

BEWDLEY TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON 7TH JUNE 2010 AT 7.30PM IN THE GUILDHALL BEWDLEY

PRESENT

Councillor Mr P Gittins (Mayor)
Councillor Dr J Adams
Councillor Mrs L Candlin
Councillor Mr S Clee
Councillor Mrs A Cox
Councillor Mrs E Davies
Councillor Mrs L Edginton
Councillor Mr J Foulkes
Councillor Mrs C Gittins
Councillor Mrs J Greener
Councillor Mr D Killingworth
Councillor Mr J Latham
Councillor Mr J Phillips

In attendance: Mr S Inman - Town Clerk
Mr D Moore – Treasurer
3 members of the Public,

6984 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none

6985 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Clee declared a prejudicial interest in minute no, 6993 as a member of the Cabinet of Wyre Forest Distinct Council which would determine the grant to the Town Council for the play area and left the room for the period of the discussion

6986 MAYOR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Mayor welcomed Councillors Candlin, Cox, C Gittins, Greener and Latham who were newly elected to the Council.

The Mayor thanked everyone for having appointed him as Mayor at the Annual Council meeting on 4th June and those who had supported him at Mayor's Sunday on 6th June. He had already carried out two further engagements within Bewdley.

The Town Clerk had received a letter from a resident from Severnside South attaching photos illustrating a particular litter problem by the riverside with rubbish overflowing from the litter bins.

AGREED

That the correspondence should be forwarded by the Town Clerk to the District Council and the issue raised at the next meeting of the Bewdley Business Partnership.

6987 MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 4TH MAY 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th May 2010 were agreed as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Mayor.

6988 COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Councillor Phillips as District Councillor reported upon the recommendations of the Parking Review Panel that were being submitted to the Community and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee. These included the ability of holders of residents parking permits to park in a given space for up to a maximum of two months as opposed to 23 hours at present, the limitation of one residents pass per household, the provision of tickets that could cover overnight and week-end periods and the investigation of a park and ride scheme involving Bewdley School for major events at week ends and holidays.

6989 ACCOUNTS FOR MAY 2010

The Council considered the schedule of accounts for payment for May 2010 drawn up by the Treasurer together with the balances held at the Bank and District Council and the current budgetary position as to income and expenditure for the period to 31st May

AGREED

(i) that the schedule of accounts be approved and signed by the Mayor with authority thereby given for the requisite cheques to be drawn;

(ii) that the balances with Unity Bank of £9,051.21 and with the District Council of £88,000.00 and with HMRC of £3,989.21 be noted;

(iii) that the Council's income and expenditure for the period to 31st May be noted.

6990 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2009/10

The Treasurer presented a set of accounts for the year ended 31st March 2010 comprising income and expenditure which had totalled £93,041.73 and £70,510.40 respectively, balance sheet and a supporting statement.

The Council had before them the Audit Commission's pro forma Annual Return which had been completed within which was the Annual Governance Statement.

The Internal Auditor had also produced a report which confirmed that the internal controls were good and the records well kept. She had made some further recommendations as to interest on investments and recovery of VAT of which the Treasurer was aware.

AGREED

(i) that the final year end accounts for 2009/10 be approved and submitted for external audit

(ii) that the Annual Return of the Audit Commission including the Governance Statement be approved and that the Mayor and Town

- Clerk be authorised to sign off the document on behalf of the Council;
- (iii) that the report of the Internal Auditor be noted and that the Treasurer and Town Clerk keep the issues of recovery of VAT and the level of interest payments on investments under review;
 - (iv) that the Treasurer be formally thanked for the work he had done throughout the year in providing regular reports and in keeping the accounts in a satisfactory state.

6991 RISK ASSESSMENT

The Town Clerk had presented a report inviting Members to consider and agree a risk assessment schedule for the Council which he had prepared. The assessment was based not simply on whether there was adequate insurance cover for assets and statutory liabilities but on whether a host of other threats and risks relating to the general management of the Council including finance, IT and staffing functions might exist and if so the degree of risk and the action that could be taken to minimise such risk and adverse outcome.

AGREED

That the risk assessment schedule be approved and that the actions suggested as being required to reduce individual risks be the subject of further reports throughout the year to either the Staffing Committee, Finance Working Group or the Council.

6992 DIRECT DEBITS

It had suggested during the course of the internal audit of last year's accounts that the use of direct debits was not covered by a statutory power. This was surprising given the widespread use of direct debits by local Councils throughout England and given it had not been raised last year when the Town Council's accounts had been the subject of closer random scrutiny by the External Auditors. The Town Clerk had sought advice from Worcestershire CALC which confirmed the view of the Internal Auditor.

AGREED

- (i) That the Council confirms that payments made previously by way of direct debit listed below be approved and that such arrangement should remain in place until such time as a specific power is available to local Councils under new legislation.

British Telecom	Phone line rental
Freedom 2 Surf	Phone and broadband connection
ING Leasing	Photocopier lease
Wyre Forest District Council	Business Rates

- (ii) That in the event of a new direct debit being required then the Council's authority be sought for such payment.

6993 WYRE HILL PLAY AREA

The Council had previously agreed in principle to continue to fund the maintenance of this play area using "Section 136" funds that were available from the District Council for which a bid had been made. The

outcome of that bid was expected shortly. However, Councillors had also earlier expressed concern about the safety of the equipment pending what was hoped to be a refurbishment of the site by the District Council. The Town Clerk produced a report appending the results of a safety audit carried out by the District Council which showed there was some evidence of the equipment posing some potential risk to safety though to date there had been no recorded incident of injury.

AGREED

- (i) That subject to the bid for the Section 136 grant being successful, the Town Council affirms its willingness in principle to continue to fund the maintenance of the play area for a term of one year as from 1st April 2010
- (ii) That the Town Clerk discuss with the District Council an apparent shortfall of funding of £205 and endeavour to secure an agreement to reduce that..
- (iii) That a meeting be convened with the relevant District Council Officers to discuss what monies were available for refurbishment and upgrading of the play equipment.

6994 TOWN CENTRE CCTV

At the Council meeting on 4th May the Town Clerk had been asked to raise points of concern as to the effectiveness of the CCTV system in the town centre with the Inspector of Police. The replies were tabled by way of an exchange of email correspondence. Some doubts remained but he had recommended that Councillors should avail themselves of an opportunity to visit the monitoring centre now located at Redditch.

AGREED

That the Town Clerk should make arrangements for Councillors to visit the CCTV monitoring centre located at Redditch.

6995 WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – SCHOOL COLLABORATIONS AND FEDERATIONS

The County Council were seeking views from a wide range of individuals and groups as to their policy of encouragement of closer working between schools by entering them into collaborative partnerships.

AGREED

That the policy should be given broad support and individual Councillors who so wished to comment could do so direct.

6996 COUNCILLORS TRAINING SESSIONS

Worcestershire CALC had arranged a series of general training sessions for Councillors during June and July at County Hall Worcester. However here was also a need for training on standards and planning particularly for new Councillors. The Town Clerk had been in contact with the District Council who it was anticipated would be putting on such sessions for its own Councillors.

AGREED

That in the first instance arrangements be made and negotiated with Wye Forest District Council to provide training on standards and planning issues.

6997 EMPTY SHOPS IN TOWN CENTRE

Councillor Dr Adams had produced a report which indicated that there were currently seven empty shops in the town centre. These gave the town a poor appearance especially those that were also in disrepair. This was a problem encountered in other towns. Pershore though had come up with a scheme whereby art displays produced by schools and art groups had been installed in the vacant shop windows that gave the buildings some added vitality. However, occupation in such manner could trigger liability for business rates.

AGREED

- (i) that the Council investigate the likelihood of local schools and art groups and landlords cooperating to produce and allow art displays in vacant premises;
- (ii) that the support of Bewdley Development Trust and the Civic Society be requested with a view to negotiating with the District Council to allow Discretionary Rate Relief for premises mounting such displays.

6998 REPORTS FROM COUNCILLORS

- (i) Bewdley Business Partnership Meeting held on 25th May – Cllr Killingworth
- (ii) Councillor Activity Report – Cllr Cleo

AGREED

That the reports be noted.

6999 BEWDLEY BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

Councillors agreed to receive the notes of the Bewdley Business Partnership held on 20th April 2010.

7000 CALC WYRE FOREST AREA MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the CALC Wyre Forest Area held on 3rd March 2010 were noted.

7001 WYRE FOREST PARISH GAMES 2010

Councillors noted the final results of this year's parish Games in which Bewdley had come fourth.

**7002 WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
WASTE CORE STRATEGY EMERGING PREFERRED OPTIONS**

The Council had earlier in the year made submissions to the County Council as to the location of waste management facilities during the period to 2027. The County Council had now summarised all of the responses from consultees which were noted.

- 7003 TOWN AMBASSADORS – FUTURE JOBS FUND**
Councillors noted that the District Council were employing up to four “Town Ambassadors” who would be selected from long term and young unemployed or up to six months to work in Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport. They would be visible in the streets and their role would be to deal with general enquiries and provide a welcome to visitors, report litter, graffiti and damage and assist at events promoting the towns.
- 7004 BEWDLEY TOWN CENTRE LOAD STREET REDEVELOPMENT**
Councillors received a briefing note from the Health and Community Facility Group as to progress.
- 7005 WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – HIGHWAYS**
The Council noted the proposed closure of part of Queensway to facilitate the laying of new service pipes for a period of up to 12 days as from 7th June 2010 and also the proposed closure of Severnside South to facilitate electrical works for a period of up to six days as from 5th July 2010
- 7006 ADMINISTRATION MATTERS**
The Town Clerk drew members’ attention to:
- The Wyre Forest Community Engagement Forum to be held on 16th June at 6.00pm at Kidderminster Town Hall;
- The Annual General Meeting of the Wyre Forest Citizens’ Advice Bureau to be held on 30th June at 7.30 at Lickhill Community Centre;
- Heritage Weekend. It was agreed to participate on Sunday 12th September by opening up the Mayor’s Parlour and Council Chamber from 1.00pm to 4.00pm with a rota of Councillors providing cover.
- Load Street Redevelopment. It was agreed the Town Clerk should accept an invitation to arrange a meeting with the Consultants for them to give a report as to progress and answer any questions.

The meeting was closed at 9.05pm

Signed.....
5th July 2010

Public Period

No member of the public wished to speak in the period allocated.