

OSWESTRY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Oswestry Town Council held on Monday 10th February 2014 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, The Guildhall, Oswestry.

- PRESENT:** **The Mayor, Councillor C Schofield.
Councillors M Bennett, W Benyon,
Mrs M E Chamberlain, Mrs E Channon,
P A Cherrington, A Davis, Mrs R Evans,
Mrs C Hawksley, V Hunt, J G Jones, D Kerr,
M Lee, D P Milner, J Price, C Stokes and
Mrs A Woof.**
- In the Chair:** **The Mayor, Councillor C Schofield**
- In attendance:** **David Preston, Town Clerk**

PRAYERS

Previous to the commencement of the meeting Prayers were led by the Mayor's Chaplain, Reverend Simon Thorburn.

PUBLIC SESSION

For 15 minutes previous to the commencement of the meeting, members of the public were invited to question the Council on local issues etc.

Mr P Clare made a statement relating to the Cambrian Heritage Railway and its recent AGM. This was suggesting that the process for the meeting had been flawed alongside the Election of its Officers and therefore the meeting had no legal validation.

The Town Clerk responded that the Council has no jurisdiction over the Cambrian Heritage Railway and is not a Trustee. It was suggested that if any individual felt aggrieved then it was appropriate for them to contact the Charity Commission to highlight their concerns.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Mrs S Best - illness

RESOLVED the apology be accepted.

2. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests on any Item included on the Agenda in accordance with Section 30(3) of the Localism Act 2011 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 were invited.

RESOLVED to note that no declarations of interest were made.

3. WEST MERCIA POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Bill Longmore, Police & Crime Commissioner, and Barry Sheldon, Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner attended as a follow-up to the meeting arranged by the Council at the Wynnstay Hotel on 26th February 2013.

A warm welcome was extended to both representatives and particularly Bill Longmore acknowledging his recent illness battles.

The presentation confirmed the Change Agenda and the Strategic Alliance that has now been put in place between West Mercia and Warwickshire. This was considered to be ground breaking in Police and a model that the Home Office is now looking at. It was projected that £21m in savings would be applicable for West Mercia and £10m for Warwickshire by 2015-16.

Against the new Alliance it was confirmed that the Government is cutting the Police grant by 4.8% for the current year. In terms of the Strategic Alliance in place with Warwickshire, the majority of senior management has been stripped out.

In terms of people management, it was confirmed that a number of Police Stations have been closed and 11 Strategic Hubs have been created throughout West Mercia. Officers now patrol zones to help work with communities and it was explained that West Mercia is recruiting more Special Constables.

With regards to budget, West Mercia have underspent for the last 2 years and have £49m in Reserves. The intention is for this balance to be spent on policing. Large sums will be used to protect front-line services and a more substantial sum will be invested in new schemes based on technology as part of a five-year plan. A series of good practice reviews are also underway looking to additional savings.

It was explained that there is a £2m Community Safety fund available each year which funds programmes such as CCTV. The Police Commissioner supports CCTV as a useful tool and assurance was given that Shropshire will receive funding towards CCTV.

Assurances were given that there is no plan to further reduce local policing in Oswestry and West Mercia are anticipating an additional 150 Officers to be recruited into the Force.

A range of questions were asked regarding the new Alliance. A question was also asked about the future of the Police Station and it was confirmed that there are no intentions to further review Oswestry Police Station.

A discussion did take place regarding a possible merger of Blue Light Services with a single Control Room.

It was explained that Oswestry had put forward a bid for Capital funding to replace its CCTV system and assurance was given that the Police Commissioner would look at CCTV and also the funding bid being submitted by Oswestry.

Various other questions were asked relating to domestic violence, communications, crime figures, and a written response on many of the questions was promised. At the end of a most rewarding session a sincere vote of thanks was recorded to both the Police & Crime Commissioner, and the Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner and best wishes were extended, from the Council, to Bill Longmore in terms of his ongoing health treatment.

4. **MINUTES**

Minutes of meetings held on:

28 th October 2013	-	OTC/06/13
9 th December 2013	-	OTC/07/13
13 th January 2014	-	OTC/08/14
27 th January 2014	-	OTC/09/14

Were confirmed and signed.

5. **TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS**

RESOLVED to note that no questions had been submitted in accordance with Standing Orders.

6. **NOTICE OF MOTION**

Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor D Kerr:

“Standing Order 19 – Voting on Election to Office

That the Council amend Standing Order 19 of the Council as below.

“The Mayor and Deputy Mayor shall be elected in order of seniority to serve a term of office of one year and having completed that term of office will then be placed on the end of the seniority list of Members of the Council. If a break in Membership of the Council occurs this will not be added to the terms previously served with the Council but the Member will start from when newly elected.

Following an election, or when filling a casual vacancy, then such member(s), having not held the Office of Mayor will be included on the seniority list above any member that has previously held the Office of Mayor.

Should the seniority list contain a number of members that have reached qualification at the same time then on an annual basis a vote will be taken on those qualifying names, by show of hands, to determine the appointments of the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor for the next civic year..

The Mayor of the Council, unless he or she resigns or becomes disqualified, shall continue in office and preside at the next Annual Meeting until his or her successor is elected at the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

The Deputy Mayor of the Council, unless he or she resigns or becomes disqualified, shall hold office until immediately after the election of the Mayor of the Council at the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

In an election year, if the current Mayor of the Council has not been re-elected as a Member of the Council he or she shall preside at the meeting until the successor Mayor of the Council has been elected. The current Mayor of the Council shall not have an original vote in respect of the election of the new Mayor of the Council but must be given a casting vote in the case of an equality of votes.”

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Motion not be adopted.

7. **SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL MATTERS**

Local Shropshire Councillors provided updates on various issues. These related to:

- Planning and the five-year supply;
- The various budget meetings taking place;
- The future of Local Joint Committees;
- The two significant consultations taking place on Commissioning and Youth Activities.

It was recognised that 2014 will be a year of significant change in Shropshire Council.

RESOLVED the updates be noted.

8. STANDING COMMITTEES

RESOLVED to adopt the below minutes:

Markets and Car Parks Committee

18th September 2013 - **MCP/04/13**
27th November 2013 - **MCP/05/13**

Finance and General Purposes Committee

23rd October 2013 - **FGP/04/13**
9th December 2013 - **FGP/05/13**

Development and Planning

14th October 2013 - **DPC/07/13**
4th November 2013 - **DPC/08/13**
20th November 2013 - **DPC/09/13**

Amenities

11th September 2013 - **AC/04/13**
20th November 2013 - **AC/05/13**

9. OSWESTRY HEALTH GROUP

Report on a meeting of the Oswestry Health Group held on 7th December 2013.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED**:

- That the report be noted;
- To express concern at the reported increase in the number of calls for ambulance provision that seems contrary to the evidence base as first presented to the Council. On this basis to invite West Midlands Ambulance Service to return to the Town Council to outline the changes the Service provided and the revised targets.

10. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007: INVITATION TO TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS – INVITATION TO TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

Letter from Stephen Williams MP confirming that the Act has been extended so that Town and Parish Councils can also take advantage of this valuable tool.

RESOLVED the information be noted.

11. **OUR PLACE!**

Information from Communities and Local Government following the launch of the Our Place! Programme as the second phase of Neighbourhood Community Budgets.

RESOLVED:

- The project be noted;
- Shropshire Council be asked to consider a joint project based on local commissioning and the shared approach to the revitalisation of town centres and employment creation.

12. **SAMDEV – PREFERRED OPTIONS**

An opportunity was presented for the Council to consider any further updates following the meeting of the Council held on 27th January 2014 when the SAMDev response, on behalf of the Town Council, was formally agreed.

RESOLVED to note the response as submitted and to invite Shropshire Council to suggest as to how the matter will now be taken forward on the basis of revision of views from English Heritage.

13. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

In view of the confidential nature of business about to be transacted which would involve the likely disclosure of confidential information as defined in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be temporarily excluded from the meeting and they be asked to withdraw.