



MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **COUNCIL** held in the Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow on **THURSDAY 30th MAY 2013** at **7.00PM**.

FC/60 PRESENT

Chairman: Councillor Smithers, Mayor

Councillors: Ginger; Draper; Newbold; Parry; Perks; Phillips; Toop

Officers: Gina Wilding, Town Clerk;
Lucy Jones, Finance Secretary

FC/61 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/62 APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

FC/63 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
None declared.

Conflicts of Interest
None declared.

Personal Interests

<u>Member</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Reason</u>
All Councillor	Updates	Know individual involved in Staffing Matter
Councillor Draper	Co-options Updates	Know some candidates Wife works for organisation with connections to business involved in Ludlow Police Matter
Councillor Perks	Updates	Knows individual involved in Ludlow Police Matter

FC/64 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION (15 minutes)

There were two members of the public and one member of the press present.

Mr Bill Eastwell, 5 Julian Road, Ludlow, asked if item 10 on the agenda, Updates, would be considered in closed session. The Town Clerk confirmed that it would.

FC/65 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION FEEDBACK (15 minutes)

The Town Clerk stated that all questions had been answered at the previous meeting.

FC/66 UNITARY COUNCILLORS SESSION

Unitary Councillor V Parry was present but made no comment.

FC/67 CO-OPTIONS

Councillor Phillips asked why the Council was looking to co-opt Councillors into the six vacant seats, instead of calling another election. The Town Clerk stated that following an election it was normal procedure to progress to co-options to fill any remaining seats on the Council. She added that more applications had now been received than seats available.

Councillor Perks encourage the use of a skills audit among current and prospective Councillors in order to create the best Council possible. He added that it would be made clear to applicants that Ludlow Town Council is a non political Council. Councillor Parry agreed that all applicants should be written to, to inform them that Ludlow Town Council is not politically minded.

Councillor Perks added that once co-opted the Council needed to ensure that the new Councillors are professionally inducted and mentored in their new role. Councillor Phillips asked if Councillor Ginger had had his induction. The Town Clerk confirmed that Councillor Ginger had been provided with an induction pack, SALC training options and had a one to one training session with herself.

Councillor Ginger stated that as co-opted Members had the same powers as an elected Member the Council could not hold them to a different standard in terms of political allegiance. He said that he had the option to declare his political status at election and therefore the co-option applicants should have the same opportunity.

Councillor Phillips expressed her concern that co-opting by stealth could leave the Council open to becoming a political Council and public ridicule. The Chairman stated that the co-option process would be completed at full Council during public session and would therefore be open and transparent.

Councillor Parry pointed out that many other town and parish Council were in a similar position and were co-opting. She stated that Councillors were more than capable of considering the applications and co-opting the best applicants for the benefit of the town.

Councillor Phillips stated that there was no rule that the Council could not have another election. The Town Clerk stated that it was the Council's decision but that co-option was the normal process. Councillor Draper added that the co-option process had already begun and backtracking now could leave the Council open to humiliation and ridicule, in addition to the cost of calling another election. The Chairman said that elections would cost in the region of £2,000 per ward (Ludlow has 7 wards = £14,000).

RESOLVED (6:2:0) GP/PT

That:-

- i) a letter be sent to all co-option candidates to reaffirm that Ludlow is a non-political Council.
- ii) once co-opted Councillors be given a full and professional induction.

FC/68 The Chairman encouraged Members to attend the SALC training courses as they were very beneficial. Councillors Perks stated that not all Councillors had the time or means to go to the training courses as they were often held during the day in Shrewsbury. He asked if it was possible to hold session in Ludlow.

RESOLVED (Unanimous) GP/PT

That the Town Clerk investigate the possibly of holding SALC training session in Ludlow in the evening for all local Councillors.

FC/69 The Town Clerk informed the Council that all co-option applications will be circulated to Members in the agenda for the meeting on the 17th June 2013. Councillor Parry pointed out that co-option would be a similar process to recruiting staff which the majority of Councillors had done in the past.

RESOLVED (4:2:2) VP/PD

That Ludlow Town Council co-opt 6 Councillors to fill the current vacancies created by the full Council election.

FC/70 **REVIEW**

Councillor Perks stated that at the beginning of the Annual General Meeting there had been some confusion as to the first item on the agenda, which he believed should be Health and Safety, Apologies and Declarations of interest before the Election of Mayor.

The Town Clerk read out a section of the Local Government Act 1972, which clearly states that at the Annual Meeting the Election of Mayor is the first item on the agenda. Councillor Perks stated that he would like clarification on this matter from the relevant authority as the Council could not have any ambiguity.

Councillor Parry stated that she had complete faith in the Town Clerk and her interpretation of the law.

RESOLVED (Unanimous) GP/MP

That through CILCA training and mentoring the Town Clerk seek clarification of the agenda order at the Annual General Meeting.

FC/71 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) JS/PD

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

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Town Mayor

Date

N.B. Closed Session Minutes will be issued.