

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD AT THE GUILDHALL, LOAD STREET, BEWDLEY
10 JANUARY 2022 at 7.00PM

PRESENT

Council Members The Mayor, Cllr P Harrison, Cllrs J Byng, A Coleman, R Coleman, C Edginton White, P Gittins MBE, I Latimer, D Morehead, E Seldon and R Stanczyszyn (Deputy Mayor)

In attendance: Worcestershire County Councillor I Hardiman
PC S Thomas, Bewdley and Rural SNO, West Mercia Police
T Bodley - Town Clerk

The Mayor reported the sad news that former Mayor of Bewdley, Ann Mace had passed away. A request was made at the end of the meeting to send a condolence card from the Mayor and Town Council and that the Mayor's PA in liaison with Cllr Davies and Gittins MBE prepare a memorial statement for the Kidderminster Shuttle. It was also noted that funeral flowers be sent from Bewdley Town Council. The Mayor's PA to notify members of funeral arrangements in due course.

9592 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and recorded below:

Cllr	Reason
Billet	Unwell
Davies	Unable to attend
Lacy	Unable to attend

9593 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were reminded to submit their Register of Interests and to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary and/or Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.

Cllrs Byng and Edginton White have a standing declaration in their respective roles as a member of Wyre Forest District Council and Trustee to Friends of Riverside North Park; any comments made at town council meetings on Localism or Riverside North Park are made prior to possession of the full facts and would not amount to pre-determination.

9594 COUNCILLORS' DISPENSATIONS

Following a declaration of interest at minute reference 9593, it was noted that Cllrs Byng and Edginton White have a dispensation in place up to May 2023 for discussion and voting on agenda items covering Localism and Riverside North Park.

9595 OPEN SESSION TO HEAR FROM:

- i) Members of the Public – None present
- ii) Representatives from Principal Authorities –
 - a) Worcestershire County Councillor Hardiman supplied a report attached, page 1177. Cllr Edginton White thanked Cllr Hardiman for the work that he had undertaken since the last meeting of the Road Safety Working Group held on 6 January.
 - b) Wyre Forest District Councillors – No reports were made.
- iii) Representatives from Supporting Services – PC Thomas, West Mercia Police reported on the following:
 - a) It had been a good festive period with the lowest record of public order offences in recent years.
 - b) There had been one serious incident prior to Christmas. PC Thomas was asked if the police would support a review of the licensed premises where the incident occurred and it was reported that the premises owners conducted

themselves appropriately and the actions of the establishment was not in question or deemed to be held accountable so a review would not be supported by West Mercia Police, however if members of the public considered a different viewpoint then they can approach the licencing board and request a review independently.

- c) The local policing team are developing surgeries and promoting the Safe Cycling Initiative and safer open spaces for lone pedestrians particularly at night-time.
 - d) Speed camera deployment resulted in speeding offences recorded thus: 183 – Cleobury Road, 120 – Dowles Road and 252 – the bypass.
 - e) Licensing and anti-social behaviour figures dating from July 2021 recorded 29 separate incidents.
- PC Thomas left the meeting at 19:10hrs

9596 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to **Approve** the minutes of the Town Council meeting held 6 December 2021, as a true record.

9597 FINANCE

- i) To approve the schedule of accounts including approval of invoices to be paid and approval of invoices paid as a matter of urgency. Please refer to schedule of payments page 1179.

RESOLVED: That the schedule of payments as at 10 January 2022 be approved.

- ii) To note the current financial position.
November and December bank reconciliations circulated in advance of the meeting was **noted**.
- iii) Kitchen Electric Heater – to consider quotation SQ-73

RESOLVED: That quotation number SQ-73 be approved.

- iv) Replacement Office Lighting – to consider quotation SQ-76

RESOLVED: That quotation number SQ-76 be approved and coded against Capital Expenditure – Town Council Office budget.

- v) Load Street Toilets – Waste Hygiene Contract
Following a report and analysis of quotations received in advance of the meeting members raised questions on the suggested frequency of sanitary units provided by quote B.

RESOLVED: That quotation A be awarded a 12-month contract to commence upon completion the date of transfer.

- vi) Insurance Renewal
It was reported that the council’s Cyber Security insurance was due for renewal in January at a cost of £319.19, this formed an essential requirement in order to demonstrate that a suitable risk management strategy was being adhered to. It was also advised that a separate policy for Wribbenhall Millennium Green Trust was due for renewal on 26 April.
It was reported that civic items were covered under the council’s insurance in 2019 but the schedule covering 2021, contents cover was reduced, and these items excluded from the policy. Members could not explain why this had occurred. It was suggested that replacement costs should be in the region of £160,000 for maces and a more realistic value placed on regalia.
It was reported that RNP play equipment had been valued at £38,000 with a recommendation that these be added to the policy.

The Town Clerk was asked to ensure that Wyre Hill play equipment was also contained within the policy and a suggestion that the SSS planters should be added if it were a cost-effective proposition.

RESOLVED:

- a) That Civic items be placed on the insurance policy.
- b) That RNP play equipment be placed on the insurance policy.
- c) That delegation be given to the Town Clerk in regard to seeking a realistic valuation and setting an insurance figure accordingly.

vii) Petty Cash Card – Monzo Debit Card

RESOLVED: That approval is granted to inject £250.00 onto a Monzo debit card for the purposes of petty cash expenditure.

9598 COMMITTEE AND GROUP REPORTS

To receive minutes and meeting notes held since the last Council Meeting.

- i) **Road Safety Group** to receive notes from the meeting held on 7 December 2021. The meeting notes were **noted**.
- ii) **Planning Committee**
It was **RESOLVED** to **approve adoption** of minutes from the Planning Committee meeting held on 15 December 2021.
- iii) **Finance Committee**
It was **RESOLVED** to **approve adoption** of the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 15 December 2021.
- iv) **Staffing Committee**
It was **RESOLVED** to **approve adoption** of the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 16 December 2021. A recommendation to merge the Finance and Facilities Committee Meetings and reduce membership to 8 in number will be placed on the February Town Council agenda for consideration of committee membership.

9599 POLICY AND DOCUMENTS REVIEW

- i) Protocol for Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure – It was reported that there had been some amendments since the last review in November 2017 with the updated version supplied in advance of the meeting. Members were requested to approve the protocol.

RESOLVED: That the Protocol for Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure be approved.

9600 LOCALISM

The Town Clerk provided an update on the localism transfers.

- i) Riverside North Park – Grant Agreement.

RESOLVED: That the Grant Agreement be ratified and signed by the Mayor.

- ii) Toilets – It was reported that the solicitor has confirmed that the address on the contract documents has now been amended to 6 Load Street, the transfer plan is also being redrawn and will be forwarded upon completion. WFDC confirm that the toilets will remain open on transfer day and the vacant possession clause in the contract has been updated to reflect this. Confirmation was also received that should car parking spaces be reconfigured WFDC will not impede or limit access to the toilet block. The update was **noted**.

9601 TOWN CLERKS UPDATES

- i) WFDC Hackney Carriage Consultation. The report was **noted**.
- ii) Office rearrangement – additional sockets and data outlet points required. The report was **noted**.

- iii) Office Broadband – Complete Fibre Business Broadband contract renewal. Members discussed the merit of remaining on the current tariff as opposed to changing to a 24-month contract.

RESOLVED: That delegation be given to the Town Clerk to decide on a suitable tariff for broadband and landline.

- iv) Stourport Road Speed Survey Results. It was stated that residents had been informed of the results of the survey and a council member remarked that congestion and speeding was a problem no matter what the survey results indicated. A further member stated that there has been a multi-agency effort to tackle the problem and thanked those for their endeavours. The report was **noted**.
- v) West Mercia Policing Priorities.

RESOLVED: That the Policing priorities would be
 1st – Anti social behaviour
 2nd – Road safety and parking problems
 3rd – Crime Prevention

- vi) Environment Agency Update – Beales Corner. The report was **noted**.

9602 WYRE FOREST HOUSE – MAYORAL BOARD

Members were asked if they wished to continue updating the Mayoral board in the Bewdley Room of Wyre Forest House.

RESOLVED:
 i) That the board would continue to be updated.
 ii) That an update would be commissioned to include insertion of the past year’s mayoral and current mayoral at the end of their term of office.

9603 MAYORAL CHAIN REPAIR WORK

Some debate took place regarding the collarette, and detachment of the chain should it be required. It was stated that the original collarette could be located in the desk drawer of the Mayor’s Parlour. The Town Clerk advised that costs to carryout hand engraving in replacement of machine engraving once the collarette was attached would be £2.42 per letter opposed to 55p per letter for the latter.

Members considered that the risk of damage be too high to support re-attachment of the hand painted scroll.

RESOLVED:
 i) That the quotation to supply and fit a velvet backing to the chain be approved.
 ii) That work to re-attach the hand painted scroll be rejected.
 iii) That two councillors be approved to deliver and collect the mayoral chain.

9604 MAYOR’S DIARY AND FUTURE EVENTS

- i) To receive an update on the Mayor’s diary as detailed below:

DATE	EVENT
11/02/2022	Stourport Skittles Night
04/03/2022	Mayor of Kidderminster Charity Ball
12/03/2022	Stourport Bingo Night
01/04/2022	Stourport Mayor’s Ball

ii) Bewdley Mayor Events as detailed below:

DATE	EVENT
22/01/2022	Bingo Night
05/03/2022	Quiz Night
29/04/2021	Mayor's Ball

9605 In accordance with the **Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1(2)**, it was **RESOLVED** that the public and the press be excluded from the meeting to allow for discussion of confidential matters relating to any of staff, legal matters or contractual arrangements, the publication of which would be prejudicial to the public interest

9606 BEWDLEY HERTIAGE TRUST – To consider the Bewdley Heritage Trust Position Statement December 2021

9607 STAFFING MATTERS

9591 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT ORDINARY MEETING –

Wednesday 19 January 2022 at 7pm, The Guildhall, Load Street.

The open meeting concluded at 20:44hrs

Signed.....
Mayor
7 February 2022

DRAFT

County Cllr Ian Hardiman's Report to Bewdley Town Council

Local Issues

Bewdley Bridge, Debris Around Pillars:

Further to my report in November, this still hadn't been cleared in December and in fact had worsened; the Rowing Club Captain asked me to chase the Environment Agency to deal with what had become a safety hazard for rowers. I contacted the Leader of the County Council who responded by asking the Council's Flood Risk manager and the Cabinet Member Responsible to speak to the EA on this. Thankfully, the EA have now reacted positively and on 6th January cleared the Debris satisfactorily.

Poorly Repaired Benches in Kidderminster Road:

I have spoken with the Highways Engineer, reminding him that the two Benches presently owned by the County Council, and which are due to be transferred to the Town Council, are still unsatisfactory having been repaired to a poor standard. He will instruct the appropriate Team responsible to attend and resolve this issue so that the benches' transfer can be agreed.

Catchems End / Kidderminster Road junction, Wall Collision Damage:

This wall was damaged by a vehicle collision in June '21 and has still not yet been repaired. I have therefore urged the Highways Engineer to arrange the appropriate works as soon as possible.

Wribbenhall Riverside Balustrade Maintenance:

Whilst on the Pewterer's side of the road the Balustrade/and its spindles have been professionally repaired and painted following a vehicle collision, unfortunately the similarly constructed Balustrade on the Riverside, running in parallel, has not and its appearance is contrastingly poor.

I have registered with the Highways Engineer a request calling for this to be attended to bring the Riverside's appearance to a standard that will be inviting to visitors to Bewdley.

Blackstone Car Park Benches: I met recently with the Highways Engineer and reminded him that the two Tables/Benches here are in a poor condition and in my view require replacement. The Engineer has assured me that he will chase the Countryside Services Manager asking him to attend to these as soon as possible.

Wyre Forest Issues

The planning application for the proposed Quarry at Lea Castle, Wolverley, has still not been determined yet but it may be getting closer as it likely to go to either the February or March planning committee at WCC.

Strategic Issues County Wide

WCC received £1.6 million from central government to support free school meals and fund holiday activities over the

We are approaching that time of year when it is time to set the budget and council tax levy.

The Cabinet met on 6th January and approved the draft budget for consultation. Full Council will debate and formally set the final budget at its meeting on 17th February.

It is proposed to increase general council tax by just .094% but to precept 3% for the social care levy, 1% for this year and 2% which WCC chose not to levy last year so this can be levied this year, so in simple terms overall council tax is proposed to increase by 3.94%. The maximum it could be increased by under Government rules is 5%. In money terms, 3.94% is £52.95 per annum on a Band D property which will mean the County Councils portion of the bill will be £1,396.78 compared to £1,343.83 last year. Remember that WCC make up 70% of your overall council tax bill, with WFDC being about 12%, your PC's share 1% and Police and Fire making up the rest.

The net revenue budget is proposed to increase from circa £355 million in 2021-2022 to £373 million in 2022-2023. The gross budget is over £1 billion.

We have had additional monies from central government this year to tackle pressures in adults and social care, a further £6 million in social care grant and a one off what is called a 'services grant' of £4.4 million, of which £1.4 million is to fund the new national insurance levy but this is still £3 million net.

We are also predicting an increase in council tax income of circa £11.3 million from the increase, 1% is worth about £2.8 million and circa £2.7 million from council tax buoyancy (new properties being built and occupied) and circa £1 million from the collection fund (i.e. more people coming back into paying council tax). Therefore adding everything together WCC is circa £30 million better off than in 2021-2022. That said there still are final pressures in social care and frankly unless the grant continues to go up substantially from government they will remain but the additional funding this year is very welcome and will go some way to alleviating the immediate pressure. Overall those pressures amount to £44.2 million so there is a gap of £14.2 million to be plugged by use of some reserves, £2.7 million, £8.1 million of income and efficiencies and use of some adult social care external funding of £3.4 million.

We have also had substantial grants to use for our Covid -19 response.

We have a large capital programme and through the period 2020 to 2024 it is proposed to spend £439 million.

So what are we spending your money on, well £155 million in our People Directorate (Adult Social Care, Public Health, Communities, Libraries, Countryside Side Service, Registration Service etc...), £109 million in Worcestershire Children First, (Children's Services, Social Care Placements, Education, SEND etc...), £57 million in Economy and Infrastructure (Highways, Waste Contract, Trading Standards, Public Rights of Way, Major Projects, Passenger Transport) and £55 million on Corporate services, (Finance, Legal and Democratic Services, Administration, Buildings and Property Management, Interest on Debt i.e. paying for the borrowing on capital schemes and many other things.

In broad terms we spend circa £260 million of the £373 million net revenue budget on vulnerable adults and vulnerable children, this is circa 70% of our budget.

We are proposing spending an additional £12 million in both 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 on road resurfacing and a further £4 million in both 2022-2023 and 2024 on pavement resurfacing.

We have also created a pot of money, £500,000 in both 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 to fund small scale schemes such as creating new pelican and zebra crossings.

There will be an uplift in the budget for Parish Lengths man. We are awaiting the specific details of this i.e. whether is a straight percentage uplift for each Parish across the board or not. I am aware the level of funding that each Parish receive has been frozen now for about 10 years.

There will be an additional £1 million for drainage including small schemes to support flood alleviation. Each county councillor will be allocated £22,500 in 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 to spend on capital local highways schemes.

We are also allocating an additional £1.1 million to extend for a further 2 years the Councillors Divisional Fund allocating each County Councillor £10,000 per annum to spend on projects and community organisations within their electoral division

In terms of school funding whilst we still are one of the more poorly funded areas and the Government has not yet changed how the formula works nationally, the quantum of cash is at least going up nationally which translates into more money for Worcestershire pupils. Under the parameters of the National Funding Formula which Worcestershire uses, there will be a minimum increase per pupil of 2%.

The dedicated school grant has increased from £371 million in 2021-2022 to £383 million in 2022-2023 (this is for mainstream schools) and the Higher Needs Block (this is for special school funding and SEND) has increased from £68.5 million to £75.5 million which is a step in the right direction but there is still a substantial overspend in special needs which needs addressing.

The CQC and Ofsted have published their report following their reinspection in the latter part of 2021, further to their 2018 inspection that found serious weaknesses in 12 areas relating to SEND. The re-inspection has confirmed that an appropriate level of improvement has been made in 8 out of 12 of the areas. The areas still of concern, which WCC and Health are already addressing relate largely to integration in mainstream schools, the appropriateness of an individual's placement and the quality of their ECHP and the interface and liaison with parents and carers.

End.

Minute Reference: 9597 i) Approval of current schedule of payments up to 10 January 2022

Agenda Item: 9597 Finance i) To Approve Schedule of Payments

Voucher	Code	Payment Method	Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
278	Lengthsman	BACS	Lengthsman	Green Man Gardens (Richard Jones)	325.02	0.00	325.02
279	Guildhall Lease Hire	BACS	Guildhall Rent	Wyre Forest District Council	55.00	0.00	55.00
280	Photocopier	BACS	Copier charges	Dolphin Tec Limited	12.30	2.46	14.76
281	Lengthsman	BACS	Lengthsman	J Taylor	250.91	0.00	250.91
282	Expenses	BACS	Stamps for agendas expenses	Niki Green	42.39	0.00	42.39
283	Town Clerk Office Refurbishment	BACS	Install new 3kw heater - office meeting room	Bickwood Electrical	264.00	52.80	316.80
284	Mayor's Expenses	BACS	Lottery License Annual Renewal	Wyre Forest District Council	20.00	0.00	20.00
285	Together Group	BACS	Room hire	Wribbenhall Parish Room	30.00	0.00	30.00
286	Meeting Room Hire	BACS	Room hire	Wribbenhall Parish Room	30.00	0.00	30.00
287	Riverside North Park	DD	General Waste Collection	Clearaway	50.45	10.09	60.54
288	Training Cllrs	BACS	Councillor Training	Worcestershire CALC	30.00	6.00	36.00
289	Insurance & Valuations	BACS	Cyber Security Insurance Renewal	Came & Company	319.20	0.00	319.20
290	Load Street Toilets	BACS	Relief Cleaner	P Purcell	200.00	0.00	200.00
291	Load Street Toilets	BACS	Relief Cleaner	P Purcell	50.00	0.00	50.00
292	Christmas Event	BACS	Park and Ride Bus	Wyvern Omnibus	450.00	0.00	450.00
293	General Admin	BACS	Petty Cash top up	Tracy Bodley - Monzo Card	250.00	0.00	250.00
					2,379.27	71.35	2,450.62

Minute Reference: 9597 ii) To note current financial position

December 2021 Bank Reconciliation

Bank Reconciliation at 31/12/2021			
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2021		155,358.59
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2021 - 31/12/2021		209,174.27
			364,530.86
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2021 - 31/12/2021		149,916.01
A	Cash in Hand 31/12/2021 (per Cash Book)		214,614.85
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Petty Cash 31/12/2021	184.57	
	Together Group 31/12/2021	150.00	
	Scottish Widows 31/12/2021	30,870.63	
	Cambridge Building Society 31/12/2021	30,000.00	
	Unity Trust Savings Account 31/12/2021	10,653.58	
	Unity Trust Current Account 31/12/2021	143,234.89	
			215,093.67
	Less unrepresented payments		478.82
			214,614.85
	Plus unrepresented receipts		
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		214,614.85
	A = B Checks out OK		