

MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **COUNCIL** held in the Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow on **MONDAY 30th JANUARY 2017** at 7.00 PM.

FC/225 PRESENT

- Chairman: Mayor Draper
- Councillors: Clarke; Cobley; Gill (7.07pm); Ginger; Kemp; Lyle; Parry; Perks; Sheward and Smithers.
- Officers: Gina Wilding, Town Clerk
Lucy Jones, Senior Finance Assistant
- Also Attending: Councillor Tracey Huffer, Unitary Councillor
Jo Banks, Women and Children's Care Group, Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust
Sarah Jamieson, Head of Midwifery
Andrew Tapp, Care Group Medical Director

FC/226 HEALTH & SAFETY

The Mayor informed Councillors and members of the public of the fire exits, fire assembly point and asked that everyone sign the attendance log.

FC/227 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R. Jones, J. Newbold and S. Newbold.

FC/228 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

<u>Member</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Councillor Parry	12	Ludlow in Bloom grant recipient

Conflicts of Interest

<u>Member</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
None declared		

Personal Interests

<u>Member</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Councillor Cobley	12	Member of the Friends of Whitcliffe Common
	8	Friend of Ludlow Hospital
	11b	Pension Fund
Councillor Ginger	13	Business Rates payer
Councillor Parry	11c	Know Mr Lumsden (490 Supporters Group)
Councillor Clarke	13	Business Rates payer
	9	Know Museum Assistant
Councillor Lyle	11c	Know Mr Lumsden (490 Supporters Group)
	12	Trustee of Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
	12	St Laurence's Arts Festival
	12	Fringe Festival
	12	Friend of Whitcliffe Common
Councillor Sheward	9	Volunteer at Ludlow Museum at the Buttercross
Councillor Draper	13	Business Rates payer
	8	Hon. Member Ludlow Hospital League of Friends

FC/229 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION (15 minutes)

Alison Hiles, Save Ludlow Maternity Unit, thanked the Council for their support in organising the march last year and the Mayor for his speech. She stated that the fight continues to ensure the future of Ludlow Maternity Unit and the group were working hard to publicise the service to local mothers to be.

Councillor Gill entered the meeting at 7.07pm

Gill George, Shropshire Defend our NHS, stated that she was sad that SATH ("Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust") had not been straight with the public, she said that Shropshire Defend our NHS had offered to work with SATH to promote the healthcare services in Ludlow but SATH had refused to work together. She thanked the Council for their support and hoped to maintain that support in the future.

Chris Deaves, Peoples Alliance for Ludlow ("PAL"), said that the Town Council were trying to impersonate Shropshire Council and though PAL were in favour of larger precept increases to ensure services the increase proposed tonight was not justified. He stated that any service transfer would not take place until next year and therefore any additional staffing in the form of a Deputy Town Clerk should be delayed until then when the Council better knows what is required.

Councillor Ginger stated that Ludlow people faced the problem of having to fund services such as the library and visitor information centre which are also used by people from outside of the parish. Surrounding parishes will have no obligation to contribute to the cost of these services.

FC/230 UNITARY COUNCILLORS SESSION

Councillor T. Huffer, Ludlow East, informed the Council that Sure Start's funding had been cut, which would mean the loss of one session at Ludlow Infants School, though in light of other cuts across the county there may be other implications. She added that the reduction of this service as well as post-natal care, which support many families in Ludlow, would be a great loss to the town.

Councillor Huffer went on to say that funds had been secured from SHA for the Ludlow Youth Partnership fireworks display and that the committee were now seeking volunteers to ensure that the display takes place. She encouraged Councillors to help find volunteers for the next meeting at the Rockspring Centre on the 28th March 2017 at 5.30pm.

Councillor V. Parry, Ludlow South, stated that Shropshire Council would no longer be providing paper planning papers and would only be allowing 31 days to clear planning issues. She added that there would be a meeting tomorrow at the Ludlow Brewery with Jason Hughes from Shropshire Council and the Civic Society to discuss the town's lighting.

FC/231 MINUTES

RESOLVED (Unanimous) GP/CS

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 5th December 2016, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

FC/232 ITEMS TO ACTION

RESOLVED (10:1:0) PD/CS

That the Items to Action be noted.

FC/233 LUDLOW HOSPITAL

Jo Banks, Women and Children's Care Group, Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust explained to Members the current position at Ludlow Maternity Unit, she stated that in October 2016 following a health and safety inspection found structural faults in the old building housing the maternity unit. The Maternity service was temporarily suspended in order to relocate the unit to alternative accommodation in the main hospital building as tenants of the Community Trust.

She went on to explain that in November 2016 the unit had to be closed again for 12 hours due to pressure on the high risk unit at the Princess Royal which meant that staff had to be relocated. A further closure was necessary in December following staff shortages due to sickness absences. She explained that maternity services were staffed from a pool of staff that were deployed countywide. Therefore there was not any problem recruiting staff to work in Ludlow because staff were assigned their placements. However, the most challenging cases were accommodated at Telford hospital so this was the staffing priority and therefore it was sometimes necessary to close units like Ludlow, Bridgnorth or Oswestry in order to prioritise the consultant led services dealing with the most high risk patients at Telford.

RESOLVED (Unanimous) GP/PD

That:-

- i) A letter is sent to sincerely thank Jo Banks, Women and Children's Care Group, Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, Sarah Jamieson, Head of Midwifery, Andrew Tapp, Care Group Medical Director for their attendance and to confirm the council's support for future meetings and an ongoing dialogue with the Women and Children's Care Group.
- ii) The Town Clerk write to the Community Trust and PropCo to ask for information regarding the proposed future of the old workhouse building that previously housed Ludlow Maternity Unit.

FC/234 FUTURE FIT

Councillor Perks asked if Future Fit was still relevant or if it had been superseded by other events. Councillor Parry said that a lot of money had been wasted on the scheme but that the outcome kept being delayed.

RESOLVED (Unanimous) GP/GG

That the Town Clerk write to the Ludlow MP to seek his advice on the most appropriate channels of communication to secure a position statement on the viability of Future Fit and the future of Ludlow hospital and local health services in Ludlow.

FC/235 LUDLOW MUSEUM AT THE BUTTERCROSS

Income and Expenditure

Councillor Ginger said that the museum had only been open four months and now that the Service Level Agreement with Shropshire Council was secured for 3 years, the income and expenditure data should be reviewed once further information is available.

Councillor Clarke stated that one of the Museum Assistants was keen to develop the merchandise income stream at the Museum.

Councillor Perks added that he was pleasantly surprised at the visitor figures for the first four months.

RESOLVED (Unanimous) GG/GP

That the budgetary recommendations for Ludlow Museum at the Buttercross be approved.

FC/236 APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

RESOLVED (Unanimous) PD/MC

That the Town Clerk seek further information to assess the viability of the Pre-Apprenticeship Programme, including cost implications and proceed with the scheme if it is shown to be cost neutral and viable for implementation at Ludlow Museum at the Buttercross.

FC/237 CASTLE STREET TOILETS

Councillor Ginger expressed his concerns regarding how far down the income figures were on the potential income. He added that the difference between usage figures and income also showed that not all users were contributing. This abuse of the service needed to be prevented in order to ensure the service is cost effective.

Councillor Perks suggested contacting other Councils who charge for toilets and ask how they have dealt with these problems, including Narbeth who have a turnstile system.

Councillor Parry stated that her main concern was staff abuse which was completely unacceptable and perhaps there were solutions available that could minimise this.

RESOLVED (Unanimous) PD/MC

That:-

- i) the budgetary recommendations for Castle Street Toilets be approved.
- ii) Services Committee consider possible solutions to prevent abuse of the pay to use system and minimise abuse encountered by members of staff.

FC/238 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Services Committee 9th January 2017

RESOLVED (Unanimous) MC/GG

That the recommendations from the Services Committee meeting held on the 9th January 2017 be approved.

Ludlow Market

That:-

- i) Market Rents for 2017-18 remain the same as 2016-17;
- ii) Market electric fees are reviewed separately at a later date.

Henley Road Cemetery

That the Cemetery fees are increased 10% in 2017/18.

Street Trading

That the Street Trading fees remain the same for 2017-18.

Memorial Benches

That the total payable for a Memorial Bench is increased by 5% in 2017-18.

Banners

That the banner fee is increased by 5% in 2017-18.

Room Hire

That the room hire fees remain the same in 2017-2018.

Model Publication Scheme (Photocopying Charges)

That the fees for the Model Publication Scheme (Photocopying Charges) remain the same in 2017-2018.

FC/239 Services Committee 9th January 2017 – Confidential

RESOLVED (10:1:0) MC/GG

That the confidential recommendations from the Services Committee meeting held on the 9th January 2017 be approved.

Town Council Vehicles

That:-

- i) All three Town council vehicles are replaced with like-for-like vehicles on a three year lease hire contracts in 2017-18;
- ii) The 2017-18 budget is amended to enable the replacement of vehicles stipulated in i) above;
- iii) The Council's vehicles are changed on a lease basis every three years.

FC/240 Policy and Finance Committee 16th January 2017

RESOLVED (unanimous) AC/TG

That the open and closed recommendations from the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on the 16th January 2017 be approved.

Street Trading Policy

That:-

- i) item 6.7 be removed from the Street Trading Policy in line with the revision to Central Government legislation and the revised policy be adopted.
- ii) Shropshire Council are asked to fund the defining of existing Street Trading pitches using brass studs, or quotes are sought if Shropshire Council are unable to fund this.
- iii) Shropshire Council Planning Department are contacted to inform them of the location of the designated Street Trading pitch in Tower Street and seek assistance from Shropshire Council Licensing.

Gritting Policy

That the Gritting Policy is readopted.

Environmental Policy

That the Environmental policy is readopted.

Budget 2017/18

To adopt the draft budgetary recommendation.

FC/241 Representational Committee 11th January 2017

RESOLVED (Unanimous) GG/JS

That the recommendation from the Representational Committee meeting held on the 11th January 2017 be approved.

Review of Service Provision – Leominster to Ludlow Bus 490

Members agreed that the update received from the 490 Supporters Group is comprehensive and confirmed that the route was well used by local people and is therefore of significant benefit to the town.

That, with immediate effect, £1,000.00 from the contingencies budget is provided to Herefordshire Council to support the 490 bus service.

FC/242 Budget Working Group 20th January 2017**RESOLVED (10:0:1) AC/GG**

That the recommendation from the Budget Working Group meeting held on the 20th January 2017 be approved.

Budget 2017/18

That:-

- i) the expenditure and income that Ludlow Town Council is committed to within the budget, be approved.
- ii) the electorate should not be bear the full costs of one-off property maintenance works in 2017/18.

Councillor Clarke left the meeting at 8.15pm

FC/243 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2017/18

The Mayor explained that the Council's Internal Auditor had visited on the Friday prior to this meeting and been able to offer an insight that in his experience many principal authorities had understated the true costs of services for transfer, not including insurance costs or savings they have access to through economies of scale. He added that from his observations he felt that many Council do not have sufficient reserves to balance out the new risks they are being asked to take on by principle authorities.

The Mayor said that any transfer of services needed a year on year revenue stream to fund and as Shropshire Council was not currently offering any form of income with the services, this revenue would have to be sought through the precept. He drew Members attention to the precept cost per household from other local councils, which showed that that even with this proposed increase Ludlow would not be the highest.

Councillor Clarke re-entered the meeting at 8.20pm

Action Plan**RESOLVED (10:0:1) GG/MC**

That the Action Plan for 2017/18 be adopted.

FC/244 Budget

Councillor Ginger stated that he did not feel he could sign the cheque for the Friends of Whitcliffe Common grant for 2016/17 and asked Members to reconsider their grant for 2017/18 in relation to the recent events regarding the

oak trees. They had ignored two resolutions made by Ludlow Town Council and refused to discuss the matter with the Council as advised by Shropshire Council.

Councillor Parry stated that the Friends of Whitcliffe Common work very hard to maintain the common land and the whole committee should not be penalised for the actions of a few.

Councillor Clarke queried the grant to Ludlow Assembly Rooms and asked when the Council would receive a presentation on the works of the Assembly Rooms and how the grant is spent. The Town Clerk stated that the CEO of Assembly Rooms was due to attend the meeting this evening, but prioritisation of the most urgent items by Council had led to mutual agreement that the item be postponed until the next meeting.

Councillor Ginger left the meeting at 8.48pm

Councillor Sheward ask why the photocopying budget had not been reduced in respect of the introduction of electronic agendas. The Town Clerk stated that the current photocopying contract with minimum usage levels was in place until May 2018, but that savings would be realised in postage and stationery costs.

Councillor Ginger re-entered the meeting at 8.50pm

In answer to Councillor Parry's question the Town Clerk stated that she had emailed the Police Crime Commission who had stated that they would welcome a further application for funding and she would report back shortly to the CCTV Working Group.

Councillor Perks requested a review of the St Laurence's Grant. The Town Clerk stated that this was not an issue for the 2017/18 Budget.

RESOLVED (7:4:0) GG/JS

That the proposed £500 grant to the Friends of Whitcliffe Common is not awarded in 2017/18.

FC/245 RESOLVED (Unanimous) PD/JS

That in accordance with Standing Orders the meeting be extend by 30 minutes.

FC/246 Budget

Councillor Perks stated that though he support the budget/precept outline he could not endorse the individual budget lines, without further information. Councillor Clarke pointed out that a budget is always an aspiration, a prediction of spending, but can never be exact prior to the event.

Councillor Smithers left the meeting at 9.00pm

Councillor Ginger emphasised that such an increase by the Town Council represents a small day to day cost to rate payers and is a minute cost in the overall countywide council tax demand. Shropshire Council precept increase will be the true weight on rate payers.

Councillor Smithers re-entered the meeting at 9.05pm

Councillor Ginger stated that the Town Council needed to make clear to residents that any services that are transferred from Shropshire Council are already being paid for through Council Tax but that those funds are not being transferred with the responsibilities.

Councillor Gill stated that the town council is in a difficult position, and whilst no one would wish to increase council tax more than required, the increase in precept is necessary. The Council cannot use reserves to fund revenue increases, or continue to diminish its reserves year on year.

RESOLVED (9:2:0) PD/JS

That, subject to the previously agreed removal of the £500 grant to the Friends of Whitcliffe Common, the Budget for 2017/18 be approved.

FC/247 Precept

RESOLVED (10:1:0) PD/JS

To approve a precept of £450,020 for 2017/18.

FC/248 BUSINESS RATES

Councillor Ginger explained that the new system for Business Rates significantly changed the status quo and would have a disastrous impact on mid-sized independent shops Ludlow.

Under the new system, 60% of the town paid zero business rates, but the remaining 40% would face significant increases and bear the burden for the whole town. He added the inherent inequality of the new scheme would also penalise small business with multiple locations because they will lose their small business relief, so owners of two branches say in Shrewsbury and Ludlow would have to shut one shop because of the loss of the financial relief on their business rates would make running two shop unviable. It seemed clear that Ludlow was facing losing businesses and gaining empty shops.

RESOLVED (Unanimous) GP/VP

That the Town Clerk:-

- i) write to the Ludlow MP and draw his attention to the conflict between the aspiration of recent government report championing the importance of local high streets and small businesses and reality of the new business rates scheme.
- ii) ask the MP how best the Council can lobby central government on this matter.
- iii) contact NABMA to seek their opinion/advice on the issue and the impact it may have on local markets.

FC/249 THRESHOLD FOR REFERENDA FOR PRECEPTS

RESOLVED (Unanimous) GG/AC

That the letter from Philip Dunne MP be noted.

FC/250 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

RESOLVED (10:0:1) AC/MC

That Councillor Perks become a member of Policy and Finance Committee.

FC/251 LUDLOW CONCERT BAND

RESOLVED (Unanimous) JS/VP

That Ludlow Concert Band be granted permission to play in Castle Gardens on the 2nd July 2017 as part of the Ludlow Fringe Festival as per the terms expressed in the letter.

FC/252 COMMITTEE & WORKING GROUP MINUTES

Representational Committee

RESOLVED (Unanimous) GG/CS

That the minutes of the Representational Committee meetings held on the 14th December 2016 and 11th January 2017, be received.

FC/253 Policy and Finance Committee

RESOLVED (Unanimous) AC/TG

That the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on the 16th January 2017, be received.

FC/254 Services Committee

RESOLVED (Unanimous) MC/JS

That the minutes of the Services Committee meeting held on the 9th January 2017, be received.

FC/255 Staffing and Appeals Committee

RESOLVED (Unanimous) JS/CS

That the minutes of the Staffing and Appeals Committee meeting held on the 6th December 2016, be received.

FC/256 Budget Working Group

RESOLVED (10:1:0) AC/GG

That the minutes of the Budget Working Group meeting held on the 20th January 2017, be received.

FC/257 Civic Events Working Group

RESOLVED (Unanimous) JS/CS

That the minutes of the Civic Events Working Group meeting held on the 3rd November 2016, be received.

The meeting closed at 9.27pm

Town Mayor

Date

NB Closed session minutes will not be issued.