



MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

HELD 6TH JANUARY 2020 at 7.00PM GUILDHALL

PRESENT

Council Members Cllr J Byng - Town Mayor and Meeting Chairman

Cllrs A Coleman, R Coleman, S Collingridge, L Davies, C Edginton-White, P Gittins MBE, P Harrison, H Lacy, D Morehead, R Stanczyszyn

In attendance: Ten Members of the Public
S Hudson - Town Clerk

9004 MAYOR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Mayor, Cllr J Byng welcomed everyone to the meeting.

9005 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr S Billett

9006 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were reminded to submit their Register of Interests and to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary and/or Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.

The Mayor, Cllr J Byng declared Other Disclosable Interests:

- 9009 –Friends of Riverside North Park – as a Trustee of Friends of Riverside North Park
- 9014 – Together Group – as Chairman of the Together Group.

Cllr L Davies declared an Other Disclosable Interest

- 9014 – Together Group – as a committee member of the Together Group.

Cllr C Edginton White declared an Other Disclosable Interest:

- 9009/9016 –Friends of Riverside North Park – as a Trustee of Friends of Riverside North Park

9007 COUNCILLORS' DISPENSATIONS

4 dispensation requests were submitted; all were **RESOLVED** and allowed.

The Mayor, Cllr J Byng –

9009/9016 – `Friends of Riverside North Park – as a Trustee of Friends of Riverside North Park and 9014 – Together Group – as Chairman of the Together Group.

Cllr L Davies –

9016 – Together Group – as a committee member of the Together Group.

Cllr C Edginton White –

9009/9016 –Friends of Riverside North Park – as a Trustee of Friends of Riverside North Park

9008 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

i. **Members of the public.**

A member of the public took the opportunity to speak, as follows:

1. Could the Council do anything with regard to condition of the grass verge at the top of Dog Lane next to Murray's Pharmacy

It was confirmed that this land had already been discussed during a Road Safety meeting. Councillors considered a number of various options for the space including being used for car parking or that the area is staked off to maintain the green space.

Mrs R Vale, WCC member for Bewdley division stated that this issue had been raised with both WCC and WFDC but it is still unclear who owns the land. Both the District Councillors present and the Town Clerk was asked to approach both Councils for clarification on ownership.

2. There was a lack of focus in the Town on New Year's Eve due to the lack of fireworks.

Councillors confirmed that the Council have no involvement with the New Year's Eve firework, in previously years these had been funded by the local pubs.

b. **Representative members of the principal authorities**

- 1) **Mrs R Vale, WCC member for Bewdley division** spoke as follow:

Paddling Pool - Issues with the paddling pool at Riverside North park have been discussed with the Friends group. BTC are to return £2000 (given by WCC for paddling pool maintenance), which in turn, will be re-directed to the Friends Group. Cllr I Hardiman has also agreed to match this with a £2000 donation.

Traffic - Various road traffic layouts for Bewdley have been considered and discounted by the WCC Highways team. The Highways team have undertaken a traffic monitoring exercise to understand the relating issues. Having reviewed the results WCC have made the decision to build a park and ride car park on the Wribbenhall side of the river to alleviate the volume of traffic from the town. It is expected that external funding will be made available and that the project should begin in a few years' time. Sites for this project have yet to be announced but various options are being considered. A new pathway has also been discussed for the Wribbenhall side of the river.

Councillors raised various questions:

Would the park and ride be free?

Cllr R Vale felt the park and ride should be free, as residents have lost their free parking.

Would the Council be told about the location options?

Cllr R Vale suggested that the Town Council discuss this with District Planning.

Would there be a foot bridge across the river as previously discussed?

Cllr R Vale thought that this could be considered as part of the new plan

- 2) The Mayor spoke on behalf of Mr I Hardiman, WCC member for Cookley, Wolverley and Wribbenhall behalf:

Local Issues:

The Kidderminster Road bend by the railway bridge - County Highways have agreed to install Bend Warning signage for drivers travelling towards the Town and railings-mounted chevrons.

Safari Park Roundabout repairs - the Highways Engineer has been asked to ensure the work is scheduled for the earliest opportunity.

Cyclists collisions occurring at the end of New Road - Highways' are considering measures to make drivers of vehicles at New Road stop before exiting.

Northwood Lane lamp obscured by overgrown trees on private property - this has again been drawn to the attention of the Highways Engineer.

Northwood Lane Vehicle Speeds & Vehicles parked on the pavement - residents have raised concerns about vehicle speeds. Speed analysis took place in December 2017; results showed no justification for intervention by the Police or the Safer Roads Partnership. Vehicles parked on pavements and causing obstruction should be reported to the Police who have responsibility this type of obstructions.

Algae coated Road Signage - The signs near the top of Habberley Bank on the B4091 and the signs from Stourport into Wribbenhall. The Town Clerk has been asked to arrange for the Lengthsman to clean these.

Speed of traffic on the Kidderminster Road along from the Safari Park roundabout -speed analysis has been carried out – the Mean Average speeds of vehicles are below the 30mph limit; referral to the Police or Safer Roads partnership is not therefore justified.

Paddling Pool in Riverside North Park - agreed to contribute £2,000 towards the major Maintenance & Repairs costs from the County Councillors Divisional Fund.

Together Group Project - agreed a contribution of £250 from the Divisional Fund to support their Members' Coach Trip this year.

Strategic Issues County Wide:

Mr I Hardiman provided a summary of WCC's budget strategy for 2020/21 and the proposed Council tax increase of 1.99% with an adult social care levy of 2%. Council tax income equates to 81% of WCC's overall income.

There will be £32.6 million additional financial pressures in 2020/21 which in part includes, pay awards to staff, additional waste disposal costs and delivering corporate plan priorities on highways, economy and the environment.

2020/2021 will see a further investment in adult's social care, children's social care and transport, tackling congestion, highways, footpaths, flood mitigation, an LED replacement programme, mainstream schools and school SEND.

None of the county's 21 libraries are going to close; there will however be some changes to the smaller libraries.

- 3) **Mrs A Coleman, member for Bewdley & Rock** gave an update from the WFDC meeting of 17th December 2019 where car parking charges were discussed. Cllr A Coleman thanked Bewdley traders for their 3000-signature petition which was present at the meeting, by a local trader, as an objection to the loss of free parking in Bewdley. Though the WFDC motion was passed the fight will continue to bring back the concession.

Discussion with regard to actions that could be taken ensued. Cllr L Davies asked that a motion be considered under urgent business **9021**; this was seconded by Cllr R Coleman.

- 4) **Mr J Byng, member for Wribbenhall and Arley** confirmed that both he and Mr P Harrison would be contributing £800 each towards Riverside North Park and £200 each towards Together Group from their district community leadership funds.

c. Representatives of support services

- 1) A representative from the Police spoke as follows:
Following a busy period in the town, there were no issues to report. There are a number of Licensing issues which are being dealt with by the new Police Licensing Officer.

9009 FRIENDS OF RIVERSIDE NORTH PARK

Mrs Jenny Chamberlain, representing the Friends of Riverside North Park, spoke of her life and connections to Bewdley and gave a brief history of the Friends Group, formed in 2012.

Mrs Chamberlain then spoke of the paddling pool and the efforts made by the group along with local residents & businesses to keep the facility open. When, in 2017, WFDC announced the pool would close the Friends group raised funds to maintain the facility under lease for 3 years 2017-2019; it was expected that the lease would then transfer to the Town Council. However, during this period annual costs massively increased and problems were identified with the pool drainage systems.

The Friends group have offered to fund the cost of replacing the drainage system and fibre glassing the pool surface to ensure the facility is handed to the Town Council in a good state of repair. Councillors were asked to consider the option available and take into account the opinions of the local community.

Councillors asked why the costs had increased, Mrs Chamberlain confirmed that this was due to a leak doubling the water costs. Councillors also raised concerns about the lack of information received from WFDC with regard to repairs and the financial implications.

9010 MINUTES: of the previous Town Council meeting held 02/12/2019 and 12/12/2019.

Cllr C Edginton White confirmed the reason for no attendance of the meeting held on 12/12/2019 was due to not receiving the Council summons.

It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** the draft of the minutes of the Town Council meetings, held on 02/12/2019 and 12/12/2019, a true and accurate record of those meetings.

9011 ACCOUNTS

The Town Clerk presented the position as follows:

- i. The updated schedule of accounts including approval of invoices to be paid and approval of invoices paid as a matter of urgency.
It was **RESOLVED to Agree** the schedule of accounts as at 31/12/2019.

The following documents were presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee 18/12/2019

- ii. It was **RESOLVED to note** the cash balances as at 30/11/2019, as general fund.

Bewdley Town Council			
CASH BALANCES SUMMARY 30TH NOVEMBER 2019			
Summary			
Statement beginning balance			87,028.10
Cheques and payments cleared (7)			-1,208.04
Deposits and other credits cleared (2)			500.00
Statement ending balance			86,320.06
Uncleared transactions as of 30/11/2019			-1,920.99
Register balance as of 30/11/2019			84,399.07
Cleared transactions after 30/11/2019			0
Register balance as of 10/12/2019			82,478.08
UNITY BANK DEPOSIT ACCOUNT			
	BANK BALANCE @ 30th NOVEMBER 2019		£10,610.30
SCOTTISH WIDOWS INVESTMENT			
	BANK BALANCE @ 30th NOVEMBER 2019		£30,460.85
CAMBRIDGE BUILDING SOCIETY			
	BANK BALANCE @ 30th NOVEMBER 2019		£30,000.00
PETTY CASH			
	BANK BALANCE @ 30th NOVEMBER 2019		£110.63
TOTAL CASH & INVESTMENT 30TH NOVEMBER 2019			£153,659.86

- iii. It was **RESOLVED to note** the bank reconciliation date 30/11/2019.
- iv. It was **RESOLVED to note** the current financial position actual against budget as at 30/11/2019.

9012 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Round-up of draft minutes, reports and updates arising since 02/12/2019:

i) Planning Committee,

It was **RESOLVED to note** the minutes of the meeting held on 28/11/2019, the minutes of the meeting held on 19/12/2019 will be presented to the next meeting.

ii) Finance and General Purposes Committee, meeting held 18/12/2019.

It was **RESOLVED to note** the Finance and General Purposes Committee's draft minutes 18/12/2019.

Approval was sought for the recommendations as follows:

- a) Grant Applications – Cllr R Coleman gave brief update on the need for a mechanism to be put in place to the return of grant monies not spent or not used for the purpose intended.

- b) Cyber Security Insurance
It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** the purchase of Cyber Security Insurance cover from Came and Company.
- c) Insurance Renewal
It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** to continue with Came & Company as the Councils insurance brokers and consider the pre-renewal invitation.
- d) CCLA Investments
It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** to review investment options with CCLA
- e) Wyre Hill Sand Park
It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** to work with the Friends of Wyre Hill Sand Park in applying for 'Awards For All' grant funding. It was noted that only one application a year can be made to this fund.

9013 FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

- Elect a Councillor to fill the vacant seat on to the F&GP committee
Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED** to agree that this item be **deferred** until the new West ward Councillor has been appointed.
- Elect a Deputy Chairman of the F&GP committee
It was agreed that responsibility falls to the F&GP committee and should be voted on at their next meeting.

9014 TOGETHER GROUP

Cllr A Coleman offered her thanks to the Councillors and volunteers who run the Together Group

It was **RESOLVED** to **Note** the draft notes of the Together Group meeting held 26/11/2019.

To agree the status of the Together Group both financially and managerially. Cllr L Davies outlined the reasons why the Council should continue their support for the group. Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED** to agree that this item be **deferred** until the next meeting and that the groups original financial support be identified.

9015 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROGRESS

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group leader, Cllr R Stanczyszyn gave Councillors an update; draft reports have been received from both Avon Planning Services and AECOM which as yet have not been reviewed. The WFDC Planning Policy team have asked to be provided with the neighbourhood plan timetable.

9016 LOCALISM

Cllr R Coleman presented his Localism discussion paper. Additionally, consideration was given to the transfer of the toilets, the paddling pool lease and a museum contribution for all of which supplementary information has been requested from WFDC. It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** that the recommendations in Cllr R Coleman's paper to be actioned and that the Council write to WFDC with regard to the Localism agenda in general.

WFDC confidentiality agreement

The wording of the confidentiality agreement was discussed; it was decided that the document needed a more thorough review; it was **RESOLVED** to agree this item be **deferred** until the next meeting.

9017 TOWN CLERK'S UPDATES

Councillors were asked to **note** the Town Clerk's updates relating to ongoing concerns, including:

- **Internal Audit -**
Recommendations from Cllr P Gittins MBE review of the financial system in line with the Internal Auditor's recommendations.
 - The Town Clerk acting as Responsible Financial Officer ensures all internal controls are adhered to.
 - Councillors are reminded to evidence their verification check by initialling the invoice and cheque stub when they sign a cheque.
- **Public Benches -**
A list of all benches identified as belonging to WCC has been sent to the County Highways Manager, no response has yet been received. The Town Clerk has chased this again
- **Bollards –**
Awaiting an update from WCC Highways

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the Town Clerk's updates.

9018 BUDGET 2020/21

Cllr R Coleman, as Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes committee, presented the budget working documents which included a range of options available and comprehensive analysis of expected income and expenditure for 2020/21 (2021/22 & 2022/23).

All operating costs for the toilets were removed from the budget as the formal paperwork has yet to be received from WFDC; cleaning is continuing as per the expired contract; all income has been received to cover these costs for 2019/20. Councillor allowances would cover travel and parking costs. Neighbourhood Plan costs are expected to be covered by the grant received from Locality. The website is being renewed and updated in line with accessibility requirements. Concerns were raised about the Together Groups budget being withdrawn.

Having debated the above, a breakeven budget for 2020/21 was considered which would equate to a precept of £182,350 using only £380 from general reserves.

Following discussions and having considered the various options available it was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** a breakeven budget for 2020/21.

9019 PRECEPT 2020/21

Having considered the budget as presented above it was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** that a precept for 2020/21 of £182,350 be levied.

The agreed precept figure of £182,350 divided by the Council Tax base figure, provided by WFDC, for 2020/21 of 3647 equates to Council Tax for a Band D household being the equivalent of £50.00 (attracting an increase of 12.5% or 10.7p per week) with Band H being twice the Band D charge and Band A 6/9th of the Band D charge. The national average Band D charge for 2019/20 was £67.18.

The agreed precept should now be communicated to and demanded of the District Council as the billing authority pursuant to Regulations made under the Local Government Finance Act 1972.

9020 MAYOR'S DIARY AND FUTURE EVENTS

- i) Received an update on the Mayor's diary for December 2019.
- ii) The future community events were noted.
Youth Music Night – A Mayor's Charity event to be held at St George's Hall on 24/01/2020

9021 ITEMS OF URGENCY OR TO NOTE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Urgent Business

Following agreement in public session 9008 Cllr L Davies proposed the wording for letter to be written to WFDC expressing the Councils dismay at changes to the parking charges. The wording of which was unanimously agreed.

Future Meetings

Discussed dates of future meetings

Annual Town Meeting	13/04/2020	this is Easter Monday an alternative would need to be considered.
St Georges Day Parade	26/04/2020	
Mayor Making	15/05/2020	

8995 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING – Monday 3rd February 2020
7pm

The meeting closed at 9.05pm

Signed.....
Deputy Mayor/Chairman
3rd February 2020