

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Minutes of the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** held on Monday 20th April 2015 at 7.00pm in the Pump Rooms, Tenbury Wells.

PRESENT: Mayor Cllr M. Willis, Deputy Mayor Cllr S. Corfield, Cllrs S. Bowkett, M. Drummond, J. Fielder, E. Hudson, D. Ingram, J. Morgan

IN ATTENDANCE: MHDC Cllrs P. Grove and A. Penn, West Mercia Police PC Lambon, Town Clerk, 5 members of the public

APOLOGIES: Cllr G. Price, Cllr J. da Costa, Cllr J. Watson

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Cllr G. Price, Cllr J. da Costa and Cllr J. Watson.

2. To receive the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 6th May 2014

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 6th May 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true and correct record of proceedings.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes

None

4. Mayors Opening Remarks

The Mayor Cllr M. Willis opened the meeting by thanking those present for their attendance.

5. Mayors' Annual Report

Attached (Appendix A)

6. District Councillors Report

Cllr Penn's report attached (Appendix B)

Cllr Penn added that the Market Street Toilets were to be refurbished.

7. County Councillors Report

Attached (Appendix C)

Cllr Pollock had given his apologies and copies of his report were given to all those at the meeting.

Cllr Fielder wished to know when the the Public Realm snagging works would be completed. The Mayor said that he understood work was to be completed in the next two weeks. The Town Clerk to follow up with WCC.

8. Local Police Report

PC Paul Lambon had been due to attend but did not arrive until just after the end of the meeting. His report was given at the beginning of the following meeting but is recorded as part of these minutes. Cllr Lambon explained that he was currently covering in Tenbury due to the long term sick leave of PC Wood. A more permanent replacement was being sought and would hopefully be in place within the next few months. Overall crime levels are down across the whole of West Mercia area and this also applied in Tenbury. PC Lambon was thanked for his attendance and was asked to pass on the best wishes of the Council to PC Wood.

9. Questions from the Pubic

Cllr Corfield requested that thanks be passed on the MHDC refuse collection team for their very good service in the town.

Mr Ian Little

Commented on two points in Cllr Pollock's report

Q: " Had not heard before that there was to be a 20mph limit on Teme St or Market Street "

A: Councillors had also not been aware of this. Cllr Pollock to be questioned on this at the next Council meeting.

Q: " Disappointing to note the delay with HRC mentioned in the report"

A: Councillors agreed that this was disappointing. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Planning application for the new site had definitely been approved and District Councillors Grove and

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Penn said they were unaware of any reason for delay and had expected work to commence in the next few months. Cllr Pollock to be questioned on this at the next Council meeting.

Cllr Penn noted his personal disappointment at the finish on some of the Public Realm works. Cllr Fielder noted that drop kerbs installed outside her property had already cracked and that workmen had told her that the kerbs were not seasoned as they used to be and so were thus liable to crack. The Mayor confirmed that the Steering Group were taking up all of these points with WCC to try to get them resolved.

Cllr Hudson

Q: "What is the non-slip surface which has been applied outside the Market Street toilets?"

A: Cllr Penn – it is a thin self-adhesive material with a granular surface, he would find out from MHDC property services the exact detail and pass on to Cllr Hudson.

Cllr Bowkett

Q: "Requested an update on Tesco?"

A: Cllr Penn trying to contact development manager at Tesco on behalf of the Museum Society who wish to look into making use of the Old Fire Station building as a heritage centre. Not likely in 2015 but perhaps in 2016. Decision likely to come in October/November regarding capital program for 2016/17. Phase 2 of Public Realm is dependent upon Tesco as WCC have chosen to wait until the development takes place before completing works.

Q: "Should Tesco sell to a third party will the planning rights be transferred over?"

A: Cllr Penn - Yes if the third party agreed to take on all the legal agreements which are part of the planning permission. The site can never be developed as housing due to proximity to the flood plain.

Meeting closed at 7:33 pm

Signed.....

Date.....

Annual Town Meeting

Monday 20th April 2015

Report from the Mayor Councillor Mark Willis

My year as Mayor of this great Town has been rather busy to say the least. Sometimes frustrating at other times hectic but always enjoyable.

Unlike many other Councils in Worcestershire, Shropshire and Herefordshire the Mayor of Tenbury is also the Chair of the Council so it is not just a ceremonial role.

Over this last year in my role as Mayor together with Jayne, my wife and Lady Mayoress, I have attended many functions and events hosted by other Mayors and District Council chairs as representatives of this Town. These events have ranged from formal dinners and balls to skittles evenings. We've promoted the Town at every opportunity. We have hosted two functions here in Tenbury, the Civic Service and the Charity Show at the Regal. Visiting Mayors and Chairs have commented most favourably on our Town.

Jayne and I have been fortunate to have been in "post" in a year which has seen the 100th anniversary of the start of the Great War. We have been to a number of very moving commemoration events that no Mayor and their consort have ever before attended. The highlight of my year was laying the wreath at our own Town Remembrance Service.

We've attended a great deal of events within the Town itself ranging from Tenbury Town Band at the Regal to a 104th Birthday party at Haresbrook.

My role as Chair of the Council, which I believe is the more important of the two roles, has been challenging and rewarding. I have been pleased to see the opening of the long awaited play area for the under eights and the recently improved entrance into the Burgage.

There are other projects still to be delivered and when I look back over this last year much time and effort has been put into the groundwork needed to take these projects forward. Improvements to the skate park, a new Pavilion and enhancement of the Civic Garden and new changing facilities for the football teams. We are close to being able to submit our business cases for these facilities and hope to be able to utilise Section 106 monies from the new housing developments on Oldwood Road to fund them.

As Mayor I have had more contact with many of the numerous volunteer groups in the Town. There really are too many to mention but all are committed and hard working groups that seek to promote and develop facilities for the benefit of this Town. They have my admiration and total support.

There is still much to be done by Tenbury Town Council. We are sorry to be losing some of our current Councillors who are standing down. Notably two former Mayors, Sue Corfield and George Price. Thank you to them for their support.

As you may be aware there were insufficient nominations to stand for election to Tenbury Town Council next month and therefore there will not be a ballot. Eight current Councillors together with three new ones will form a new Council on the 12th May and will seek to co-opt to fill the two vacancies.

It would be remiss of me not to say thank you for the support given to me by my wife, Jayne. Also many thanks to our own ever hard working and conscientious Town Clerk, Dawn and the support staff Karen, Dave, Josie and Stuart. My eyes have been opened even wider this year to just how much goes on in the background.

Thank you as well to all my fellow Councillors and a very big thank you to traders and residents in the Town who have openly supported and encouraged me.

Malvern Hills District Council
Annual Report to Tenbury Town Council 2014 - 2015
Tenbury Ward Councillors: Phil Grove & Tony Penn

AWP 17/04/2015

The District Council has succeeded in maintaining a balanced budget in the face of severe government cuts. Savings have been achieved by finding new income sources and this year a 0% increase in tax has been implemented. It should be noted that in this situation MHDC's "take" is only 9% of the total bill.

Further economies have been achieved by reducing staff numbers and the reorganisation of senior management. The recent appointment of a shared Chief Executive with Wychaven District Council has resulted in improved staff flexibility and reduced costs still further.

The cross party Strategic Review undertaken when Phil Grove was Leader of the Council determining priorities and methods of delivery is now 70% complete.

The domestic recycling service has improved with the introduction of wheeled bins whilst maintaining the weekly black bag collection. An income generating commercial recycling service has also been introduced alongside the successful and expanding garden waste collection.

A new economic development plan with local businesses to secure continued prosperity for the area has been linked to Worcestershire LEP's strategic economic plan. Our local unemployment rate is now a third lower than the national average.

A new leisure strategy has been implemented which has secured a sound future for all the district's major sport facilities including Tenbury's swimming pool.

Improved hub facilities at Tenbury Library have resulted following the commissioning of Civica to take over operational responsibility. This has saved money and ensured continuation of face-to-face services.

Following extensive lobbying and support the roll-out of Broadband has continued throughout the district and has now resulted in 95% coverage.

Stage 2 of the public examination of the South Worcester Development Plan is now under way and it would appear that it now stands a fair chance of approval.

This is a vital element for use in opposition to inappropriate planning applications and MHDC's planners have been the lead members in driving this forward.

The introduction of civil enforcement of parking has been welcomed by traders throughout the area. and appreciated by car owners who can now usually find a place to park.

Finally it is important to emphasize the particular support given to Tenbury Wells.

Grants to the Tenbury Information Centre, the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Tenbury & District Museum Society and Cafe 27 have all been maintained which is not the case in other areas of the District.

Tenbury's swimming pool has been saved from closure and will have a grant of £320,000 from MHDC spread over the next 5 years.

Help and support is given to the various regular annual events which include the Applefest and the town's famous Mistle and Holly Sales and the associated activities.

We have enjoyed a good working relationship with Tenbury Town Council and thank those councillors standing down and those remaining for their support. Should we be re-elected it would be our wish that this healthy relationship continue for the good of Tenbury and the surrounding area.

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20.04.15

COUNTY COUNCILLOR REPORT

1. WCC finances and budget

Tenbury residents do not need reminding that we have been through a period of budgetary cuts that have resulted in the County Council becoming a much more efficient unit, with fewer employees but nevertheless fulfilling our statutory obligations across the county.

The County contribution to council tax had been kept unchanged for several years but this year has increased by just 1.94% equivalent to £20 a year for a Band D property. This is in a budget of about £330 million pounds. As a way of responding to budget constraints, we have been examining the best ways of fulfilling our responsibilities with a comprehensive review of all services and the way they are delivered. Some have been commissioned to outside bodies, on occasions made up of staff that used to work for the County.

This has been part of a drive to offer services online where possible, with the aim of reaching 85% of such contacts online, while always making phone or face to face facilities available to those who wish to use them.

2. Road conditions

One area that always attracts attention is the state of our roads and footpaths (technically footways, where they are pavements alongside a road). Worcestershire has a proud record in this regard and can claim to be better than our near neighbours. That does not mean we do not have a lot of repairs to do and we gained a multi-million pound allocation from central government to attend to potholes this winter.

We are operating an online system of reporting such problems, including defective street lights, flooding, overgrown shrubbery and the like. This is giving more rapid and better responses to problems and should be seen as the first line of reporting, even before resorting to badgering your county councillor. The new system is much easier to operate, with interactive maps for locating problems easily and then reports back on what is to be done.

Tenbury has benefited from some locally determined highways money to improve the footway in Orchard Court and there are similar situations around the division, particularly in Clifton and Eastham.

3. Public Realm

Tenbury has been disrupted this winter with work on the Public Realm between Crow Corner and the Market. This is the first phase of a programme which will take the improvements as far as the Teme Bridge, in conjunction with the building of the new Tesco supermarket.

While there have been difficulties for traders and shoppers during this period, the end result is a great improvement. The design was approved by members of the steering group throughout and the intention has always been to make Tenbury a more attractive place for residents and visitors alike.

The raised tables and future 20mph speed limit are intended to slow traffic and make it less intimidating for pedestrians. It is also hoped that through traffic that can use alternative routes will do so, relieving the centre of the town of some of the congestion.

4. Adult Social Care

Some people have questioned the spending of money on the Public Realm at a time of budgetary restraint. This is understandable, but the money was allocated some time ago and, as with highway work, such efforts should not be set aside just because of needs elsewhere.

The social care costs of our ageing population have placed a strain on our budget, but, in line with the results of our Viewpoint surveys into the priorities of the residents, this budget has been increased by several million pounds. We are also keen to help people live at home and use assistive technology to make that safe and comfortable.

5. Children's Services

Another area where budgets have increased is children's care. For obvious reasons, many children need to be taken into care and the figure for Worcestershire now stands at nearly 700, costing about £26 million a year. This has meant an increase in allocation of £2.5 million this year.

It is not a situation we wish to see continue, as it would obviously be better if children were cared for at home and our social workers are intent on achieving that wherever possible. We would also like to have a longer list of foster carers, so that children could be cared for with a family rather than in a care home. Anyone interested in volunteering for such a role, or knowing someone who might be able to help, is urged to come forward to offer their homes and hospitality. You can get in touch via a website cleverly called www.isfostering4me.co.uk or call 0800 028 2158.

6. Café 27

As I have reported to the Town Council before, funding for positive activities for young people is being cut again from April 2016. This will put the position of Café 27 in some jeopardy. They and the rest of the community have 12 months in which to find a continuing source of funds to keep the café open and thriving, as it is at present.

This is a very valuable facility for the whole community and I hope we can find an appropriate funding stream over the coming year. Personally, I would not rule out sponsorship from a company or individual, and I am sure benefits would accrue from such support to those involved.

7. Tenbury MIU

Recently we have had to accept that the Tenbury Minor Injuries Unit has started to close overnight. While this is to be regretted, it is true that it was infrequently used and often then for matters that could have been dealt with during the day. Nevertheless it represents a decline in service to the community, and I hope it will not result in more people going to A&E unnecessarily.

8. Broadband coverage

Worcestershire has been determined to improve broadband coverage throughout the county and in particular in those areas that are not commercially viable, i.e. beyond about 70% of premises. Our initial aspiration was to cover 90% of all residences and businesses and this should be achieved by the middle of 2016. The next phase will then start, to push this penetration to 95%. In addition, nine parishes in the vicinity of Tenbury have benefited from the wireless Airband system.

It is planned to give Superfast Broadband coverage to much of Tenbury by the end of next year. This will mean download speeds of at least 24 Mbps. More information can be found on the Superfast Worcestershire website.

While this investment is partially funded by central government via BDUK and by BT, the County has invested in the region of £10 million so far, and is unusual in insisting that businesses should be treated in the same way as residences.

9. Tenbury High Ormiston Academy

This last year has seen Tenbury High School pass out of local authority control and re-emerge as part of the Ormiston Academy family. The Ofsted inspection that resulted in special measures was always something of a misjudgement, and I am very pleased to note that new admissions are very healthy, as parents have made their own decisions on whether it is a good school or not.

This week sees a Shakespeare competition, organised by Caroline Palethorpe, part of the aspiration to improve educational achievement across the school. I am sure we all wish Adrian Price and his dedicated staff a very successful year in the coming examinations.

10. HRC relocation

At long last we seem to be making progress on the relocation of the household recycling centre from the Palmer's Meadow car park to the Bromyard Road business Park. This will yield another 20 or so free parking spaces and allow the construction of an overflow parking area in the corner of the rugby ground. This will be hard standing but covered in grass, so as not to damage the look of the recreation area.

The new recycling centre will be able to handle a much wider range of materials and this will mean that the percentage of all material taken to the centre that can be recycled will rise from about 37% at present to nearer 75%, as is found elsewhere across the county. As the material that cannot be recycled at present has to go to landfill, and thus attract high charges, this change will save a considerable amount of money in time.

The bureaucratic process to achieve this move has been excessively slow, and it looks as if the new facility will not be finished until near the end of the year.

11. Divisional Fund

Each of the 57 Worcestershire County Councillors is allocated £10,000 each year to distribute to worthy causes as they think fit. While the councillors have control over the money's use, they should never forget that the money comes from Council Tax payers, and it is just being given back to them for the general good of the community.

All of my grants are detailed on the WCC website, as for all councillors, and you may care to have a look sometime. In this last year I have been able to help a number of local groups, including the football club, the kickboxing club, Tenbury in Bloom, the Tenbury and Teme Valley Band, Our Way Self Advocacy and the LD Carers Group, plus a visit to the Skills Show at the NEC, the High School Drama Club, the Shakespeare Competition and the Party in the Park.

I am anxious to see that as many causes as possible should benefit from this funding, and would encourage anyone who knows of a need that might be helped by a small amount of money to please get in touch.

**Cllr Ken Pollock
Martley,
Worcester
20th April 2015**