



MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **COUNCIL** held in the Ludlow Conference Centre, Ludlow on **MONDAY 31st JANUARY 2011** at **7.00PM**

FC/171 **PRESENT**

Chairman:	Councillor Aitken, Mayor
Vice-Chairman:	Councillor Pope, Deputy Mayor
Councillors:	Davies; Glaze; Hunt; Jackson; McCormack; Mitchell; Newbold; Parry; Pound; Smithers; Wilcox
Officers:	Veronica Calderbank, Town Clerk; Lucy Morgan, PA
Also in Attendance:	Venerable Colin Williams Colin Richards, Shropshire Council Head of Historic Environment

FC/172 **PRAYERS**

The Mayor welcomed the Ven. Colin Williams and invited him to lead the Council in prayers.

FC/173 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Callender and Leyton-Purrier.

Councillor McCormack queried whether the Council had to accept apologies. The Town Clerk advised that this matter would be discussed in confidential session where it appeared on the agenda.

FC/174 **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>
V. Parry	Member of Ludlow in Bloom
J. Smithers	Member of Ludlow in Bloom
D. Davies	Director of Cittaslow (Council Representative) Trustee of the Town Walls Trust (Council Representative)

Prejudicial Interests

<u>Member</u>	<u>Item</u>
V. Parry	Member of Ludlow in Bloom
J. Smithers	Member of Ludlow in Bloom

Councillor McCormack asked Members to note that she was no longer a Director of Cittaslow.

FC/175 The Chairman announced to Members that Ludlow Town Council had won the NABMA Market of the Year 2011.

RESOLVED (Unanimous)

That the Market and Special Projects Officer and the rest of the Town Council staff be thanked for all their hard work.

FC/176 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION (15 minutes)

There were twenty two members of the public present.

Mr Bradley, Steventon New Road, expressed his concerns regarding the Ludlow Assembly Rooms ("LAR") grant and the requested increase. He understood that the LAR had received £13,000 in the previous year and had applied for £20,000. He stated that this was a very large amount compared to the Citizens Advice Bureau who only received £2,000 last year and had applied for £3,000 this year. He stated that the LAR were a business and that if they were unable to stand on their own feet without a subsidy from rate payers they should close.

Paula Redway, of Ludlow Assembly Rooms, clarified that LAR was a charity and they needed public support in order to subsidise tickets which would cost in the region of £44.00 if the aim were to recoup the full cost of events, which would exclude the majority of visitors. She went on to say that the LAR reached all age group and sectors of the public, they had over 200,000 visitors per year not

including the youth festival. She urged the Town Council to consider increasing the grant funding for 2011/12 to £20,000.

Jules Woodman, Appletree Theatre Group, stated that the LAR's support was essential to the group providing expertise and knowledge as well as assistance with rooms etc. She added that the LAR supported a wide range of businesses in Ludlow and that the town was very lucky to have such a facility.

Mr Alexander, ex-Chairman of Ludlow Assembly Rooms, emphasised that the LAR was not a business it was an asset to the town just like the leisure centre. He said that the LAR is important to all age groups of local residents, as well as attracting tourists to the town who would consequently spend money in local businesses. He went on to say that should the LAR price tickets with the aim of recouping the cost of the event, prices would exclude many people and that the reason low rates could be offered was due to the support of volunteers and grant funding. Over £2,000,000 had been invested in the LAR over the years he explained but should they lose the continued support of such organisations as Ludlow Town Council they would be forced to close.

Mr Beasley, of Old Gate House, stated that he had only been a Ludlow resident for a short time, but was surprised by the wide variety of events available at the LAR, he urged the Town Council to give as much as they can.

Sue Morrison, of Sandpits Road, commented that the LAR was an amazing facility for the town and it would be a terrible loss if it closed.

Kate Adams, the Streetscene Manager, Shropshire Council, informed the Council that in the last couple of weeks they had issued six fixed penalty notice in Ludlow, two for dog fouling, two for littering, one for fly tipping in Castle Street car park and one littering by a business.

The Mayor thanked the public for their comments.

FC/177 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION FEEDBACK (15 minutes)

The Town Clerk provided the Council with a document answering all questions submitted in the last two months, she stated that most matters were in progress. Councillor Parry thanked the Town Clerk for answering these questions so well.

FC/178 UNITARY COUNCILLORS SESSION (5 minutes)

Councillor Rosanna Taylor-Smith (Ludlow North) congratulated the Town Council for the Market award and stated that she had heard the Markets and Special Project Officer on Radio Shropshire and thought that his coverage was excellent. She went on to say that there would be a Strategic Planning meeting to consider the rear of 9-10 King Street development in the Ludlow Assembly Rooms on the 17th February at 2.00pm and that the public were welcome to attend this public meeting.

She stated that with regard to the £400,000 Market Town Revitalisation monies, there would be a public meeting on the 10th February in the Ludlow Assembly Rooms at 7.00pm to invite public suggestions for capital projects.

Councillor R Taylor-Smith advised that the King Street closure would commence on the 21st February and it would remain open to pedestrians and cyclists. Vehicular diversions would be signposted and Shropshire Council would be making a press release tomorrow. Councillor Pope asked how long the closure would be, Councillor R Taylor-Smith stated that the works will hopefully take four weeks but until works started it was difficult to determine. Councillor Parry asked when the works to Ludford Bridge would start and how long they would take as business in the area were really struggling. Councillor R Taylor-Smith said that the current plan was to reopen the bridge in April but this would depend on what is found when the works start. Commencement of the works was currently awaiting complex custom made scaffolding to be fitted over the top of the bridge.

Councillor Tracy Huffer (Ludlow East) stated that a very important hospital consultation was currently underway which would produce major changes, the next local consultation was in Craven Arms Community Centre on the 9th February at 7.00pm. She encouraged Members and the public to attend or pass on any views to her.

Councillor Martin Taylor-Smith (Ludlow South) informed the Council that Shropshire Council parking charges had now been standardised across the major Shropshire market towns. Revenue from the parking meters went to a general fund for general works across the county and that like the Linney car park meter the machines did not give change.

He went on to say that the provision/transfer of thirteen out of nineteen toilets across the county had now been agreed on a range of terms, from sums of maintenance monies to the exchange of streetlights. He added that whether a charge was imposed on the use of toilets was up to whoever was taking them over.

He commented that the proposed 5% precept increase seemed to be the average across Shropshire excepting Bridgnorth who were maintaining a 0% as they have large reserves. He congratulated the Town Council on maintaining level staffing costs over the last few years and that the small increase proposed would cover the increase in National Insurance.

He voiced a plea to the Town Council with regard to the Heritage Lottery Fund bid to grab any money the Council can get in this economic climate and to learn from previous losses of funding by delaying matters. He added that the planning application had been received for the proposed new hospital on the Eco Park and in due process it would come to the Town Council for comment. He finally stated that the next Local Joint Committee meeting would be held on the 22nd February at Ashford Carbonell Village Hall.

Councillor Parry queried whether Ludlow parking fees could be donated to the Ludlow Assembly Rooms, Councillor M. Taylor-Smith stated that Shropshire Council already donated monies to the Assembly Rooms.

Councillor Pope asked if some works could be made to improve the visibility of the slip road into Ludlow from the north, the Town Clerk stated that the Signage Working Group were considering this and in partnership with Shropshire Council eleven redundant signs had already been removed from the town centre. Councillor M. Taylor-Smith asked Councillor Pope to email any details to him and he would investigate the issue.

The Chairman stated that negotiations were underway with Shropshire Council regarding toilets and that the Town Clerk would be reporting back to Council shortly.

FC/179 MINUTES

Councillor Wilcox queried whether it needed to be recorded in the minutes if a Councillor left the room for a short period if no resolutions were made during their absence. The Town Clerk stated that it did need to be recorded as it protected the Council if/when the minutes were referred to/queried in the future.

RESOLVED (Unanimous)

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on the 22nd November 2010, subject to minor typographical amendments in minutes FC/162, FC/163 and FC/167, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

FC/180 POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

a) Minutes

RESOLVED (Unanimous)

That the draft minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 17th January 2011, subject to the amendments at minutes PF/132 and PF/145, be received.

FC/181 b) Recommendations

ALLOWANCES FOR COUNCILLORS

That the Town Council does not seek to pay Parish basic allowances to Members and that the status quo remains.

The Mayor advised that thirteen out of the fifteen Ludlow Town Councillors had been present at the Policy and Finance Committee when this matter was discussed.

RESOLVED (Unanimous)

That the Town Council does not seek to pay Parish basic allowances to Members and that the status quo remains.

FC/182 LUDLOW IN BLOOM – REQUEST FOR FUNDING

That a grant of £2,500 be awarded to Ludlow in Bloom for 2011/2012.

Councillor Smithers stated that in the last few years Ludlow in Bloom had travelled a varied route to the top mainly achieving gold in the Heart of England in Bloom competition. He thanked the Town Council for their assistance and informed Members that due to Ludlow in Bloom's success they are shortly to be visited by Nantwich in Bloom.

Councillor Parry added that Ludlow in Bloom currently had more volunteers than ever before and without their support and Ludlow Town Council's they could not achieve such a wonderful display.

Councillor Parry and Smithers left the meeting at 7.40pm

RESOLVED (9:0:2)

That a grant of £2,500 be awarded to Ludlow in Bloom for 2011/2012.

Councillor Parry and Smithers rejoined the meeting at 7.45pm

FC/183 CEMETERY ISSUES

That:-

- i) grave spaces are to be marked out;**
- ii) an audit should be carried out to establish if graves have been filled without paperwork being provided; and**
- iii) an evaluation be carried out of how much space is available for future interment.**

The Chairman informed the Council that these recommendations would allow the cemetery to operate more effectively.

RESOLVED (Unanimous)

That:-

- i) grave spaces are to be marked out;**

- ii) an audit should be carried out to establish if graves have been filled without paperwork being provided; and
- iii) an evaluation be carried out of how much space is available for future interment.

FC/184 MARKET BOOKING REFUND POLICY

That the Town Clerk be authorised to refund fees where markets are over subscribed or cancelled by the Town Council.

RESOLVED (12:0:1)

That the Town Clerk be authorised to refund fees where markets are over subscribed or cancelled by the Town Council.

FC/185 COUNCIL PROPERTIES

The Buttercross

That a full report on the Buttercross be presented to Council relating to the funding available for the Buttercross to be used as an educational interpretation and heritage centre.

That Chairman drew Members attention to the extensive and detailed papers provided by the Town Clerk and invited Shropshire Council's Conservation Officer, Colin Richards to speak to the Council.

The Conservation Officer informed the Council that in the final years of South Shropshire District Council ("SSDC"), due to climate changes, there were a series of collapses of the Town Walls, repair of which cost SSDC in the region of £100,000 per year. English Heritage advised that this situation could not continue and that a responsible body needed to be set up for the maintenance of the walls, therefore the Town Walls Trust came into existence.

The St. John's Road wall was the first to be repaired with one section costing in the region of £60,000, the Heritage Lottery Fund ("HLF") helped with these costs.

He went on to say that the north face was the biggest job to be undertaken, the Town Walls Trust have been putting together this bid for three years and are looking to secure, with a joint bid, 80-90% of the costs (£700-800,000). Since the bid preparation began the HLF have changed their terms of reference so that there needs to be an education, interpretation and skills aspect to the bid not just restoration. The HLF have suggested that in this round of funding Ludlow only has one chance therefore a joint bid ensures all the necessary works are done in the short term. The works to the Castle Gardens are urgently

needed as the gardens are a significant area of public enjoyment. The Buttercross is currently an obsolete building and without works to make it DDA compliant it cannot be used as a public building.

Councillor Pope asked whether the Town Council would be expected to take on the liability or leasehold of the Castle Walks once completed. The Conservation Officer stated that the liability was currently with the Castle but that if the paths are extended and a picnic area set up the HLF would fund a scheme that would minimise maintenance costs and that future liability would depend on what agreement was reached with the Castle. The Town Clerk assured Members that this was stage 1 and that no details or agreements would be worked out until the project was progressed further.

The Conservation Officer stated that the 1st stage was to submit a draft proposal for the HLF's consideration to establish whether funding is available and how much. The final decision lies with the Town Council as they own the land.

Councillor Pound asked how much of the funding would be spent on professional fees. The Town Clerk assured Members that these charges were being minimised as the bid was mainly being put together by Officers of Ludlow Town Council and Shropshire Council and that the HLF make allowances in the funding for these fees.

Councillor Wilcox queried whether the Buttercross was the best place for an interpretation/education centre. He also questioned if the installation of a lift could diminish the structure of the Buttercross and the health and safety issues should a fire occur.

The Conservation Officer advised that the Buttercross was currently suffering from use and abuse especially at night and that the proposal to enclose the area would offer protection to the historical structure. The previous restoration to the building had ensured a good basic structure and at this stage the bid was only testing the HLF's interest in funding. In the future the Buttercross' suitability can be compared to other possible sites in the town, though the Buttercross is the natural centre of Ludlow considering the road network and the surrounding buildings.

The Conservation Officer emphasised that no commitment is needed tonight.

Councillor Parry added that anything to encourage more visitors to the town was important, she was also interested in the option to include skills training in the project especially for local young people.

Councillor Pope expressed her concerns that should the project go over budget the Council would be liable for the costs and also the ongoing running costs of such facilities, she asked whether a smaller bid would be more manageable.

Councillor Jackson stated that the glass works at Ludlow College and the Assembly Room had been unpopular at first but that they were now part of the town and worked really well.

The Conservation Officer stated that before any commitment was made the Council could put any further question they had to the HLF and he had been advised to split the project into three stages, the first being the most urgent i.e. the Town Walls. At a time when many sources of funding are constrained the HLF is one of the few sources not depleted.

Councillor Mitchell commented that the Buttercross was built for public use and should remain so. The Town Clerk reminded Members that to remain in public use a lift was required.

Councillor McCormack advised that the issues with the walls and walks would not go away, they would only get worse and if we do not grad this funding with both hands the Council may end up having to pay for the works themselves, she stressed that the bid should not be thrown away over one issue.

The Chairman added that the Guildhall could be considered once vacation was confirmed.

RESOLVED (8:0:5)

That the Town Clerk be authorised to continue with the proposed bid and to report back to a future meeting on progress.

FC/186 The Guildhall

That the Town Clerk write to HMCS to establish whether they will be vacating the Guildhall and when.

The Town Clerk explained to the Council that the current Guildhall lease expired on the 31st March 2011 and that currently she has been unable to confirm if and when they will be vacating the building. After this date the tenancy will continue on a month by month basis but she stated that she will continue to chase a definite answer.

Councillor Jackson asked if the about the condition of the building, the Town Clerk stated that the Court Service had a full repairing lease, that a dilapidation survey had been carried and she would ensure all repairs were completed.

FC/187 Cemetery House

That three quotes for replacement of the pointing on Cemetery House with lime mortar be sought and the central heating system to be repaired before it is let to tenants.

RESOLVED (11:0:2)

That:-

- i. the Town Clerk obtain three quotes for replacement of the pointing on Cemetery House with lime mortar;
- ii. the central heating system to be repaired before it is let to tenants;
- iii. the Town Clerk and Chairman of Services Committee be authorised to accept the best quote for repairs to cemetery house on behalf of the Town Council so that the works may be started as soon as possible.

FC/188 Cemetery House Garden

That a portion of the Cemetery House gardens be excluded from the tenancy and be retained by the Council for the propagation and lining out bedding plants.

RESOLVED (11:0:2)

That a portion of the Cemetery House gardens be excluded from the tenancy and be retained by the Council for the propagation and lining out bedding plants.

FC/189 CITIZEN ADVICE BUREAU FUNDING REQUEST

That CAB should be awarded a grant of £2,000.00.

Councillor Aitken informed the Council that since this recommendation the Budget Working Group had considered the matter, it was agreed to defer this item to the budget setting.

FC/190 MILL WHEEL AT THE BUTTERCROSS

That Council considers the request from Dinham Millennium Green to move the Mill Wheel from the Buttercross to the Green's 'Viewing Room'.

The Chairman informed the Council that the proposal to move the Mill Wheel to Dinham Millennium Green had been defeated at Policy and Finance Committee but added that he believed the Millennium Green was a better site for the Mill Wheel.

Councillor Smithers stated that he had been to see the Mill Wheel today and that currently it seemed to be used as an ashtray and looked very untidy. Councillor Parry pointed out that the Mill Wheel had been at the Buttercross for over 150 years, that she was concerned it would be damaged if moved and added that it could be a feature in the Heritage Lottery Fund bid with regard to the Buttercross. Councillor Smithers said that the Mill Wheel was not one piece of stone, but several bound together and therefore easily put back together.

RESOLVED (5:6:0)

That the Mill Wheel from the Buttercross be moved to the Green's 'Viewing Room at Dinham Millennium Green.

As the proposal was rejected the status quo remains.

FC/191 MEMORIAL BENCHES

That following the amendments the Memorial Bench Regulations be adopted.

Councillor McCormack highlighted the amendments mentioned, changing "brass plaque" to "metal plaque".

RESOLVED (9:0:4)

That subject to amendment of the word "brass" to "metal" the Memorial Bench Regulations be adopted.

FC/192 **That the 'Lakeside' bench be the only type of bench used.**

The Chairman explained that one type of bench would be used across the town and that a bench with arms had been recommended as it may deter skateboarders.

RESOLVED (9:0:4)

That the 'Lakeside' bench be the only type of bench used and the charges indicated be approved.

FC/193 SERVICES COMMITTEE

RESOLVED (Unanimous)

That the draft minutes of the Services Committee meeting held on 10th January 2011, be received.

FC/194 REPRESENTATIONAL COMMITTEE

a) Minutes

RESOLVED (Unanimous)

That the minutes of the Representational Committee meeting held on the 7th December 2010 and 11th January 2011, be received.

FC/195 b) Recommendations

LUDLOW SWIFT CONSERVATION GROUP

That Ludlow Town Council's Direct Labour Force help Ludlow Swift Conservation Group to put up nesting boxes.

The Chairman pointed out that the swifts would arrive shortly and therefore this was an urgent matter.

RESOLVED (11:0:2)

That Ludlow Town Council's Direct Labour Force help Ludlow Swift Conservation Group to put up nesting boxes.

FC/196 SHROPSHIRE OLYMPIAN FESTIVAL

That the item be considered by full council and subsequently discussed with the Chamber of Commerce to explore ways to create a 'spin off' children's event in Ludlow.

RESOLVED (Unanimous)

That the Town Clerk present a report on the Shropshire Olympian Festival to a future Council meeting.

FC/197 PROPOSED MARKET FEES FOR 2011/12

The Chairman drew Members attention to the attached fees proposing a £1 increase. He stated that there was no change to specialist market fees and that a further report on festival market fees would be presented at a later date.

Councillor McCormack queried the rationalisation of these fees, the Town Clerk stated that she was working from the Council's current charging structure and proposed a even £1 increase on all days. The National Market Traders Federation had been consulted and they acknowledged it to be a fair increase.

Councillor Newbold queried the difference between the whole market letting fees and individual stall fees. Councillor Smithers stated that when letting the whole market there was a guaranteed income irrespective of whether all the stalls were full, when we run the market and let stall by stall we only receive fees for the stalls filled, therefore not a guaranteed income.

Councillor Wilcox left the meeting at 8.30pm

The Town Clerk added that the festival market charges were under review due to the huge difference between the whole market rent and the fees charged for stalls during the festivals.

Councillor Wilcox rejoined the meeting at 8.35pm

RESOLVED (11:0:2)

That:-

- i. the market fees increase (£1.00) on general market fees be accepted;
- ii. the Town Clerk bring a report on the rationalisation and proposed increase of specialist and festival market rents.

FC/198 MARKET REVITALISATION

The Chairman informed Council that there were two very important meetings on the 3rd February (Royal British Legion 10.30am) and 10th February (Ludlow Assembly Rooms 7.00pm) to encourage ideas to be submitted but he assured Members that this was not a decision making stage. The Town Clerk asked Members to invite anyone else who they believed to be interested.

RESOLVED (Unanimous)

That a Special Council meeting be called on the 23rd February 2011 to consider the bids as an advisory body to report to Shropshire Council.

FC/199 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Town Clerk stated that the procedure was based on the NALC model complaints procedure but she had added persistent/continuous contacts.

Councillor Parry commented that this procedure put a lot of pressure on the Mayor and asked whether the pressure could be shared with another nominated Councillor. Councillor Pound suggested setting up a Sub-Committee. Councillor Pope stated she would prefer complaints not resolved at the first stage to go to a formal Committee as according to Standing Orders one Councillor could not make decisions for the whole Council.

The Town Clerk highlighted a typographical error in the final paragraph which should have been "and/or".

Councillor Parry stated that only the most serious complaints should be reported to Council. The Chairman suggested that any complaints not settled in the 1st instance by the Town Clerk be passed to the Staffing and Appeals Committee to consider.

RESOLVED (12:0:1)

That subject to the amendments stated above the complaints procedure be adopted.

FC/200 FINANCIAL MATTERS

The Chairman went through the budget with Members and highlighted several codes including:-

- Citizens Advice Bureau grant;
- Ludlow Assembly Rooms grant on the basis of agreeing a Service Level Agreement with possible regard to rooms hire, toilet availability to the public, signage and review;
- Members noted the Diamond Jubilee Budget which would be £5,000 this year and a further £5,000 next year;
- Specialist Market expenditure which is balanced by an increase in Specialist Market income.

The Town Clerk explained the market rent income in the budget does not include the rent increase agreed earlier in the meeting and due to the current financial climate it was best to be conservative in the budget. She further stated that the street furniture budget had been reduced in view of the Memorial Benches Policy adopted today.

Councillor Pound commented that the budget was three parts one part being the Direct Labour Force and that the Council was not looking to make savings especially in the workforce. The Council has taken on too much low paid responsibility from other authorities.

Councillor Parry stated that she did not agree with Councillor Pound, she had been in the office today and that staff never stopped, not only did they have the current work/projects to complete but also years of un-catalogued archive material to "wade" through, the staff work really hard. The Chairman pointed out that overall staff costs had not increased from 2009/10 and that costs were under control.

RESOLVED (10:1:2)

That the budget be approved.

FC/201 RESOLVED (9:1:2)

That the precept be set at 5% for 2011/12.

Councillor Mitchell left the meeting at 9.00pm

FC/202 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC: PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

The Chairman moved that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business pursuant to section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

RESOLVED (unanimous)

That the public be excluded and the meeting continue in closed session.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

Town Mayor

Date

N.B. Confidential Minutes will be issued.