

OSWESTRY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Oswestry Town Council held on Monday 27th October 2014 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, the Guildhall, Oswestry.

PRESENT: **The Mayor, Councillor J G Jones
Councillors M Bennett, W Benyon, Mrs S Best,
Mrs E Channon, A Davis, Mrs R Evans,
Mrs C Hawksley, V Hunt, D Kerr, M Lee,
D P Milner, J Price, C Schofield, C Stokes and
Mrs A Woof**

In the Chair: **The Mayor, Councillor J G Jones**

In attendance: **David J Preston – Town Clerk
Eight members of the public**

PRAYERS

Previous to the commencement of the meeting Prayers were led by the Reverend Michelle Grace on behalf of 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.

Mrs A H Bickerton raised issues around the draft Corporate Plan, and the Code of Conduct for Councillors: the delivery of tourism, and also issues relating to the Oswestry Joint Economic Board. All these issues were responded to by the Town Clerk.

Mr P Lloyd commented upon a Notice of Motion on the Agenda from Councillor W Benyon. The comments highlighted concerns relating to food and convenience goods moving out of the town centre and the impact on footfall with the Council urged to consider good practices that will best serve the town centre. Support was also given for a pay on foot parking regime should the current car park management system be replaced in the future.

Mrs A Jones spoke about concerns from local residents over the decision of the Council to enter into part-night lighting. Concerns were voiced around security and particular issues that had arisen in the Coney Green and Ambleside areas in recent weeks. It was confirmed that the issue was on the Council Agenda for discussion and resident viewpoints would be taken into consideration.

54. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence was received from:

Councillor Mrs M E Chamberlain – illness
Councillor P Cherrington – Civic function as Deputy Mayor

RESOLVED the apologies be accepted.

55. 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.

56. FOOTWAY LIGHTING

The Lighting Task and Finish Group of the Council will be meeting in the near future to review changes as now introduced to the Town Council's lighting regime and progress with introduction of LED lighting to various sites. Requests had been received from Elected Members for the lighting issue to be discussed by Council and therefore the opportunity was provided.

After discussion it was unanimously **RESOLVED**:

- On the basis of representations received, the Council agreed to review its lighting policy working through the Task and Finish Group;
- To assist that Group, contact be made with the contractor Ringway to see if photo-cells can be varied in timings and to establish the options available to the Council and, in particular, if lighting hours can be extended;
- To seek a review meeting with Shropshire Council on the project, as rolling out across the county, taking into account local issues and also looking specifically at a review of priorities/risk areas in terms of public safety and the representations being received;
- To seek a review with Shropshire Council of lighting policy on the basis of potential impact of LED options and whether those lower running costs and emissions can be achieved by changing from sodium to LED lighting;
- To invite representatives from the Facebook Petition Group to meet with the Council through its Task and Finish Group in advance of their discussions;

- To seek costings and savings regarding part-night lighting in terms of an update from Shropshire Council.

57. SPEAKER – OSWESTRY TOWNSCAPE AND TRANSPORT FORUM

Following recent meetings of the newly formed Oswestry Townscape and Transport Forum and the visit to Oswestry by Ben Hamilton Bailee, the Leader of Shropshire Council, Councillor Keith Barrow, attended to provide an update for the Town Council on discussions to date, the programme, and the role and influence of the Town Council.

Councillor Barrow began with an invite to discuss issues and problems and expressed his disappointment at some of the recent Press publicity relating to earlier discussions about the Group. He considered that Oswestry was attractive and there is a need to make the town even more attractive. If we do so then shops and business will follow. He explained the set-up of the Group with the Past Mayor and Town Clerk being invited and Councillor Schofield then being invited to continue to provide continuity for the Town Council. It was confirmed that meetings of the Group will be open to the public and the Town Council is invited to be involved at whatever level it wishes.

After considerable discussion it was **RESOLVED**:

- To acknowledge and accept the request from Councillor Barrow that Councillor Schofield and the Town Clerk continue to attend as the permanent representatives from the Town Council;
- To acknowledge and accept the invitation for the Office of Mayor to be a member of the Group;
- To note the personal invitation from the Leader of Shropshire to Councillor A Davis to also be a member, in an individual capacity.

At the end of the meeting a sincere thanks were extended by The Mayor to Councillor Barrow for the information and subsequent discussion.

58. MINUTES

Minutes of meeting held on **28th July 2014 – OTC/04/14** – were confirmed and signed.

59. TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS

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

60. STANDING COMMITTEES

RESOLVED to adopt the below minutes:

Markets and Car Parks Committee

16th July 2014 - **MCP/04/14**

Finance and General Purposes Committee

16th July 2014 - **FGP/02/14**

8th September 2014 - **FGP/03/14**

Development and Planning

9th July 2014 - **DPC/05/14**

13th August 2014 - **DPC/06/14**

10th September 2014 - **DPC/07/14**

24th September 2014 - **DPC/08/14**

61. NOTICES OF MOTION

a) Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor D Kerr:

“This Council affirms that it will use the proceeds from the Smithfield development for the regeneration of the town centre and allocates the £2M already received in the following proportions to deliver the objectives of the Oswestry 2020 vision identified in brackets.

- *Securing the re-use of empty town-centre properties (.5m) (1,2,6,9 and 11)*
- *Improving the civic spaces and public realm in the town centre (£1.2m) (4,8,9,11, 15, 16,18 and 19)*
- *Regeneration of the markets (.3m) (3,9,10,15 and 16)*

The Council further resolves that three task and finish groups (one for each of the above allocations) with six members each be formed immediately. The remit of each group shall be to identify the most effective and efficient projects for securing the stated objectives within their remit. They shall also undertake consultation with local residents and report back to the Council by the end of January 2015.

In order to utilise the talents of the entire Council it is also resolved that every Councillor shall have the opportunity of being a member of one of these working parties.”

RESOLVED the motion not be adopted.

b) Notice of Motion in the name of Councillor W Benyon:

Regeneration Central Car Park

- *“Creation of a Business Information Centre in conjunction with a Tourism Information Centre. Much needed to promote town centre businesses.*
- *Construction of new and modern toilets.*
- *A review of methods of entry and exit strategies possibly also convert to pay on exit.”*

RESOLVED to note that new toilets on the Central Car Park are part of the Corporate Plan; however entry and exit arrangements to the Car Park to be referred to the Townscape and Transport Group as part of their open brief deliberations on traffic related issues.

The Oswestry Chamber of Commerce, Shropshire Council, and Walford and North Shropshire College, to be invited to offer a view on a town centre business information centre and their interest in being prospective partners.

62. SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL MATTERS

RESOLVED to note that no issues were raised.

63. TOWN COUNCIL ISSUES

Request from Councillor M Bennett to consider a couple of issues.

a) **Clawdd Du**

Following the recent incidents of bins being set alight, can the Council discuss how the area could be made safer and perhaps more attractive? The primary issue is the refuse bins which, if they cannot be enclosed/protected, should moves be put in hand to close off the alleyways with lockable gates – safety issues allowing?

RESOLVED to facilitate a meeting between Police, Fire Service, Shropshire Council, and property owners, to look at options and include Veolia in those and to seek their suggestions as to alternative arrangements.

b) **Castle Bank**

I am concerned over the steps on Castle Bank which are difficult to negotiate and seem to be showing signs of wear. Consultations with English Heritage need to be undertaken to see if the steps could be regarded to make them easier to use.

The area in front of Castle Bank, as shown in early postcards, depicts an attractive area, fenced in, with a spectacular water feature. Fencing might help with security at night, while restoring the area to the way it looked in Edwardian times would be consistent with efforts to improve the general look of the location. However while this may be feasible, it may not be wholly desirable. The question is raised for general debate as to the pros and cons of returning the front of Castle Bank to its pre-WW1 look.

RESOLVED in recognising wear and tear, and health and safety/risk, English Heritage be invited to review accessibility to the site with the Town Council.

In addition, English Heritage to be invited to express their potential interest in sharing a scheme to restore the monument frontage to its pre-WW1 appearance.

64. NABMA – WUWM LONDON 2014

RESOLVED to note a letter from Graham Wilson OBE, Chief Executive of NABMA, recording formal thanks to the Town Council for its involvement and support to the NABMA and WUWM Conferences held in London in September 2014.

65. OPENNESS AND ACCOUNTABLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Report on the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulation 2014 that sets out new requirements to allow the public greater access to Local Government decision making.

RESOLVED the report be noted and the recommendations agreed to form a Code for the Council and to be incorporated into Standing Orders,

66. OSWESTRY SCHOOL – GOVERNING BODY

Letter from Phil Bowd, Bursar of Oswestry School, confirming that, with the arrival of the new Headmaster, the School is reviewing the composition of its external nominations on its governing body.

“We are very grateful for the continued long-standing support of the Town Council, but note that your representative, Elaine Channon, has been on our board since 2010, and her position on the board is due for election at our next AGM in February 2015. The normal period of time that governors are on our board is 5 years.”

The Council is therefore invited to formally review its representation on the Board due for election at the AGM in February 2015.

RESOLVED the names of Councillors M Bennett, Mrs R Evans, and C Schofield, be submitted for consideration by the Governing Body.

67. PUBLIC OPEN SPACES IN OSWESTRY

Letter from Mark Blount, Parks & Greenspace Team Leader of Shropshire Council, confirming that Shropshire Council is reviewing its grounds maintenance on public green space sites within all Shropshire Market Towns.

In summary, the Larger Town Councils are invited to consider taking on public open space facilities within their areas.

At this stage the Town Council was invited to consider “*an in principle decision*” as to whether they would be interested in the proposal or not.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED**:

- To note the information and, despite the short timeframe, to invite costings and further information as part of some research looking at the potential expansion, opportunities and implications for the Council in terms of developing our own commercial/trading activities.

68. PLACE PLAN – ANNUAL REVIEW 2014-2015

Information from Hayley Deighton, Principal Policy Officer at Shropshire Council, regarding the review of the Place Plan and timescale.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council arrange a Seminar inviting Chairmen and Clerks from each Council in the Oswestry Area Committee and delegated authority be given to the Development & Planning Committee of the Council to finalise the response.

69. SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL PLANNING SERVICE – PLANNING DECISIONS BRIEFING NOTE FOR PARISH & TOWN COUNCILS

RESOLVED to note for information that Councillor Mal Price, Portfolio Holder for Planning, and Ian Kilby, Planning Services Manager at Shropshire Council, have responded to requests from Parish Councils requesting clarification on the question of how planning decisions are being taken in advance of the SAMDev Plan adopted.

70. PLANNING BRIEFING

RESOLVED to note for information that Ian Kilby, Planning Services Manager at Shropshire Council, attended a Planning Briefing Meeting for Parish and Town Council Clerks on the 5th September 2014.

71. OSWESTRY TOWN COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2014-17

RESOLVED to formally adopt the Corporate Plan following consultation, seminar and review by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

72. SALC AGM

RESOLVED to note that the SALC AGM, as proposed for the 1st November 2014, had been cancelled due to low delegate numbers.

73. FUTURE LOCAL – NALC’S LARGER COUNCILS CONFERENCE

RESOLVED to note, for information, that the Council has been asked, through the Town Clerk, to provide a session at the Conference on Regeneration and Local Economic Development being led by Parish and Town Councils.

74. 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.