



MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **COUNCIL** held in the Ludlow Conference Centre, Ludlow on **MONDAY 30th JANUARY 2012** at **7.00PM**

FC/282 PRESENT

Chairman: Councillor Aitken, Mayor

Councillors: Davies; Hunt; Jackson; McCormack; Parry; Perks; Pound; Smithers

Officers: Veronica Calderbank, Town Clerk;
Lucy Morgan, Secretary

FC/283 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Wilcox.

FC/284 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:

There were no personal or prejudicial interests declared.

FC/285 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION (15 minutes)

There were three members of the public and press present.

Simon Buteux, Readers House, Ludlow, stated that he welcomed today's Shropshire Star article, the Heritage Lottery bid was of great importance to the town and it would be a great loss to lose the bid over the Buttercross doors, which are a substantial mistake which hasn't helped the bid.

Mr Buteux said that he was unhappy that the pre-planning application consultation had not been more thorough. He stated that the enclosure of the Buttercross market, irrelevant of the details, was wrong in principle in accordance with planning guidance. Therefore the thousand of pounds spent on different designs for the enclosure had been wasted as it was without a sound basis.

He went on to say that in order for the bid to succeed the Town Council needed better consultation and collaboration with local interested parties i.e. Museum, Visitor Information Centre, Library in order to maximise the visitor experience in the town. He also encouraged the Council to work with St Laurence's Church and consider a joint bid. Finally he stated that he whole heartedly backed the bid without the Buttercross Market enclosure.

FC/286 UNITARY COUNCILLORS SESSION

Unitary Councillor R. Taylor-Smith, Ludlow North, stated that she was following the progress of the bid with great interest as a member of Shropshire Council's Planning Committee, the Ludlow Conservation Area Advisory Committee and the Chair of the Ludlow Area Liaison Group.

Unitary Councillor M. Taylor-Smith, Ludlow South, said that he considered tonight to be one of the most important meetings of the Town Council in a long time. He stated that Shropshire Council had a vested interest in the bid as they were providing a Market Town Revitalisation grant of £120,000 towards the match funding and the restoration of the town walls was of interest to all.

Councillor M Taylor-Smith stated that the bid needed to go through the path of least resistance and that the current planning application would fail at Shropshire Council Planning Committee as they were not able to pass any planning applications with a strong objection from English Heritage. He went on to say that if the market area remained open that this would prevent the Visitor Information Centre ("VIC") from moving to the Buttercross, but that he looked forward to the Interpretation centre working with the VIC and Ludlow Assembly Rooms.

Councillor M Taylor-Smith stated that Shropshire Council were currently looking at a community asset transfer of the Council owned building to the Assembly Rooms. Therefore the future of the VIC and Museum in the building may be up to the Assembly Rooms. He added that Shropshire Council Museum service were open to providing the Town Council with the most relevant exhibitions to make the Interpretation Centre a success.

Councillor Perks said that the previous consultation meetings had created much discussion on the planning application submitted. But he considered the amendment a practical and pragmatic solution.

FC/287 BUTTERCROSS PLANNING APPLICATION AND LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

The Mayor reminded the Council of the meeting last year held at the Rockspring Centre at which the enclosure of the Buttercross was debated in detail and several different proposals were considered. This meeting had resulted in the Council supporting the submission of a planning application to enclose the Buttercross Market with glass doors. He added that previously the Council had

been led to believe that English Heritage would support a “light touch” reversible enclosure solution and he believed this was what had been submitted, therefore he was disappointed that they had objected.

In response to Mr Buteux’s comments the Town Clerk stated that prior to the submission of the planning application the Town Council had held several consultation meetings including a visit to what was believed to be a similar project in Tewkesbury, though this turned out to be a considerably different situation to Ludlow the visit was attended by several interested parties including the then Chair of the Civic Society. She said that the Town Council had not consulted the Museum service, but she pointed out that this was stage 1 of the bid only, stage 2 was generally the consultation stage and usually bids for Stage 1 do not require planning permission and the funders will pay for the consultative round including an audience participation report and a detailed business case.

The Town Clerk stated that the Planning Application had been made in advance as there was little point continuing with the bid should we be unable to secure planning permission. She emphasised that the bid was certainly not in jeopardy as it had not yet been applied for, though the negative press could have an impact when we do apply. She added that as a small Town Council we were in good shape and she thanked Councillor M Taylor-Smith for the repairs to the Buttercross he had pioneered during his time as Mayor of Ludlow.

In reply to Mr Buteux’s comments the Town Clerk stated that she had not at any time received any application or request from St Laurence’s Church to make a joint bid. She said that the plans and diagrams had been drawn up by Shropshire Council’s Philip Belchere they had only taken one day as he had the appropriate software and this was done with no cost to Ludlow Town Council, therefore there had been little expenditure on these proposals by either Council and following consultation all suggestions were drawn up including Mr Buteux’s suggestion of roller shutter doors.

She went on to say that the proposed enclosure method had be altered following concerns from English Heritage as to the weight of glass on the Buttercross floor, she had consulted engineers and the smaller glass doors similar to those installed at the Castle had been put forward. She stated that the enclosure of the Buttercross Market has been an issue discussed by the Town Council over the last 32 years.

The Mayor explained to the Council that in order to optimise the use of the Buttercross 1st floor and to bring it back into public use disabled access was needed via a lift through the market area. Without the enclosure of the ground floor Members may need to consider the enclosure again at a later date or ways to prevent vandalism. The Town Clerk emphasised that not one objection had been received in relation to the lift or 1st floor change of use and hoped it would no longer be contentious.

Councillor Smithers said the lift access to the 1st floor of the Buttercross had been debated over many years and resulted in two options, either to put the lift through the Market area or through the Buttercross shop resulting in a loss of

rental income. He went on to say that in this time of recession the Council and the town should be doing all it can to draw in this £1.9million which would provide jobs and income for local businesses and stop delaying the matter by objecting potentially small details in the bid.

Councillor Jackson stated that she was disappointed that English Heritage had objected to the planning application as the Town Council had been working on their advice. She said that the enclosure had been a logical way to protect the lift and Market area but that its removal from the application was a pragmatic step in order to continue with the whole bid. She urged Members to consider a vandal proof lift solution in order to make full use of the Buttercross. Councillor Jackson added that she was keen to have the whole town's support for the bid which would only be achieved through full consultation.

Councillor Pound said that there had not been enough consultation as he believed Councillors didn't fully understand what was happening. The Mayor reminded Members that full consultation would take place at Stage 2 s to the details of the scheme.

Councillor Parry expressed her thanks to the Council on behalf of the Ludlow Access Group. She stated that disabled visitors and residents were often forgotten in the town and the groups members were very excited about the new centre in the Buttercross.

Councillor Davies stated that taking back the Buttercross shop for the lift was not an option as the Council should not be looking at removing a long standing tenant or the loss of a reliable income.

Councillor Smithers advised that previous consultations had been on the overall nature of the bid not specific details of each element. Therefore the extent of the consultation may not have been perceived by the public, the future it needed to be made clear what was being asked. The Town Clerk advised there were no details available for the Castle Gardens, Walls and Walks and there had been 5 public meetings concerning the bid proposals and all Members had been present at, at least one of these public meetings or 23rd February 2011.

RESOLVED (unanimous)

That the glazed doors be removed from the Planning Application and Listed Building Consent application.

The Town Clerk asked Members to note that as this decision had been made the matter would not be referred back to Council before the bid was submitted. She advised Members that the Revitalisation Monies in the sum of £120,000 were time sensitive and had to be spent by September 2012 although she was grateful to Councillor M Taylor-Smith for what he described as "wriggle room" to the end of the financial year. As soon as she received the planning permission she would submit the bid without any further delay to reduce the possibility of losing funding. Councillor Hunt supported this, he stated that the Council needed

to avoid further procrastination which could lead to the loss of funding as was proved by the previous market situation were delay defeated the bid.

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Town Mayor

Date

N.B. No Confidential Minutes will be issued.