

Wellington Town Council

Town Mayor
Cllr Denis Allen



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POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at the Wellington Civic Offices on **Tuesday, 6th June 2017** commencing at **7.00pm**.

Cllr S deLauney – Chairman	Cllr P Morris-Jones
Cllr F. Burns	Cllr J Gorse
Cllr D. Allen ex-officio	Cllr M Hosken
Cllr A. Lowe	

In attendance – Becky Eade, Telford & Wrekin, Karen Roper Clerk and one member of the public.

1/17 Welcome and Election of Chairman – Cllr deLauney welcomed everyone to the meeting and called for nominations for Chairman for the ensuing year. Cllr Gorse proposed Cllr deLauney as Chairman and was seconded by Cllr Burns, a vote was taken and all were in favour. Cllr deLauney was elected as Chairman of this committee for the ensuing year. He then invited Becky Eade to address the meeting.

2/17 Allotments – Becky Eade - Parks, Healthy Spaces, and Events Team Leader for Telford and Wrekin. She said there are 15 allotments in the Borough 11 managed by parishes, one located in Wellington situated behind Highfields House off Wrekin Road. The Wellington allotments have 66 plots in total let as 19 full and 26 half. Waiting lists close at 10 applications and are presently full. Rents currently generate £930.00 per annum with concessions or £1,800 if there were no concessions. Rates are reviewed annually and generally increased by inflation. Costs are mainly water at £650.00 per annum, repair costs are generally low as this is not a high maintenance site and recently drainage work has been done as building in the area caused problems in some low lying plots. Inspections are carried out at regular intervals to ensure plots are appropriately maintained, if not three warnings are given before notice to vacate is served. Rent agreements are standard and invoicing is done annually. There was a brief discussion about the duty of a Town or Parish council to consider the provision of allotments if 6 or more parishioners made a request. The Clerk explained that the council need only 'consider' and were not under any duty to provide as long as they had specific reasons why this could not be done such as lack of suitable land within the parish. Cllr Morris-Jones asked if T&W would pass over ownership of the land to the Town Council. Becky said that other parishes had had long term leases but was willing to explore the possibility of land transfer. Cllr Gorse said the current care home plans for Arleston included some allotment provision. A further site in Ercall Wood proposed a further 30 plots but both would be run by an allotment management group. The Clerk asked about protection on the site from pests such as rabbits, shed size regulations and Police attendances at incidents, Becky responded by saying there are no regulations on shed sizes and it is the individuals responsibility to protect their own plots. Becky confirmed that the Borough is wanting to hand over this service, members commented that it will

bring a lot of admin work and hassle for no financial gain and questioned if energies and resources would be better targeted at the projects for the Town Centre. Cllr Burns said this is about providing assets for people, Cllr Allen asked if we did not take it over would the allotments vanish? Becky said they would look at alternative arrangements such as forming an Association. Members asked the Clerk and Becky to work together and bring back a report to the next meeting to address the following questions.

- Would the land be leased or handed over to the Town Council
- The Borough would be making administrative saving – would they be prepared to prove a cash injection for taking on the service
- Provide a clear comparison of income and overall costs

3/17 Apologies for Absence – Lee Carter

4/17. Declarations of Interest – None received at this time

5/17 Election of Deputy Chairmen (x2)- Cllr Burns and Cllr Lowe were nominated as Deputy Chairmen for P&R. There being no further nominations Cllrs Burns and Lowe were elected for the ensuing year.

6/17 Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 2nd May 2017 - Were proposed for agreement subject to acceptance of the following amendments made at the Annual Full Council meeting held on 9th May 2017 Ref 13.4

Cllr Lowe said the minutes of the 2nd May 2017 lacked clarification on the following points and requested that future meetings are always recorded:

- **Office move** - Cllr Lowe said the actual amount of the allowance proposed by Cllr Burns **of up to £2,000.00** to be spent at the discretion of the Clerk was omitted from the minutes.
- **Parking** - Cllr Burns said the parking matters were **'referred back to the Chairman of the Parking Committee Working Group'** and the minutes did not include this comment.
- **Parking** - Cllr Lowe said that the P&R minutes discussed the unveiling date for the Parking Machines and did not record that members said that **'it should be very well advertised.'**

The amendments were proposed for acceptance by Cllr Burns and 2nd by Cllr Lowe. The Minutes were then proposed by Cllr Gorse, 2nd by Cllr Lowe and RESOLVED by members as a true and accurate record.

7/17 Matters Arising –

7.1.17 Smell in town centre – The Clerk reported both Severn Trent and the Telford and Wrekin Drainage Officer have done a substantial amount of work in the Square to alleviate this problem. The main run is free so the problem may be the smaller gulleys which are being checked out – the issue now to be sorted out is whether some of them might be in private ownership. We have asked that investigations continue until the problem is solved. The Clerk has also reported an issue at 8 Market Square both of smell and of rats. Again T&W officer came back to say they do not investigate private property. Members were unhappy with the negative responses and asked the Clerk to be assertive as they felt this these were Public Health issues.

7.2.17 Pride in Your High Street - Murals Project– The Clerk reported the next cheque for £5,000 has been paid towards the murals and Rob Francis is looking at claiming back the

funds from Telford and Wrekin to reimburse the Council. The next mural - the cobbler, will be installed shortly in Market Street.

7.3.17 Chewing Gum removal – members were shown picture of a before and after patch of walkway which has been cleaned as a sample leading from the High Street to the Bus Station. Staff are still gathering quotations and assessing the different methodologies of gum removal and will bring information back to this committee. Staffs are also making enquiries to see if funding might be applied for as it is a priority on the environmental audit done by PCSO Hall. Cllr Gorse said there had been investigations about buying a machine and hiring it out. Cllr deLauney said there is a type of back pack that staff could use but there needs to be a mass clear up first then 'spot cleaning' could be done on a regular maintenance programme. Cllr Hosken said this issue was looked at a long time ago but was not taken forward.

7.4.17 PCSO / Anti-Social Behaviour – The Clerk reported on the following matters raised at Monday's conference call;

1. Regular conference calls will take place on Mondays at 10.30am – members were asked to feed in their issues
2. Progress Pub Watch/Shop Watch schemes
3. Take action on Parking on layby the churches
4. Receive results from the Environmental audit and will bring issues to next meeting
5. Take action about poor waste management behind the shops
6. The Clerk is attending a Workshop on Integrated Community Management on Monday 12th at 2.00pm members were asked to let her know of their top 5 issues.
7. PCSO Amanda Hall – is back but on restricted hours and duties presently. She has called an Anti Social Behaviour Working Group meeting on Thursday 8th June at 2.00pm at the Police Station.

Members were made aware that Maximus Jones, our PCSO, has been successful in getting the Housing Association to prosecute against a person throwing excrement over the garden fence into a neighbouring property.

7.5.17 2020 Project Board – The Chairman was not present at the last meeting and the minutes had not been circulated. The Clerk agreed to circulate the minutes.

7.6.17 Office Move – The Clerk reported that Staff have indicated they are happy with the accommodation although there are obvious disadvantages to be overcome. We have had 2 quotes for the obscuring of the window both coming in at £274/275 (4 companies asked to quote) members were happy for the Clerk to go ahead accepting the most suitable quote. Jake Anslow (T&W Architect) had been contacted on the storage issue and on flagpole relocation. The Clerk reported that the old Lesleys Room is currently without electricity so is not really accessible. Cllr Morris-Jones MBE said it is 6 weeks since the move and in his view the new meeting room makes us look a laughing stock as it has the appearance of a 2nd hand auction room. Staff have to go outside the building to access toilets which he felt was against the law, and that bookings for the committee room are still being done by Telford & Wrekin. The Remembrance Book is not accessible to the public and in his view it is chaos and has been for the last 6 weeks and we need things to be moving forward quickly. At a previous meeting the Clerk had suggested a settling down period of 3 months before any further decisions are taken but it was proposed by Cllr Allen 2nd by Cllr Lowe to form a working group to look at these issues and report back to the next meeting. Cllr Hosken said it was an utter disgrace and we should be gaining from this move and this was not a right and proper situation. Cllr deLauney said that the blame does not sit with individuals, it was a corporate decision and money from booking our room would come to us. It was agreed that Cllrs Hosken, deLauney and Burns meet in the Clerks office on Monday at 10.30am.

7.7.17 Parking in Wellington – The Clerk reported the parking machines are due to go live in Wellington on June 19 and a press release had been done. The machines issuing free tickets have been installed in the following car parks: the Civic & Leisure Centre car park (currently known as Swimming Pool West), Naylor's Row, Walker Street (currently known as Swimming Pool East) and Victoria Road North. Fay Easton is working with Bob Colbran to produce a map showing short and long stay car parks. Councillor Morris-Jones MBE said there now needs to be agreement on the longer term parking arrangements; initial thoughts are that 9 hours free parking would seem to be a consensus with local businesses.

7.8.17 Councillor Vacancies – The Clerk reported she had met with Cllr Jinks and that Cllr Luter had arranged to see her on Wednesday. The appropriate forms will/have been signed will/had been sent to the elections team. They will receive both a paper copy and an online version of the induction pack and SALC training list. Cllr Jinks has asked that the induction training is done in house on a one to one / one to two basis this will be discussed further. Cllr Morris Jones MBE said it was good to see a younger element being elected to Council and we may need to hold more meetings in the evening to accommodate them.

8/17 Finance –

8.1.17 Reports - The Clerk reported that due to the end of year workload the Deputy Clerk had been unable to provide all of the usual reports. Cllr Hosken moved items A & B on the agenda, 2nd by Cllr deLauney and agreed by members present to accept the reports relating to receipts and payments for April 2017.

- a. To agree receipts for April 2017
- b. To agree payments for April 2017

Items listed below C to E will be presented to the July meeting

- c. To agree payments to date for May 2017
- d. To receive details of Petty Cash payments for April and May 2017
- e. To receive details of Receipts/Payments compared with budget as at 30th April and May 2017.

8.2.17 Insurance- The Clerk explained that the Council's Insurance Brokers had been asked to compare three quotations and they have advised the best price was from our current provider, Aviva. Their quotation now included the murals and Councillors' computers, members also pointed out that the insurance premium tax had increased which has led to an increase of £283 on last year's invoice.

Cllr Hosken proposed, 2nd by Cllr Lowe and it was RESOLVED by members to accept the quotation and renew the Town Councils' Insurance Policy for 2017/18 for the sum of £5507.92.

8.3.17 Annual Audit

Members received copies of the accounts, the Annual Return 2016/17 and the Internal Auditors Report for the year ending 31st March 2017.

- a. **Internal Auditor's report for the Year Ending 31st March 2017.**
The Clerk explained that the Internal Auditor had picked up issues with 4 cheques, 3 of which were relating to the previous financial year. Two of the cheques had not been presented by the payee's and one had been prepared but the invoice was missing and VAT had been reclaimed. The 4th cheque related to this financial year and was still the cheque book waiting for further information from the benefactor. The Internal Auditor had awarded a qualified audit and had therefore responded No to boxes A,B & J on the Internal Audit report form 2016/17.

Cllr Morris-Jones MBE said these were minor faults, easily rectified. The Clerk said they should have been picked up by the Internal Auditor last year and written off. The Chairman said three of the cheques were issued at a time when the Deputy Clerk was working on his own and doing year end for the first time with no support. He commented that the council is used to having a clear audit and this year's report was unfortunate. The Mayor commented that we have lost the services of Cllr Perkins who used to check the accounts from time to time and suggested this practice is reinstated. Members asked the Clerk to prepare a report for the July meeting with proposals of how to ensure that these problems are not repeated in future years.

b. Bank Account update – Report – Clerk

The Clerk reported that Staff have been investigating how other parishes deal with their banking particularly in relation to electronic banking. The Internal Auditor was asked to comment and gave the following response.

I cannot advise specifically on other Town Council's as I do not audit their accounts. In general, electronic banking and payments are more accurate than manual transactions with a reduced risk of fraud. It is the council's decision which bank they choose to go with, however the council's policies and regulations should be met whichever systems are used.

The Clerk reported that following the change of bankers from NatWest to Barclays, although the Barclays account has been opened, the account at NatWest is not fully closed. Barclays have been approached several times to indicate if our new Community Account will allow / is capable of making BACS payments and internet banking, but to date there is no response. Cllr Morris-Jones said he is happy to make another appointment with our account manager and the Deputy Clerk to take things forward.

The Clerk was asked to produce a report for the July meeting on Banking, internal audit and electronic payments.

Cllr Hosken asked for the minutes to record members' on-going support for staff.

9/17 Defibrillator – The Clerk explained this item was on the agenda specifically in relation to the Buckatree Hotel and their application to 'host' a machine due to their location at the foot of the Wrekin. She reported that defibrillators are also on the P&L agenda where Cllr Carter reported that a survey was being undertaken by T&W to identify where the machines are situated and once completed decisions relating to provision can be taken accordingly.

Cllr Hosken reminded members that the Town centre should come first and all units should be fully accessible. Cllr Morris-Jones MBE said the application for the grant should have been forwarded by Probus or the Lions. Members said they were uncomfortable giving public money to the hotel as it is a profit making organisation and may be creating a precedent for other businesses to request units. It was suggested by Cllr Hosken and agreed by members to offer to pay ¼ of the cost shared with Probus, Lions and the Buckatree.

10/17 Wellington Environmental Services Team – The Clerk reported on the achievements of Joe Talbot who has been awarded his BTEC in Cleaning Principals. Members gave their congratulations. The Clerk said a full WEST report would go to full council next week. The Clerk suggested a Personnel meeting should be called in July to look at the following issues.

- **Continued employment of Joe**
- **Improving the Member Officer protocol**
- **Solving the trolley scenario**
- **Decision of future Christmas Bonus arrangements**

11/17 Bowring - To receive a verbal report - Cllr Morris-Jones.
Cllr Morris-Jones reported that Chris Goulson has visited the Bowring Café and had agreed to repair the flooring. He had had a discussion with the tenant who informed him that he was looking at installing an oven in order to cook hot meals particularly in the winter when he was hoping to remain open. He advised that he was also considering doing full English breakfasts which is a very different business model to the first tenant. The additional use for cooking means the current extractor is no longer suitable and the Clerk was asked to price up an appropriate unit at the Town Council's cost as this would be over and above the initial specification. Tables and chairs have been purchased and seem to be working well, they are the folding type that are taken in in the evenings. T&W officers are looking at the quotations received to move the access road behind the kiosk and opening hours have been set and advertised. Cllr Gorse said that advertising information should be at all entrances to the Park particularly from the A5 Holyhead Road. She felt it was important to support the kiosk and look at further advertising opportunities. Customers should be able to hire set of bowls and other equipment which could be funded through the Community Chest.

12/17 Visioning Event Next Steps – The Chairman said that the last visioning event was not completed and he suggested that we held a further event with the whole council and professional facilitator. Following long discussion it was proposed by Cllr Lowe, 2nd by Cllr Hosken to hold a second Visioning Day to complete the process and to approach Professor Copus to act as facilitator.

Cllr Gorse left at 9.20pm

13/17 Loo of the Year Award – It was proposed by Cllr Morris-Jones MBE, 2nd by Cllr deLauney to again enter the Parade toilets for the Award.

14/17 To receive urgent matters for information only.

Station Roof - At full council Cllr Roberts and later by email Frank Laurellio complained about the station roof having holes in it. The complaint has been logged and escalated with the Property Manager and maintenance team at Network Rail.

Flag Flying – The Mayor has suggested that the Red Ensign is flown for Merchant Navy Day on 3rd September. The Mayor has also agreed at P&L Committee to review the flag flying policy and will bring suggestions back to the committee.

15/17 To agree date and time of next meeting – As Tuesday 4th July 2017 at 7.00pm.

Chairman.....Date.....