

OSWESTRY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Oswestry Town Council held on Monday 27th January 2014 at 7.00pm 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 A Cherrington, Mrs R Evans,
Mrs C Hawksley, V Hunt, D Kerr, M Lee, J Price,
C Stokes and Mrs A Woof

In the Chair: The Mayor, Councillor C Schofield

In attendance: David Preston, Town Clerk
Brian Smith, Planning Consultant – former
Director of Planning & Technical Services,
Oswestry Borough Council
Also in attendance 56 members of the public

DAVID LAWSON

At the start of the meeting The Mayor asked Councillors and guests to be upstanding in memory of David Lawson who had recently passed away. David was the former Chief Reporter at the Oswestry & Border Counties Advertiser and a good friend of the Council past and present.

PUBLIC SESSION

The Mayor confirmed that the Council was prepared to extend the Public Session to thirty minutes, acknowledging the number of members of the public present. He began by stressing that the Town Council is not the decision maker in SAMDev but is just a consultee. All sites in SAMDev are developer or landowner led.

It was explained that the Council had tried in the past few weeks to extend the consultation period with Shropshire Council as far as possible so that not only had the Council an opportunity to gather as many views as possible and information but also to ensure that the public and the Campaign Group had extra time to meet the individuals at the core of the issue.

The Mayor congratulated the Campaign Group on the important role they had played in the debate; having influenced many views and opinions and having brought publicity about the Hillfort and the town. The Mayor explained that the Council was now at the stage where it had to submit its response; a Seminar had been held to provide a draft report which had been put in the public domain and had been on the Council website.

In summary, The Mayor explained that the Council had worked hard to enable time for research and comment to be sent to Shropshire Council and a meeting had been held with English Heritage and officers of the Campaign Group had been informed of timescales. At this stage The Mayor opened the floor for comments.

A range of comments and views were expressed concerning both the Hillfort and the Cottams. Comments were also expressed by academic sources and the promoter of one site.

51. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor A Davis - illness

Councillor J G Jones - illness

Councillor D P Milner - illness

RESOLVED the apologies as submitted be accepted.

52. **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.

53. **SAMDev: DRAFT REVISED PREFERRED OPTIONS: OSWESTRY**

The Council was invited to formally consider and agree its response to the SAMDev – Preferred Option.

As part of the process to finalise its response to the consultation process the Council had arranged a site visit for interested parties and Campaign Group to the various sites on the 17th October 2013. It had arranged a drop-in session for members of the public on the same evening and has promoted a meeting between the Council and English Heritage on the 5th December 2013.

The Council had held its own Seminar on the 7th January 2014 and a response that formed the basis for discussion at the meeting had been prepared by Brian Smith, acting as Consultant to the Town Council.

Various information had also been presented to Councillors as received from members of the public and developer.

Two amendments were put to the draft report. First in respect of Site OSW004.

To replace the words ***“the reduced allocation is supported”*** with the words ***“the revised allocation is opposed by the Town Council because the***

harm that this development will cause to the context and setting of the Hillfort is not outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal as required by the NPPF.”

This motion was not carried.

Second amendment was that in respect of Site OSW030 The Cottams, the amendment was that ***“the Council will not pursue its objection to allocation at this site”*** be replaced by the wording ***“that the Council continue its objection to allocation at this site.”***

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** the amendment be lost.

Following discussion the original submission, as drafted at the SAMDev Consultation on the 7th January 2014 was left on the table and as a way to strengthen the submission and acknowledging the views expressed in the public session by the Hillfort Campaigners, it was suggested that the below could be added as a condition to the Council's response:

“in supporting Osw003 and Osw004, and the position of English Heritage, the Council make this conditional that these inclusions in SAMDev can only be made if a full review of the existing Historical Assessment is secured by Shropshire Council. This in terms of the direct impacts of development following a process of due diligence so that the important confirmation is provided that the Heritage Impact Assessment is NPPF compliant. To achieve this then assurance is sought that independent evaluation will be taken.

It is considered that such scrutiny must also include a full examination of the Heritage Statement provided by the Old Oswestry Hillfort Campaign Group dated December 2013.”

After discussion it was unanimously **RESOLVED**:

- To formally agree that the Town Council's response to SAMDev – Revised Preferred Options Oswestry will be on the basis of the decisions as recommended at the Town Council Seminar as held on the 7th January 2014 supported by the below condition:

“in supporting Osw003 and Osw004, and the position of English Heritage, the Council make this conditional that these inclusions in SAMDev can only be made if a full review of the existing Historical Assessment is secured by Shropshire Council. This in terms of the direct impacts of development following a process of due diligence so that the important confirmation is provided that the Heritage Impact Assessment is NPPF compliant. To achieve this then assurance is sought that independent evaluation will be taken.

It is considered that such scrutiny must also include a full examination of the Heritage Statement provided by the Old Oswestry Hillfort Campaign Group dated December 2013.”

54. OSWESTRY AND SURROUNDING AREA PLACE PLAN

Place Plans identify the local priorities and infrastructure requirements for each of Shropshire's communities. They are developed by Shropshire Council in partnership with local communities, Parish and Town Councils and local infrastructure and service providers.

Eighteen Place Plans have been developed. Each Plan is based around one of Shropshire's market towns or key centres and its surrounding rural hinterland.

The Council was asked to consider its response to this annual consultation.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED**:

- To refer the matter to the Development & Planning Committee and delegate responsibility to that Committee to respond;
- To invite the Oswestry 2020 Group to comment to influence that discussion;
- To invite Oswestry Area Committee to comment as representative of local Parish Councils.

55. ANNUAL BONFIRE AND FIREWORKS – BUDGET ISSUE

Report from the Town Clerk on the 2013 event which unfortunately achieved a financial shortfall for the first time in the 25 year history of the event; this, due to weather conditions. A way forward was suggested to ensure community reward from the volunteer efforts in staging the event.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Council show its support and gratitude to the Treble Niners by agreeing to meet the shortfall from the 2013 event and also by providing a sum of £1,000 as donations to be allocated by the Treble Niners. This to recognise their effort in arranging the event and their support for the town and the Council. An appropriate sum to be vired from the Christmas Music Live underspend for 2013.

Councillor C Schofield
Mayor of the Town of Oswestry