

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL HELD ON 2 DECEMBER 2021

PRESENT: Councillors Bradford, Chowns, Eakin, Harvey, Howells, Knight, Manns, Morris, Sinclair, Troy and Whattler

ALSO PRESENT: Angela Price – Town Clerk
Olivia Trueman – Community Development Officer

C464 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bannister and Hughes.

C465 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Harvey declared a pecuniary interest in agenda items 15 and 16, Welcome Back Fund and Great Places to Visit, in relation to the Bye Street Toilets.

C466 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE NOLAN PRINCIPLES

The Clerk advised Members that this would be a standing item on all future Council and Standing Committee agendas.

RESOLVED:

That the Nolan Principles be received and noted.

C467 TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2021

Minute No. C462 – Councillor Howells noted that the last but one paragraph in the explanation of the minute was incomplete. The Clerk advised that she would confirm with Councillor Whattler the location of the steps and amend the minutes accordingly.

RESVOLED:

That the minutes be approved and signed as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

That minute no. C462 be amended to read as follows:

“Councillor Whattler asked whether instead of the recycling bins consideration could be given to the repair of a set of steps on the Town Trail behind the houses on Golding Way.”

The Mayor asked Members to agree to move agenda items 6 and 21 to be considered as the next items on the agenda.

C468 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were ten members of public present at the meeting in relation to agenda item 21 – Ledbury Boxing Day Meet.

The Mayor asked that each group nominate a spokesperson and advised that each would be given 5 minutes to speak, following which Members would be asked to consider agenda item 21.

Mr John Rose was the nominated speaker on behalf of those against the Ledbury Boxing Day Meet; Mr Rose advised that he had an objection to the Hunt and wanted to know where Ledbury Town Council stood on this issue. He added that the Malvern Hills Trust had banned hunts from its land following the monitoring of the Ledbury Hunt, stating that it had been reported that hunting had taken place in areas where fox hunting had been banned. He also stated that the Ledbury Hunt were ignoring the law and not laying trails.

He finished by asking “How can the meet in Ledbury Town Centre be permitted? What kind of message does this send out?” adding that Ledbury Town Council have a decision to make.

Mr Tom Leeke spoke on behalf of the Ledbury Hunt; Mr Leeke stated that the Council were not being asked to debate the issuing of a licence or whether the meet is legal or not. He suggested that if Mr Rose and his colleagues had evidence that prove the Ledbury Hunt has broken the law then he should provide this to the Police.

Mr Rose interjected at this point to state that they had presented their evidence to the police, however the police had advised that it was insufficient.

Mr Leeke pointed out that the evidence provided is not always impartial and admitted that mistakes are sometimes made. He stated that fox hunting was banned in 2004, pointing out that the hunt would not be able to survive if they did not follow the rules.

He pointed out that the Ledbury Meet was for one hour, traditionally on Boxing Day, and that the thousands of people attend the hunt which in turn bring businesses to the pubs, cafes and shops in the town.

The Mayor thanked the representatives for their statements and opened up the discussion to Councillors.

Councillor Sinclair reiterated Mr Leeke’s comment that if Mr Rose and his group have evidence of illegal actions then they should take it to the police.

Councillor Eakin stated that the Council are not there to arbitrate between the two groups, but to decide on what conclusion the Council want; the council are not saying it is illegal they were being asked to decide whether “to request Herefordshire Council to put an end to the Boxing Day Meet in Ledbury and to not facilitate this in any way”. He added that just because it has been a tradition for many years does not necessarily mean it is right to continue with and proposed the motion as follows:

“That Ledbury Town Council write to Herefordshire Council to formally request that the road not be closed for the Ledbury Hunt and that Council take no action to facilitate the hunt for reasons cited by the Malvern Hills Trust evidence of systematic violations of the rules, and lack of consultation with local traders and businesses.”

Councillor Troy seconded the motion.

Councillor Knight thanked both groups for attending the meeting, stating that she believed the right thing to do was to pass this onto Herefordshire Council to consider a way forward. She also stated that whilst the Feathers do very well on the day of the Ledbury Meet, many other traders in the town do not open. She said that it was concerning that more people attend the Boxing Day Meet, than attend the Remembrance Service in November.

Councillor Bradford stated that this is the first time he recalls this item being on the agenda of the Town Council and pointed out that the Meet is not illegal and as such he does see how it could be banned from taking place, stating that people have the freedom of choice, and a horse has as much right to be on a road as others. He did not feel that it was for Ledbury Town Council to say whether they decide whether to support or not support this event.

Councillor Harvey stated that she was not sure what the Council were being asked to do, she agreed with Councillor Bradford in respect of this being the first time Ledbury Town Council has been asked for an opinion on the road closure for this event, pointing out that this type of consultation is a requirement of Herefordshire Highways as part of the process of considering the request for the road closure. She advised that this year the Meet was not on Boxing Day, as this is a Sunday, but on the Monday as the Bank Holiday, which would be the first trading day of the post-Christmas sales.

She advised that she had been a Town Councillor since 2011 and at no point could she recall the traders, Council or Ward Councillors having been consulted in respect of the road closure. She pointed out to Mr Leeke that this is something that they should be doing and that she would hope that they take this away from the meeting and change this for the future and ensure they are acting correctly.

Councillor Harvey advised that she had read the Malvern Hills Trust report and that she had concerns over the evidence provided over a sustained period, which suggested the Hunt had not been following the trail. She pointed out that Trail hunting is not illegal, however if it was proven that the hunt is not acting within the law then the Council could not support this; she would support the Council writing to the Police to follow this up. She pointed out that whilst she is not interested in hunting herself she would defend an individual's right to do this legally as we live in a free country.

She reiterated the need for the Ledbury Hunt to ensure they carry out the correct consultation and that they did not take it for granted that they can flout the law, stating that she believes the Hunt has some ground to make up to get the confidence of the public.

Councillor Howells advised members of the public that Ledbury Town Council cannot decide on the road closure, they can only make recommendations for Herefordshire Council to consider. He pointed out that sometimes as a Councillor it is necessary to be politically courageous and stated that he agreed with much of what Councillors Eakin and Harvey had said.

He pointed out that just because something has become a tradition it doesn't mean there should be a sense of entitlement and that times change, but he recognised that the law does allow for trail hunting as long as it is carried out within the rules.

Following the debate the Mayor asked Councillor Eakin to remind Members of his proposal:

"That Ledbury Town Council write to Herefordshire Council to formally request that the road not be closed for the Ledbury Hunt and that Council take no action to facilitate the hunt for reasons cited by the Malvern Hills Trust evidence of systematic violations of the rules, and lack of consultation with local traders and businesses."

Councillor Harvey asked whether Members had read the Malvern Hills Trust report, as she was concerned whether the proposal should be voted on if Members were not aware of the content of the report which had been cited within the proposal, suggesting that she would be happy for a recess to allow Members to read the report. She cautioned Members against voting without having the evidence in front of them.

Councillor Harvey suggested deferring the item until such time all Members had read the report and also writing to the Police asking them to revisit the evidence that had been presented to them. Councillor Eakin was asked whether he would be happy to defer the item for the reasons given by Councillor Harvey; Councillor Eakin advised that he was not prepared to defer the motion and subsequently the vote was taken.

A named vote being was asked for by several Members. The outcome of the vote was as follows:

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTENTIONS
Councillor Eakin	Councillor Chowns	Councillor Manns
Councillor Morris	Councillor Knight	
Councillor Troy	Councillor Whattler	
Councillor Howells	Councillor Harvey	
	Councillor Bradford	
	Councillor Sinclair	

Therefore, the vote was LOST 4/6.

The members of the public left the meeting.

C469 HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCILLOR WARD REPORTS

- a. Councillor Howells advised that he had not been able to provide his Ward Report in time for distribution Members. He read his report, and a copy of this is attached to these minutes.
- b. Councillor Harvey had provided her Ward report, and this had been shared with Members prior to the meeting. In her report she had urged Ledbury Town Council Planning Committee to undertake some preparatory work to consider what commentary the council might wish to provide in relation to Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy, in particular LB1 & 2 and the policies for rural development and growth in the villages which impact on Ledbury as a service centre.

Councillor Harvey also urged Members to consider responding to Herefordshire Council's consultation on its Domestic Abuse Strategy. It was suggested that the Council should share contacted details on their website, the Clerk advised Members that the Community Development Officer had attended a Domestic Abuse Awareness Course earlier in the week and that she had information on contact details that could be share on the website.

- c. No Ward report had been received from Councillor I'Anson.

C470 TO RECEIVE MOTIONS PRESENTED BY COUNCILLORS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 9

None received.

C471

TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ECONOMY AND TOURISM COMMITTEE HELD ON 4 NOVEMBER 2021 AND TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Economy & Tourism meeting held on 4 November 2021 be received and noted subject to the following amendment:

Minute no. ET25 – that the word “Plan” be removed from the explanation of the discussion and Resolved point 2.

C472

TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUES OF MEETINGS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 OCTOBER AND 11 NOVEMBER 2021 AND TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN

14 October 2021

Concerns were raised in respect of minute no. P495 in respect of a Parish Council running a bus service and the financial implications of such a project. Councillor Howells advised that there are grants available for small towns to do this and this is why the committee had agreed to investigate the possibility of Ledbury being part of a pilot project in Herefordshire.

Members noted that this was an item for discussion at agenda item 20.

11 November 2021

It was noted that those present at the meeting had not been included in the minutes.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on 14 October 2021 be received and noted,**
- 2. That the minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on 11 November 2021 be received and noted, subject to the following amendment:**

That the following be added to the list of those present at the meeting:

Councillors Bradford, Howells, Knight, Morris and Troy.

C473 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT & LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2021 AND TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of a meeting of the Environment & Leisure Committee held on 18 November 2021 be received and noted, subject to the following amendment:

Minute no. E202(2) – that the word “friendship” be removed.

C474 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2021 AND TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of a meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee be received and noted.

C475 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Sinclair be elected to serve on the following committees:

Planning, Environment & Leisure and Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee.

C476 NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Members were requested to give consideration to the Neighbourhood Development Plan documents provided within the agenda pack, in particular the Revised NDP Parish Council Draft Reg 14 document, which they were requested to approve for submission to Herefordshire Council.

Councillor Harvey commended Councillor Howells and the members of the Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Party on the Reg 14 document and the project management and financial controls throughout the process.

However, she did raise concerns over the no of green spaces that had lost protective statues in the past. She pointed out that the document has reintroduced protections for these, with the exception of Robinsons Meadow, near Newbury Park. She also raised a number of other points

which Councillor Howells reassured her he would feed back to the group, reminding Members that this is not the final document. He advised that there would be a further round of consultation following which any further amendments would be possible, including those points raised at the meeting. He pointed out that getting to Reg 14 does provide protection in respect of planning applications.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Neighbourhood Development Plan documents be received and noted.**
- 2. That the Revised NDP Parish Council Draft for Reg 14 be approved and forwarded to Herefordshire Council for review, along with a supporting letter advising of the caveats that the status of green space at the back of the Knapp has still to be decided and that the 'blue' round area shown on the policies map as the likely location of 3ha of employment land, expected to be included in the Bloor development which was still under new planning permission review, was indicative only and that the actual location could be elsewhere – such as nearer the viaduct.**

C477 OUTSIDE BODIES REPORTS

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Strömstad Twinning Association meeting held on 18 March and 5 October 2021 be received and noted.

C478 WELCOME BACK FUND

Members were requested to give consideration to the submission in respect of the Welcome Back Fund. They were asked to review the activities list and suggest any amendments where appropriate and endorse the actions of the Clerk in signing the document.

The Clerk advised she had been advised that it was possible to move the funding around within the activities list if the projects suggested did not happen. She advised that it was unlikely that the hanging Christmas Trees would be able to be hired at this late stage and suggested moving the funding from this to the Hire of Characters and other expenditure for the Christmas Lights Switch on.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Clerk advise the Economy & Place Team that the Council would wish to move the £350 suggested for the hire of the hanging Christmas Trees to the Hire of Characters and**

other expenditure for the Ledbury Christmas Lights Switch on to cover the cost of additional expenditure.

- 2. That the actions of the clerk in respect of signing the Service Level Agreement be endorsed.**
- 3. That officers be authorised to proceed with all activities within the Service Level Agreement, subject to the amendment at point 1 above.**

C479 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 3(x)

Councillors Eakin and Whattler left the meeting at 9.00 pm.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To suspend Standing Order 3(x) for a period of 30 minutes to allow agenda items 16 - 19 to be considered.**
- 2. That agenda items 20, 23 and 24 be deferred to the next meeting of Full Council, scheduled for 3 February 2022, noting that this will now become the first business of that agenda.**

C480 GREAT PLACES TO VISIT

Members were requested to give consideration to the Service Level Agreement and draft activities list in respect of the £90,000 being offered as part of the Great Places to Visit Funding.

Councillor Harvey advised that there were a number of issues within the Service Level Agreement that had been raised with Herefordshire Economy & Place Officers, however an amended agreement had yet to be received.

Councillor Harvey suggested, to avoid delay in the preparation of the activities list, it be delegated to the Mayor and Councillor Hughes as the Chair of the Economy & Tourism Committee, in consultation with the Clerk and that the be authorised as signatories on the final document.

Members were advised that information had been received on a number of the proposed projects, they gave consideration to the draft activities list to agree which projects should be pursued and what amendments should be made.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To avoid delay in the preparation of the activities list, it be delegated to the Mayor and Councillor Hughes as the Chair of the Economy & Tourism Committee, in consultation with**

the Clerk and that they be authorised as signatories on the final document.

2. That the following projects be included in the Activities List, subject to them meeting the requirements of the criteria of the Great Places to Visit funding:

- Improvements to the visual impact of the centre of the town by the provision of plants, hanging baskets etc. around the town and approach roads - £5,000
- Provision of funding to support the Master's House Landscaping project - £3,000
- Improvements to the toilets on Bye Street (provision of baby changing unit) - £500
- To repair and extend the steps at Dog hill Woods to the picnic area at the top - £10,000
- Provision of a shop front enhancement grant scheme for local traders – further thought to be given to this scheme with a view to a light touch approach - £36,000
- Queens Jubilee Event - £10,000
- Infrastructure to improve the Charter Market and provide specialist markets in the town - £10,000
- Installation of drop kerbs around the Town Centre - £12,000
- Creation of Tourism material – to include new town map, and digitalisation of material - £12,500

C481 COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

The Clerk advised that the Winter Newsletter had been published.

C482 JOB FAIR

Councillor Harvey suggested that a Job Fair is a lot of work, and it would be helpful to have more information on how this was proposed to work. She was aware that Councillor Bradford had been involved in previous Job Fairs and asked whether it would be similar to these.

Councillor Bradford advised that it would be a different model from previous Fairs, it would be more about offering help and guidance.

RESOLVED:

That officers work with Councillor Bradford to draw together a plan on how the Job Fair would be delivered.

Councillor Knight asked whether it would be possible to have an extraordinary meeting of council before Christmas to discuss agenda item 24. Councillor Harvey advised that it had been agreed that this item would be deferred to the next meeting of Council,

scheduled for February 2022 and the Clerk confirmed that any items not considered at this meeting automatically become the first business of the next meeting.

C483 TRO SCHEME AT MABLES FURLONG

Members were requested to give consideration to a request from ADL Traffic & Highways Engineering Ltd in respect of a TRO Scheme at Mables Furlong to introduce double yellow line restrictions.

RESOLVED:

That Ledbury Town Council support the Traffic Regulation Order to introduce double yellow line restrictions at Mables Furlong.

C484 RESOLVED:

To note that the next meeting of Council is scheduled for 3 February 2022 at 7.00 pm in the Burgage Hall, Church Lane, Ledbury.

The meeting ended at 9.33 pm

Signed Dated