

OSWESTRY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Town Council held on Monday 30th January 2016 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, the Guildhall, Oswestry

PRESENT: **The Mayor, Councillor D P Milner
Councillors Mrs S Best, Mrs C Chamberlain,
P Cherrington, A Davis, Mrs C Hawksley, V Hunt,
J G Jones, M Jones, D Kerr, M Lee, S Mason, C
Schofield, C Stokes and Mrs A Woof**

In the Chair: **The Mayor, Councillor D P Milner**

In attendance: **D J Preston – Town Clerk
A Roberts – Assistant Town Clerk
One member of the public**

PRAYERS

Previous to the commencement of the meeting, Prayers were led by the Mayor's Chaplin, 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. Questions to be answered by Mayor, Chairmen of Standing Committees, or Town Clerk.

Mrs Kate Clarke attended to advise of the Hillfort Hug on the weekend of 11th / 12th February 2017. Information was provided on the Hug and the Seminar being arranged. The Members were encouraged to write a message about local heritage. Comments were also made regarding the partial review of the Local Plan and a necessity for the protection of the Hillfort.

The Town Clerk responded saying that Members would note the dates as provided and the Council would welcome any letter from the Hands Off Oswestry Hillfort relating to the refresh of the Local Plan which will be considered upon an agenda.

59. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from:

**Councillor Mrs E Channon - family commitments
Councillor Mrs R Evans - illness
Councillor J Price - work commitments**

RESOLVED the apologies be accepted.

60. 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.

The Council had formally declared a dispensation for itself to enable precept requirements for 2017/18 to be discussed and determined.

RESOLVED to note no declarations of interest were received.

61. SPEAKER

The Leader of Shropshire Council, Councillor Malcolm Pate was in attendance to discuss various issues relating to health, redesign of Council services, etc.

The Leader provided a background to the financial position of the Council and the agenda to protect frontline services. It was acknowledged that the main problem centres upon funding for Adult Social Care and the lack of funding that comes down from Government. In general terms, the problem with under-funding of Shropshire services was acknowledged in terms of funding, population, sparsity and being the largest geographical county in England. Shropshire Council is continuing to put demands upon the Government for fair funding to deliver its statutory services.

Many issues were discussed with the Leader and a commitment was made to keep the Town Council informed and up to date with issues relating to the Innovation Park. Considerable discussion took place around dangerous buildings and empty shops and it was acknowledged that Shropshire Council could take action under a Section 215 Notice. It was considered that the challenge now is to make town centres more interesting and therefore together we need to work to understand a vision for how we see Oswestry town centre in the future.

With regard to planning and concerns voiced by Town Council Members, in particular in terms of Lidl, the Leader acknowledged that there should have been more communication with the Town Council and that the consultation that was undertaken was poor. The Leader offered to take up any matter of planning concern in the future.

A discussion took place around a Referendum, future council tax and the situation regarding Surrey. The Leader confirmed that Shropshire Council would not consider having a Referendum going forward.

A discussion took place as to whether the county had benefited from being a Unitary Authority and the view of the Leader was that it had as it had brought in £105 million additional funding since its inception. In terms of health and Accident & Emergency, the Leader of Shropshire Council described that the CCG was a shambles, the STD Plan was considered to be £130 million short and that the Unitary Authority want proper health facilities and Accident & Emergency at Shrewsbury and at The Princess Royal.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to thank the Leader for the presentation and for the honesty and the answers as provided to many questions and to take up the Leader on his offer to look at the issue of empty shops, particularly in Cross Street, with the Town Council.

62. MINUTES

Minutes of meetings held on:

24th October 2016	OTC/03/16
16th January 2017	OTC/04/17

Were confirmed and signed.

63. STANDING COMMITTEES

RESOLVED to adopt the below minutes:

Markets and Car Parks Committee

21st September 2016	MCP/04/16
23rd November 2016	MCP/05/16

Development and Planning Committee

5th October 2016	DPC/06/16
16th November 2016	DPC/07/16
19th December 2016	DPC/08/16

Amenities Committee

14th September 2016	AC/04/16
16th November 2016	AC/05/16

Finance & General Purposes Committee

5th September 2016	FGP/03/16
17th October 2016	FGP/04/16

5th December 2016

FGP/05/16

64. TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS

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

65. SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL MATTERS

Updates were provided by local Shropshire Councillors P Cherrington, V Hunt, and D Kerr on issues regarding policies, consultation or general matters and this followed on the discussion as held earlier with the Leader of Shropshire Council.

Subject areas discussed included free parking for 30 minutes at hospitals; restarting of cardboard recycling in February; concerns over the closure of New Century Court, etc.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council send a letter of support to Shropshire Council asking what caused the decision for the closure of New Century Court and what alternative provision may be possible, particularly as changes in housing benefit will enhance the problem going forward.

66. ELECTION OF THE MAYOR AND THE DEPUTY MAYOR 2017/18

To formally nominate The Mayor Elect and The Deputy Mayor Elect for 2017/18 in accordance with Standing Order 19 of the Council. The Standing Order is as below:

Voting on Election to Office

19. 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.

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.

When two or more Councillors are elected to serve on the Council on the same date, by Election, then the order of the Seniority List is determined by the below process.

The name of each Councillor sharing the same Election date to the Council are to be placed in a suitable receptacle and an independent person will pull out a name at a time.

The first name drawn out will take the position of seniority and the process will continue, if necessary, and subsequent names drawn out will, in descending order, complete the Seniority List.

The list, as then established, will remain in place for the ongoing service of each Councillor, regardless of future Elections.

If two or more Councillors are Co-opted to the Council, at the same meeting, then the Councillor that fills the first Co-option will become senior and others, as may then be Co-opted will, in descending order, complete the Seniority List.

The process, if required, will normally take place in February, when the Council determines the Mayor Elect and the Deputy Mayor Elect for the forthcoming year, and will form part of a Council Agenda for both adoption and transparency.

Should a Councillor decline the opportunity to become the Mayor Elect, or the Deputy Mayor Elect then that name will immediately be placed at the end of the Seniority List.

In an Election year, following completion of Term of Office, the outgoing Mayor will be placed at the end of the Seniority List below any newly Elected Councillors.

In accordance with the Standing Order, a ballot was undertaken and the names were pulled out of a receptacle by the Mayor's Chaplain, the Reverend Simon Thorburn.

The seniority of the Council is therefore now finalised and it was **RESOLVED** to note that the names drawn out to take the positions of seniority are as below:

1. **Councillor M Lee**
2. **Councillor Mrs R Evans**
3. **Councillor Mrs A Woof**
4. **Councillor Mrs S Best**
5. **Councillor J Price**
6. **Councillor D Kerr**
7. **Councillor C Stokes**

67. PAVEMENT PARKING – OSWESTRY

At the December meeting of the Development & Planning Committee correspondence was received from a local resident expressing concern over vehicles parking on the pavements in Oswestry. As a result the Council wrote to The Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP and also to West Mercia Police.

Provided was a letter from Owen Paterson MP and a letter from Inspector Nigel Morgan, Safer Neighbourhoods Inspector, North Shropshire Policing Area.

In addition, the Town Clerk outlined correspondence between West Mercia Police and the Editor, Oswestry Border Counties Advertiser.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that, due to the matter being beyond the control of the Town Council, the correspondence, at this stage, be noted.

68. FOUND PROPERTY - OSWESTRY

Following a recent Press headline, Councillor D Kerr approached the Town Clerk to see whether the Town Council could assist with issues of lost property in the town centre being brought to the Guildhall, thereby working in partnership with the Police and providing a town centre point of access for any issues; the Council then being able to liaise direct with the Police.

A meeting was held with Inspector Nigel Morgan, Safer Neighbourhood Team, North Shropshire and Oswestry, Shropshire Policing Area, in December and a copy of an email, as a result of that meeting, was provided.

RESOLVED to record willingness, in principle, to co-operate and explore further. In addition, to look to establish a protocol with the Police to record their level of support and to ensure that staffing safeguards are introduced with a further report to be invited from the Town Clerk for consideration.

69. PARTIAL REVIEW OF THE SHROPSHIRE LOCAL PLAN – ISSUES AND STRATEGIC OPTIONS CONSULTATION

For information, email from Shropshire Council Planning and Policy Team confirming that Shropshire Council intends to undertake a partial review of the Shropshire Local Plan. A consultation will run from 23rd January 2017 – 20th March 2017.

The Council was asked to note that Adrian Cooper, Planning Policy & Strategy Manager, Shropshire Council would attend, subject to availability, a meeting of the Oswestry Area Committee on 7th February 2017.

RESOLVED to note the situation and that the Town Council arrange its own meeting with facilitation by Gill Jones, Consultant, to enable a suitable response to be made.

70. BUSINESS RATES RETENTION

RESOLVED to note, for information, copy response from the Association of Town & City Management (ATCM) following the above consultation.

71. OSWESTRY TOWN YOUTH COMMISSIONING CONTRACT 2017

Shropshire Council would like to hear from a local organisation interested in providing Youth Sessions at 'The Centre', Oak Street, Oswestry, principally for 14 to 19 year olds (24 years old for individuals with learning difficulties). The sessions will provide a programme of structured activities that respond to young people's needs and feedback.

RESOLVED to note the information and the fact that it will go to a Task & Finish Group within Shropshire Council to review Youth Services and it's funding.

72. ELECTION OF THE MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR 2017

It was unanimously **RESOLVED** that Councillor Vince Hunt be elected as the Mayor Elect for 2017/18.

With regard to the Deputy Mayor Elect then the matter be related to the seniority list and the Council to discuss further as appropriate when it is established if any Members will be not be standing for Council from May 2017.

73. 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.