



# BEWDLEY Town Council

## **MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

**HELD 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020 at 7.00PM GUILDHALL**

### **PRESENT**

Council Members      The Mayor, Cllr J Byng, Cllrs D Morehead - Deputy Town Mayor  
S Billett, A Coleman, R Coleman, S Collingridge, C Edginton White,  
P Gittins MBE, P Harrison, M Maher, R Stanczyszyn

In attendance:        Ten Members of the Public  
Elizabeth Thomas - The Young Mayor  
S Hudson - Town Clerk

### **9043    MAYOR'S OPENING REMARKS**

The Mayor Cllr J Byng welcomed everyone to the meeting, he also welcomed Bewdley's new west ward councillor Michael Maher and Mr Jim Ineson as the representative speaking on behalf of St Georges Hall. The Mayor spoke of the major flooding issues faced by the town and that the Council are looking at ways in which they may help including setting up a flood sub-committee. The Mayor voiced his disappointment that the Town Council were not informed about the recent visits to the town of the Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire and the Chairman of the County Council.

### **9044    APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs L Davies and Cllr H Lacy,

### **9045    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.

Cllr C Edginton White declared Other Disclosable Interests in agenda Items:

**9055-** Grants for Approval -Riverside North Park Paddling Pool – Involvement as a trustee to the Friends of Riverside North Charity

### **9046    COUNCILLORS' DISPENSATIONS**

None requested

### **9047    PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

#### **i.    Members of the public.**

5 members of the public took the opportunity to speak, as follows:

#### **1.    Urgent Flood Assistant**

- Wribbenhall Flood Group set up in 2017 have a supply of flood sacks which no one seems to know about and that there didn't appear to be a central point of contact during the flood.
- People are collecting and donating items for the flood victims but there is need for storage. Items distributed so far include cookers and food. Nowhere has been set up for the collection of donations.

The Mayor asked whether anyone knew of a room where donations could be stored. Cllr C Edginton White thanked the Wribbenhall Parish Room for their help taking in donated items and asked that the speakers contact details be left at the end of the meeting to follow up the issues raise.

2. Flood Information

- There used to be a flood information board in the Beales Corner area, could this be re-instated

3. Flood Information

- Why were the temporary barriers at Beales Corner inadequate, the barrier were only 5.2 meters, shorter than previous erected.

4. Bridge/By-pass and Welch Gate Pollution

- The resident thanked the emergency services and the Environment Agency for their work during the floods.
- Had any traffic monitoring taken place on the by-pass. The number of vehicles using the by-pass during the floods would normally use Bewdley as a cut through
- The roads are being changed in Horsefair, Kidderminster due to pollution issues, could this be done in Bewdley.
- Children are being driven to school rather than walking, could the Young Mayor ask Bewdley School how many pupils are driven to school.

The Young Mayor, Elizabeth Thomas, agreed to do this.

Cllr R Stanczynszyn commented that the pollution in the Horsefair would not be elevated by the highway changes.

5. Dog Lane Development Land

- Is there any update on the development land by the fire station; residents were originally told that the land would be for residential use but have now been told that it would for retail use.

Cllr P Harrison commented that he understood it was for residential use.

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

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

Flooding

The flooding situation in Bewdley has been a real crisis for the town, but despite of this, the Town and its people have shown incredible resilience and stoicism. Cllr R Vale offered profound thanks to all the agencies who have worked so hard for Bewdley at this time. Everyone has done an incredible job. Cllr R Vale spoke of her gratitude to the leader of the County Council Simon Geraghty who has been incredibly hands on, visiting Bewdley numerous times and has been in contact with me several times a day to see how he can support Bewdley. The County Council want to help Bewdley survive this crisis and help it to thrive going forwards.

The Bridge and the switchback are closed, the ground is completely saturated, drainage ditches are full and small watercourses remain extremely sensitive, local rain might cause surface water issues. Highways are working around the clock at the moment to keep the County running.

### Dowles Road Update

Mr Bradley Knight at County is project managing the scheme to create a new pedestrian crossing on Dowles Road adjacent to Woodthorpe Drive, Bewdley. Any technical enquiries can be addressed directly to Mr Knight.

The works to be undertaken will create an uncontrolled crossing that will provide users much better visibility of the Dowles Road and improve safety. The work should take approximately 5 days and will be undertaken by MacDonald's Surfacing. Due to flooding the works have been put back, as yet no new date is available. Residents in the area have been made aware of the scheme via letter drops.

- 2) **Mr I Hardiman, WCC member for Cookley, Wolverley and Wribbenhall** was unable to attend the meeting, the Mayor Cllr J Byng read his report as follows:

Following last month's Town Council, concerns were raised regarding the Blackstone Traffic Island which has some brickwork displaced by a vehicle collision also the condition of the Catchem's End Zebra Crossing surface. Both will be inspected by the Highways Engineer on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March.

The following have also been chased the installation of Disability Tactiles for the Catchem's End Zebra Crossing; the Northwood Lane Lamp being obscured by overgrown trees and the replacement of the Cat's Eyes in the lower section of the A456 By Pass.

- 3) **Mrs C Edginton White, member for Bewdley & Rock** gave an updated on the distribution of her WFDC community leadership fund:

£400 Rock Gateway Signage  
£200 Lifebuoy replacement  
£200 Defibrillator cabinets  
£200 to be held by BTC for the community flood group

Cllr C Edginton White also gave an update on the motion put before WFDC on 26/02/2020, looking at lessons learned and future flood defence solutions. The Councillor thanked all agencies involved in supporting the flood efforts. With regard to the status of the Dog Lane development land; the information provided to District Councillors is that this site will be mixed use both residential and retail.

- 4) **Mrs A Coleman, member for Bewdley & Rock** is proposing, to the WFDC Overview and Scrutiny committee, provision is made for emergency parking for vehicles belonging to residents of flooded properties.

Museum funding – WFDC proposed that the museum will be transferred to an independent trust (this is not yet set up) which will potentially result in job losses. The museum is expected to be funded by grants which support projects not salaries.

- 5) **Mrs C Edginton White, member for Bewdley & Rock** asked to speak on behalf of a group wishing to hold an event celebrating Bewdley's community spirit and thanking the emergency services. It is hoped that the event will promote town businesses and act as a fund raiser; it is proposed that the event includes an number of activities, speeches and a large community choir.

**9048 ST GEORGES HALL**

Mr Jim Ineson gave a presentation on the proposed planning application to extend St Georges Hall and asked for the Councils support in the process.



## The Rationale for Further Development

### Background

- The Hall was first established in the 1960s by the Christian churches in Bewdley for their communal use.
- Since then, with the development of the churches' own facilities, that need has become largely redundant.
- The Hall was re-developed in 2013 using a mixture of public money (DEFRA) and local fund-raising. Since then it has been operated as a registered charity by a board of 8 Directors and a paid part-time team of 4.
- Last year, over 50 local organisations used the Hall for a wide range of events covering social, cultural, health, educational and youth-related activities.
- The well-supported, volunteer-staffed café is open 6 days per week, and welcomed around 50,000 visits in 2019.
- Rooms in the Hall attracted 32,000 attendees to events organised during 2019.

## Need for further development

- In 2018 a management review identified restrictions that prevented the Hall from serving the community to its full potential.
- A public engagement exercise followed to determine satisfaction levels, suggest improvements and identify additional facilities required.
- The needs identified to better serve the community were:
  - A “holding” kitchen on the 1st Floor for events held in the Main Hall.
  - Increase the café space.
  - Provide an intermediate size meeting space.
  - Create a studio space suitable for different Performing Arts.
  - Improve access to disabled toilet on ground floor.

## Proposed Development

- The Board has engaged architects to design a scheme which both re-configures the current layout and adds a 3 story extension on land already owned by the Hall at the side of the building.
- The development addresses the needs identified by the public consultation in the following ways:
  - The café floor area is increased by 50%
  - A new kitchen provides the capacity to cater seamlessly for dinners/receptions in the Main Hall.
  - A new Arts Studio will have a sprung floor and built-in AV equipment.
  - A new meeting space provides capacity for larger meetings.
  - Additional storage space is provided for the Hall and for hirers.
- In addition to the needs identified by the public consultation, we are negotiating with the County Council to re-locate Bewdley Library to the ground floor of the new extension.

## Funding and Schedule

- The total budget for the full works is estimated to be approximately £1.3 million. This will be raised through a mixture of public grants, local fund-raising, and existing capital.
- A planning application is being prepared and we expect to submit by April/May.
- A further public consultation/awareness campaign will be held in parallel.
- Assuming a successful fund-raising campaign, building could start autumn 2020, with completion early 2021.

**9049 MINUTES:** of the previous Town Council meeting held 03/02/2020

With a minor amendment, it was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** the draft of the minutes of the Town Council meetings, held on 03/02/2020, a true and accurate record of that meeting.

**9050 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 **Approve** the schedule of accounts as at 29/02/2020.

The following documents were presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee 19/02/2020

- ii. It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the cash balances as at 31/01/2020, as the general fund.
- iii. It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the bank reconciliation date 31/01/2020

Bewdley Town Council	
Unity Current Account, Period Ending 31.01.2020	
RECONCILIATION REPORT	
Reconciled on: 05/02/2020	
Reconciled by: Sharon Hudson	
Any changes made to transactions after this date aren't included in this report.	
<b>Summary</b>	
GBP	
Statement beginning balance	76,353.48
Cheques and payments cleared (26)	-15,900.82
Deposits and other credits cleared (6)	991.61
Statement ending balance	61,444.27
Uncleared transactions as of 31/01/2020	-1,707.09
Register balance as of 31/01/2020	59,737.18
Cleared transactions after 31/01/2020	0
Uncleared transactions after 31/01/2020	-65.00
Register balance as of 05/02/2020	<b>59,672.18</b>
<b>UNITY BANK DEPOSIT ACCOUNT</b>	
BANK BALANCE @ 31st JANUARY 2020	10,631.71
<b>SCOTTISH WIDOWS INVESTMENT</b>	
BANK BALANCE @ 31st JANUARY 2020	30,460.85
<b>CAMBRIDGE BUILDING SOCIETY</b>	
BANK BALANCE @ 31st JANUARY 2020	30,000.00
<b>PETTY CASH</b>	
BALANCE @ 31st JANUARY 2020	69.63
<b>TOTAL CASH &amp; INVESTMENT 31ST JANUARY 2020</b>	<b>£130,834.37</b>

- iv. It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the current financial position actual against budget as at 31/01/2020.

**9051 COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Round-up of draft minutes, reports and updates arising since 03/02/2020:

- i) **Planning Committee,**  
Cllr R Stanczyszyn gave a brief update of the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the minutes of the meeting held on 30/01/2020, the meeting minutes dated 27/02/2020 will be presented at the next meeting.
- ii) **Finance and General Purposes Committee,** meeting held 19/02/2020.

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the Finance and General Purposes Committee's draft minutes 19/02/2020. Cllr R Coleman gave a brief update of the meeting.

Approval or noting was sought for the recommendations as follows:

- a) Internal Audit It was **RESOLVED** to **Note** Cllr P Gittins audit review quarter 3 invoices and payments. Councillors are reminded to initial both the invoice and cheque stub when authorising cheque payments
- b) Christmas Light Switch On Event 2019/20 It was **RESOLVED** to **Note** the Christmas income over expenditure reconciliation.
- c) Bewdley Fire Station It was **RESOLVED** to **Approve** a presentation evening being held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 for the former fire fighters of Bewdley at St Georges Hall.

## **WORKING GROUP REPORTS**

### **iii) Road Safety Group**

Cllr S Collingridge gave an update on the meeting. The next meeting will be held on 06/04/2020 and review Welch Gate pollution.

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the notes from Road Safety Group meeting held on 18/02/2020

It was **Agreed** that Councillors would send responses to the Town Clerk to enable a Council response to the draft West Mercia PCC Road Safety Strategy consultation.

### **9052 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROGRESS**

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Leader Cllr R Stanczyszyn gave an update on progress to date and confirmed that the health check report was made available for review by WFDC. A draft design code report has been received from AECOM, this will be presented and reviewed at the next group meeting. WFDC have confirmed that a Strategic Environmental Assessment will be required

### **9053 TOWN CLERK'S UPDATES**

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

- **Internal Audit** – on-going – the Internal Auditor (DKE Audit Services) will be in the office on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
- **Localism** – Following the meeting with WFDC on 27/02/2020 it was agreed that all items originally included on the Localism agenda are now back on the table to be considered.
- **Public Benches** – WCC benches - awaiting update from Highways – Chased by Town Clerk
- **Bollards** – awaiting update from WCC Highways - Chased by Town Clerk

### **9054 POLICIES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

It was **RESOLVED** to **Approve** that the following policies are adopted:

BTC003	Grant Awarding Policy
BTC014	Internal Financial Controls

### **9055 APPROVAL OF GRANTS REQUESTED BY LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**

Bewdley Town Council has allocated £14,000 from its 2019/20 budget to the support of local groups as of November 2019 £10,570 had been allocated to local organisations. The following grants allocations were recommended for Approval by the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

St Anne's Funhouse	<b>£1000</b>
The Friends of Riverside North Park	<b>£1430</b>
Bewdley Scouts Group	<b>£1000</b>

It was **RESOLVED** to **Approve** that the remaining grant funding be allocated as above.

It was **RESOLVED** to **Note** the response received from the Bewdley Community Theatre Group regarding their 2019/20 grant funding.

**9056 ASSET REGISTER**

It was **RESOLVED** to **Approve** the Asset register dated February 2020.

**9057 PLASTIC FREE BEWDLEY CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

Cllr S Collingridge gave an update on the actions taken by the group to date, Bewdley should meet its target date of 2021. An official launch to the campaign will take place on 09/05/2020 to be opened by MP Mark Garnier and be held in conjunction of the Greener Living Fair.

**9058 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Cllr S Collingridge spoke of the need for a review of how the Council communicates with the community and how the Council feedback what it is doing. It was felt that not everyone engages with Council's website; facebook is getting more positive feedback. Cllr S Collingridge asked that Councillors contacted him with their ideas.

**9059 COUNCIL EMAILS**

Following a request from the Finance & General Purposes committee the Town Clerk is in the process of contacting local businesses to ascertain what options are available to the Council.

**9060 BEWDLEY FLOOD DEFENCES**

- i. The Mayor Cllr J Byng thanked all those involved with helping during the floods and gave a brief update on the on-going flooding issue. A public meeting will be arranged with the Environment Agency once the flooding recedes.
- ii. Cllr R Stanczyszyn's presented a report regarding the repositioning of street furniture and lifebuoys sited behind the flood barrier.

It was **RESOLVED** to **Approve** the recommendation as follows:

- Bewdley Town Council resolves to start discussions with WFDC and WCC to reposition all public benches, waste bins and lifebuoy locations, which are subject to flooding along Severnside, on both sides of the Severn. It further resolves to achieve this before autumn 2020.
- iii. Cllr C Edginton White gave a verbal update on recent flood events and confirmed, that in all cases, the property level protection on the homes at Beales Corner failed. Residents had also raised concerns about the ongoing support for temporary barriers and the need for an information board to be located on both sides of the river.



Cllr C Edginton White thanked both the Mayor Cllr J Byng and the Town Clerk for their presence in the town on the 16<sup>th</sup> February during the initial flooding incident.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED** to **Approve** the recommendations as follow:

1. Bewdley Town Council setup a working group to review the recent ongoing flood event to report back to full Council at the April Council meeting.
2. The group to provide recommendations to the Council for action with regard to the Temporary Flood Barriers at Beale's Corner and the installation of a permanent flood barrier at Beale's Corner.
3. The Council have regard for any proposals/requests made by the Community Flood Group once a review of the recent events has taken place.
4. The Council insist on the completion of the Emergency Plan to ensure that communication and resources are readily available for the Town Council and Bewdley Community when an incident occurs.

**9061 FLAG FLYING FOR THE ARMED FORCES**

Following consideration, the members asked that this ceremony be added to the Localism agenda.

**9062 COUNCIL STRUCTURE**

To receive Cllr L Davies report and discuss and agree actions. As Cllr L Davies was unable to attend the meeting it was **RESOLVED** to defer this agenda item until the next meeting of the Council.

**9063 DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the Mayors diary and the dates of the up and coming Mayoral and Civic events

- i) Mayors Diary for February 2020
- ii) Mayoral Events  
02/05/2020 Mayor's Charity Ball  
  
Civic Events  
20/04/2020 Annual Town Meeting  
15/05/2020 Mayor Making  
21/06/2020 Mayor's Civic Sunday  
08/11/2020 Remembrance Sunday  
05/12/2020 Christmas Switch On

**9064 ITEMS OF URGENCY OR TO NOTE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Urgent Business**

Coronavirus – The Town Clerk had sent all Councillors NHS information with regards to the virus. An update was given out regarding the latest recommended actions to be taken.

The Community Spirit event – the event is expected to include a number of organisations, would be held on a Saturday for approximately 2 hours. As yet there

are no concrete proposals but the group are looking for Town Council support; it is not expected to cost much but a road closure would be required.

Councillors were asked to Volunteer; any funding requests should be made to the next F&GP Committee 18/03/2020.

**Future Meetings**

Worcestershire CALC Area meeting 19<sup>th</sup> March 2020 – Cllr Edginton White agreed to attend along with the Town Clerk and the Mayor Cllr John Byng

- 9065 In accordance with the Public Bodies** (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1(2) it was **RESOLVED** to exclude the public and the press from the meeting to allow for discussion of confidential matters relating to any of staff, legal matters or contractual arrangements:

Cllr C Edginton White declared an interest in agenda item 9066 and left the meeting.

The meeting was suspended for a short break from 9.05pm to 9.15pm

**9066 On Going Staffing Matters**

Cllr D Moorhead presented a paper with regard to costs and future actions. It was **RESOLVED** to **Approve** follow up actions.

- 9042 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING** – Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020, 7pm

**The meeting closed at 9.42pm**

**Signed.....**  
**Mayor/Chairman**  
**6<sup>th</sup> April 2020**