

Minutes of a Special Meeting of Wem Town Council held in Wem MUR Church, Aston Street, Wem on Thursday 14 January 2010 at 7.15 p.m.

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

1 member of the public.

The Mayor welcomed all present to the meeting and wished everyone a Happy and Prosperous New Year. Cllr Cooley gave a particular welcome to Cllr P Broomhall attending his first meeting of the Town Council.

The Mayor reported an urgent additional confidential matter would be considered at the end of the meeting.

10/255 Apologies

Apologies for unavoidable absence were accepted from Cllrs C Keane, L E Phillips, C H Shingler, Mr J Dromgool and Mrs E Hinton (prior commitments).

10/256 Wem Sports & Social Association

The Mayor welcomed Mr A Evans, Mr D Jenkins, Mr N Rogers and Mr A Walker from Wem Sports & Social Association to the meeting. Mr Rogers presented the financial requirement of the Association to the Town Council (copy of letter previously circulated) and gave a brief summary of the work undertaken by the Association. Mr Rogers also explained the decision of the Management Committee to purchase a new grass cutting machine and there was a lengthy discussion of this matter and also the use of rebated diesel fuel.

Cllr Mrs Dee said the use of rebated fuel should be allowed for recreational grass cutting and requested this issue be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the Town Council.

There was also some discussion of the increase in the financial request by the Association and the Clerk explained some additional maintenance items requiring urgent attention had arisen.

Cllr Mrs Wilson praised the work of the Association and the volunteers who run it and proposed the financial request of the Association be approved.

Resolved:-to approve the Association's financial request of £19,650 for the year 2010/2011.

The Mayor closed the discussion by thanking the members of the Association for their attendance and assistance to the Town Council.

10/257 Declaration of Interests

Cllr Cooley declared personal interests in the applications for grant funding as a member of Wem Carnival Committee, a member of Wem Christmas Festival Committee, a member of St Peters Church, a member of Wem Civic Society, a Vice President of Wem Jubilee Band and a member of Wem Senior Club.

Cllr Mrs Meakin declared personal interests in the applications for grant funding as a member of Wem Carnival Committee, a member of Wem Christmas Festival Committee, a member of the 'Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery' and a Trustee of Wem Town Hall.

Cllr Mrs Broom declared personal interests in the applications for grant funding as a member of Wem Christmas Festival Committee and a member of Wem Senior Club.

Cllr Mrs Carson declared a personal interest in the application for grant funding as a Vice President of Wem Jubilee Band and a personal interest in the planning application for 17 New Street as a friend & colleague of Cllr Phillips, one of the applicants.

Cllr Mellings declared a personal interest in the application from Wem Christmas Festival Committee as auditor for that group, a personal interest as observer for the 'Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery' group, a personal interest in Wem Town Hall as an advisor in his capacity as a Shropshire Councillor and a personal interest in the planning application for 17 New Street as a colleague of Cllr Phillips, one of the applicants.

Cllr Mrs Wilson declared a personal interest in item 6 as a Committee member of Wem ADOS and personal interests in the grant applications as a member of the Eckford Sweet Pea Society, a member of the 'Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery' group, a member of the Wem Christmas Festival Committee, as a Vice President of Wem Jubilee Band and a member of Wem Senior Club.

Cllr Mrs Dee declared a personal interest in the applications for grant funding as a member of the Senior Club, a member of the Eckford Sweet Pea Society, in the application from Wem Army Cadets as her husband is Treasurer of the group, in the application from Wem Scouts as President and Chairman of the County Group and Vice President of Shropshire Guiding, as a Trustee of the Millennium Green, as the representative of the RC Church on the 'Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery' group and as a Vice President of Wem Jubilee Band.

Cllr Towers declared a personal interest in the contribution to Wem Baptist Church Playgroup as a member of the Church.

Cllr Murray declared a personal interest in the planning application for 17 New Street as a colleague of Cllr Phillips and in item 4 as a member of the Parish Church.

10/258

Rate Estimates for 2010/2011

Councillors agreed to discuss the various requests for funding after consideration of the provisional budget for the forthcoming year. The Clerk explained that apart from the increased sum for WSSA the contributions for external bodies had been kept the same as for last year to assist the Council.

EXPENDITURE

Public Lighting, Allotments, Burial Grounds, Recreation and Old Town Hall

The Clerk pointed out no funding had been included for any additional street lighting and explained that a scheme to upgrade the lighting on the footpath between Somerset Way and Lowe Hill Road would probably cost approximately £10,000. The Clerk went on to explain a sum had been

included in the current year's budget for the replacement column in Wemsbrook Drive. Cllr Mellings suggested the street lighting scheme for the footpath be funded from the reserves. This was agreed so as to keep the percentage increase in the Council's precept as low as possible.

The Mayor said he had visited the allotments recently and was concerned that some appeared to be uncultivated. He suggested the Town Council visit the allotments in the Spring to check them and this was agreed.

Cllr Broomhall queried the length of the loan for the Town Hall.

Resolved:-to approve these estimates without amendment.

Administration

Cllr Cooley reminded Councillors the Town Council would have to pay any election costs after March 2010.

Cllr Mrs Meakin inquired if the additional room hire costs had been included and the Mayor said he had been approached by the Manager of the Town Hall about the Town Council using a room at the Town Hall for its meetings. Cllr Mrs Carson said there was no parking at the Town Hall and it was also pointed out the Town Council had made a decision within the last six months to use the Council Chamber in Edinburgh House for its meetings after March 2010.

Cllr Towers made reference to the Mayor's Allowance and it was explained it had been the issue of travel expenses which had been discussed.

Resolved:-to approve the estimates for administration without amendment.

Miscellaneous,

Cllr Mellings reported Shropshire Council was to undertake a review of the provision of public toilets in the county and suggested the sum of £5,000 be deleted to allow the Council some flexibility in its estimates.

Resolved:-to approve the miscellaneous figure with the deletion of £5k for the Recreation Ground toilets.

Swimming Pool and Income

The Clerk reported as no information had been received from Mrs James of the 'Friends' group the sum for 2010/2011 be left unchanged.

Resolved:-to accept these figures without amendment.

This gave a total net expenditure less income figure of £215,126.

Councillors then considered the notes prepared by the Clerk.

Reprinting of Story of Wem

The Clerk reported progress in this matter.

Extension of the Service Road to the Cemetery

This was discussed at some length and it was agreed to consider it during the year.

Refurbishment of Seats on Wem Recreation Ground

Cllr Mrs Carson pointed out the seats on the Milldam footpath were more in need of repair and there was a lengthy discussion of who was responsible for them.

The seats on the Recreation ground were discussed at length and Cllr Towers suggested people be invited to give donations and Cllr Broomhall suggested the LJC may be able to assist with grant funding.

Resolved:-to discuss this matter later in the year.

Badges for former Mayors

Cllr Mellings suggested that whilst these badges would be a nice gesture they were not affordable at the present time.

Resolved:-not to proceed with the purchase of former Mayors Badges.

The Clerk referred to the discussion of this matter by the Audit Committee and asked if the Council still wished for former Mayors to be invited to Civic functions.

Resolved:-that former Mayors be invited to Civic functions.

Velvet Pad for Mayors Chain

Resolved:-that a quotation be obtained for the Mayors chain to be placed on a velvet pad.

INCOME

Allotment Rentals

Resolved:-to increase the cost of a full butt by £1 from 1 April 2011 and the other allotments proportionally.

Burial Fees

Resolved:-to leave the burial charges unchanged this coming financial year.

Requests for Funding

The Clerk pointed out no formal request for funding by the Baptist Church had been received (a copy of the response from the Treasurer, Ms Towers had been previously circulated) and Cllr Towers explained that whilst the contribution from the Town Council was not sought it was very appreciated by the Baptist Church to assist with the costs of the Holiday Bible Club.

Shropshire CAB

Resolved:-to make no contribution to this organisation.

Eckford Sweet Pea Society

Resolved:-to make a contribution of £1,000 to the Eckford Sweet Pea Society.

Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery – Maintenance of Cemetery

Cllr Mellings proposed the sum of £1,800 be given to this group as had been given for the two previous years to Wem PCC.

An amendment by Cllr Mrs Carson that the sum of £1,000 be given was lost.

Resolved:-that a contribution of £1,800 be given to this group for the maintenance of the Whitchurch Road Cemetery.

Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery – Chapel Repairs

There was some discussion of this request and it was suggested the group may be able to find alternative funding.

Resolved:-to make no contribution towards this project.

Hope House, Marie Curie, No Panic and Severn Hospice

Resolved:-to make no contributions to these organisations.

Mythstories Museum, Wem Army Cadets, Baptist Church Bible Club and Wem Carnival

Resolved:-to make the same contributions to these organisations (£200 to Mythstories Museum, £200 for Cadets, £200 to Baptist Church Holiday Club and £2,000 to Wem Carnival) as for the previous year.

Wem Christmas Festival

There was some discussion of the Christmas lighting and Cllr Mrs Carson suggested it would be helpful if Wem Chamber of Commerce was to be more involved with the lighting.

Cllr Mrs Carson proposed this Committee be given £2,000 (seconded by Cllr Murray) and Cllr Towers proposed an amendment that the group be given £3,000 (seconded by Cllr Mrs Dee).

Cllr Mrs Carson said the Councillors who were members of the Christmas Festival Committee had a prejudicial interest and should not vote upon this matter. This was agreed which resulted in a tied vote of 3 for and 3 against the amendment.

There was some discussion of whether or not the Councillors on this Committee had a prejudicial interest and the Mayor read from some

guidance given by SALC which indicted the Councillors only had a personal interest.

Cllr Mellings then suggested Standing Orders be suspended to allow a further vote upon this matter.

Resolved:-that Standing Orders be suspended to allow another vote upon this matter.

Resolved:-the amendment that a contribution of £3,000 be given to this Committee was approved.

Cllrs Mrs Carson and Murray left the meeting at 9.15 p.m.

Wem Civic Society

The Clerk reported an additional letter had been received from this group (copy circulated at the meeting).

Resolved:-to agree to submit the planning application as requested and make a contribution of £300 (including the cost of the planning application) towards this project.

Wem Jubilee Band

Resolved:-to make a contribution of £250 to this organisation.

Millennium Green

Resolved:-to make a contribution of £1,700.

Cllr Mrs Dee did not vote upon this proposal.

Wem Scouts & Guides HQ Management Committee

There was some discussion of the letter sent by this organisation.

Resolved:-to make a contribution of £300 (as for the previous year).

Wem Senior Club

Resolved:-not to make a contribution to this organisation.

Wem Town Hall

Some additional email correspondence from Mr Cobbold was circulated to Councillors at the meeting.

Resolved:-to make a contribution of £20,000 (as for the previous year).

Wem Youth Centre

Resolved:-to leave this contribution unchanged at £3,000.

With the above amendments this gave gross expenditure of £223,306 and net expenditure of £216,176. With the balance brought forward Cllr Mellings explained this would be an approximate 1.8% increase on the current year's precept.

Resolved:-that a precept of £207,308 be set for the year 2010/2011.

10/259

Planning Applications

09/03770/FUL Residential development of 12 dwellings, formation of vehicular access with visibility splay, Land adjacent to Carwynan, Church Lane.

Councillors considered a letter dated 5 January 2010 from Wem Civic Society (previously circulated). The Clerk explained as the date for responses had been 8 January 2010 the Emergency Committee had approved a letter of objection (as for the original application for this site) be sent to Shropshire Council.

Resolved:-to strongly object to this application as for the original application.

09/03627/OUT Renewal of extant planning permission for erection of 14 town houses following demolition of existing houses, 17 New Street.

Resolved:-to have no objection to this application.

10/260

Wem ADOS Invitation on 28 January 2010

Councillors considered an invitation received from Wem ADOS (previously circulated) and the Mayor suggested the meeting of the Town Council be held on Wednesday 27 January 2010 to allow interested Councillors to attend this event.

Resolved:-that the ordinary meeting of the Town Council be held on Wednesday 27 January 2010.

10/261

Street Light on BT Pole in Wemsbrook Drive

Councillors considered a letter dated 21 December 2009 from BT Openreach (copy previously circulated). The Clerk read a quotation of £1,520.00 plus VAT for this work to the meeting and also reported letters had been sent to the residents to advise them of the situation.

Resolved:-to approve the removal of this lantern and to accept the quotation of £1,520 plus VAT for the removal and installation of a new lighting column.

10/262

2010 Practitioners Conference

The Clerk asked if the Town Council would agree to her attendance at this annual conference.

Resolved:-that the attendance of the Clerk at this conference be approved.

The Clerk also reported a training session on chairmanship would be held in Shrewsbury on 18 January 2010.

Resolved:-that the attendance of Cllr Mellings at this seminar be approved.

10/263

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.

10/264

Wem Swimming Pool

Councillors considered a letter dated 12 January 2010 from Mr Corbet (copy of letter circulated at the meeting). The Clerk explained the current situation and it was agreed to await the advice of the Council's solicitor.

Resolved:-to await the advice of the Council's solicitor.

10/265

Open Council

Resolved:-to confirm the resolution contained in item 10/264 made during closed meeting.

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Town Mayor