

OSWESTRY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Oswestry Town Council held on Monday 22nd July 2013 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, the Guildhall, Oswestry.

- PRESENT:** The Mayor, Councillor C Schofield.
Councillors M Bennett, W. Benyon, Mrs S Best, Mrs M E Chamberlain, Mrs E Channon, P 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 J Preston – Town Clerk
Bill Bowen on behalf of the Mayor’s Chaplain
Three members of the public

PRAYERS

At the commencement of the meeting Prayers were led by Bill Bowen on behalf of Reverend Simon Thorburn, the Mayor’s Chaplain.

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.

No members of the public in attendance asked questions.

18. APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were submitted.

19. DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Declarations of Pecuniary Interests were invited in relation to matters on the agenda in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 s32 and The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012.

RESOLVED to note that no declarations of interest were made.

20. WELCOME

A warm welcome was extended to Alan Davis, the newly elected Councillor for the Cabin Lane Ward. The Mayor wished him every success following the Election and assurance of friendship and co-operation from fellow Members.

21. MINUTES

Minutes of meetings held on:

20 th May 2013	-	OTC/02/13
3 rd July 2013	-	OTC/03/13

were confirmed and signed.

22. STANDING COMMITTEES

RESOLVED to adopt the below minutes:

Markets and Car Parks Committee

20 th May 2013	-	MCP/01/13
12th June 2013	-	MCP/02/13

Finance and General Purposes Committee

20 th May 2013	-	FGP/01/13
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Development and Planning

20 th May 2013	-	DPC/01/13
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Amenities

20 th May 2013	-	AC/01/13
22 nd May 2013	-	AC/02/13

23. TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS

To answer any questions in accordance with Standing Orders upon which formal notice had been given.

RESOLVED to note that no questions were asked.

24. SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL MATTERS

Update on relevant information on Shropshire Council matters from local Shropshire Council Members.

Councillor M Bennett provided an update on the changing Constitution at Shropshire Council, recognising that it runs “the strong leadership” model. It would seem that all Executive power is now vested with the Leader, the new Cabinet and new Portfolios. An outline of the responsibilities was given. In addition, the Portfolio Holders now have decision making powers and meetings where such action is taken are not meetings available to the public or Press.

An update was also given on the Scrutiny role with various Scrutiny Committees being revamped and remits being redefined. It was acknowledged that Councillor Vince Hunt is Chairman of Scrutiny for Environment and Services.

It was also acknowledged that there is a drive to becoming a Commissioning Council and Oswestry will be the second pilot area in terms of Local Commissioning of Services.

An interesting Q&A session developed with a particular concern being recognised that decisions will be taken on key issues in private on matters that affect large sections of the population and include large budget areas.

25. **FAIRTRADE STATUS**

Letter from Julia Haslam, Acting Secretary to Oswestry and District Fairtrade Group.

Oswestry received its Fairtrade status in May 2006. A reapplication was now required.

The Town Council's support is essential to this process and the Council was to give an indication:

- That it uses Fairtrade products eg tea and coffee in all offices;
- That it will assist in promoting the sale and use of Fairtrade products in the town;
- That Councillors will attend public events and Fairtrade Group meetings if possible;
- To support local farmers and food producers, although it is considered that the Council does it well already.

The Council was invited to reaffirm its support for the application for Oswestry to renew its Fairtrade status.

RESOLVED to reaffirm our commitment to enable the application to be submitted for Oswestry to renew its Fairtrade status. In addition, to suggest that an enquiry be made of Shropshire Council to see if it will make a countywide statement in respect of all market towns.

26. **NALC – “A NEW FUTURE: DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY”**

Email from the Executive Officer at NALC confirming that a discussion paper was adopted by the National Council on the 2nd July 2013 for consultation. Responses are required by the 30th August 2013. These will be reported to the Executive Committee on the 10th September 2013 and then National Council on the 1st October 2013.

The National Chairman had asked that the consultation be as wide-ranging as possible and therefore all member councils were invited to respond.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED:**

- That this Council believes that NALC should be a strong membership organisation based on a county or regional basis to enable greater economies to be built for training, legal and career progression of staff;
- To suggest that the county model is unsuited to the aim to create new Councils as these are primarily likely to be urban located, often large and unlikely to connect or have affinity with rural areas;
- If NALC is to be a more serious player then its Constitution must be quickly resolved to be able to speak on behalf of its membership on an informed basis. Any review, therefore, essentially to have a strong level of external scrutiny and challenge.

27. FRIENDS OF OSWESTRY LIBRARY

Letter from Stephen Haworth, Chair of the recently formed Friends of Oswestry Library Group. The Group would like to raise, with the Council, their concern about the largely vacant building above and adjacent to the new Library. Ideally they would like to request a review of the building, perhaps in partnership with the Town Council but particularly in terms of its potential use as a community resource.

In addition, a video presentation was given by Councillor Bennett on facilities available and the difficulties concerning access to the third level.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED:**

- To express an interest, in principal, in the proposals to bring this redundant public space into more meaningful use. On this basis, to invite Mr S Haworth to give a presentation to the Town Council that should focus particularly on the significant issues of access and outline business plan, and potential users, alongside funding opportunities that may be available.

To also suggest that Shropshire Council be invited to offer their views on the proposals of Friends of Oswestry Library Group.

28. SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL – SAMDev REVISED PREFERRED OPTIONS DRAFT – JULY 2013

Information from Shropshire Council in the form of the 3rd “Revised Preferred Options” stage of the Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev Plan). The document deals with any changes to the strategies for growth in towns, hubs and clusters and changes to preferred options for sites

for new development following the extensive consultation and engagement in 2012.

The Revised Preferred Option SAMDev Plan is now out for public consultation for 8 weeks until 23rd August 2013 and comments were sought only on matters that have changed since the preferred options consultation in 2012.

RESOLVED that the Council hold a further Seminar with Brian Smith, former Director of Planning at Oswestry Borough Council, to enable a professionally informed submission to be made. Following the Seminar a meeting of the Council to be followed, with a Public Session, so that the Council can ensure that all local views can be voiced previous to the final decision being taken.

29. STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED to note that the Finance & General Purposes Committee had agreed changes to Standing Orders. As a further update on Model Standing Orders was expected by NALC, then it was **RESOLVED** that the matter be deferred to a future meeting when the revisions can be formally adopted alongside any further changes that may be necessary.

30. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

RESOLVED following review to adopt the Council's Financial Regulations, noting that such a review always takes place at the commencement of each Council term.

31. SOLAR ENERGY

Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor W Benyon.

"I am totally convinced that solar energy has a big part to play in our future energy supplies.

I ask this Council to consider fitting solar panels both to the Powis Hall and Guildhall. It would be an excellent return of investment for money derived from the Smithfield development.

I am currently fitting 16 solar panels with a return on my investment of nearly 14%. I ask my fellow Councillors to give this idea serious consideration."

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the Notice of Motion and the Facilities Manager be asked to investigate with the Markets 2010 Group the suggestion of panels on the Powis Hall roof only due to the Conservation concerns that exist over such a siting on the Guildhall. The investigation to also look at any other suitable buildings in the Council's ownership that may benefit alongside other energy saving devices.

32. 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.