in a walk around the town to view possible projects.

*Bike Track - Visit by RoSPA*

The Clerk reported the RoSPA inspection had been undertaken and following the receipt of the report that day a meeting of the Bike Track Working Party would be arranged in the near future.

*Town Crier*

The Mayor said he was in the process of arranging a meeting regarding this matter.

*Loss of Plastics Recycling Bank*

In response to an inquiry by Cllr Mrs Meakin Cllr Mellings explained attention was being given to this matter at the present time.

*Badge of Office for Immediate Past Mayor*

The Mayor said he was considering this matter at the present time.

*Card for Fismes*

The Mayor apologised to Cllr Mrs Dee for his omission in sending a Christmas card to the Mayor of Fismes.

*Car Parking Charges*

Cllr Mrs Carson expressed concern at the empty car park and the adverse impact of the recent maintenance works and car parking charges must have upon local businesses.

Cllr Mrs Dee invited Cllr Mrs Carson to attend a meeting of the LJC the following week as the issue of the car parking charges was to be discussed at that meeting with Cllr Simon Jones, Shropshire Council's Portfolio holder for Transport.

Cllr Mellings also reported a separate meeting was to be arranged to discuss the impact of the car parking charges upon the town.

12/252 Report of an Informal Meeting of the Planning Committee held on 25 January 2012

The Chairman of this Committee presented this report which was circulated at the meeting. Cllr Mellings explained this report was for information only and a meeting would be arranged in the near future for the Town Council to discuss this matter.

Resolved:-to receive and approve the above mentioned report.

12/253 Planning Applications

*11/05778/FUL Erection of 3 storey office accommodation. Former Timber Yard, Aston Street, Wem, Shropshire, SY4 5FA*

Cllrs Mrs Dee and Mellings left the room whilst this application was discussed.

Resolved:-to have no objection to this application.

Cllr Mrs Carson abstained from this vote as she considered it would have been possible for this organisation to use some of the office accommodation in Edinburgh House.

*11/05822/FUL Extensions to existing medical centre including the formation of new access involving the removal of a section of boundary wall and trees. Wem Medical Practice, New Street, Wem, Shropshire, SY4 5AF*

*12/00084/FUL Proposed change of use from B1/B2 to D1 (children's pre-school nursery) and associated works to include external play area; 2m high external fencing with secure gates; 2No storage units. Unit 1, Wem Business Park, New Street, Wem, Shropshire.*

*12/00098/TPO Works to 3No Trees – T2 Yew – To fell and replace; T3 yew – reduce by 50%; T4 – Holly (frontage) – reduce by 25% protected by the North Shropshire District Council. (Roseville, New Street, Wem) TPO 1999. Roseville, New Street, Wem SY4 5AB*

*12/00099/TCA Works to one beech tree, outer foliage is within 100 cm of roof eaves and needs reducing in length to maintain clearance, within Wem Conservation Area. Wem Medical Practice, New Street, Wem, Shropshire, SY4 5AF.*

*12/00121/TCA To fell 1No Lawsons Cypress and 3 Hollies within Wem Conservation area, Roseville, New Street, Wem, Shropshire SY4 5AB*

*12/00213/FUL Erection of a two storey side extension, 18 Davies Drive, Wem, Shropshire, SY4 5YW*

Resolved:-to have no objections to the above listed applications.

Applications Approved

*11/02607/FUL Erection of ten dwellings, Mill Bank, Mill Street*

*11/04930/FUI Erection of extension, Bulmer Cottage, Chapel Lane*

*11/04963/FUL Alterations to access, 79 New Street*

Resolved:-to receive this information.

12/254 Reports from the Town Council's Representatives upon meetings of the Swimming Pool Working Party Sub-Group

The Mayor reported this group had met earlier in the week but as unfortunately representatives from Teme Leisure had been unable to attend it would be necessary to meet with them before reporting back to the Town Council.

12/255 Minutes of a Meeting of the Mayor's Awards Working Party held on 12 January 2012

The Mayor presented these minutes (previously circulated) and reported progress since that date.

There was some discussion of the definition of 'Heroes'.

Resolved:-to receive and approve the above mentioned minutes.

12/256 Clerk's Report and List of Accounts for Payment

The Clerk presented this report and highlighted the various items on the report.

*Car Park at Butler Sports Centre*

Resolved:-to approve the action of the Clerk in requesting these vehicles not to park on this car park.

*Repair to Street Light*

Resolved:-to approve the action of the Clerk in this matter.

*Tree Inspection Report*

Resolved:-to approve the action of the Clerk in this matter.

Resolved:-to receive and approve the Clerk's Report and the accounts for payment.

12/257 Shropshire Council

Councillors considered a letter dated 13 December 2011 from Shropshire Council (previously circulated).

Resolved:-to receive this letter.

12/258 Energy Charges for Street Lighting

Councillors considered a letter received via email on 14 December 2011 from Scottish Power and an exchange of emails with Shropshire Council regarding this matter (copies previously circulated).

The Clerk explained that Shropshire Council required a very detailed inventory of the Town Council's lights before it could join Shropshire Council's energy scheme

and it would be necessary to employ the Town Council's contractor to prepare the inventory.

The Clerk went on to explain that she & Cllr Mellings had attended a workshop organised by Shropshire Council earlier in the week to discuss Shropshire Council's decision to switch off some of its lighting between midnight and 5.30 a.m. It was explained at that meeting that Shropshire Council would prefer Town & Parish Councils to follow suit at the same time to reduce confusion to the public. However there would be a cost involved in purchasing the necessary equipment & having it fitted. It was explained the changeover would probably take place during 2014/2015. A proper schedule would also be required for the correct fittings to be purchased.

Cllr Mellings pointed out the Town Council would need to adopt the same criteria for exemptions as the principal authority to avoid confusion.

Resolved:-to request a quotation from the Council's contractors to prepare the necessary inventory to join Shropshire Council's energy scheme.

Resolved:-to refer discussion of the proposal by Shropshire Council that the Town Council adopt part time lighting to the Planning & Transport Committee for consideration.

12/259 BBC Radio Shropshire

Councillors considered a letter dated 19 December 2011 from the BBC Trust (copy previously circulated).

Resolved:-to receive this letter.

12/260 Butler Sports Centre – Gate into Chapel Lane

Councillors considered two letters dated 19 and 27 December 2011 from Mr Hiley of Bulmer Cottage (previously circulated).

Resolved:-to receive these letters and refer to Wem Sports & Social Association.

12/261 Deletion of Shrewsbury from Wem Addresses

Councillors considered a letter dated 22 December 2011 from Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP (previously circulated).

There was some discussion and Cllr Mrs Carson pointed out Royal Mail had not included Shrewsbury in the letter addressed to the Town Council.

Resolved:-to send a copy of this letter to Rt Hon Paterson.

12/262 Love Lane Cemetery

Councillors considered an email from the Shropshire History Society (previously circulated).

Resolved:-to have no objection to the release of the information requested.

- 12/263      Shropshire Council – Town Square
- Councillors considered an email dated 5 January 2012 from Shropshire Council (previously circulated).  
Cllr Mrs Carson queried the funding for this project and there was some discussion.
- Resolved:-to receive this email.
- 12/264      Wem Town Hall Community Trust – Working Party
- Councillors considered a letter dated 9 January 2012 from this organisation (previously circulated).
- Resolved:-that Cllrs Mrs Dee, Mellings and Mrs Wilson represent the Town Council on this Working Party.
- 12/265      Shropshire Council – Public Toilets
- Councillors considered a letter dated 23 December 2011 from Mr Candler (previously circulated).
- Resolved:-to receive this letter.
- 12/266      Shropshire Council – Emergency Planning Briefing
- Councillors considered a letter dated 11 January 2012 from Shropshire Council (previously circulated). It was agreed the Clerk ask Cllr Mrs Broom if she wishes to attend this briefing.
- Resolved:-that Cllrs Mrs Broom and Mrs Granger represent the Town Council.
- 12/267      Army Presentation Team
- Councillors considered a letter dated 7 November 2011 addressed to the Mayor from this organisation (previously circulated).  
Cllr Mrs Dee suggested this presentation take place at the Annual Parish Meeting. It was also suggested Adams School and the Cadets be notified of the date.
- Resolved:-to invite this group to give a presentation at the Annual Parish Meeting to be held on an evening separate from that of the Annual General Meeting.
- 12/268      Floral Planters
- The Mayor read a quotation for the plants for the planters to the meeting. There was some discussion. The Clerk pointed out some of the planters would probably require replacement in the not too distant future.
- Resolved:-to accept this price of £875 for the preparation of the plants for the planters from Mr S Cobbold.
- Resolved:-to refer the floral planters to the Environment Committee.

12/269

Copier

Councillors considered a letter dated 6 January 2012 from Ricoh giving notification of a price increase for the copier. The address 'Wem Town Council, Shrewsbury' was highlighted.

Resolved:-to receive this letter and price increase.

Resolved:-to send a copy of this letter to Rt Hon Paterson re wem addresses.

12/270

Shropshire Council – Standards Committee

Councillors considered an email from Shropshire Council dated 17 January 2012 received via Shropshire Cllr Mellings (previously circulated).

Resolved:-to receive this email.

12/271

Proposed Changes to the Ambulance Service, Reports from the Council's representatives to other bodies, Report upon Shropshire Council from Cllrs Mellings and Dee, Information/future agenda items.

Resolved:-to defer these items in view of the time.

12/272

Exclusion of Public and Press

Resolved:-that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press be excluded from the meeting in accordance with Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

12/273

Cleaning of Public Toilets in Car Park

Councillors considered two quotations received for the cleaning of the public toilets from April 2012.

There was a lengthy discussion.

Resolved:-to enter into a twelve month contract with Healthmatic for the year 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013 and to discuss this matter later in the year.

12/274

Open Council

Resolved:-to approve the discussion contained within item 12/273 made during closed session.

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Town Mayor