

Minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of Wem Town Council held in Edinburgh House, New Street, Wem on Thursday 29 July 2010 at 7.15 p.m.

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

5 members of the public.

The Mayor welcomed all present to the meeting and apologised for not formally welcoming Cllr Mrs Granger to the Town Council at the last meeting. The Mayor went on to formally welcome Cllr Mrs Granger.

10/82 Declaration of Interests

The Clerk highlighted the list of planning applications to be considered later in the meeting.

Cllr Mrs Meakin declared a personal interest in item 20 as a member of the 'Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery'.

Cllr Phillips declared a personal & prejudicial interest in item 9 payment to Welch & Phillips as a Director of this company and a personal interest in item 20 as a member of the congregation of Wem Parish Church.

Cllr Mrs Wilson declared a personal interest in item 20 as a member of the 'Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery'

Cllr Mrs Dee declared a personal & prejudicial interest in item 11 as a Board member of the Meres & Mosses Housing Association, a personal interest in item 20 as a member of the 'Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery' and personal interests in items 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19 and 23 as a Member of Shropshire Council.

Cllr Mrs Dee declared a personal & prejudicial interest in the planning application for 31 High Street as a Member of Shropshire Council's Planning Committee and also because her husband had written a letter of objection to this application (this interest declared during minute number 10/88).

Cllr Cooley declared a personal interest in item 20 as a member of the congregation of the Parish Church and member of 'Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery' and a personal interest in item 22 as a resident of Soulton Road.

Cllr Mellings declared a personal & prejudicial interest in item 11 as a Board Member of Meres & Mosses HA, personal interests in items 7, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 23 and 26 as a Member of Shropshire Council, a personal interest in item 20 as a member of the congregation of Wem Parish Church and a personal interest in item 28 as a Member of Shropshire Council and a Trustee of the 'Friends of Wem Swimming Pool'.

10/83 Wem Chamber of Commerce

The Mayor reported Mr W Nevitt, Chairman of Wem Chamber of Commerce had been unavoidably delayed that evening and hoped to attend a future meeting of the Town Council.

10/84 Public Participation Time

Mr Edwards referred to the recent fire at the Industrial Estate and expressed concern about how a mass evacuation of Wem would be managed if another serious fire was to occur. Mr Edwards asked that a public meeting be held to explain the situation to the local population. There was some discussion and Councillors agreed a public meeting would be helpful. Cllr Mellings said he hoped to organise a joint briefing session for the Town Council and Wem Rural once Shropshire Council had completed its ongoing inquiry.

Cllr Murray arrived during the above discussion at 7.25 p.m.

10/85 Minutes

Resolved:-that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council held on 24 June 2010 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

10/86 Proposals for Town Square/Community Area

In reply to an inquiry by Cllr Broomhall Cllr Mellings said he had made inquiries regarding the funding for this scheme and at present it was £166k.

10/87 Annual Reports

The Mayor reminded her colleagues these reports were ready for collection by Councillors.

10/88 Planning Matters

Amended Plans

10/02491/CON Demolition of existing workshop buildings within Wem Conservation Area, Land to rear of 10 High Street,

Amendment – deletion of public highway land from plan.

Resolved:-to re-iterate the Council's original objections to this application.

Notice of Site Visit and Decision by Committee

Cllr Mrs Dee declared a personal & prejudicial interest in this application as a Member of Shropshire Council's Planning Committee

and also because her husband had written a letter of objection to this application and left the room whilst it was discussed.

09/01443/CON and 09/70194/FUL Alterations to and conversion of buildings at rear of property including partial demolition, Land to rear of 31 High Street.

Cllr Mrs Meakin reported that she had represented the Town Council at this site visit and at the Committee meeting and the application had been refused. Cllr Mellings said the application to demolish had been approved and the applicant advised that a scheme for three dwellings would be looked at more favourably.

Application Approved by Shropshire Council

10/01999/LBC Internal alterations, White Horse Hotel, High Street.

Resolved:-to receive this information.

10/89

Proposals for Extra Care Housing Development on Land off Wemsbrook

Councillors considered information regarding these proposals which had been previously circulated and Cllr Mellings circulated plans of the proposed development.

Cllr Mrs Carson made reference to the presence of great crested newts on the site. Cllr Mellings explained Shropshire Council was aware of the newts and plans for the proposed development would have to include mitigation measures to protect them.

Cllr Cooley queried the entry requirements for the dwellings as he said there was local concern that applicants would have to be on benefits to qualify for this accommodation. Cllr Mellings explained Shropshire Council was considering a number of options including rented and shared ownership. Cllr Mellings also pointed out this scheme may not proceed because of the forthcoming government spending restrictions. There was some discussion of the proposals. Cllr Mrs Carson said such developments should be located nearer the town centre and at present younger people were being allocated housing for the elderly in Wem. It was explained it was proposed this development would contain a communal area and provision for a shop and hairdresser. The development would also be accessible via the Town Bus service.

In response to an inquiry by Cllr Broomhall Cllr Mellings explained a Business Plan was in the course of preparation and Cllrs Mrs Meakin & Phillips suggested the Council defer consideration of this scheme until the Business Plan had been published.

Resolved:-that this Council support in principle the proposals for this development subject to consideration of the Business Plan providing the following points are addressed –

1. Would request external access to facilities and shops to ensure their viability.
2. Would request a mixture of tenure (both rented and shared ownership) to ensure this accommodation is available for local people who have need of it regardless of their financial circumstances.
3. Good access is required for the Town Bus Service onto the site.
4. The appropriate mitigation measures are put into place to protect the great crested newts and any other protected wildlife species on the site. Would request the involvement of Natural England.
5. Local traders be invited to tender for the retail outlets to provide employment opportunities for local people.
6. Priority for allocation of accommodation be given to local elderly people as high percentage of older people in population of Wem.
7. Would request the communal areas have a quiet area as well as a TV lounge.

Cllr Mellings closed the discussion by urging local residents to make their views known to Shropshire Council regarding this development.

10/90 Report of a meeting held on 28 June 2010 to discuss the Public Open Space for the Development off Fothergill Way

Councillors considered this report and a copy of a letter dated 30 June 2010 (which had been previously circulated). Cllr Mellings explained the background to this matter and said it required resolution as several of the street lights were not working at the present time. In reply to an inquiry by Cllr Broomhall Cllr Mellings said Shropshire Council had not yet adopted the highway from the developers.
Resolved:-to receive and approve this Report.

10/91 Clerk's Report and List of Accounts for Payment

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

Future Operation of Level Crossing

The Clerk drew the attention of Councillors to the email dated 23 July 2010 from Network Rail (circulated at meeting).
 It was agreed to suggest to Network Rail that a general invitation to the public be issued and the consultation held in the Town Hall between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. any evening (except the last Thursday of the month) with an additional information point on Wem Market and in the Co-op foyer.

Wem Recreation Ground

The Clerk reported there was a current issue on the Recreation Ground with a considerable amount of glass being broken. Mrs Drummond said this matter had been reported to the local police for attention.

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

10/92 Wem Youth Centre Management Committee – Representative from Wem Town Council

Resolved:- to appoint Cllr Broomhall as the Council's representative upon this Committee.

10/93 TARCA– Representative from Wem Town Council

Cllrs Mrs Dee & Mellings declared personal & prejudicial interests in this item as Members of the Board of Meres & Mosses Housing Association and left the room whilst it was discussed.

Councillors considered a letter dated 18 June 2010 from this organisation (previously circulated).
Cllr Cooley apologised to the Town Council for giving the original letter directly to Cllr Mrs Broom rather than to the Town Council.

Resolved:- to appoint Cllr Mrs Broom as the Council's representative upon this Committee.

10/94 Proposals for Town Square/Community Area

Councillors considered two emails dated 30 June 2010 and 11 July 2010 from Mr Cobbold (previously circulated).
The Clerk also circulated a letter dated 26 July 2010 from Mr Jaboor at the meeting.

There was some discussion of Mr Jaboor's suggestion regarding the canopy and Cllr Mrs Carson asked when a decision would be made upon the proposals and said a considerable number of people had approached her to express their concerns about the proposals.
Cllr Mellings explained Wem Forum had requested further work to be undertaken and a decision may be made in September.

Resolved:-to receive these emails and letter.

10/95 Shropshire Council – Highways Maintenance Grant

Councillors considered a letter dated 30 June 2010 from Shropshire Council (copy previously circulated).
There was some discussion of this matter and Cllr Mrs Dee suggested it may be useful for the 'Keep Wem Tidy' group.

Resolved:-to refer this matter to the Environment Committee for consideration.

10/96

Shropshire Council – Spotlight on the Shropshire Economy

Councillors considered a letter dated 1 July 2010 from Shropshire Council (copy previously circulated).
Cllr Mrs Carson made reference to the former Morgan Library building and said if Shropshire Council was to consider selling this property the Town Council should purchase it for the benefit of the town.
There was some discussion of the size of this consultation document and it was agreed to circulate it around Councillors for discussion at the next meeting of the Town Council. Cllr Mellings offered to obtain a further two copies from Shropshire Council.

Resolved:-to circulate this document for discussion at the next meeting of the Town Council.

10/97

Quotations for Remedial Works to Chains of Office

Councillors considered emails dated 7 July 2010 from Fattorini regarding this matter (copies previously circulated).
The Clerk explained the quotations amounted to nearly £3,400 plus VAT and no provision had been made in the budget for such expenditure.
Cllr Mrs Wilson suggested this matter be considered at the rate estimates meeting and if necessary the chains be refurbished in consecutive years.

Resolved:-to receive these emails and consider this matter at the estimates meeting in January 2011.

10/98

Shropshire County Primary Care Trust

Councillors considered a letter dated 7 July 2010 from this organisation (copy previously circulated).

Resolved:-to receive this letter.

10/99

Fire at Wem Industrial Estate

Councillors considered a copy of a letter dated 9 July 2010 from a Wem resident to Shropshire Council (copy previously circulated).
Cllr Mrs Dee said all present shared these concerns. Cllr Mellings said he had tabled a question at a meeting of Shropshire Council the previous week and a full review of the site operations was in the process of being undertaken in preparation for a meeting towards the end of August.
Cllr Mrs Carson expressed concern about potential health hazards from the smoke from this unit and Cllr Mellings explained it was being

monitored by the Environment Agency. Cllr Mrs Carson asked if a public meeting could be held to inform the public of the situation and Cllr Mellings explained it was the intention of Shropshire Council to hold such a meeting.

Resolved:-that a letter of explanation be sent to Mr Jones to explain the Town Council share his concerns and a response was awaited from Shropshire Council.

10/100 Shropshire Council – Local Transport Plan

Councillors considered a letter dated 9 July 2010 from Shropshire Council (copy previously circulated).

Resolved:-to receive this letter.

10/101 Shropshire Council – Delegation of Street Trading

Councillors considered a letter dated 14 July 2010 from Shropshire Council (copy previously circulated).

Cllr Mrs Dee urged the Town Council to investigate this matter and suggested if the Council did accept responsibility for the licensing of streets it could control street vendors during events such as the Carnival Parade.

Resolved:-to request further information and to refer this matter to the Environment Committee for consideration.

10/102 Friends of Wem Cemetery

Councillors considered an invitation received from the 'Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery'.

Resolved:-to receive this invitation with thanks.

10/103 June Edition of Parish Pump and Letter from NALC

Councillors considered the June edition of the Parish Pump, a letter dated 28 May 2010 from NALC and copy of 'Being a Good Employer'.

Resolved:-to receive this information.

The Mayor informed her colleagues the presentation of the re-accreditation certificate would take place on Friday 10 September 2010 in Wem Senior Club.

Cllrs Mrs Broom, Broomhall, Carson and Phillips gave their apologies for absence at this event due to prior commitments.

Cllr Shingler left the meeting at 9.10 a.m.

10/104

Wem Level Crossing

Cllr Mellings explained there were two issues of concern regarding the level crossing. Firstly the continued abuse by drivers and secondly the length of time the barriers are closed compared with other crossings such as at Prees.

Cllr Mellings said he had asked for an explanation of the time delay at Wem and Cllr Glover suggested it may help if the warning lights were set further away from the crossing.

Cllr Mellings said it may be helpful if a representative from the Transport Police were to attend a meeting of the Council.

Resolved:-that a representative from the Transport Police be invited to attend a meeting of the Town Council.

10/105

Shropshire Council – Draft Shropshire Parking Strategy

Councillors considered a letter dated 19 July 2010 from Shropshire Council regarding a consultation document upon draft parking strategy (copy previously circulated and copy of report circulated at the meeting).

Cllr Mrs Dee said this matter had been mentioned some time ago and reminded her colleagues that the Co-op own part of the main car park. Cllr Mrs Dee said the Council should strongly object to the proposal to introduce car parking charges in the town.

Resolved:-that this Council strongly objects to the proposal to introduce car parking charges in the town as the town's economy is too fragile to sustain such charges, the income would probably not cover the costs of such a scheme and would encourage shoppers, etc to park on residential streets or travel to Harlescott.

Cllr Mellings suggested the Town Council organise a Public Meeting with Wem Rural Parish Council to demonstrate the public's strength of feeling regarding these proposals.

Cllr Cooley made reference to a survey and Cllr Murray pointed out such charges would lead to shoppers travelling to Shrewsbury and possibility to the use of a clamping company.

Cllr Mellings said the last shoppers survey had highlighted the provision of free car parking as one of the major reasons for shoppers to use the town and Cllr Mrs Dee pointed out it had been planning policy to grant permission for the change of use from retail to residential units in the town centre without parking provision because of the free parking in the town.

It was pointed out there seemed to be some confusion over closing dates for the consultation and Cllr Mrs Carson pointed out such charges would cause problems for the vet surgery.

Cllr Mrs Meakin also highlighted the additional need for parking provision for the proposed medical centre and Meres & Mosses building.

Resolved:-that a Joint Public Meeting with Wem Rural PC be organised in September and the Portfolio holder be invited to attend this meeting.

10/106 Mayor's Charity Event

The Mayor informed her colleagues of a charity fund raising event to be held on the 18 September 2010 in aid of the Mayor's nominated charity 'Help for Heroes'.

Cllr Mellings also reported a funding raising event for the same charity was to be held in the Town Hall on the forthcoming Saturday.

10/107 Wem Sports & Social Association

Cllr Mellings reported upon the recent AGM of the Association. Cllr Mellings reported the same Officers had been re-elected and there had been some mention of the future secretarial arrangements. Cllr Mellings went on to say the financial management was satisfactory (and thanked the Clerk) and that the Management Committee had agreed to meet every two months in future.

10/108 North Shropshire Market Town Group

Cllr Cooley reported upon a recent meeting of this group and said the issue of car parking had been the main topic of discussion. Cllr Cooley also made reference to the concept of 'pop up' shops and the revision of town plans. Finally Cllr Cooley reported a survey of Wem market had been undertaken; the traders would appreciate more promotion of the market and customers more stalls selling fresh produce.

10/109 Local Joint Committee

Cllr Towers reported upon a recent meeting of this Committee and of the grants allocated to Wem organisations.

10/110 Report upon Shropshire Council

'No Cold Calling' Signs

Shropshire Cllr Mrs Dee said she had tabled a question about this issue and had been advised it was unenforceable. Cllr Mrs Dee said such a scheme was in operation in Luton and she would investigate this matter further.

Planning Guidance on Housing Density

Shropshire Cllr Mellings explained some planning guidance had been issued regarding the development of gardens and also the density of development.

Leak from Tanks at Wem Motors

Shropshire Cllr Mellings reported the appropriate equipment had been installed at this site.

Pedestrian Crossing in New Street

Shropshire Cllr Mellings reported Shropshire Council had no success in recruiting a lollipop lady and was to investigate the possibility of installing a pedestrian crossing near the junction of New Street with Pym's Road.

Housing Development off Mill Street

Shropshire Cllr Mellings reported that following the raising of concerns by local residents regarding the scale of this proposed development he had requested this application be referred to the appropriate Shropshire Committee for decision and that a site visit be undertaken.

10/111

Information/Agenda Items

The Mayor asked Shropshire Cllr Mellings about an inquiry from Mr Edge regarding some highway works in New Street and Shropshire Cllr Mellings promised to investigate the matter.

Cllr Mrs Carson raised an issue regarding parking in Barnard Street which had prevented an ambulance gaining access to a house.

Shropshire Cllr Mellings reported he had requested Shropshire Council give attention to this matter.

In reply to an inquiry by Cllr Mrs Broom regarding the siting of a mirror on a junction Cllr Mellings explained he had also requested attention be given to this suggestion.

Cllr Towers said he had been approached about the condition of the Eckford Memorial in the Whitchurch Road Cemetery. Cllr Mrs Meakin explained this matter had been raised with the 'Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery' Committee.

10/112

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.

10/113 Minutes of Meetings of the Swimming Pool Working Party held on 8 & 16 July 2010

The Mayor presented the minutes of the above mentioned meetings (copies previously circulated).

There was some discussion of the current situation and Cllr Mellings explained the reasons for the current delay. Cllr Mellings also informed the Council of the support offered by Shropshire Council to assist with the future operation of the pool.

Resolved:-to receive and approve the above mentioned minutes and to allow Teme Leisure access to the pool whilst the legal documentation is prepared.

10/114 Letter from Council's Insurance Company

Councillors considered a letter dated 24 June 2010 from the Council's insurance company (previously circulated) and the Clerk reminded the meeting of the background to this matter.

Resolved:-to receive this letter.

10/115 Appointment of Honorary Townsman Awards

Councillors took part in a secret ballot. Cllr Mellings reminded his colleagues that for the co-option of Councillors a majority of 50% plus one was required. There was some discussion and it was suggested this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Town Council and be discussed near to the start of the meeting.

Resolved:-to defer this matter until the next meeting of the Council and a majority of 50% plus one be required.

10/116 Open Council

Resolved:-to confirm the resolutions contained in items 10/113, 10/114 and 10/115 made during closed meeting.

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Town Mayor