

LUDLOW TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ludlow Town Council meeting held at The Bishop Mascall Centre, Ludlow, on Monday 28th January 2008 at 7.00pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Glaze (Town Mayor), Smithers (Deputy Town Mayor), Aitken, Bradley, Callender, Davies, Galtress, Hunt, Kidd, Mitchell, Newbold, Perks, Pope, Pound and Wilcox

OFFICERS PRESENT: Richard Walden, Acting Town Clerk, Hannah Coleman, Assistant Clerk and Linda Thomas, Town Clerk designate

The Rev Preb Brian Curnew led the Council in prayers.

FC6/08 APOLOGIES – There were no apologies.

FC7/08 PREJUDICIAL AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

The Acting Town Clerk circulated a letter from the District Monitoring Officer addressed to all Members of the Council in which she referred to a recent newspaper article which quoted a councillor with an alleged fixed view on a matter. She advised that, whilst such a quote was not necessarily evidence of predetermination, it was in councillors' interests to ensure they did not give the appearance of having made up their mind before attending a meeting. Councillors must come to a meeting with an open mind if they wished to speak and vote on a matter. Councillors who had made up their mind could speak but must then withdraw from the room whilst the matter was debated and voted upon.

The Acting Town Clerk further advised that the same rules applied to Councillors who had voted in a committee on a recommendation placed before the full Council. There was no problem with that Councillor voting on the matter again provided he/she kept an open mind on the matter and considered all views expressed at the meeting and any further information before casting their vote.

The following declarations of interest were **RECEIVED**:

Cllr Galtress	Cittàslow	Personal Interest (Cittàslow supporter)
Cllr Kidd	Cittàslow	Personal Interest (Involved with Cittàslow initiative and President of Cittàslow UK)
Cllr Perks	Cittàslow	Personal Interest (Supporter of Cittàslow)
Cllr Perks	Budget; Ludlow Assembly Rooms	Personal Interest (Involved through Skillbuilders)
Cllr Smithers	Budget; Ludlow Assembly Rooms	Personal Interest (Council Representative)
Cllr Smithers	Budget; Ludlow in Bloom	Personal Interest (Chairman of group)



Cllr Wilcox

Budget; Ludlow Assembly Rooms Personal Interest (Council Representative)

FC8/08 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION – There were 77 members of the public present.

Paula Redway, Assembly Rooms, reminded Members that Councillors Smithers and Wilcox were the Town Council representatives and could monitor the work of the Assembly Rooms, but were not on the Board. She confirmed that the Council funds help to subsidise the ticket costs and if there were to be a cut in those funds, it would affect the £33,000 awarded by District Council and £66,000 from the Arts Council.

Daisy Kinton, New Road, informed Council that she attended a drama club at the Assembly Rooms, along with many other young people who find that other youth facilities are lacking in Ludlow. Her concern was that any reduction in funding would raise the costs and potentially make tickets unaffordable.

Nicki Kenwood, Aston on Clun, reported that many people outside Ludlow also use the Assembly Rooms and any reduction in grant funding would have a detrimental effect on the future.

Elizabeth Kevill, Bromfield Road, felt that the Assembly Rooms was an important place for youth to meet and therefore help them socially. She attended React.

Councillor Rosanna Taylor-Smith, Mill Street, asked that the Town Council should agree the terms for the Somerfield toilets and emphasised their importance.

Councillor Ed Havard, Kennet Bank, required answers to the questions raised at the Council meeting in December and suggested that the minutes should be more detailed.

Monica Davenport, Upper Linney, reiterated the social importance of the Assembly Rooms for older residents of Ludlow as well, and that there was great opportunity to get involved.

Pete Gillard, Corve Street, reminded Members that the Assembly Rooms was important to both keep and attract young people in and to Ludlow. It provided culture for all to use.

FC9 /08 APPOINTMENT OF NEW TOWN CLERK – The minutes of the meeting of the Appointments Panel held on 4th January were received and members were delighted to note the appointment of Mrs Linda Thomas, currently Town Clerk of Knutsford in Cheshire, as the new Town Clerk with effect from 10th March. Mrs Thomas was present at the meeting and the Town Mayor, on behalf of all Councillors, congratulated her on her appointment.

FC10/08 MINUTES – The minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 3rd and 14th December 2007 and 2nd January 2008 were **APPROVED** as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

FC11/08 REVENUE BUDGET 2008/09 – Members considered a report of the Acting Town Clerk detailing the revised revenue budget for the current financial year and a proposed budget for 2008/09. The draft budget represented a total precept of £286,451

which, based on 3,617.2 Band D equivalent properties, would result in an average council tax of £79.19 for a Band D property – an increase of £9.90 or 14.28% on the Town Council's element of this year's tax.

It was **RESOLVED** that: (1) subject to an additional grant of £2,500 to the Ludlow festival (to be funded £500 from project support funds and £2,000 for improvements to Wheeler Road hut) the revised budget and draft budget for 2008/09 be approved and, as a consequence, the Council issue a precept on South Shropshire District Council for £286,451.

(2) the Market, Amenities and Cemetery Committee be asked to review fees and charges to produce the 2.5% increase included within the estimates.

(3) the principle of the Town Council accepting future responsibility for the maintenance of the Somerfield toilets once refurbished by the District Council be agreed and further discussions take place on the details of the arrangement.

(4) the new Town Clerk be requested to pursue with vigour possible external funding sources for improving the Wheeler Road former scout hut.

FC12/08 PLANNING & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE – It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meetings of the Planning & Highways Committee held on 3rd December 2007 and 7th and 21st January 2008 be received. It was also agreed that meetings of the Committee in future be held on Tuesday evenings at 7.00pm commencing on 5th February.

FC13/08 MARKETS, AMENITIES & CEMETERY COMMITTEE – It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Markets, Amenities and Cemetery Committee held on 21st January be received and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

FC14/08 CITTÀSLOW

The Council considered a detailed report of the Acting Town Clerk on the appointment of a representative Director on the emerging Cittàslow Ludlow community interest company (CIC) and on advice from the professional Auditor on Council assets acquired from grant received towards furthering Cittàslow principles. It was **RESOLVED**: That (1) Councillor Perks be appointed as the Council's Director on the Cittàslow Ludlow CIC.

2) the Council's Cittàslow assets be transferred to Cittàslow Ludlow in the following manner:

Flags In the light of recent decisions it being unlikely that the Council will have use of the Cittàslow flags in its possession, so these be transferred now

Trailers The two trailers (one having been subject to an arson attack and the subject of an insurance claim) being used for the cardboard recycling scheme, it be agreed that their future be deferred until the evaluation of the pilot scheme has been completed

Aluminium signs	These indicate “Welcome to Ludlow – UK’s first Cittàslow” and be transferred to the new body who would be responsible for obtaining necessary consents for their erection.
Cast iron snails	These too can be transferred now.
£2,000 reserve	This sum derived from an MTI grant for Cittàslow purposes and could not therefore be spent for other uses so it was agreed that it be transferred once the Community Interest Company has been established.

Councillor Mitchell left the meeting at 8.35pm.

FC15/08 COUNCIL STRUCTURE – The Council considered the detailed report and recommendations of the working group on Council structure and a performance management system.

It was **RESOLVED** that (1) the new Council structure set out at Appendix “A” to these minutes be approved:

(2) the Advisory Committees operate in the same manner as full council and standing committees in that a minimum 3 days notice will be given of the business to be transacted, the meeting is serviced by an appropriate Council officer, be chaired by an elected member of the Council, only matters included on the agenda may be discussed, meetings be convened at such times to ensure copies of the minutes including any recommendations can be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting of the appropriate standing committee and if the meeting is to discharge any delegated function it shall be open to the public and it will be recorded with formal minutes. Any such bodies also be given clear terms of reference, a timescale for their deliberations and a clear understanding of the impact of their likely deliberations;

(3) the Working Parties be generally fact finding only and have no powers to take decisions unless specifically authorised to do so by the appointing committee. Again all meetings must comply with the general rules set out in the above resolution;

(4) a new policy be established that where any outside organisation seeks financial, technical or moral support from the Council or requests the Council to appoint a representative Councillor(s) the Council will first ask the organisation to confirm its constitution, membership and objectives and then to supply copies of all minutes which can be presented for information to the relevant Council committee for information/discussion and, at the appropriate time, of copies of its annual accounts. A formal record of all council representatives on any such outside organisation is kept and updated as required. In future there to be a standard item on agendas of all main standing committees “To receive reports from outside organisations” to enable Council representatives to report back on recent meetings they have attended;

(5) a new Standing Order be introduced which allows any three councillors at a committee meeting to require that any decision which they perceived to be controversial, to be referred to the full council for a decision;

(6) the Acting Town Clerk be asked to draft, in consultation with the Chairman of the Working Group, detailed terms of reference for committees, revised Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures which take account of these changes for presentation to the Council; and

(7) the Acting Town Clerk liaise with the Shropshire Association of Local Councils to develop a programme of training sessions for Councillors to take account of the differing requirements of the new structure (e.g. chairmanship skills for all councillors likely to be chairmen or vice chairmen, strategic planning skills for members of Policy and Finance Committee, employment law and responsibilities for members of Staffing and Appeals Sub-Committee, Auditing and financial control procedures for members of Accounts Sub-Committee, health and safety and management skills for members of Services Committee and advocacy and communications skills for members of the Representational Committee). Whenever possible these training sessions be held in Ludlow and attendance expected for those councillors with designated responsibilities.

(8) the proposed new Standing Orders include the following provisions:

- a) all Councillors to receive copies of ALL standing committee agendas and be advised of the dates of sub-committees and working parties;
- b) all Councillors have a right to attend all meetings as observers and be able to speak (but not vote) on a specific item with the consent of the Chairman of the meeting; and
- c) draft copies of the minutes of all meetings be posted on the Council's website ideally within 5 working days of the meeting, even though they cannot be approved until the next meeting.

(9) a special meeting of the Council be held at the Buttercross on Thursday 7th February at 6.30 pm to determine the composition of the various new committees.

FC16/08 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – The above Working Group had also recommended that the Council agrees to the principle of introducing a performance management system whereby elected members set out the Council's vision and mission statement and service objectives for the next few years and that these be conveyed to all staff by means of a cascading system of annual development reviews and quarterly follow up meetings for every officer. These would provide measurable targets for every staff member linked to the Council's objectives and would also ensure that an effective support mechanism was provided to the new Town Clerk and all other staff. The Town Clerk's interview would be conducted by a Councillor appointed by the Staffing Sub-Committee, the Town Clerk to conduct the interviews for the Assistant Clerk, Community Services Officer and Markets Officer and these officers would conduct the interviews for all other staff. The interviews would identify any training and development needs to assist in meeting individual performance targets. The results would then be reported "back up the line" so the Staffing Committee could monitor and evaluate overall performance and then review, confirm and communicate objectives before re-starting the whole process.

Necessary training would need to be provided to ensure all staff are able to contribute to the above process.

It was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations be adopted and the process be initiated by Councillor Aitken facilitating a seminar for all councillors and staff to discuss and determine the Council's mission statement and overall objectives. The intention being that the new mechanism would be in place to support the new Town Clerk on her appointment.

Due to the duration of the meeting it was **AGREED** to suspend Standing Orders and continue the meeting for a further half an hour.

FC17/08 ACCOUNTS – The Accounts Sub-Committee's report of accounts approved for payment in December 2007 and January 2008 was **RECEIVED**.

FC18/08 WEBSITE AND NEWSLETTER GROUP – The Council received the minutes of the meeting of the Newsletter and Website working group held on 3rd January and adopted its recommendations concerning the content, editorial policy and distribution of the new Council newsletter and the content and purpose of the Council's website. Quotations were being invited for the printing of the newsletter and the construction of the website.

FC19/08 GRANT FUNDING – It was **RESOLVED** that the applications of Ludlow Junior School for a grant of £276 to enable 69 children to take part in "Crucial Crew" and of Ludlow College for a prize of £30 for a citizenship award be approved.

FC20/08 WEST MERCIA POLICE CONSULTATION – It was **RESOLVED** that Councillors Bradley, Glaze, Newbold and Smithers be authorised to approve a response from the Town Council on draft policing priorities.

FC21/08 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS – The report of the Christmas Lights Working party held on 7th January were received and the recommendations contained therein were adopted.

FC22/08 TRAINING – It was **RESOLVED** that: (1) the Town Clerk be authorised to attend the Society of Local Council Clerks Practitioners Conference at Stoke upon Trent from 29th February to 1st March.
(2) that Councillor Pope and the Town Clerk be authorised to attend the annual conference of the National Association of Local Councils at Eastbourne from 20th – 22nd May.

FC23/08 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** that, in the view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.38pm.

Town Mayor

Date