

SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, FRANKWELL QUAY, SHREWSBURY
AT 6.00PM ON MONDAY 21 JANUARY 2019**

PRESENT

Councillors P Nutting (Mayor), P Gillam (Deputy Mayor), J Dean, Mrs H Fraser, I Jones, N Laurens, Ms J Mackenzie, Mrs P Moseley, A Mosley, K Pardy, A Phillips, K Roberts and D Vasmer (arrived late).

IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Gary Farmer (Operations Manager), Andy Watkin (Responsible Finance Officer), Rebecca Oliver (Committee Clerk), John Campion (West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner), Superintendent Mo Lansdale (West Mercia Police Commander for Shropshire), a colleague and one member of the press.

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors P Adams, N Green, H Taylor and Mrs R Wall.

PRAYERS

In the absence of the Council Chaplain prayers were not said.

59/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Shropshire Councillors	Twin hatted members declared personal interests in matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council
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60/18 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 12 November 2018 were circulated as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 12 November 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

61/18 MATTERS ARISING

- 61.1 REF: MIN 47/18 PUBLIC QUESTIONS** – The Town Clerk confirmed that she is awaiting a response from Shropshire Council to her letter about Members’ concerns about road safety in Shrewsbury and particularly on New Street.
- 61.2 REF: MIN 46.3 TWINNING WITH ZUTPHEN TOWN** – The Town Clerk confirmed that since all twinning activities have ceased with Zutphen, the bank account will require closing and its contents transferring. This matter will be added to the F&GP agenda for discussion.
- 61.3 REF: MIN 57/18 BIG TOWN PLAN** – Councillor Laurens thanked the Town Council for the letter he received commending his work on the Big Town Plan. He appreciated this recognition and extended out the praise to the many others who have contributed to the success of the Big Town Plan.

62/18 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 62.1 MAYOR & DEPUTY MAYOR’S ENGAGEMENTS** - Details of the Mayor & Deputy Mayor’s engagements for November, December and January were circulated to members.

RESOLVED:

That the Mayor and Deputy Mayor’s schedule of engagements be noted.

- 62.2 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR AND TOWN CLERK** - There were no announcements from the Mayor or Town Clerk.

63/18 PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

There were no questions received from members for consideration.

64/18 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

There were no questions received from members for consideration.

65/18 LOCAL POLICING IN SHREWSBURY

The meeting was joined by John Campion (West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner) and Superintendent Mo Lansdale (West Mercia Police Commander for Shropshire). They each outlined their main duties and responsibilities.

The Force are currently agreeing their budget which commits £1 million investment in crime prevention initiatives including CCTV and an additional £50k per Community Safety Partnership (CSP) for 2019/20 is being made available which is accessible to the Town Council. The Council Tax will increase by £19.50 per household to solely fund 115 additional Officers in West Mercia, in addition to the 100 already recruited. This takes the total number of Officers to 2150 for West Mercia, the highest since 2012.

The Police & Crime Commissioner is responsible for a £211 million budget which is made up from 55% government grant and the rest from tax paid by residents. A further £1 million is earmarked for crime prevention activities and the Town Council are invited to consider how this would be best spent.

Superintendent Mo Lansdale and her team cover operational work in Shropshire working with Safe Neighbourhood Teams, Patrol Officers, CID, Harm Hubs and Assessment Units. They have three main priorities; safer roads (road collisions and travelling criminality), safer people (vulnerable people and child exploitation) and safer homes (burglaries and domestic abuse).

The Officers responded to Members' questions:

COUNTY LINES – West Mercia Police are working to crack down on county lines (mobile phone numbers used to commit drug offences). Drug dealing causes great concern as the dealers are often exploiting vulnerable people i.e. children as couriers of the drugs. The children are victims and are not always aware of what they are involved in. Cuckooing (a form of crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for drug dealing) is also a problem in Shrewsbury with 6 or 7 properties used for this purpose.

Partnership working is leading to identifying vulnerable people and their premises. The Local Policing Priority Team have been working at Shrewsbury Train Station today which has resulted in positive information gathering. Officers will be attending schools to educate school children of the dangers of these crimes and the implications of getting involved.

SCHOOL CHILDREN TARGETS – Post detention pupils are being targeted by drug dealers when leaving secondary school. This causes concern and the Superintendent agreed to provide extra visibility at Meole Secondary School. Parents will also be taught to spot the warning signs that their children are involved. This is a national issue.

COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH CONCEPT – West Mercia Police embrace any initiative that is in the interest of keeping the public safe. They are willing to consider any scheme, and if appropriate support with training and equipment. As 'the car' is the biggest threat to the public's safety, this is providing the focus of Police Officers. Preventative work with motorists is being delivered by Officers and Citizens through the Community Speed Watch scheme. Any Councillors and their residents can get involved and should contact West Mercia Police if interested. The focus is on preventing road accidents, but any funds raised from speeding awareness courses and fines are reinvested in road safety schemes.

POLICING 30MPH ZONES VS 20MPH ZONES – Enforcing 20mph zones is more difficult than 30mph zones due to the legislation. The Superintendent confirmed that not all 20mph zones are enforceable, particularly outside schools, some are advisory only. The Police & Crime Commissioner is in favour of 20mph zones in the right places. The Superintendent agreed to send the committee more details about the legislation surrounding enforcing 20mph zones and confirm which are enforceable.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & REFUGE FOR WOMEN – The nearest refuge for women is outside Shrewsbury in a rural area. Removing victims from their abusive home to a rural location can make them feel isolated and draw them back to their dangerous home environment. Therefore, the Police prefer to remove the perpetrator or put the victim in a hotel until the home environment can be made safe with a long term solution. There is no demand for another refuge in Shrewsbury.

HOMELESSNESS & OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION – Homelessness is on the increase in Shrewsbury and this town is popular with beggars and the homeless as it has a main town centre, it is a lucrative town where £80 a day can be earned from begging and those on the streets feel safe. Many choose to be on the streets and have turned down offers of accommodation. HOST (Homeless Outreach Street Triage) is still operational and provides all round support from various organisations. The Ark charity supports the homeless and Team Shrewsbury is instrumental in information gathering and can be contacted via Ruth Jones, Shrewsbury Town Council. An initiative by West Mercia Police of removing bedding left on the streets, as they are deemed a health hazard, is being actioned and supported by the Ark.

All partners are trying to find long-term solutions to homelessness in Shrewsbury.

NUMBER OF EXTRA OFFICERS IN SHREWSBURY – The distribution of the new 115 full time officers will be controlled by the Chief Constable but is expected to be around 15 in North Shropshire. Some will be based in Oswestry but will respond to calls from Shrewsbury. This is a record year for new recruits and 8 new officers will be starting working in Shropshire in the next 16 weeks.

The public are urged to report every crime to West Mercia Police Force to help them monitor demand for additional Police Officers. The Police aim to respond to all emergencies and answer 90% of 999 calls within 10 seconds. This week they have answered around 8500 calls, 70% of which was within 30 seconds.

The Police now have technology to access computer files remotely via laptops and smartphones, therefore increasing their time being visible on the streets.

USING DRUG DEALERS AS BAIT – The Police Force do not use criminals as bait for catching more elusive criminals. They deal with the initial crime committed and often the accused will be carrying evidence which will lead the Police to finding further criminals by gathering information and intelligence.

BUDGET CUTS FROM GOVERNMENT – In the 2000's the funding was £2400 raised from two years of council tax increases, not government funding. In 2010 it dropped to just below this amount and last year was £1900. The Police & Crime Commissioner requires £2150 to be fully operational and so is hoping the proposed Budget will be agreed. The Force is spending more but things also cost more.

Councillor D Vasmer joined the meeting.

LOCAL POLICE NEWSLETTER – Councillor Roberts reported that he has received his first copy of the Local Police Newsletter which he has found useful and informative.

SUPPORT OF POLICE FORCE – The Police Force are here to support the public and have twelve Officers and a Sergeant available in Shrewsbury. The website; www.westmercia.police.uk has

all the contacts of local Police staff and useful information. Councillors are asked to encourage their constituents to report all crimes and contact the team if support is required.

LOW LEVEL ANTI – SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND GANG RELATED PETTY CRIME – All incidents of this nature should be reported to the Police which will help to understand the scale of the problem and make resources available. Police will be deployed to such incidents despite them being petty crimes to alleviate the fear caused to the public. Team Shrewsbury keep a log of anti-social behaviour and the Town Clerk will ask Ruth Jones to circulate this to all members.

TRAINING – The Town Council organised for Craig Pinkney, a criminologist, speaker, researcher and leading responder to gangs and serious youth violence, to provide training. Fifty-five individuals from various organisations attended the training session. The Town Council is also looking to bring training awareness programmes into schools.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (i) Superintendent Mo Lansdale provides more detail on the legislations that inhibits the enforcement of 20mph speed restrictive zones together with a list of enforceable 20mph zones.**
- (ii) The Town Clerk investigates funding opportunities on the OPCC Website that the Town Council may wish to take advantage of.**

66/18 LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – PREFERRED OPTIONS

Following various previous discussions, presentations from Eddie West (Senior Planning Policy Officer – Shropshire Council) and Berrys and points raised at the Planning Committee meeting, the Town Clerk collated Members' concerns into a letter that was circulated prior to the meeting.

Following the last Planning Committee, the Town Clerk sought clarification on how the criteria for assessing preferred sites was considered; details had been circulated to members by email prior to the meeting. An official response to this consultation is required by mid-February 2019.

Councillor Dean reported that seventy people attended the Shrewsbury Going Forward conference which was deemed a great success.

The following comments were made:

- The most controversial site was SHR216 and members questioned its inclusion purely in the fact it would fund part of the North West Relief Road
- The need for a Boundary Review was ever more essential and should be considered as a matter of urgency. The Mayor reported that the issues of the Local Plan Review expanding the development boundaries of Towns beyond their parish boundaries is widespread and this is causing angst between the towns and their neighbouring parishes. There was likely to be consideration for a Boundary Review by Shropshire

Council following the next elections. The current boundaries will not affect the agreement of the Local Plan Review.

- Members want to ensure that the Local Plan Review accords with the Big Town Plan and questioned whether there was a need for other Supplementary Planning Guidance to meet the requirements of the Big Town Plan.
- Connectivity is important i.e. walking/cycling routes and request they are included in strategies to ensure they get implemented.
- There needs to be a greater emphasis on Climate Change and mitigation to work towards a zero carbon society
- Master planning to protect the countryside walks was also requested as the Planning Policy does not cover this.
- There needs to be provision for this plan to meet the scale of change over the plan period.

Councillor Dean was asked if there was any mechanism for the public views to be fed into the process. The Forum will look into this and feed back to Council.

The Town Clerk was thanked for collating Members' responses. With the addition of the comments raised, everyone was in favour of the Town Clerk submitting the circulated letter on their behalf.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Clerk adds the comments raised and then submits the letter to the Local Plan Review consultation on behalf of the Town Council.

67/18 FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 03 December 2018 and 14 January 2019 were submitted as circulated and read.

Councillor Mosley circulated a list of Cross Town Projects, and the sources of funding, to be completed during 2019 and 2020. This was agreed at the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting on 14 January and most Members have contributed to it. Officers have reviewed the whole of Shrewsbury and all wards are represented. It is hoped that this can become a rolling program of works if funding can be found annually, and it demonstrates the Town Council's commitment to making Shrewsbury a better place. An operational plan for starting the work will be drawn up. These projects use all of the current Neighbourhood Funds which are expected to be replenished by future new developments planned in Shrewsbury.

Councillor Mosley highlighted the main action points from the minutes including the agreement to increase the precept and the setting of the 2019/2020 budget. He clarified that within the three year medium term financial plan, the redevelopment of the Quarry will be considered as will the sourcing of permanent headquarters for Shrewsbury Town Council staff. These will be long-term objectives.

Councillor Roberts announced that the Shrewsbury In Bloom committee are looking for new members and asked that any interested Members, or residents, contact him.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 03 December 2018 and 14 January 2019 be accepted and approved.

68/18 RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 05 December 2018 were submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 05 December 2018 be accepted and approved.

69/18 PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 20 November, 11 December 2018 and 08 January 2019 be submitted as circulated and read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 20 November, 11 December 2018 and 08 January 2019 be accepted and approved.

70/18 APPLICATION TO REGISTER THE GREENFIELDS RECREATION GROUND AS A TOWN OR VILLAGE GREEN

The Town Clerk circulated a Notice from Shropshire Council regarding an application to register the Greenfields Recreation Ground as a Town or Village Green. The public consultation ends on 09 March 2019. The Town Council owns and manages the site and Officers have concerns that if this request be granted, they will be severely restricted in carrying out any maintenance works on the site i.e. constructing fencing. The Town Council intends for this land to remain as a recreational ground with open public access in perpetuity and can see no benefit of changing the site's status.

As the site is accessed from Herongate, Ditherington and Greenfield areas, Members agree that the Town Council is the right authority for managing the site.

Councillor A Phillips expressed his support for the application as it would give the residents more powers to control the site.

Councillor Mosley proposed and it was seconded that the Town Council objects to the application.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Town Council objects to the application for registration of the Greenfields Recreation Ground as a Town or Village Green.**
- (ii) That the Town Clerk writes to Shropshire Council outlining the Town Council's position.**

71/18 BUDGET 2019/20

Members noted and unanimously approved the setting of the 2019/2020 expenditure revenue budget of £3,452,414 and the increased precept levy for 2019/2020 of £1,233,447.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the revenue expenditure budget be set at £3,452,414**
- (ii) That a Precept of £1,233,447 be levied against the ratepayers of Shrewsbury**