

Wellington Town Council

Town Mayor
Cllr Dorothy Roberts



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FULL COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held in Civic Offices on Tuesday 13th December 2022 commencing at 7.00pm and livestreamed on Facebook.

Present:

Mayor Cllr D. Roberts	Cllr. G. Cook	Cllr J. Gorse	Cllr A. Lowe
Cllr P. Fairclough	Cllr. G. Luter	Cllr S. Hall	Cllr. K. Tomlinson
Cllr P. Morris-Jones MBE	Cllr L. Jinks	Cllr S. de Launey	Cllr. P. Davis

In attendance. Nick Brooke, John Campion and Karen Roper.

Public Open Session

73/22 Welcome – The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and said she was very sorry to report the very sad death of Alan Frost, he was a great historian and so knowledgeable about Wellington, he will be greatly missed. Cllr Tomlinson said that a Telford and Wrekin employee and Wellingtons' former Environmental Officer, Rob Jeavons, had also very sadly died at an early age. The Mayor called for a one minute silence. She then asked Rev. Nick Brooke to lead prayers.

Nick Brooke led prayers and left the meeting at 7.09pm

74/22 John Campion. The Mayor invited the Police and Crime Commissioner to answer the questions previously forwarded by members.

Council Tax – The PCC said the current situation is a challenge because of the inflation rate running at around 10% which impacts on wages and overheads such as heating and lighting which have to be paid for. His intention is to raise the precept by around 4% and he would add 20 extra Police Officers across his region. He said his precept increase was currently the 3rd lowest across the country. He was supportive of a low tax system and had on 6th December issued a consultation which closes on 6th January. The Clerk would distribute the document.

Police Station - Members were concerned that Wellington Police Station may be lost in favour of a 'fit for purpose' base. The PCC explained the current building was large and needed updating to remain relevant to the needs of the service and the majority of his budget needs to be spent on people. He assured members there were no plans to close the Police station but relocation was being considered. He gave examples from elsewhere of partnering with the fire service or community centres. Cllr Morris-Jones MBE said officers are presently not based in Wellington so the public has to wait for them to attend from Malinslee. We should have a service based in Wellington and he added 'if the Station closes you may end up reopening it because of demand as has happened in Shifnal and elsewhere'. The PCC said he agreed that there should be a station in Wellington. Cllr Jinks commented the reception at the Wellington Station was not manned and asked how the service can be accessed in an emergency. The PCC

said everyone should call 999 in an emergency situation. Cllr Tomlinson expressed her disappointment at the apparent reduction in numbers of PCSO's from two to one. The PCC said he had some courses running for PCSO's and his plans were to increase numbers of neighbourhood officers. Cllr Tomlinson said the timing of the consultation mentioned earlier was poor being over Christmas and asked if it could be extended. The PCC said unfortunately not as deadlines needed to be met.

Cllr Gorse asked about a £490k grant awarded following a joint application between the PCC and T&W Council to deliver safer streets for women. The PCC said the aim is to stop offending and tackling poor male behaviour from school age to adults. Cllr Roberts said the Police should try and work in conjunction with local events to give a Police presence when women are in the town at night.

Cllr Luter asked about the increase in thefts of construction equipment giving a recent scenario and the slow police response. The PCC said the experience described by Cllr Luter had fallen short of his expectations and he would make some enquiries.

7.45pm the Mayor thanked Mr Campion for attending this evening and answering the challenging questions posed, members then gave him a round of applause and he left the meeting. The PCC said that members could contact him anytime.

75/22 Receive and approve apologies – Apologies had been received from Cllrs Hosken, Ahmed, Brittain and Alvey for illness. The Clerk said she had received a letter from Cllr Alvey requesting a leave of absence for the next 4 months. Cllr Barker was absent for family reasons, Cllr Carter for work obligations, Cllrs Latter, McClements and Pierce had other commitments. The following members agreed to note and accept the apologies. Cllrs; Roberts, Lowe, Fairclough, Morris- Jones MBE, Jinks, Hall, Gorse, de Launey, Luter, Tomlinson, Cook and Davis. There were no abstentions and no votes against.

76/22 Receive Declarations of Interest – Cllr Morris-Jones MBE and Cllr Roberts, gave declarations of interest in relation to the Orbit. The following members agreed to note and accept the declarations, Cllrs; Lowe, Fairclough, Jinks, Hall, Gorse, de Launey, Luter, Tomlinson, Cook and Davis. There were no abstentions and no votes against.

77/22 Receive and approve the final minutes of the Full Council held on 11th October 2022

The Clerk forwarded the following amendment;

The vote recorded minute Ref: 48/22, resulting in the resignation of the Deputy Mayor was contrary to our adopted Standing Order 9.6 and is therefore invalid.

Cllr Cook proposed, following acceptance of the above amendment, the minutes of 11th October 2022 as a true and accurate record. He was seconded by Cllr. de Launey and the following members voted in favour Cllrs; Roberts Lowe, Fairclough, Morris- Jones MBE, Jinks, Hall, Gorse, de Launey, Luter, Tomlinson, Cook and Davis. There were no abstentions and no votes against.

Receive and approve the minutes of the Full Council held on 8th November 2022

Cllr Davis proposed the minutes of 8th November 2022 as a true and accurate record. He was seconded by Cllr. Luter and the following members voted in favour Cllrs; Roberts Lowe, Fairclough, Morris- Jones MBE, Jinks, Hall, Gorse, de Launey, Luter, Tomlinson, Cook and Davis. There were no abstentions and no votes against.

Receive and approve the minutes of the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting held on 28th November 2022. Cllr Davis proposed the minutes of 28th November 2022 as a true and accurate record. He was seconded by Cllr Hall, and the following members voted in favour Cllrs; Roberts, Lowe, Fairclough, Jinks, Hall, Gorse, de Launey, Luter, Tomlinson, Cook and Davis. Cllr Morris- Jones MBE abstained and there were no votes against.

78/22 Matters Arising from the above Minutes – None as all are covered in the committee reports

79/22 To receive the minutes of Wellington Town Council Committees and to consider the recommendations therein.

a) Policy and Resources Committee minutes of 06.12.22, and confidential minutes of 06.12.22 – Cllr de Launey highlighted the following matters;

- **Minute Ref 88/22 George Evans' Memorial** – Cllr de Launey said that the family and members had agreed on the wording for the storyboard so the order would now be placed and hopefully a ceremony can be held together with the Evans family in the New Year.
- **Minute Ref 90/22 CCLA Deposit of Funds** – Cllr de Launey confirmed that 2 accounts were being opened for the loan and balances.
- **Minute Ref 92/22 Market Street Works** – Cllr de Launey said Market Street work was progressing well and the result had been worth waiting for.

Confidential Minutes of 06.12.11 - Cllr de Launey said if members wish to discuss the details of matters recorded within these minutes he would be pleased to answer their questions but would do so in private session. He made the following comments.

- **Bowring** – Negotiations were underway to agree a new lease for the café.
- **Budget Timetable** – A draft budget had been presented to the P&R meeting on 6th December and to tonight's Full Council meeting. Cllr de Launey said he was happy to answer any questions and the key thing was that there will be no precept increase to members of the public. The January meetings of both P&R and Full Council would approve the final budget.

Cllr Morris-Jones MBE said the budget had been balanced by increasing access to our reserves so why did we charge the tax payers too much in previous years. Cllr de Launey explained that in the previous year the budget was set up to include the loan payments for borrowing £500,000 for regeneration but the first repayment is not due until May 2023. Additionally the Market Street development had been included in the budget calculations but had not come to fruition until the end of December this year therefore these payments were also delayed.

Cllr Gorse said the budget was discussed in detail at P&R and no criticisms were raised at the time. Cllr Davis said he wanted to extend his thanks on behalf of members for all the work and effort Cllr de Launey had put into this budget including work done whilst on his holiday.

There were no further questions from members.

b) Planning Committee meetings held on 19.10.22, 09.11.22 and 30.11.22 – Cllr Luter presented the minutes, there were no further questions.

c) Events and Communications Committee 29.11.22 – Cllr Davis presented the minutes. Cllr Roberts said the Carol Service was very successful, lots of positive

comments had been received and the singing was amazing. Cllr Gorse said the Christmas lights were looking really good in the town and again lots of great comments had been received. She asked if next year consideration could be given to improving the lighting displays in the outlying centres and to reconsider the timing of switching on and off the lights. She felt that if they were switched on earlier such as at 14:30 in the afternoon when more people were about and would see them.

80/22 Conservation Working Group Report meetings held 26.09.22 and 30.11.22 - Cllr Tomlinson said the trees from the containers were now planted in the reserve at the Shawbirch entrance and they look really good. The area had been awarded Green Flag status and a circular route had been installed. She added the Friends do a great job and the 50 tree learning trails had been revamped for the children. The ¼ ly meeting will continue and reports will be brought back to this meeting. Cllr Davis thanked the Friends and Cllrs involved in the efforts to move the trees from the planters to the Conservation area.

81/22 Community Action Team Report – The Clerk had circulated the reports and said a Public Space Protection Order is being investigated. Local Ward Walks would be taking place in the New Year and more information would be available soon. Quotations had been requested for another CCTV camera needed in Market Square and additional lighting in Market Approach. She asked that members contact her at any time with any issues so she could raise them immediately through the CAT.

82/22 To Approve Terms on behalf of the Town Council for the Orbit agreement – Cllr de Launey reported that there were 2 documents that will need signature one to underwrite the Orbit loan and the lease which would also protect the interests of the Council. The paperwork was not yet available and would hopefully be brought to a future meeting. Cllr Lowe proposed that members agree that the paperwork may be signed by the Mayor and the Clerk in line with the three sanctions recorded in the confidential minutes of 28th November 2022 and listed below;

- *50/50 purchase split*
- *Full repairing lease and the Town Council to have no financial responsibility for repairs and maintenance*
- *Clause to ensure that if either party wishes to dispose of their share should be offered to the other joint purchaser in the first instance.*

He was seconded by Cllr.Tomlinson and the following members voted in favour Cllrs; Roberts, Lowe, Fairclough, Jinks, Hall, Gorse, de Launey, Luter, Tomlinson, Cook and Davis. Cllr Morris- Jones MBE abstained and there were no votes against.

83/22 Motions to Council Proposed by Cllr Carter and seconded Cllr McClements.

1. *After raising local Council Tax by 6.6% in 21/22 and 4% in 22/23 (to over £190 per year for a band B house), This Council urges the Conservative West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, to match the commitment by this Council and by Labour led Telford & Wrekin Council to freeze Council Tax for 2023/24.*
2. *This Council supports the recent public calls by Cllr Lee Carter, Cllr Angela McClements and Cllr Graham Cook for Horizon Parking Limited to invest and repair the car park which they own off Market Street Wellington (known locally as Wilkinson's Car Park). This Council will write to Horizon to urge them to rectify serious defects and address local residents and businesses concerns about Safety.*

The Mayor said these motions were not received in line with the required 10 days' notice and those members who put these items on the agenda were not present. She would not allow any discussion and asked that all members in future adhere to our Standing Orders. Cllr Davis asked the Clerk to confirm the situation. The Clerk said the motions were received outside of the deadline but she had added them to the agenda as we had the PCC visiting this evening to directly respond to motion 1, and motion 2 had already been raised with Telford and Wrekin at Director level so she was able to give an update. Cllr Gorse proposed to move to next business, members agreed.

84/22 Policy change to consider ending routine live streaming of meetings – Cllr Luter said during lockdown 800 people were watching the Planning Committee, the numbers had reduced but we were still engaging with a busy population and he felt it would be a shame to take this option away. Cllr Davis said some comments are received about the quality of the audio and video and we should be thinking about how this can be improved. Cllr Tomlinson said she felt this was an excellent way to be open and transparent as not everyone could get out to attend meetings in person. Cllr Jinks agreed stating we should not have anything to hide and what we say should be on public record. Cllr Davis proposed that livestreaming is continued and he was seconded by Cllr Lowe. The following members voted in favour Cllrs; Roberts, Lowe, Fairclough, Jinks, Gorse, de Launey, Luter, Tomlinson, Cook and Davis. Cllr Hall abstained and Cllr Morris- Jones MBE voted against. Cllr Fairclough added she felt we should make it clear that we are now open to the public both by personal attendance and by livestreaming.

85/22 To consider the request to use Lesley's Room for French Lessons - Cllr Roberts said she had to make a declaration that she belongs to the Civic Society who meet in Lesley's room once a month. Cllr Lowe reminded members the Town Council is twinned with Chatenay Malabry and the twinned had asked permission to use the room free of charge for French Lessons fitting in around current bookings.

Member's comments were;

- Many small groups and Associations would like an FOC meeting room
- The Town Council itself often needs the room for ad hoc meetings
- Cllr Gorse asked how often would it be used and for how long, she would like further information
- Cllr Lowe responded the sessions are generally for a 90 minute duration, dates and times would be to suit the town council
- When visiting France we are treated like royalty and it feels like the least we can do
- Cllr Fairclough said it is the Town Council that is twinned NOT the Town so they are not an outside organisation
- Cllr Tomlinson said they are not a charity group or other organisation and they do treat us well when we visit France.

It was proposed by Cllr Davis and seconded by Cllr de Launey to offer Lesley's Room Free of Charge for 90 minute sessions at mutually agreed times during 2023. The following members voted in favour Cllrs; Roberts Lowe, Fairclough, Morris- Jones MBE, Jinks, Hall, Gorse, de Launey, Luter, Tomlinson, Cook and Davis. There were no abstentions and no votes against.

86/22 Date of Next Meeting – was agreed as Tuesday 10th January 2023.

Chairman.....10th January 2023