

Report of a Meeting with Shropshire Council Conservation Officers held on Wednesday 15 November 2017 at 10.00 a.m. in the Eckford Suite, Edinburgh House, New Street, Wem to discuss Conservation Issues in Wem

Present:-Cllrs C Mellings & E Towers, Ruth Hitchen (Senior Conservation Officer), Dr Andy Wigley (Historic Environment officer), Sue Thomas (Community Enablement Officer), Mrs S Thornhill (Assistant Town Clerk).

This meeting was arranged following concerns expressed by County Councillor Chris Mellings and the Town Council regarding a number of properties in the Wem Conservation Area considered to be out of keeping with the Conservation Area.

The following issues were discussed

1. Signage on the buildings on the High Street, in particular the Just Eat Signs on the 2 takeaway restaurants near Maunds Corner and the neon orange sign on the refurbished Fish & Chip shop on the High Street.

Ruth Hitchen said that she had been advised by the Enforcement Office that 'Junoon' Indian Restaurant had submitted an application regarding works to the frontage of the building but this had been submitted on the wrong forms, **the issue** was therefore ongoing. She also said that she had written to the restaurant regarding unauthorised works.

Regarding the 'Just Eat' signs, this is a national campaign and has not been raised as a major issue locally due to other matters that needed sorting out. Nothing can be done regarding these signs if the building is not listed. The 'Just Eat' concept needs to look at addressing this issue nationally and Dr Andy Wigley suggested a joint approach from Wem Town Council and Shropshire Council to 'Just Eat' to address signage and maybe to have a different colour sign/toned down version in Conservation Areas. It was also suggested contacting Junoon to ask them to also approach 'Just Eat'. It was decided that Shropshire Council will progress enquiries with 'Just Eat'.

Cllr Towers said he had spoken with the manager of Silver Fish, Fish & Chip Restaurant regarding the Pukka Pie sign on the outside of the building and was told it was only replacing the previous sign. Ruth Hitchen said that if the sign was internally illuminated, it was not permitted illumination. There was some discussion over the height of the sign and if the building is not listed this cannot be controlled. Sue Thomas said this issue needed to be logged with the Enforcement Team and suggested that Wem Town Council send an email as permission would be needed for the sign to be in place.

2. The frontage of Rhonda's Sandwich Bar where the fascia to the property is deteriorating.

Ruth Hitchen said she had spoken with the owner of the building who is aware that the building is listed and knows that an application needs to be submitted regarding any changes to be made. To date no application has been received. Ruth will contact the owner again. It was mentioned that works had started on the interior of the building. Sue Thomas and Ruth Hitchen will go and look at the building following this meeting in response to safety concerns raised by Cllr Mellings.

3. The condition of the White Horse

Concerns were raised by Cllrs Mellings and Towers regarding the safety of the structure, bits of wood were falling off the front and there appears to be some movement in the roof tiles. Ruth Hitchen said that following a Land Registry search approach was made to the Legal department regarding to whom any form of notice could be served. The owners are now in receivership and the building is now in the ownership of the Crown. **Contact has been made with the Crown, who have replied stating their position in this matter and further information is awaited.** Ruth has chased up the Solicitor's Department regarding this. Contact has also been made with the Legal Department regarding the serving of a section 330 notice and the advice **received was that it was not appropriate to proceed** with this. In the meantime contact will be made with the leaseholder who is aware of the grants available and ask him to meet on site to discuss the situation.

It was mentioned that if the building was deemed a dangerous structure it would be down to Building Control who would just remove the danger but would not carry out any repairs and the building would have to be imminently dangerous for Building Control to get involved.

It was suggested in the meantime to possibly tidy up the front of the building to make it more presentable to residents and visitors to the town. Permission would need to be agreed by the leaseholder and then community projects could be looked at.