

## SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

### MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, FRANKWELL QUAY, SHREWSBURY AT 6.00PM ON MONDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2019

#### PRESENT

Councillors P Gillam (Chair), Mrs G Burgess, Mrs H Fraser, N Green, Mrs K Halliday, I Jones, Mrs P Moseley, A Mosley, P Nutting, A Phillips, K Roberts, D Vasmer & Mrs R Wall,

#### IN ATTENDANCE

Helen Ball (Town Clerk), Gary Farmer (Operations Manager), Andy Watkin (Responsible Finance Officer), Carol Pullen (Acting Committee Clerk) & two members of the public.

#### APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors P Adams, J Dean, Ms J Mackenzie & K Pardy.

#### 52/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Shropshire Councillors	Twin hatted members declared personal interests in matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.
Councillor Mrs G Burgess	Declared a personal interest in Item 16 ref: loading bays as she has a business in the town centre

#### 53/19 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 2 September 2019 were circulated as read.

#### RESOLVED:

**That the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 2 September 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.**

#### 54/19 MATTERS ARISING

##### 54.1 Ref Min 50/19 Harlescott Sunday Market

The Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer had been given delegated authority to seek the most appropriate mechanism for the future running of the market in collaboration with the Finance & General Purpose Committee. The Town Clerk reported that two tenders had been received and the Responsible Finance Officer was

currently undertaking financial due diligence after which the tender would be awarded and the Finance & General Purpose Committee notified.

## **55/19 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**55.1 Mayor & Deputy Mayor's Engagements** - Details of the Mayor & Deputy Mayor's engagements for September and October were circulated to members.

The Mayor reported on several of his recent engagements and re-iterated how much he was enjoying undertaking the role.

### **RESOLVED:**

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

## **55.2 Announcements from the Mayor and Town Clerk**

The Town Clerk announced

- Following the resolution to work towards paperless Council meetings all Councillors had been e mailed about whether or not they wished to receive paper copies. The default position would be **not**, unless otherwise requested.
- The Town Clerk had e-mailed all Councillors on 21 October about the Urban Tree Challenge Fund, they were reminded that they need to advise the Town Clerk of any trees they wish to be considered as the bid must be prepared by the end of November.
- VE Day 75 Commemorations co-incide with the 225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Shropshire Yeomanry, who are looking to exercise their Freedom rights within Shrewsbury. The Town Council together with the Yeomanry and the BID are looking to organising a collective commemoration of the VE Day 75 Commemorations on the w/e 8/9/10 May 2020.
- Remembrance Parade, Service at St Chad's, Wreathlaying & March Past – Sunday 10 November. The parade will leave the Castle at 9 am for a 9.45 am Service at St Chads followed by Wreathlaying in the Quarry and March Past on St Chad's Terrace.
- Christmas Lights Switch On – Wednesday 20 November at 6.30 pm.
- Carols in the Square – Wednesday 18 December at 6 pm.

## **56/19 PUBLIC QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

No public questions or comments had been received.

## **57/19 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

There were no questions received from members of the Council.

## **58/19 TIM PRITCHARD – SHREWSBURY PROGRAMME MANAGER**

Members welcomed Tim Pritchard who has recently joined Shropshire Council as Shrewsbury Programme Manager (Town Curator). He comes from a background in property construction and design and delivery of projects so is hoping to use his experience and expertise to develop and deliver projects within the town. He gave an overview of some of the imminent projects in which he would be involved, master planning of the town centre, improvements to walking routes, including improving access routes to the Flaxmill and links from the railway station to Abbey Foregate, consideration of modes of transport with a view to reducing car dependency, improvements to park and ride and Castle Street visioning.

There followed an opportunity for questions from members.

Councillor Mosley asked for an update on the Dana footpath. Despite initial delays with the SHS, work had been agreed eighteen months ago but had still not commenced. Now that the Dana Footbridge was re-opening, he felt it was unacceptable that works had still not commenced.

Tim responded that he was very aware of the delay and Heads of Terms had now been agreed with the SHS and the necessary agreements received from Conservation. To avoid any disruption during the Christmas period, the works were expected to commence in February although there was still some signing off of the licence required and Tim agreed to clarify and report back.

Councillor Phillips asked that consideration be given to cleaning up under the railway bridge as this is not a pleasant entry into the town. Tim confirmed that this has been raised on several occasions and they are seeking a permanent solution. They have been working with two consultancies who have identified environmental issues.

Councillor Fraser asked for consideration to be given to cycling with the growing appetite for reduction in car use and the Council's commitment to becoming carbon neutral. She felt there was much that could be done to improve transport links and would be interested to learn how Shropshire Council could be an ambassador in connectivity.

Councillor Green asked whether Tim would be involved in offering advice at planning stage in relation to larger scale developments and issues where a broader view was needed.

Tim confirmed that although the planning aspect was not within his remit he felt that we could advise within strategic documentation such as the Place Plan.

Councillor Halliday asked whether the chicane style barriers could be removed around the town to support cycling in Shrewsbury.

Councillor Vasmer was concerned about disability access to the town and their ability to use public transport.

Tim advised that the Big Town Plan Group was working on a movement strategy for the town. Rather than just a Transport Strategy, this would look more in detail at spatial analysis and connectivity alongside other reviews including improvements to Park & Ride and the Parking Strategy.

Tim assured members that discussions are taking place to ensure that long-term solutions are sought, not just quick fix solutions.

The Mayor thanked Tim for attending and answering questions.

## **59/19 MOTIONS**

### **59.1 LOCAL ELECTRICITY BILL**

In presenting his motion to Council, Councillor David Vasmer gave a brief outline. The Local Electricity Bill would make it easier for people to set up renewable energy companies and give the Council a great opportunity to become a key player and endorse their commitment towards renewable energy. He asked that Council support the Motion

#### **RESOLVED:**

##### **That Shrewsbury Town Council:**

- (i) acknowledges the efforts that this council has made to tackle climate emergency;**
- (ii) recognises that councils can play a central role in creating sustainable communities, particularly through the provision of locally generated renewable electricity;**
- (iii) further recognises**
  - that very large financial setup and running costs involved in selling locally generated renewable electricity to local customers result in it being impossible for local renewable electricity generators to do so,**
  - that making these financial costs proportionate to the scale of a renewable electricity supplier's operation would create significant opportunities for councils to be providers of locally generated renewable electricity directly to local people, businesses and organisations, and**
  - that revenues received by councils that became local renewable electricity providers could be used to help fund local greenhouse gas emissions reduction measures and to help improve local services and facilities;**

- (iv) **accordingly resolves to support the Local Electricity Bill, currently supported by a cross-party group of 115 MPs, and which, if made law, would make the setup and running costs of selling renewable electricity to local customers proportionate by establishing a Right to Local Supply; and**
- (v) **further resolves to**
- **inform the local media of this decision,**
  - **write to local MPs, asking them to support the Bill, and**
  - **write to the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, Power for People, (at 8 Delancey Passage, Camden, London NW1 7NN or [info@powerforpeople.org.uk](mailto:info@powerforpeople.org.uk)) expressing its support.**

## **59.2 MOUNT HOUSE**

Members were asked to consider a Motion put forward by Councillor Ms J Mackenzie. In the absence of Councillor Ms Mackenzie the Town Clerk appraised Members on the background to this.

Mount House is part of a large Public Asset Portfolio leased to Mapeley Estates from HM Treasury. It is currently sub-leased to the Valuation Office whose existing lease is due to expire shortly and who have intimated that their Shrewsbury operations shall be relocated to other VOA estate.

Shrewsbury Town Council, and other interested public organisations, saw the potential for acquiring the lease for public benefit and formed the Mount House Steering Group in January 2018 under the Chairmanship of Councillor Jane Mackenzie.

Since then, there have been ongoing discussions with Mapeley Estates and the steering group about the future of the building and various meetings at which it was acknowledged there was significant interest in the asset given its relevance to Charles Darwin and their correspondence related more to Mount House than any of the other 600 buildings in the portfolio. At the time they were keen that it would come into public ownership, and supported the aims of the steering group and gave interested parties until November last year to express interest.

University Centre Shrewsbury in conjunction with the Wildlife Trust made a formal bid for the lease, a sum which reflected the current value of the property less known works to bring it to acceptable use. It was intended that floors above ground level would be used for the University, whilst part of the ground floor, outside courtyard and gardens could be used to enhance the visitor experience.

In March 2019 Shropshire Star ran a story about Mr Marchant being interested in the building and efforts were made by key players to enter into discussions about collaborative working.

It wasn't until recently a front page article in the Shropshire Star reporting the agreed purchase of the lease by Mr Marchant, that the Mount House Steering Group were made aware that the UCS Bid had not been successful.

Following discussions with Mapeley, UCS subsequently withdrew their tabled bid, unable to match the new bid.

**RESOLVED:**

**That Shrewsbury Town Council notes with interest recent newspaper articles about the purchase of Mount House by Mr Marchant. Given the significant local, national and international interest this building attracts in terms of promotion of the Darwin connections to Shrewsbury and associated tourism potential, the Town Council invites Mr Marchant to a future meeting of Council to present his ideas for use of the building, his business model in supporting academia and education and the potential for retaining this building as a visitor attraction.**

## **60/19 FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 30 September 2019 were submitted as circulated and read.

The Town Clerk drew members attention to the following:

- (i) Ref Minute 34/19 – Whitehall Medical Practice** – A reply had been received from the CCG and had been circulated to all members. The Town Clerk advised that the CCG would send representation to the Full Council meeting on 20 January 2020.
- (ii) Ref Minute 38/19 – Climate Change Action Plan** – Following the recommendation by F&GP Committee, Council were asked to adopt the Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- (iii) Ref Minute 39/19 (ii) – Upton Lane BMX** – Council were asked to support the F&GP Recommendation that a budget be established in the Capital Budget for 2020/21 for the rebuild of the Upton Lane BMX.
- (iv) Ref Minute 40/19 – Christmas Lights Tendering** – The Town Clerk highlighted to members the resolution agreed by F&GP of raised expenditure on Christmas Lights of up to £60k.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That that it be noted that a member of the CCG would attend the meeting of Full Council on 20 January 2020 to give an overview of their medium and long term plans.**
- (ii) That the Climate Emergency Action Plan as recommended at Finance & General Purpose Committee on 30 September 2019 be adopted.**
- (iii) That a specific budget be established for the Upton Lane BMX in the 2020/21 Capital Programme.**
- (iv) That the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 30 September 2019 be accepted and approved.**

## **61/19 RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 2 October 2019 were submitted as circulated and read.

**Ref Minute 43/19 – Charter for Walking Neighbourhoods**– the Town Clerk made contact with the Ramblers Association who had advised that the Charter was in its infancy and at this stage they were seeking support from Councillors across the country. The Town Clerk had prepared a draft letter giving Members collective support for this Charter and showcasing some of the work already done within Shrewsbury. Members agreed that the Town Clerk take this forward.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) That the Town Clerk write to the Ramblers Association giving support to the Charter for Walking Neighbourhoods and that Shrewsbury Town Council would welcome the opportunity to work with The Ramblers, both locally and nationally to develop a greater appreciation for the outdoors, encourage people to have more active lifestyles and also lobby those nationally to change policy about supporting these kind of initiatives.**
  
- (ii) That the minutes of the Recreation & Leisure Committee meeting held on 2 October 2019 be accepted and approved.**

## **62/19 PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 17 September, 08 October & 29 October 2019 were submitted as circulated and read.

Councillor Green drew Members attention to the change of format of the Planning Committee Minutes. To comply with GDPR the name and address of the applicant would no longer be shown on the minutes.

### **RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 17 September, 08 October & 29 October 2019 be accepted and approved.**

## **63/19 CIVICS COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Civics Committee meeting held on 30 September were submitted as circulated and read.

The Town Clerk reiterated the need to maintain the continuity of the Mayor and asked members to consider what level of support they thought was needed in terms of Mayor's Officer and vehicle, secretarial support and Mayoral allowance.

Members agreed that the Mayoral allowance needed reviewing in light of the range of duties expected of the Mayor and this may encourage more councillors to consider stepping up to the position.

The Mayor was increasingly being asked to attend functions outside of the Parish boundaries and there followed discussions on the electoral boundaries. Councillor Nutting said that although the Electoral Commission were not prepared to consider boundary changes within the wider electoral divisions, there have been discussions with Shropshire Council as to addressing the disparity in Parish Boundaries. With large developments planned on the outskirts of the town, there is huge potential for change.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That Council continues to recognise the importance of the Mayoralty in terms of its profile and local/regional recognition and provides the necessary support to Councillors to take on the responsibility of the role;**
- (ii) That the Finance & General Purpose Committee look to reviewing the Mayoral Allowance alongside other internal civic budgets;**
- (iii) That the Personnel Committee look to recruitment of a new Mayor's Officer once the current incumbent formalises his intentions to retire;**
- (iv) That Officers explore options for a replacement Mayoral Vehicle;**
- (v) That the Town Clerk explore training courses for Councillors to understand the Mayor's role as a Civic Head as well as Chairman of Council;**
- (vi) That the Town Clerk look to ways in which the role of a Town Councillor can be promoted ahead of the 2021 elections to encourage more people to stand;**
- (vii) That the Finance & General Purpose Committee consider making formal representations to Shropshire Council regarding the need to undertake a Periodic Electoral Review for Shrewsbury.**
- (viii) That the minutes of the Civics Committee meeting held on 30 September 2019 be accepted and approved.**

**64/19 JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 06 October were submitted as circulated and read.

Councillor Mosley reported that there had been significant discussions about Job Evaluation and the future of the Quarry Depot.

He drew attention to Minute 4.4 and encouraged Councillors to visit the various sites in order to be more familiar with the Town Council's assets and engage more with staff and learn more about their individual roles.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the Joint Consultative Committee meeting held on 06 October 2019 be accepted and approved.**

*Councillor Nutting left the meeting*

## **65/19 YOUTH CONSULTATION**

Council considered Shropshire Council's Youth Support Consultation. The Town Clerk had prepared a draft response for members to consider. A discussion ensued regarding the development of a County-wide youth service and how it would impact on Shrewsbury.

There was collective support for a co-ordinated approach to developing a youth service in the Shrewsbury area and members asked the Town Clerk to amend the response accordingly.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Town Clerk write to Shropshire Council expressing concerns on the proposals and urging Shropshire Council to consider both Councils working together to maximise use of collective resources in a seamless programme for Shrewsbury.**

## **66/19 CAR PARKING STRATEGY**

Members considered proposed changes to Shropshire Council's Parking Strategy. The Town Clerk had prepared a draft response for members to consider. Members were particularly concerned about the loading bays as they see these as crucial for maintaining a vibrant early evening and night-time economy and respectfully requested that the loading bays are only for that specific use between 6.00 am & 6.00 pm.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Town Clerk write to Shropshire Council with the Town Council's response to the proposals set out in the Parking Strategy.**

## **67/19 LIBRARY STRATEGY – ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

Members considered Shropshire Council's Library Strategy and their response to this. The Town Clerk had prepared a draft response for members to consider. Members were somewhat confused as to the purpose of the strategy, seeing it as a little vague, but they all agreed that Libraries played a vital role in the community as a space for social interaction, quiet contemplation and innovation.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Town Clerk write to Shropshire Council in response to the Library Strategy expressing Council's view that Libraries continue to play a key role and are crucial to community life.**

*3 members of the public left the meeting*

**68/19 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:**

**That in accordance with s1(2) Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960, members of the public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that the following items being considered involve the disclosure of confidential information.**

**69/19 PERSONNEL COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 23 October were submitted as circulated and read.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) That a Deputy Town Clerk be recruited on J12 with delegated authority of Recruitment Panel to appoint.**
- (ii) That recommended grades be agreed upon changes to Town Clerk & Operations Manager Grades and backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.**
- (iii) That the Job Evaluation Policy be approved.**
- (iv) That the Staffing Structure be approved.**
- (v) That the Scheme of Delegation be approved.**
- (vi) That the Minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting held on 23 October 2019 be accepted and approved.**