



MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** held in the Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Ludlow on **WEDNESDAY 5th MAY 2011** at **7.00PM**

ATM/01 PRESENT

Chairman:	Councillor Aitken, Town Mayor
Councillors:	Councillors Davies; Jackson; McCormack; Newbold; Pound; Parry; Smithers; Wilcox
Officers:	Veronica Calderbank, Town Clerk; Naomi Brotherton; Secretary/Admin/Finance
Public:	15

ATM/02 WELCOME BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the order of business.

ATM/03 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Councillors, Callendar, Hunt, Leyton-Purrier and Pope.

ATM/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the terms of the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (England) Order 2007 issued under Section 51 of the Local Government Act 2000 Members declared interests as follows:

Personal Interests

<u>Member</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
V. Parry	Ludlow in Bloom	Chairman
J. Smithers	Ludlow in Bloom	Vice-Chairman

Prejudicial Interests

There were no prejudicial interests declared.

ATM/05 VOTING

The Mayor advised the Meeting that if a vote is called, only Electors of the Town were eligible to vote. He added that any decision taken at this meeting is only advisory and will be referred to Council for consideration and to make a final decision.

ATM/06 POWERPOINT PRESENTATION ON THE WORK OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

The Mayor made a Powerpoint presentation to the meeting, he stated that the Town Council was very efficient in what it had done in the past year and working practices between Councillors and Town Council staff had been effective and successful.

Progress

He informed the meeting that the finances were in good order but the Town Council was forever seeking good practices to make tax payers money reach further.

The Mayor commented however, that communication between the Town Council and Shropshire Council could be improved and this was an ongoing process.

Award Winning Council Market

The Mayor reported that the Market had won the best Town Council Market of the year and had celebrated recently with the traders and public. Without the help and support of Chris Bayliss, the Market Manager and Sean Turgoose, the award would not have been possible.

Focus on Youth Matters

He went on to say that youth matters in the Town were a major issue with youngsters migrating to other areas of the country as they could see no future in Ludlow. He stressed the need to support education, training and employment.

Market Town Revitalisation Fund

The Mayor explained that money from Shropshire Council had been allocated to Market Towns with Ludlow netting £400k for capital expenditure. £350k had now been allocated, following applications from 22 projects of various sizes. Not all the projects were successful and the final decision was made by Shropshire Council.

Talking to Other Parishes

He explained that talking to other Parishes had been invaluable and this was made possible with forums such as the Local Joint Committee's organised by Shropshire Council. Joint discussions had already been carried out regarding the Eco Park, the new proposed caravan park and the closure of Ludford Bridge. He added that discussions were ongoing regarding weight and vehicle length restrictions to egress the bridge.

Town Plan

The Mayor explained that the Town Plan had been completed and copies were available at the meeting. He stressed that this was a working document and would be revisited in six months to be refreshed.

The Mayor then invited the Town Clerk to speak about projects.

The Buttercross

The Town Clerk explained that phase I, exterior painting of the Buttercross, was due to be completed shortly. The cupola had now been treated and restored, as had the weathervane. Phase II works was due to commence shortly.

Castle Gardens

She stated that soil samples were being sent for testing as the plants in one of the beds did not thrive. She went on to point out the four photographs on the slides which included the Town Walls, Buttercross, Castle Gardens and Castle Walks and explained that a Heritage Lottery Bid was being drawn up to include an education element which English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Bid had introduced as part of the new criteria. She acknowledged that the Buttercross was an axial point in Ludlow and would be perfect for an Interpretation/Education Centre and had received a letter from Dr Speight to this effect.

Revitalisation Monies

The Town Clerk pointed to the slide presentation and invited questions.

Q How would the Interpretation Centre have an impact on the Visitor Information Centre?

The Town Clerk explained that she had had no request formally, or informally, for the Visitor Information Centre or museum to relocate to the Buttercross. However, she would be compiling a report on all the Council's properties to be considered at Full Council when details were available, there was no plan to do this.

The Mayor further added that whilst this option been discussed at the Local Joint Committee no decisions had been made.

Town Clerk's Report - Staffing

The Town Clerk thanked all the current staff for their expertise and support. She denied rumours that there more staff and stated that it was the opposite with one less on the administration team. She went on to say that two members of the Direct Labour Force (DLF) had left the previous year, which only left two full-timers. Therefore the Town Council had taken on four temporary members to help with the increased duties. She explained that the two vacant positions had been advertised in the Job Centre and website but had had a poor response and therefore it would be advertised in the local press in due course.

ATM/06 SERVICES COMMITTEE – COUNCILLOR PARRY

The Mayor invited Councillor Parry, as Chairman of the Services Committee to speak and she opened her remarks by saying what a pleasure it was to be part of Ludlow Town Council. She explained the following services in Ludlow provided by the Town Council:-

Ludlow in Bloom

Councillor Parry advised the meeting that Ludlow in Bloom is discussed at the Services Committee and that she was Vice-Chairman and Councillor Smithers, Chairman. She reported that Ludlow had been awarded Gold this year but it was close to being awarded silver and appealed for new membership to Ludlow in Bloom.

Memorial Bench Policy

She informed the meeting that a new Memorial Bench Policy had been approved by the Council. Any benches needing to be replaced or additions would be uniform and the type had been chosen by the Committee.

Grass Cutting

Councillor Parry outlined that all the grassed open spaces and play area were cut once a week which, was a credit to the DLF, as this service level is not offered by other Town Councils.

Cemetery

She went on to say that security had increased since the new oak Chapel doors had been installed.

Linney

Councillor Parry advised the meeting that tenders for the erosion work had been opened but the contractor would be decided on at Full Council on the 9th May and that funding would shortly be received.

Toilets

Councillor Parry reported that the Town Council was now responsible for the public conveniences and any problems should be reported to the Town Council.

The Town Clerk added that coin boxes could be fitted if agreed by full Council on the 9th May.

ATM/07 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WORKING GROUP

The Mayor invited Councillor Jackson as Chairman of the Christmas Lights Working Groups to explain the changes that had occurred during the year.

Councillor Jackson explained that planning for the Christmas lights started in the Summer and met regularly up until switch on. She advised the meeting that new energy saving LED lights had been purchased which made a saving in electricity of 75% as well as helping the planet. The old lights had not gone to waste but had been used to on the tree that had been positioned on Castle Square.

ATM/08 REPRESENTATIONAL COMMITTEE

The Mayor invited Councillor Wilcox as Chair of the Representation Committee to explain its function.

Councillor Wilcox described Shropshire Council as the Planning Authority which consults the Town Council on planning applications/issues in the Town. Other than being asked for its opinion the Town Council could not influence any decision. He advised the meeting that an Officer from Shropshire Council now attended the meetings which had made the process run more smoothly.

He went on to explain that the Committee receives applications for grants and the annual budget is set at £2,000 with a maximum grant of £200 being awarded.

Another function of the Committee is to receive consultation papers from Shropshire Council e.g highways matters and any decisions are formalised at Full Council before reporting back to Shropshire Council.

Councillor Wilcox also explained that Councillors were representatives on outside bodies, meaning that Councillors sit on committees such as Ludlow in Bloom or the Ludlow Conference Centre.

ATM/09 POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Mayor invited Councillor McCormack to speak on the function of the Policy & Finance Committee.

Councillor McCormack advised that the Committee had two functions, one of Policy and one of Finance. She explained that through the Policy function the Town Plan had been compiled and thanked Councillors for their help.

She stated that the Town Council's finances two years ago were in a 'horrible' situation as they were not well managed and the accounts system was difficult to use. She acknowledged that in two years this situation had been turned around and the accounts now looked healthy.

ATM/10 WRITTEN AND VERBAL QUESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS

Q There was an article in the paper (The Ludlow Advertiser) regarding a partnership being dissolved, does Ludlow need one like Cleobury Mortimer?

The Mayor replied by explaining that the partnership related to Cittaslow International Company which closed at the end of March. It had been decided at Full Council that Ludlow would no longer be a member.

The Town Clerk added that Ludlow, was one of three Councils making the decision, Lithgow and Cockermonth had also withdrawn from Cittaslow, taking the membership from nine Towns to six. Other local partnerships were being considered and this had been identified in the Town Plan as a priority.

Q There is not a full explanation of the accounts – would these be discussed at the Council meeting on the 27th June and could the public ask questions at this meeting?

The Town Clerk confirmed that the accounts would be available to the public before the meeting on the 27th June and questions could be asked in the public session. She also said that the Internal Auditor's Report would be available.

Q The figures available tonight show an underspend of £104k could this be explained?

The Town Clerk verified this by explaining that money had been earmarked for capital works. e.g. Castle Gardens and had been carried forward to the next financial year.

She praised the all the staff for their conduct and work undertaken which is a high and professional standard.

Q What is happening with the toilets at Co-op?

The Mayor responded by saying that negotiations were ongoing. Initially the Lease had run out and the toilets had been purchased by an off-shore company. Efforts were being made to make contact the off-shore company and communications had been opened between the Town Council and Chief Executive of Co-op.

Q Does Ludlow Town Council have any say in how the rooms at the Assembly Room and the Visitor Information Centre are used?

No, replied the Mayor, the buildings were owned by Shropshire Council.

Councillor Jackson

Q Could we have a show of hands of how many people receive a copy of the Buttercross Bulletin?

(Five hands were raised out of 15).

Councillor Jackson

Q How can we communicate and engage with the public?

The public made the following suggestions:-

- 1) Through the local press, perhaps with a quarter or half page on a regular basis.
- 2) Local radio (Sunshine Radio), BBC Shropshire Radio or even spots on talk shows.

Graeme Perks – Added a comment regarding benches. That the bench removed from St Johns had been taken away and repaired by young people. The cost had been less than £100 and Mrs Morris was happy.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Town Mayor

Date

N.B. No Confidential Minutes will be issued.