

OSWESTRY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Oswestry Town Council held on Monday 12th November 2012 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Oswestry.

PRESENT: The Mayor, Councillor M. Bennett.
Councillors Mrs. A.H. Bickerton, Mrs. M. Benyon, W. Benyon,
Mrs. M.E. Chamberlain, Mrs. E. Channon, P.A. Cherrington,
Miss B.Y. Gull, Mrs. C. Hawksley, S. Haworth, R. Hoseason,
V. Hunt, W.O. Jones, D.P. Milner and C. Schofield.

In the Chair: The Mayor (Councillor M. Bennett)

In attendance: David J. Preston – Town Clerk
Peter Lloyd

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor J.G. Jones – illness
Councillor Mrs. V. Schofield – holiday
Councillor S. Rainey – family commitments

RESOLVED the apologies be noted.

2. PRAYERS

Previous to the commencement of the meeting, prayers were read by The Mayoress, Councillor Mrs. E. Channon.

3. PUBLIC SESSION

Members of the public were invited to question the Council on local issues etc. but no questions were raised.

4. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

To receive declarations under consideration on this agenda in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 s32 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

Councillor S. Howarth - declared a bias in Agenda Item 9B – Oswestry Community Action as a member of Footfall.

Councillor Miss B.Y. Gull – declared a bias in Agenda Item 9B – Community Action as a hirer of equipment.

Councillor Mrs. M. Chamberlain – declared a bias in Agenda Item 9B – Community Action as a hirer of equipment.

Councillor W .Benyon – declared a bias in Agenda Item 9A – As a Vice President of Oswestry Cricket Club.

5. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor, Councillor M. Bennett confirmed that Remembrance Sunday had been a huge success with large crowds and one of the largest parades witnessed in the Town for many years.

It was acknowledged that The Rt. Hon O. Patterson MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Councillor Keith Barrow, Leader of Shropshire Council and Mrs. Christine Abram, wife of the High Sheriff were also in attendance.

Thanks were recorded to the Oswestry Branch, Royal British Legion, The Reverend Simon Thorburn and all involved in making it such a successful day for Oswestry.

A reminder was given on training to be held on Tuesday 13th November 2012 in respect of changes in Standards by the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

The Mayor, Councillor M. Bennett, presented a new gable and block to the Town Council and this was warmly received with grateful thanks being extended to The Mayor.

6. MINUTES

Minutes of meetings held on

23rd July, 2012 -	OTC/05/12
1st August 2012	OTC/06/12
11th September 2012	OTC/07/12

were confirmed and signed.

7. TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS

RESOLVED to note that no questions had been submitted.

8. STANDING COMMITTEES

RESOLVED to adopt the below minutes:

Markets and Car Parks Committee

4 th July 2012	MCP/03/12
12 th September 2012	MCP/04/12
31 st October 2012	MCP/05/12

Finance and General Purposes Committee

11 th June 2012	FGP/02/12
3 rd September 2012	FGP/03/12
22 nd October 2012	FGP/04/12

Development and Planning

6 th June 2012	DPC/03/12
9 th July 2012	DPC/04/12
23 rd July 2012	DPC/05/12
1 st August 2012	DPC/06/12
15 th August 2012	DPC/07/12
3 rd September 2012	DPC/08/12
26 th September 2012	DPC/09/12
15 th October 2012	DPC/10/12
29 th October 2012	DPC/11/12

Amenities

20 th June 2012	AC/03/12
25 th July 2012	AC/04/12
10 th October 2012	AC/05/12

9. WEST MIDLANDS AMBULANCE SERVICE

Presentation and update from Michelle Brotherton, Interim General Manager, West Mercia Area, West Midlands Ambulance Service on changes in the local service. In addition, also present from the Ambulance Service were Dean Jenkins and Chris Kowalk.

At the outside it was explained that Oswestry used to have the Ambulance Station and a crew of paramedics and technicians who were based in the town, however it was stressed that the Service could be transferred anywhere in the County for an emergency.

Under the Make Ready model the service was descaled and the stations will be removed with two hubs being created in Shrewsbury and Donnington. Oswestry now has an advanced community paramedic working out of the town on a 24/7 basis. It was confirmed that Oswestry still has an ambulance present but this is now in the form of a car with the advanced community paramedic who is integrated into the community and the local Doctor's.

The Shropshire Make Ready model has moved from the traditional model of local ambulances to central hubs where vehicles are equipped and then turned around.

In Oswestry new facilities will be provided for the advanced Community Paramedic in the new urgent care centre.

It was explained that 75% of life threatening calls must be achieved within 8 minutes and in the first month of operation of the new scheme in October an 85% achievement was recorded. In addition a reduction was actually seen in patients needing to go to hospital.

In general terms the framework for the service was outlined in Shropshire with two hubs, seven community paramedic posts and an additional seven response posts. Ambulances are despatched to response posts and at peak times there are fifteen double crewed ambulances on duty and this number never falls below nine in the evening. An assurance was given that the advanced community paramedics are dedicated for 24 hours every day. In an emergency it was explained that normally an ambulance will be despatched to an interim point as support.

A lengthy question and answer session ensued. In general summary it was acknowledged that the advanced Community Paramedic will be based in Oswestry on 24/7 basis; ambulance crews will be despatched to back fill the area based on demand, however no ambulance will be sited in Oswestry on a 24/7 basis.

As a way forward it was **RESOLVED:**

- To formally thank the representatives of West Midlands Ambulance Service for the presentation and for information as provided;
- To invite Councillor Gerald Dakin, Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Group at Shropshire Council to attend a meeting with the Council to consider changes in health care in the area with a wider invitation to be extended to the Clinical Commissioning group through Dr. Carol Morton;
- To invite the West Midlands Ambulance Service back in six months to review the change agenda and any issues that may be applicable.

10. OSWESTRY FOOD BANK – PRESENTATION FROM PHIL SIMPSON – FOOD BANK TRUSTEE ON THE OSWESTRY FOOD BANK SCHEME

It was acknowledged that the food bank had been open a year and was part of the network of 200 Trussell Trust food banks. The aim was to provide short term emergency food to individuals or a family in crisis. This is normally for 3 days until the normal support agencies can accommodate the needs.

Around 30 partner agencies hold food bank vouchers that are provided and the service is now based in Beatrice Street.

All food is donated by school, churches or individuals and when food arrives it is sorted by volunteers and stored ready for distribution. Currently involved are 24 local churches and 30 partner agencies and in the 12 month period nearly 700 people have been given assistance. Some 8,824kg of food has been donated and 6,084kg has been distributed. It was acknowledged that the food bank covers a wider area than the town and it was pleasing to note that there is a steady stream of volunteers. The service is available Mondays and Thursdays operating with a team of 8 people.

A question and answer session ensued and at the conclusion it was **RESOLVED:**

- To formally thank Mr. Simpson for the most informative presentation and to offer full support to Trustees and volunteers of this invaluable local service.

11. LARGE GRANT SCHEME

Consideration of applications for financial assistance as received from Oswestry Cricket Club and Oswestry Community Action.

In terms of Oswestry Cricket Club Councillor W. Benyon declared a bias and left the Chamber taking no part in discussion or voting.

Councillor S. Howarth also declared a bias in respect of Oswestry Community Action.

After general discussion of both applications it was **RESOLVED** to remit the requests for funding to the Chairman's Group of the Council to enable them to interview and examine the applications then make formal recommendations on funding or otherwise to the Council.

12. SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL ISSUES

The Shropshire Council members present were invited to provide any update or any relevant information on Shropshire Council matters.

A range of issues were discussed including the My Space Project which is now open and proving successful, the issue of blue badge parking and the need for the implementation of the Traffic Order in Smithfield Road, the initial success that has been achieved at the hub at Oswestry Library and finally the concern of the lack of publicity over the elections to be held in respect of the Police Commissioner.

13. WEST COAST FRANCHISE

Letter from The Rt. Hon. Owen Paterson, MP providing copies of correspondence regarding the West Coast Franchise, including a letter sent to the Rail Minister and a copy of the response from the Secretary of State.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED**:

- To continue to press for a daily service from the County to London starting in Wrexham with this to form part of the franchise;
- To offer to solicit and provide evidence of support from local parish Councils and community Councils across the border if considered of assistance by the Rt. Hon. Owen Paterson.

14. TOWN CENTRE REVITALISATION GRANT SCHEME

The Town Clerk had held discussions with Shropshire Council following the Oswestry Joint Economic Board and the intention to set up a £75,000 grant scheme.

In summary a draft protocol for applications had been prepared and this was revised to provide grants of 50% up to £15,000 to enable empty premises in the Town Centre to be back in to use. The Joint Economic Board will finalise the criteria for bidding.

It was **RESOLVED** to formally endorse the scheme and to accept the documentation acknowledging that the Town Council will be the accountable body and the project will be formally launched by the Joint Economic Board in the near future.

15. DISPENSATION TO SET A PRECEPT

A legal topic note was circulated from NALC as a result of various discussions on E-Forums regarding the regulations for disclosable pecuniary interests particularly in relation to the annual setting of the precept.

In addition the views of the Local Monitoring Officer had also been sought that appeared to be contrary to the advice being disseminated from NALC.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to write to NALC and the LGA pointing out the disparity of views based upon their legal opinion and urging that they formally contact DCLG so that clarity is sought on this most important issue acknowledging that it affects all precepting authorities throughout England and Wales.

A copy of correspondence to be forward to the Rt. Hon. O. Paterson suggesting that perhaps the matter can be raised for the Secretary of State at DCLG.

16. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972 the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to leasing matters and it is therefore recommended that the public and press be excluded.