



MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

HELD 7TH OCTOBER 2019 at 7.00PM GUILDHALL

PRESENT

Council Members Cllr J Byng - Town Mayor and Meeting Chairman
Cllr L Kearns – Deputy Town Mayor
Cllrs S Billett, A Coleman, R Coleman, S Collingwood, C Edginton-White, P Gittins MBE, P Harrison, H Lacy, D Morehead, R Stanczyszyn

In attendance: Ten Members of the Public
Miss E Thomas, Young Mayor
S Hudson - Town Clerk

8934 MAYOR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Mayor, Cllr J Byng welcomed everyone to the meeting and spoke of the reminder received from CALC about the importance of Councillors attending training sessions.

8935 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr L Davies who was unable to access the Guildhall as there is no lift.

8936 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 Edington White declared Other Disclosable Interests in agenda Items:

- 8944
 - Internal Audit – review of pantomime and music festival – **Involvement in in** both events as the then Deputy Chair of the Community Development Committee and the Chair of the BTC Events Committee
 - Localism – Lease of Riverside North Park Paddling Pool – Involvement as a trustee to the Friends of Riverside North Charity
- 8949
 - Staffing – Cllr C Eginton-White commented that the agenda item was vague and did not clearly identify to which former member of staff the item referred.

Cllr S Billet declared an Other Disclosable Interest

- 8949
 - Staffing – as a facebook friend of the former employee and as a former tutor.

The Mayor, Cllr J Byng declared an Other Disclosable Interest

- 8944
 - Localism – Lease of Riverside North Park Paddling Pool – involvement in Friends of Riverside North Park Group.

8937 COUNCILLORS' DISPENSATIONS

No dispensation requests were submitted for consideration.

8938 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

i. **Members of the public.** Members of the public took the opportunity to speak, as follows:

- 1) **Overhanging foliage and overgrown shrubs on Fort Mahon Place**
A member of the public living in Fort Mahon Place raised concerns about the unkept state of land on one side of the road and that vehicles have difficulty accessing the street due to overgrown trees. The issue has been reported to WCC, no action has been taken. The resident asked who was responsible for this land.
- 2) **Late night drinking, Recycling Bin and Biker:**
A resident raised concerns about:
 - Bewdley becoming a late-night drinking venue. The town is a residential area and the extended opening hours should be reduced.
 - Recycling bins have been removed from the car park, when will they be put back.
 - Had the Town Clerk received a response from Stratford on Avon District Council with regard to Bikers Wednesday.The Town Clerk confirmed no response had been received and that she would chase this up.

b. Representative members of the principal authorities

- 1) **Mrs R Vale, WCC member for Bewdley division** spoke as follows:
 - Agreed to donate £200.00 toward the Christmas Light event
 - Dog Lane paving issues – A lady recently fell in the area of uneven paving. The incident has been reported to WCC; Paul Green (WCC) and Peter Bassett (WFDC) are to review the site, which is in the conservation area.
 - The Bridge - Historic England class the bridge as Category C* on their risk register. They confirm that the bridge requires aesthetic maintenance but no specifics have been given.
 - Welch Gate –a meeting has been arranged with Paul Green (WCC) to give an update following on from the road traffic survey. Agreed to meet with Cllr S Collingridge to discuss the results.
 - Road Safety, 20 is plenty - Alan Amos from WCC will support this if the police will enforce it.
 - Bewdley Library – St Georges hall are looking to extend their premises to incorporate the Library; dependant on planning. This should enhance Library provision in Bewdley.A question was put to Cllr B Vale relating to a traffic numbers survey in Welch Gate. Cllr Vale confirmed that this survey should have been undertaken last month. There is also a need to know where the traffic goes including HGV's. A 20 mph speed limit in town should encourage the use of the by-pass. It has been made clear that no solution is not an option.
- 2) **Mr I Hardman, WCC member for Cookley, Wolverley and Wribbenhall** sent his apologies; the Mayor Cllr J Byng read out Cllr Hardman's report:

Wyre Forest Issues:
 - Work on Kidderminster Train Station continues, with changes to the forecourt taking place. The station has recently been demolished.

- The Ludlow Road Children's respite facility has now been agreed for closure. Children who use this facility will now use a facility in Bromsgrove or Malvern. The facility is outdated and not up to OFSTED and CQC standards as it has twin rooms which are no longer permissible. This decision was taken after full consultation and due regard for all service users' needs. This facility is owned by the Worcestershire Health & Care Trust.
- The former Grange rehabilitation unit has been sold for residential development. Service users who need rehabilitation after hospital are now placed in the independent sector with Wyre Forest.
- A449 Hoobrook Island: Consideration is being given to what type of congestion reduction scheme will be implemented there.

Strategic Issues:

- Worcestershire Children's First has now been launched and began on 1st October, and includes Children's Social Care, Education and Special Needs & Disabilities (SEND). The Company's budget is circa £100million with 800 WCC staff having been transferred into the Company. A recent OFSTED report states that the service is no longer inadequate.
- The Parish Council Conference is at County Hall on 17th October.
- The County Cabinet have approved a County -wide Education Strategy from 2019-2024. This sets out its vision and ambition for Education over the next 5 years.
- SEND Funding: WCC expects to receive an additional £7million in 2020-2021 to cope with the rapidly growing pressures.

Local Issues:

- A456 Roundabout Repairs & Transfer to the District Council's responsibility. I have been assured that this project will soon be actioned allowing the future maintenance to be handed to the District Council.
- Tactiles for Catchems End Zebra Crossing: I have been informed that the materials are at hand and the work will soon be carried out.

3) **Mrs C Edginton-White, WFDC member for Bewdley & Rock** spoke with regard to the District Council licensing committee undertaking a review covering the next 5 years; under consideration are:

- New licenses to prohibit people entering a premise after 11pm
- Late night levy charges on hostellers (paying towards additional policing) – currently there is insufficient evidence to support the levy as incidents are not being reported.

Cllr C Edginton White added that all incidents are worth reporting.

c. Representatives of support services

1) **PC N Chater representing local police** spoke with regarding to the night time economy and incidents that have been reported such as the tree being thrown into the river, shop lifting and assaults.

A question was asked about whether there had been anymore incidents reported at Millennium Green. PC N Chater confirmed there had been no more reports about Millennium Green and that the Police were patrolling the area.

8939 MINUTES: To approve the minutes of previous Town Council meeting.

A suggested amendment to the 02/09/2019 minutes was put to Council for consideration and approval. The amendment was not carried. Cllr C Edginton White spoke of why she considered the minute to be inaccurate.

Following a named vote, it was **RESOLVED** to **AGREE** that the original draft of the minutes of the Town Council meeting, held on 02/09/2019, is a true and accurate record of that meeting

The named vote on the original draft of minutes went as follows:
Proposed Cllr R Coleman, Seconded Cllr H Lacy

For: Cllrs, S Billet, J Byng, A Coleman, S Collingridge, P Harrison, L Kearns, D Morehead,

Against: Cllr C Edginton White

Abstain: Cllrs P Gittins MBE and R Stanczyszyn

8940 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** schedule of accounts as at 30/09/2019.

The following documents were presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee 18/09/2019

- ii. To note the Town Councils cash balances as at 31/08/2019, as general fund
It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the cash balances.
- iii. To note the most recent bank reconciliation
It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the bank reconciliation date 31/08//2019.
- iv. To note actual financial position compared to agreed budget for 2019/20.
It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the current financial position against budget as at 31/08//2019.

8941 COMMITTEE REPORTS

Round-up of draft minutes, reports and updates arising since 02/09/2019:

- i) **Planning Committee**, the minutes of meeting held on 29/08/2019 and the draft minutes of the meeting held on 26/09/2019:

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the Planning Committee's minutes of 29/08/2019 and the draft minutes of 26/09/2019.

Cllr R Stanczyszyn thanked Cllr H Lacy for chairing the meetings in his absence.

- ii) **Finance and General Purposes Committee**, meeting held 18/09/2019.

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the Finance and General Purposes Committee's draft minutes 18/09/2019.

The committee's Chairman Cllr R Coleman, spoke to the committee's recommendations for approval as follows:

- a) Internal Auditor for 2019/20
It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** the use of DKE Audit Services as internal auditors for 2019/20.
- b) Polices for Review and Approval:
It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** the following polices

- BTC002- Memorial Bench Seat Policy

- BTC032 – External Grant Applications Protocols

c) Wyre Hill Sand Park

It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** the storage of the playground digger in the BTC garage until relocation can be agreed.

It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** the purchase of a padlock for the park gate

It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** permission be given to local residents to open and close the Wyre Hill Sand Park gates morning and evening

d) Christmas Light Switch-on Event

It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** the Hire charges for the Lower Load Street Car Park of £400.00

It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** that LSD Promotions Ltd be directly responsible for administering and receiving payment for charity market stalls.

It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** expenditure of up to £500 on stage performers at the Christmas light switch-on event.

i. **Staffing Committee** meeting held 04/09/2019

It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** that public access office opening days be changed from Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday to Monday to Thursday, public access office opening times to remain the same 9am to 3.30pm.

The draft minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held 04/09/2019 were discussed at agenda item **8949**.

8942 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROGRESS

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group leader, Cllr R Stanczyszyn gave Councillors an update on the Green Space Assessment report which identifies several parcels of land around the west of Bewdley, a number of which have high landscape value.

A financial report relating to the Neighbourhood Plan will be presented to the next Finance & General Purposes committee. Cllr R Stanczyszyn confirmed he has been working with Planning Officers from WFDC and that there is a requirement for a screening assessment. There has been a progress meeting with the contractors undertaking the design code. Their work should be completed by the end of the year.

Questions were raised with regard to the need for the design code as one had been previously drafted. A professional design code is needed, the Town Council have not paid for this it was included as part of the Locality funding.

A question was also raised with regard to what the changes had been suggested by WFDC to the BTC Neighbourhood Plan housing policy. Cllr R Stanczyszyn confirmed that there was a number of inclusion that were no longer required and therefore need to be deleted.

8943 ROAD SAFETY GROUP

Deputy Road Safety Group Leader Cllr C Edginton White gave an update of the last meeting 09/09/2019

Cllr S Collingridge thanked Cllr C Edginton White for chairing the meeting in his absence.

A meeting was held on 23/09/2019 by WFDC which included representatives from the Civil Enforcement team, the WFDC Assistant Operations Manager, the Police, WCC Highways, the Mayor Cllr J Byng and the Town Clerk regarding motorbike parking on Severnside South, the following suggestions were discussed and should be considered for **approval**.

- It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** no parking notices be purchased and fixed on the railings near the bandstand on Severnside South stating 'No Parking including Motorbikes'.
- Councillors raised concern about the introduction of large moveable planters in the area around the bandstand as they could cause an obstruction or be used as litter bins. As no costing had been provided the matter was deferred and referred back to the Financial and General Purposes committee for further consideration.

Discussion are also underway with WCC Highways to possibly increase the number of bollards in the area, moving them closer together. Cllr B Vale had agreed to fund the renewal of the bollards. Both the WFDC Civil Enforcement Team and the Police have agreed to monitor the area more closely.

8944 TOWN CLERK'S UPDATES

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

- **Internal Audit -**

The Internal Audit Group meeting 02/10/2019 – reviewed risk policy, risk assessments and pantomime and music festival post event analysis. To be presented to Finance and General Purposes Committee 16/10/19

- **Public Bench**

WCC Highways require photographs of the site on Cleobury Road near Winbrook. where the bench, currently held in the garage, is to be sited. Cllr Coleman agreed to forward photographs to the Town Clerk. Cllr B Vale has agreed in principle to replace damaged benches and pass on-going responsibility to the Town Council.

- **Budget 2020/21**

The Budget Group meeting 02/10/2019 – collate the initial budget proposals with consideration being given to the localism agenda. To be presented to Finance and General Purposes Committee 16/10/19

- **Localism –**

The Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, Cllr R Coleman and the Town Clerk attended a meeting at the WFDC Green Street office on 27/09/2019 to discuss the financial implication of the proposed asset transfers.

It was confirmed that the figures previously supplied had been top-line estimated figures only, the Operation Manager, Steve Brant agreed to provide more accurate data for the areas under discussion.

- Transfer of Load Street public conveniences – following a meeting on 27/09/2019, WFDC were asked to provide a condition report, make good identified repairs to the infrastructure and provide more accurate figures – no response has been received.

- Lease for Riverside North Park paddling pool – the Friends of Riverside North Group have asked permission to fibre-glass line the paddling pool, WFDC have agreed to contact the Friends Group in the first instance with regard to this. BTC have been provided with a copy of the proposed 5-year Paddling Pool lease and 3-year maintenance agreement. Several issues have been identified; these are to be discussed with the WFDC Legal team prior to final approval. WFDC have been asked to provide a condition report and more accurate figures – no response has been received
- The Guildhall – meeting with the Museum Manager 03/10/2019 with regard to the use of the Guildhall meeting room. BTC are unable to sublet or share the room under the current lease. WFDC are to speak to the police directly to discuss their requirements.

WFDC have also been asked to verify what part of the building constitutes the Guildhall, should it include the offices currently used by the Museum staff – no response has been received

Councillors raised concern regarding the accuracy of the figures provided by WFDC in relation to the proposed asset transfers and whether staffing costs were included. There is a lack of transparency, more clarity is required.

The Town Clerk has a meeting with Linda Draycott from WFDC on 08/10/19 to discuss the issues further.

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

8945 CHRISTMAS LIGHT SWITCH ON EVENT

Signal 107 Radio will be managing this year's switch-on event on behalf of the Town Council, Peter Barnett will be sourcing and providing the local acts for the stage entertainment. 10 charity market stalls will be made available to registered charities, these will be managed by LSD Promotions Ltd directly. The Rotary Club are providing the Christmas tree which will be erected on 23/11/2019.

The Town Clerk and the Administration Assistant met with Brynn Hazelwood, as a representative of local traders, to discuss issues relating to the Christmas light event. A meeting is to be arranged with LSD Promotions to discuss market stall placements.

Complaint

The Mayor, Cllr J Byng has spoken to the local trader to discuss the issues raised in their written complaint. The trader's complaint will be noted and taken into account at the Christmas debrief meeting.

8946 MAYOR'S DIARY AND FUTURE EVENTS

- i) To receive an update on the Mayor's diary

The Mayor provided a written update on the events attended

The Mayor, Cllr J Byng wished to record his thanks to Trevor Price for the fabulous American event he attended with the Mayoress on Saturday.

- ii) To note future community events
 - 12/10/19 - Bingo night– A Mayor's Charity event to be held at Shawhedge Road Community Centre from 7pm
 - 27/10/19 - Mayors Sunday
 - 10/11/19 - Remembrance Sunday

- 11/11/19 - Remembrance Day– Councillors are invited to pay tribute at the War Memorial at St Anne’s Church at 11am
- 16/11/19 - Music Night– A Mayor’s Charity event to be held at St George’s Hall time to be confirmed.

8947 ITEMS OF URGENCY OR TO NOTE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Councillors raised concerns about disability access to the Guildhall and how Cllr L Davies can attend future Council meetings. Various options were discussed including a lift.

A 6th form pupil from Bewdley School has asked to use the BTC logo on a project – the Town Clerk was asked to find out more information relating to the project.

8948 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:

The members of the public left the meeting at 8.30pm

8949 STAFFING

Prior to discussions, the Cllr C Edginton White asked what was to be discussed. Once confirmed she left the meeting declaring an interest as a witness in the on-going staffing matter and as a friend of the former employee.

Cllr S Billet left the meeting declaring an interest as a facebook friend of the former employee and a former tutor

Staffing Committee confidential update:

The Chairman of the Staffing Committee, Cllr D Morehead, provided an update on the confidential issues discussed at the staffing committee meeting 04/09/19

Neighbourhood Plan – It was considered no further action was required.

On-Going Staffing Matters – A brief update was given to Council with regard to on-going matters relating to an ex-member of staff and the actions taken to date.

It was **RESOLVED to Agree** that the Town Clerk respond to correspondence received.

8950 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING – Monday 4th November 2019 - 7pm

There being no further business this meeting was closed at 8.50pm

**Signed.....
Mayor/Chairman
4th November 2019**