

**LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE COMMITTEE
HELD ON 20 MAY 2021
VIA ZOOM**

PRESENT: Councillors Bannister, Chowns, Knight (Chair) Manns, Morris, Troy and Whattler.

IN ATTENDANCE: The Town Clerk – Angela Price
Chairman of Sustainable Ledbury – Nina Shields

E145. APOLOGIES

No Apologies were received.

E146. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None received.

E147. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Councillor Knight advised that the meeting would be a non-decision, non-voting meeting due to legislation for Council's to hold virtual meetings being withdrawn (minute no. C317 refers). She advised that any decision made in respect of the items discussed at the meeting would be made by the Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the committee under delegated powers. All decisions will be reported to the Annual Meeting of Council on 24 June 2021.

The Town Clerk advised that she had received the following questions from Mr Ellis:

1. Will Councillors Manns, Bannister and Morris now admit in public that it was them and them alone that made the decision to use the Stone Workshop back in 2019 to carry out the refurbishment to the town War Memorial without carrying out any checks on the company's credibility and competence to undertake such works and without any real contract being signed?

As we were the only councillors attending the meeting, we voted on the information provided. As the meeting was quorate with three councillors attending, this was a perfectly legal decision.

In awarding a contract, we looked at the work specifications and the quotes. The legal and commercial details of any contract are not a matter for councillors.

2. Will Councillors Manns, Bannister and Morris now apologise to Mr Heaton and the people of Ledbury for their part in wasting £30,642 of donated money?

We have no reason to apologise for the decision that was made as due process was followed. As to the accusation that money donated by Mr Heaton has been wasted, we do not believe that this is the case.

3. Can Councillors Manns, Bannister and Morris each give a good reason in public, why they shouldn't resign as Councillors after making such a monumental bad decision that ended in the waste of Mr Heaton's donation and now forcing the people of Ledbury to foot the bill for their gross error of judgement and incompetence? I feel that not allowing the public to know what is going on with regards to further works to the War Memorial and the reason why and how LTC came to be in such mess over this issue will just add fuel to the fire. Things won't start to settle down and trust return in LTC until everyone is aware of the truth and those responsible admit their mistakes and do the right thing."

We have no reason to apologise or resign for carrying out our duties as councillors as best we can and according to our standing orders and code of conduct.

Ledbury Town Council is investigating the work done by the contractor to determine if the repair of the war memorial was not carried out according to the specification against which the contract was awarded.

With regard to whether any further work on the memorial is required, LTC will be informing the public on this when the investigation is completed, and we have had an opportunity to discuss this with the contractor.

The Chair asked Councillors Manns and Morris whether they would like to add anything to Councillor Bannister's response. Councillor Manns advised that the three councillors referred to had made a recommendation to other committees and council from the Environment & Leisure Committee, they had not awarded the contractor at that meeting.

Councillor Knight advised that the Council were currently in talks in respect of the War Memorial and that a statement would be released in due course.

E148. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 MARCH 2021

The Town Clerk provided Members of the Committee with an update on the actions listed on the action sheet attached to the minutes.

She advised that Balfour Beatty would like an example of what the banner would look like before agreeing. It was noted that the Administrative Officer would create some designs and forward these to councillors for discussion prior to sending to Balfour Beatty.

The Clerk also advised that now the Town Maintenance Operative was in place it was hoped that the telephone box on Bridge Street could be tidied up and adapted to host a defibrillator, book, and seed swap.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Leisure Committee held on 18 March 2021 be received and noted.**
- 2. That the Clerk writes to Herefordshire Council in an attempt to speed up the process.**

E149. RECREATION GROUND

Minutes of the Events Working Party on 28 April and 11 May 2021.

Members were asked to receive and note the minutes of the Events Working Party held on 28 April and 11 May 2021.

The Clerk updated members on the progress of the event that the council hope to be holding on the Recreation Ground on Saturday, 21 August 2021, named 'Reggae on the Rec'. The Administrative Officer had applied for the premises licence and was waiting to hear back from Herefordshire Council.

General Update on the following:

Shelter
Basketball Court
Football Pitch line marking
Benches

The Clerk raised concerns that she had received from Councillor Whattler in respect of the colours chosen for the exterior of the shelter. She advised that the artist had advised that he was considering how the colours could be changed to lighten them. The Clerk advised that once the outside of the shelter had been completed anti-graffiti paint would be used to cover the designs.

The Clerk advised that she was in the process of obtaining quotes for the replacement of the base of the shelter, following damage having been done by fires being lit under the shelter.

The Clerk updated members on the above street furniture and football pitch, as well as the proposal to mark lines on the football pitch and replacement goal posts.

Members were provided with a design of a colourful bench that could replace a broken one in the Recreation Ground. The Clerk advised members that the bench will be made from recyclable material.

The Town Clerk advised members of an Incident in the Basketball area over Easter weekend. The Clerk thanked a resident for cleaning the basketball pitch after the incident and for keeping her updated. She advised members that she has contacted the police to advise them of the incident.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Members of the Environment and Leisure Committee receive and note the minutes of the Events Working Party held on 28 April and 11 May 2021.**
- 2. That Members the Environment & Leisure Committee receive and note the update in respect of the Recreation Ground.**

E150. CEMETERY

Friends of Cemetery

Members received a verbal update on the progress of starting a 'Friends of the Cemetery' group. The Clerk advised members that due to the significant amount of interest it was decided that the group would meet after 17 May when Government restrictions have been eased.

Possible opening of Chapel for Candle Lighting

Due to the success of opening the Chapel for Christmas and being unable to open the chapel for Mother's Day and Father's Day the Town Clerk suggested that the council consider opening the chapel for NHS day on Monday, 5 July 2021.

It was noted that 5 July is a Monday and therefore staff would not be available to provide cover at the Chapel all day, therefore the Clerk asked if Councillors could help volunteer through the day. Both Councillor Manns and Chowns advised that they could help.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the verbal update on the Friends of Cemetery Group be received and noted.**
- 2. That the verbal update on the possibility of opening the chapel for NHS day be received and noted.**

E151.

TOWN TRAIL

Nina Shields advised members that herself and the Clerk had recently walked the Town Trail with Spencer Hogan and Fiona Miles from Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty. The purpose of the meeting was for Sustainable Ledbury Members advise Spencer and Fiona how members would like to manage the trail if a licence to cultivate was granted to Ledbury Town Council.

Spencer Hogan had identified several areas that wildflowers could grow, he advised that changing the mowing routine would allow for a meadow to grow.

RESOLVED:

That Members of the Environment and Leisure Committee receive and note the verbal update from Nina Shields and the Town Clerk.

E152.

FRITH & CONIGREE WOODS FOREST PLAN CONSULTATION

Members were provided with a Forest Plan Consultation of Frith and Conigree Woods.

Councillor Knight suggested that if members would like to make a comment, that they email the Town Clerk directly by Wednesday, 26 May 2021.

Nina Shields advised members that she had shared the link to make comment on the consultation throughout her social media platforms.

RESOLVED: That Members of the Environment and Leisure Committee receive and note the update on the Forest Plan Consultation, noting that the Town Clerk will collate a response from members comments.

E153. ENQUIRY IN RESPECT OF SLOW WAYS PROJECT

Members were provided with correspondence from the Chairman of the Windcross Paths Group in relation to the Slow Ways Project.

Nina Shields advised members that the correspondence could be discussed in the next Climate Change Working Party.

RESOLVED: That Members of the Environment and Leisure Committee receive and note the correspondence received from the Chairman of the Windcross Paths Group, noting that the correspondence be referred to the Climate Change Working Party.

E154. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

To note that the date of the next Environment and Leisure Committee is scheduled for 15 July 2021 subject to agreement at the annual meeting on 24 June 2021.

E155. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair and Clerk advised that the committee need to discuss the following items in confidential session due to various points needing to be discussed having potential legal ramifications.

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, in the public interest the press and public are excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

E156. MARKET HOUSE

The Clerk advised that she had hoped to have some information on quotes received in respect of works required to the Market House. However, she advised that she had forwarded two quotes to the council's architects for checking but as yet had not received a response.

Councillor Chowns asked for information on the repairs needed, the Clerk advised that she would forward a copy of the Quinquennial Survey to all committee members for the Market House and the Council Offices.

E157. WAR MEMORIAL

Councillor Knight advised that considerable work had gone into reviewing the processes employed with regard the works to the War Memorial.

The Clerk advised members of a number of issues that needed to be addressed and advised that Councillor Harvey had provided some suggestions on how the committee may wish to proceed in respect of the Memorial.

Members agreed that the suggestions provided by Councillor Harvey appeared to be a sensible approach and that the Clerk, Chair and Vice-Chair should meet with the Council's architects to discuss this further with a view to obtaining a more in-depth report to provide members with information on what is required to ensure the War Memorial is repaired to an acceptable condition.

Signed

Dated

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm.