

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF ROYAL LEAMINGTON
SPA HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, PARADE, ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA ON
16 JULY 2013**

Present: Councillors Judith Clarke (Chairman), Sarah Boad (from Minute No. 24 onward), Roger Copping, Gurpreet Dulay, Bill Gifford, Balvinder Gill, David Greenwood, Susan Ingleby, John Knight, Simon Lytton, Yvonne Moore, Ann Morrison, Mota Singh, Amanda Stevens and Alan Wilkinson

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Timothy Crockford.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Declarations of Interest were made by Councillors Copping, Gifford, Gill and Wilkinson in relation to all matters concerning Warwick District Council.

19. PUBLIC FORUM

The Chairman welcomed Mr Archie Pitts, Chairman of Friends of the Pump Room Gardens to the meeting and invited him to speak in support of the proposal contained in report No. 9. Mr Pitts outlined the extent of the proposed restoration works to the Pump Room Gardens, explaining that an initial proposal would be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund. The bid was seeking a significant funding contribution towards a project anticipated to cost approximately £1m of which the Friends of the Pump Room Gardens had pledged to raise £50,000 and Warwick District Council had agreed to contribute £100,000, subject to a successful application to the Heritage Lottery Fund. Mr Pitts was confident that the Friends of the Pump Room Gardens, which had already raised £20,000, would reach the target.

The proposal had involved input from the community and educational establishments throughout the town and the Friends were now seeking the support, in principle, of the Town Council. The Council welcomed the proposal and unanimously endorsed the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

RESOLVED that a letter supporting the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the proposed restoration of the Pump Room Gardens is approved.

Mr Pitts was thanked for his presentation and left the meeting.

20. REFUSE CONTAINERS WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Consideration was given to a report (Report No. 5) together with a further letter from Dr Andrew Cave of 39 Portland Street, regarding the provision of large domestic waste containers outside a listed building within the Conservation Area.

The Council noted the correspondence both from the complainant and the Head of Neighbourhood Services and considered that no further action available to the Town Council would achieve a different outcome.

RESOLVED that the correspondence is noted and no further action is taken on this matter.

21. WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL REVISED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Consideration was given to report (Report No. 6) concerning the consultation by Warwick District Council on the Revised Development Strategy (Local Plan).

The Council noted that the previously expressed preference for a broad location of housing growth was no longer sustainable and therefore the majority of new housing would be located to the south of Leamington Spa in the Parishes of Warwick and Whitnash.

Several Members spoke in broad favour of the proposals within the Revised Development Strategy, emphasising that it offered an opportunity to create enhanced communities which were well designed, distinctive and less dependent on car ownership. The Council endorsed the "Smart Growth" approach which would address the needs of housing, land use, sense of space, transport and community together. The Council recognised that the scale of development would entail a very significant road infrastructure to accompany it, which presented a threat to the creation of communities with natural communications to the existing town.

Reference was also made to the opportunities to look imaginatively at new forms of housing and the level of housing density. The importance of providing suitable recreation and leisure facilities, including allotments, were also emphasised.

The proposal that the Revised Development Strategy be endorsed, subject to these observations, was seconded.

A Member outlined the importance of supporting the District Council in its endeavours to avoid applications for development within the green belt and considered that the support of the Town Council would be most helpful in this process. It was then moved and seconded that this be embodied within the original proposal. On being put to the vote the amendment was lost, with six votes for and seven votes against. The meeting was then adjourned for ten minutes.

Upon resumption of the Meeting, it was

RESOLVED that the Town Council of Royal Leamington Spa broadly welcomes the Revised Development Strategy for Warwick District as follows:-

Plans for Housing

The Town Council acknowledges that Warwick District Council was unable to proceed with its original strategy to spread the new developments throughout the District, and understands that the major sites are all to be in an area to the south of Warwick and to the west of Whitnash.

This presents both threats and opportunities to residents of Leamington, Warwick, and Whitnash. This Council urges Warwick District Council to minimise the negative consequences and enhance the opportunity to create living communities that will enrich the District.

We wish to see the strategy, and its subsequent policies, as a positive vision for the whole District. We support the intention to create a District that is a sustainable mixture of housing, with neighbourhoods that are well designed and distinctive. These intentions will only be realised through **intelligent and**

well organised planning. In particular we have to plan for a society that is less car dependent. The area designated for housing will have an enormous road infrastructure to accompany it. We believe that new housing developments must be accompanied by investment in public transport, strategic cycle routes to Town Centres and employment sites and pedestrian networks, or people could become isolated in their housing areas.

We like the 'Smart Growth' approach that addresses housing, land-use, sense of place, transport and community together.

Threats

*The size of the development could create a large urban area that has no identity, or natural connections, with existing towns.

* Delays in finalising the plan will result in a developer's charter, with the Planning Department unable to prevent developers building unwelcome areas, with no overall planning of design, or size of dwellings.

*The area designated for housing is very far from the area designated for employment, creating a potential additional problem for traffic chaos.

* The District clearly needs a range of homes, and particularly a range of affordable and social housing. There is a potential threat that many properties could be bought to let, and this trend destroys the potential to build enduring communities.

*There appears to be no pro-active planning layout. The housing developments would benefit from an overall Master Plan, which reduces the threat of urban sprawl.

Opportunities

* If the South of the District is to take the brunt of the development, then more effort could be made to create a new area, in which homes are not seen as isolated units of investment, but as parts of a greater social whole. Alternative forms of housing could be explored, e.g. Community Land Trusts, co-housing etc.

*The idea of Garden Suburbs may now be a little out-dated, and present very low density development. Garden City/Town/Suburbs were reliant on car transport. We need higher density housing (as older parts of Leamington and Warwick), that would allow for a proper public transport system.

*Higher density layouts must be considered. Warwick, Leamington and Kenilworth have examples of good Victorian, Edwardian, and Georgian building at high density.

* Developers must be required to demonstrate affordability and diversity, in addition to sustainability.

* Warwick District Council must take the opportunity to create neighbourhoods that are distinctive, that have individual identities, and that contain all the elements needed for family living, and that do not depend on the use of private transport.

* The increasing importance of Allotments to peoples' leisure and well-being must be recognised with the provision of appropriate sites in close proximity to new housing development.

The Town Council looks forward to the publication of further policies that will detail how this is to be achieved.

Councillor Greenwood left the meeting following conclusion of this item.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Councillors Copping, Gifford, Gill and Wilkinson declared non pecuniary interests in the above item by reason of being Members of Warwick District Council, remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting thereon.

22. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

Consideration was given to a report (Report No. 7) outlining the District Council's proposed draft charging schedule for the Community Infrastructure Levy. It was noted that there was still need for discussion on the items that would be eligible for inclusion within the remit of the Levy and that existing sources of funding through Section 106 agreements and the Highways Acts would continue.

RESOLVED that the Council supports the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy together with the preliminary draft charging schedule, and looks forward to its implementation along with Neighbourhood Plans which will contribute to the development of the town's new Local Plan.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Councillors Copping, Gifford, Gill and Wilkinson declared non pecuniary interests in the above item by reason of being Members of Warwick District Council, remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting thereon.

23. SITES FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

Consideration was given to a report (Report No. 8) on the provision of sites for the Gypsy and Travelling Community.

RESOLVED that the Town Council endorses the District Council's approach in providing adequate land for accommodating gypsies and travellers within the District Local Plan.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Councillors Copping, Gifford, Gill and Wilkinson declared non pecuniary interests in the above item by reason of being Members of Warwick District Council, remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting thereon.

Councillor Boad joined the meeting upon conclusion of this item.

24. TOWN COUNCIL OBJECTIVES 2013-14

Consideration was given to a report (Report No. 10) setting out key objectives for the Town Council for 2013-14.

Various suggestions were made by Members regarding omissions from the report including allotments, twinning and acknowledging the contribution of the local student population. It was agreed that these amendments should be incorporated into the revised report.

RESOLVED that a revised report is submitted to a future Council meeting including the observations of this meeting.

Councillor Moore left the meeting on conclusion of this item.

25. **PLANNING POLICY FOR HIMOS AND STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN WARWICK DISTRICT**

Consideration was given to a report (Report No. 11) setting out a draft policy proposed by the District Council in relating to dealing with applications for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HIMOS) and student accommodation.

The Council expressed its satisfaction on the publication of the draft policy, but regretted the length of time that had elapsed in bringing forward these proposals. It was also noted, with considerable disappointment, that the District Council had omitted to consult with the Town Council during the preparation of the draft policy. A Member commented that success of the policy would depend on enforcing its compliance.

RESOLVED

- (i) that a letter endorsing the proposed policy for HIMOS and student accommodation is forwarded to the District Council; and
- (ii) that the District Council is advised of this Council's disappointment at its omission from consultation on preparation of the draft planning policy.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Councillors Copping, Gifford, Gill and Wilkinson declared non pecuniary interests in the above item by reason of being Members of Warwick District Council, remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting thereon.

26. **REPORT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR**

Consideration was given to a report (Report No. 12) from the Internal Auditor following examination of the financial statements and underlying financial records for the financial year ended 31 March 2013.

The Town Clerk was complimented on his management of the Council's financial records as mentioned in the auditor's letter.

RESOLVED that the letter from the Internal Auditor is noted.

27. **LEAMINGTON SPA POST OFFICE – PROPOSED RELOCATION**

Consideration was given to a report (Report No. 13) setting out proposals to relocate the present Post Offices from its premises at 1 Priory Terrace to 32 Bath Street.

The Council expressed its disappointment at the proposal which it considered ill-advised on the grounds of accessibility, service, inconvenience to customers, inadequate parking, and the future use of the vacated site at Priory Terrace.

RESOLVED that a letter of objection to the proposed relocation of the Post Office from 1 Priory Terrace to 32 Bath Street is forwarded to the Post Office in accordance with the Council's observations.

28. RE-ARRANGEMENT OF ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

The Town Clerk reported that it was necessary for the Leamington Spa Annual Town Council Meeting, scheduled for 17 May 2014, to be re-arranged and postponed for one week to 24 May 2014 due to use of the Town Hall in connection with postal votes for the European Parliamentary Elections.

Members commented that the Town Council meeting had been arranged prior to the District Council's arrangements and therefore an explanation should be obtained prior to agreeing an alternative date.

RESOLVED that an explanation from Warwick District Council is sought concerning the use of the Town Hall on 17 May 2014.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, Councillors Copping, Gifford, Gill and Wilkinson declared non pecuniary interests in the above item by reason of being Members of Warwick District Council, remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and voting thereon.

29. CASUAL VACANCY – MANOR WARD

The Town Clerk reported on a letter from Councillor Tim Crockford resigning his position as a Town Councillor with immediate effect. He explained that this would create a casual vacancy for a Councillor for Manor Ward which would be filled by election if requested by ten electors for the said Ward within a period of 14 days. If no election was demanded then the Town Council would be advised by the Returning Officer that it could proceed to fill the seat by co-option.

RESOLVED that the report of the Town Clerk is noted.

30. MINUTES OF COUNCIL AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES

- (i) Planning Committee – 23rd May, 13th June and 3rd July, 2013

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Planning Committee held on 23rd May, 13th June and 3rd July 2013 are received.

- (ii) Policy and Resources Committee – 4th June 2013

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 4th June 2013 are received.

- (iii) Cultural and Community Committee – 30th May 2013

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meetings of the Cultural and Community Committee held on 30th May 2013 are received.

(iv) Council – 21st May 2013

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council held on 21st May, 2013 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

31. ACCOUNTS

A schedule of accounts arising for payment had been circulated and a copy is attached to the signed Minutes.

RESOLVED that the schedule of accounts is approved for payment.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and ended at 9.05pm

Chairman

Date

