



## MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** held in Oscars, Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Mill Street, Ludlow on **MONDAY 27<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2015** at **7.00PM**

### **ATM/01 PRESENT**

Chairman:	Councillor Draper
Councillors:	Cobley; Ginger; Jones; Kemp; Lyle; J Newbold; S Newbold; Parry; Perks (from 7.40pm); Sheward; Smithers
Officers:	Gina Wilding, Town Clerk; Naomi Brotherton, Secretary/Admin Assistant Charlotte Ambrasas, Admin Assistant
Unitary Councillors:	Tracey Huffer, Andy Boddington, Vivienne Parry Richard Huffer (Clee View)
Electors:	20

### **ATM/02 WELCOME BY THE MAYOR**

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced himself, the Councillors and Town Clerk, explained the order of business and thanked all who were attending.

The Mayor stated that it had been a pleasure and honour to have served the Council in the capacity of Mayor and that it had been a pleasure working with staff and Councillors. He particularly thanked former Councillors Mold and Holcombe who had recently resigned, leaving two vacancies, one in Hayton Ward the other in Gallows Bank Ward.

He outlined it had been a busy year and he had attended civic visits in Oswestry, Ellesmere, Whitchurch, Bromyard. In Ludlow there had been a commemorative WW1 service and in September the Royal Welsh were granted the Freedom of the Town. He thanked the Earl of Powis for the use of the castle for the ceremony and informed the public that the Royal Welsh had been impressed by the welcome from the Town. He thanked businesses who had donated £1,300 towards the event which had cost £4,500.

The Mayor added that there were further events planned during the year and the Mayfair would be coming to Ludlow this week.

**ATM/03 APOLOGIES**

No apologies for absence were received.

**ATM/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None declared.

Conflicts of Interest

None declared.

Personal Interests

<u>Member</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Cllr Lyle	Core Grants	Chair of Friends of Ludlow Arts Festival
Cllr Parry	LIB	Chair of Ludlow in Bloom involved with Ludlow in Bloom
		Signed the petition to lobby the MP for Shrewsbury Hospital to retain an A&E Service
Cllr Perks	NHS	Signed the petition to lobby the MP for Shrewsbury Hospital to retain an A&E Service

**ATM/05 VOTING**

The Mayor advised the meeting that if a vote was called, only Electors of the Town were eligible to vote.

**ATM/06 PRESENTATION ON THE WORK OF THE TOWN COUNCIL 2014-2015**

The Mayor stated that he was Chair of Full Council and updated the electors present on:

**Publications and Social Media**

He outlined that the Town Council reached the public through the Town Council's website, Market website, Facebook and Twitter. This was in addition to the Buttercross Bulletin which was produced quarterly and the Calendar of Events which was distributed throughout the Midlands and the Town. 100,000 copies were printed annually.

**New Staff**

The Mayor welcomed Charlotte Ambrasas to the new permanent post of Admin Assistant. He also informed the public that the Town Council had recently advertised two posts, one of which was a new post, which was Direct Labour Force Assistant Grounds Person/Market Assistant and the Town Council looked forward to welcoming two new members of staff.

### **The Buttercross Heritgate Interpretation Centre**

The Mayor reported that the work on the Buttercross was in its final phase and was going well with the lift now in situ and plastering and painting in progress. He commented that the Buttercross Working Group had been working hard to agree a Service Level Agreement and forecasting future finances. A completion date of July 2015 was currently the goal.

### **Core Grants**

He explained that the remit of Full Council was to consider applications for Core Grants and referred to the slide showing the names of the organisations which the Town Council had awarded grants to for 2014-15.

### **Guildhall**

The Mayor explained that most meetings took place in the Guildhall which was situated in the heart of the Town.

### **Projects**

#### **Boxing Club**

He informed the public that work on the new Boxing Club/Community Room had been completed in September 2014 and was a total success. The project had been intended to be cost neutral and there was still £3,383 balance to be paid to the Town Council which was being paid for by events at the Boxing Club.

## **ATM/07 SERVICES COMMITTEE –COUNCILLOR JONES**

The Mayor invited Councillor Jones as Vice-Chair of the Services Committee to speak on the work of the Committee.

Councillor Jones informed the public that it was this Committee that the discussed the services provided to the Town.

#### **Flower Beds in Ludlow**

Councillor Jones praised the Direct Labour Force (DLF) who she said did a marvellous job of caring and maintaining the flower beds in Ludlow. She added that in her opinion investing in a Direct Labour Force was the best investment made as the DLF were on-site in Ludlow 5 days a week. Along with the flower beds the DLF maintained the Cemetery and organised the Markets.

She highlighted that the Town Council had supported Fairtrade in Ludlow and had planted up the round bed in Castle Gardens last year with plants in the form/colour of the Fairtrade logo.

#### **Market**

She explained that the Market was open to the public up to six days a week with regular markets operating Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturdays all year. There were also additional specialist markets on alternate Thursdays

and Sundays and the remaining alternate Thursdays was a local produce market and Sundays an Antique Market.

#### Public Toilets

Councillor Jones explained that the Town Council provided toilets at Castle Street, Smithfield, the Linney and Henley Road Cemetery and that they were monitored and cleaned at least twice a day.

#### Street Trading

She advised that along with the Market, Street Trading pitches were available for traders upon application to the Town Council.

### **ATM/08 REPRESENTATIONAL COMMITTEE – COUNCILLOR GINGER**

The Mayor invited Councillor Ginger to speak on the work of the Representational Committee.

Councillor Ginger explained the role of Representational Committee as a statutory consultee for planning applications received by the Planning Authority, Shropshire Council. He stated that the Town Council was only able to comment on the application paperwork provided by Shropshire Council as an Officer from Shropshire Council no longer attended the Representational meetings to answer questions.

He informed the public that 109 applications had been considered this year and highlighted that all received equal consideration. The Town Council, he added, worked closely with the Local Conservation Area Advisory Committee which aimed to retain Ludlow's rich heritage.

#### Traffic Regulation Orders

Councillor Ginger stated that traffic regulation orders included consultations on road markings and also notification of road works. He informed the public of a recent application for a crossing on Old Street made by the local school, which the Town Council had supported.

#### Project Support Grants

Councillor Ginger outlined the project support grants that had been granted in 2014-2015 and added that the Town Council invited applications from organisations to be considered at the Representational Committee. A criteria and application could be obtained from the Town Council offices.

### **ATM/09 POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE – COUNCILLOR DRAPER**

The Mayor thanked former Councillor Holcombe for his role as Chair of Policy & Finance. As Vice-Chair he then spoke on the function of the Policy and Finance Committee.

The Mayor explained that the Committee had a two main functions. Firstly to ensure the Council had policies in place to help the working of the Council and staff; and secondly to monitor and manage the finance.

He highlighted the six new Policies which had been adopted and also reported that 16 had been reviewed and re-adopted.

Turning to the finance aspect, the Mayor added that the Accountant had visited the Town Council that day and all was well. The Council faced difficult adjustments due to Shropshire Council's Commissioning Services and the withdrawal of the Council Tax Support Grant. He went on to say that tough decisions had had to be made and budgeted for 2015-16 and that the following financial year would bring more challenges, but the Policy & Finance Committee were working hard to ensure the best for the Town.

#### **ATM/11 WRITTEN AND VERBAL QUESTIONS FROM RESIDENTS**

The Mayor informed the public that only two questions had been received prior to the meeting.

**Q What is the position regarding the fountain in Castle Gardens?**

A The Civic Society put forward a proposal for the fountain to be repaired. It was welcomed by Council. Unfortunately due to the processes of the Town Council, how meetings fell, and that Castle Gardens is now an Ancient Scheduled Monument along with the Castle, requires an application and consent from the Secretary of State, and the Civic Society decided not to proceed. The Town Council has thanked the Civic Society for all their work and asked them reconsider. The Town Council will be reviewing all its assets as it considers the Town Plan this year and the fountain will be considered within this process.

**Q Dog fouling and litter is on the increase in Ludlow. How does the Town Council intend to tackle it?**

A There was a joint awareness event at the Linney on the 10<sup>th</sup> April with Ludlow Town Council, Shropshire Council and the local Community Police which was well supported. Church Stretton Town Council have a similar problem and are piloting a zero tolerance policy during the summer holidays and this is something the Town Council could also trial.

The Mayor then asked for questions from the floor.

**Q The Flexible Working Policy – does this relate to a zero hours contract?**

A No. The Policy provides a framework within which a member of staff may apply to change their working hours.

Q Pat Hanson, Station Drive

**I understand that the former Town Clerk, who received a large settlement from an Employment Tribunal has been employed as a Consultant. Is this correct?**

A No. The former Town Clerk undertook a considerable amount of work on the town walls when a former Heritage Lottery Bid was submitted. She more recently passed on her knowledge and information on the matter to the Town Council. This service was provided free of charge.

Q Pat Hanson, Station Drive

**I am disgusted at the sub-standard level of information being offered to visitors to the Town now that the Visitor Information Centre is hidden in the Ludlow Assembly Rooms. Once visitors have found the Visitor Information Centre, they are met with inexperienced/unknowledgeable volunteers. How is the Town Council going to rectify this?**

A The Town Council supports tourism by producing the Calendar of Events leaflet. Leaflets are provided in reception of the Guildhall and queries answered. Ludlow Town Council also supports twinning and other activities. The Town Council has worked with the Assembly Rooms and Shropshire Council to ensure that visitors still have access to information.

Helen Hughes, Voluntary Acting Chief Executive, Ludlow Assembly Rooms

Ms Hughes explained that Ludlow was extremely lucky to still have a Visitor Information Centre as Shropshire Council had cut most of this service to areas, apart from in the north of the county. Monitoring revealed that similar numbers of people are using the Visitor Information Centre in the new location. She went on to say that the current climate was difficult and the Assembly Rooms was working hard to try and update its inefficient heating and lighting systems.

Once the Assembly Rooms had made structural changes that the Visitor Information Centre would be moved downstairs to a more prominent place and be combined with the box office. She stated that the combined function should work well given the nature of the box office and visitor season.

Q Mike Jackson, Broad Street

**Public information. I would like to see an interactive screen put up on the Buttercross walls which visitors and residents could access for information.**

A From what has been said before there is a lack of funds, especially as Shropshire Council has withdrawn the Council Tax Support Grant of over £34k. Ideally we would like to support all requests but with limited funding this is probably not possible.

Q **Does Shropshire Council have a legal right to withhold the Council Tax Support Grant?**

A Yes but it is not morally correct.

**Q** Jill George, on behalf of Shropshire - Defending the NHS  
**Ms George urged the Town Council to lobby the newly elected MP for Ludlow after the elections in May to ensure the A&E and Emergency Care services remain in Shrewsbury and are not transferred to Telford. She added that she had an open letter to the current MP for Ludlow and those who wished to add their signature after the meeting could do so.**

**A** The Mayor stated that Ludlow Town Council had already expressed their support and would give the process active consideration.

**Q** Richard Summers, New Street  
**You referred to toilets earlier. The Linney car park is becoming more popular, could you clarify the situation with the toilets?**

**A** The Town Council is aware that the toilets need refurbishing, funds are earmarked, and this will be undertaken shortly.

**Q** Pat Hanson, Station Drive  
**Could spaces at the Linney Car Park be marked out as drivers park their cars badly in the car park?**

**A** With the loose stone on a flood plain, unfortunately, it would be very difficult if not impossible to mark out.

**Q** Peter Burden, Mill Street  
**I am aware that there is no legal right to stop national retailers moving into Ludlow but does the Town Council have a view or strategy to discourage this? I am concerned that if a National retailer moves into Ludlow litter would increase.**

**A** The Town Council has no legal right to stop a premises opening and should be aware that National retailers quite often will take on shops that are not viable for the smaller retailer. The Town Council actively supports the current diversity of independent businesses and retailers.

Regarding litter collections, Shropshire Council has reduced its collection of litter from daily to every other day.

**Q** Marilyn Gaunt, Mill Street Ludlow  
**Can a National retailer be encouraged to provide sympathetic signage?**

**A** The Planning Authority consider signage and changes and as the application you are querying is in a conservation area it will be discussed at when it submitted to the Town Council's Representational Committee.

**Q** Peter Gillard, Future Fit NHS  
**New consideration is being given to Community Care services and representations are being sought from Shropshire Patient Groups currently. However, should services be cut at Shrewsbury I have queried if the savings made whether funding would be given to improve the facilities at Ludlow Hospital. The response has been that there are no funds and I would urge the Town Council to work with patient groups to establish what services are needed. Will Ludlow Town Council work and make representations to improve healthcare in Ludlow?**

A Yes and as stated earlier we will lobby the newly appointed MP for Ludlow after the May elections.

Q Joyce Brand, 3 College Street, Ludlow  
**Is Ludlow Town Council aware that Ludlow's Community Hospital is owned by a private company with the only goal to make a profit?**

A No. we were not aware. Thank you.

Councillor Richard Huffer, Unitary Councillor.

I feel duty bound to inform Councillors and residents that Shropshire Council has received an application for a 34 acre solar farm which will be seen from Sheet Road, Whitcliffe, Caynham Camp and Clee Hill. The application will be discussed at Bitterley Parish Annual General Meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> May at Bitterley Village Hall should residents wish to attend and put forward representations.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

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Town Mayor

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Date

N.B. No Confidential Minutes will be issued.