



THE TOWN COUNCIL
OF
ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA
TOWN HALL, THE PARADE,
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ROBERT NASH ACIS DMS
Clerk to the Town Council

Our Ref: RN/

Date: 12th March, 2019

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** will be held in Meeting Room 5A, Town Hall, Parade, Royal Leamington Spa on **MONDAY 18th MARCH, 2019 at 6.00 pm.**

The business will be as set out below.

Yours faithfully,

CLERK TO THE TOWN COUNCIL

To Councillors: Janet Alty, Sarah Boad, Judith Clarke, Hayley Grainger, David Greenwood, Daniel Howe, John Knight and Ann Morrison.

(All other Members of the Town Council – Agenda for information only)

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members of the Committee are invited to declare any interest they may have in items identified for discussion at the Meeting.

3. **PUBLIC FORUM**

To receive representations from members of the public in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.

4. **MINUTES**

To consider and approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting held on 11th February, 2019 (Report No. 4)

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(i) CHRISTMAS LIGHTING (MINUTE 74)

Town Clerk to report on progress regarding the arrangements for re-tendering the Christmas Lighting Contract.

(ii) OLD MILVERTON ALLOTMENTS – DAMAGE TO SITE BOUNDARY (MINUTE 78)

Town Clerk to report on action taken since the last meeting.

6. STAGECOACH SERVICES 67 AND 67a

To consider representations made by the Secretary of the St Mary's Residents' Association concerning the re-routing of bus services along St Mary's Road. (copy of letter herewith).

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

To consider the attached Report (Report No.7 to follow)

8. ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY – 8TH APRIL 2019

To consider arrangements for the meeting of the Annual Town Assembly on 8th April, 2019.

9. ACCOUNTS

To approve a schedule of accounts arising for payment since the last meeting.

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 11TH FEBRUARY 2019 AT THE TOWN HALL, PARADE, LEAMINGTON SPA

Present: Councillors Ann Morrison (Chair), Janet Alty, Sarah Boad, Judith Clarke, Caroline Evetts (substituting for Cllr Grainger), David Greenwood, Daniel Howe and John Knight.

Four Members of the public were present.

69. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hayley Grainger.

70. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations of non-pecuniary interest were made:-

Councillor	Agenda item	Interest
Councillor S. Boad	Lillington Library	Member of Warwickshire County Council
Councillor C. Evetts	Proposed Relocation of Warwick District Council Offices	Member of Warwick District Council

71. **PUBLIC FORUM**

The meeting was attended by Carrie Terry and Russell Allen representing "Leamington Together". Ms Terry summarised the representation made to the Council meeting on the 14th January which was detailed in Report No 6 prepared by the Town Clerk. The Committee was advised that since that meeting, representatives of Leamington Together had met the Chief Executive of Warwick District Council who had confirmed that further work on the relocation project had been halted and no decision would now be taken on the matter until July, 2019. It was the view of Leamington Together that the reconstruction of the Covent Garden Car Park was a discrete project that was separate from the proposed new Offices, the process leading to which had not been subject to appropriate public scrutiny or consultation. Leamington Together was therefore seeking a delay of 1 year to help provide greater certainty to business in terms of any potential disruption to car parking and to allow for the review of the decision to construct new offices on the site of the Covent Garden Car Park.

In answer to a question on the cost implications of extending the timescale of this project, Mr Allen indicated that the potential impact needed to be viewed in the context of other significant costs arising from the project which had not been quantified, such as the impact from loss of footfall in the Town Centre and the potential reductions in business rates.

The Chairman thanked Ms Terry and Mr Allen who remained in the meeting for the consideration of the following item of business.

72. **PROPOSED RELOCATION OF WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICES**

Consideration was given to a Report (Report No.6) relating to the representations made to the Town Council at the meeting on the 14th January with regard to the proposal by Warwick District Council to construct new offices on the site of the Covent Garden Car Park. Appended to the Report was the statement issued by the Leader of the Council concerning the postponement of the final decision on this project until July, 2019 to enable detailed assessment of the alternative car parking options and the methodology for communicating the proposals to businesses and members of the public.

Councillor Boad noted that since the presentation to the Council meeting on 14th January, the District Council had announced a delay of six months before reconsidering the relocation project which would also coincide with the election of a new Council. She considered that consultation with business and local residents on the impact of the closure of the Covent Garden Car Park had not been satisfactory but that deferring the decision would enable the District Council to develop its parking displacement strategy and investigate alternative transport options which would encourage people to consider travelling by means other than the private car. She also considered that the Town Council was not in a position to seek to delay the proposed construction of new Offices as it did not possess all the information relevant to the District Council's accommodation needs.

A proposal, moved by Cllr Boad and seconded by Cllr Greenwood, was then put to the meeting as follows:-

This Council notes with grave concern the impending closure of the Covent Garden Car Park due to concrete cancer. It also notes the concern of local residents and businesses as to the effect this will have on the town centre.

It resolves to ask Warwick District Council to:

- *defer the decision on the future of the car park until there is a viable displacement strategy in place; and*
- *ask Warwick District Council to work in partnership with the Town Council, BID and the Chamber of Trade to:*
 1. *develop a plan to publicise the changes within and outside Leamington – encouraging visitors to keep visiting;*
 2. *investigate alternative transport options such as subsidised train and bus routes and improved cycle parking to encourage modal shift;*
 3. *make sure that the car park is closed for only one Christmas; and*
 4. *ensure that there are enough spaces in the new car park to satisfy demand.*

On being put to the vote the Motion was lost by 2 votes for to 4 votes against.

Following further discussion, in which the importance of engaging with local residents and stakeholders was emphasised, a motion was carried on the Chairman's casting vote by 4 votes for to three votes against with two abstentions.

RESOLVED

(i) that Warwick District Council is requested to defer the decision on relocating its Offices for a period of one year to allow sufficient time to plan for the closure of the Covent Garden Car Park and the preparation of a viable car park displacement strategy, in consultation with Royal Leamington Spa Town Council, BID Leamington and the Chamber of Trade.

(ii) that the District Council utilises this period of time to undertake a review of the viable and cost effective alternatives to its accommodation needs, so that greater social and environmental equity can be realised and best value guaranteed.

73. **MINUTES**

Consideration was given the Minutes of the Meeting held on 8TH January, 2019 (Report No. 4).

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 8th January 2019 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

74. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

(i) **Christmas Lighting (Minute 63)**

Councillor Greenwood indicated that as he would not be seeking re-election to the Town Council in May, there was a question as to his availability to participate in the tender evaluation exercise for the new Christmas Lighting Contract. It was proposed that if the timing of the tender evaluation process did not permit his attendance, another Member of Council is invited to sit on the Evaluation Panel.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk seeks an alternative Member nomination to the Christmas Lights Tender Evaluation Panel, if necessary.

(ii) **Stagecoach Proposed Service Changes (Minute 61)**

Councillor Boad advised that following the re-tendering of key services to compensate for the withdrawal of bus services by Stagecoach, Warwickshire County Council had agreed to allocate £500,000 from underspending within the concessionary travel allocation to directly support bus services.

RESOLVED that the County Council decision is welcomed.

75. **LILLINGTON LIBRARY - ADDITIONAL OPENING HOURS**

Consideration was given to a Report (Report No. 7) with regard to the level of use of facilities at Lillington Library which received a subsidy from the Town Council.

The Town Council had since 2011 provided a subsidy to Warwickshire County Council to maintain additional opening hours at the Library, initially three hours per week later reduced in April 2016 to 2 hours per week. The decision by Warwick District Council in July 2018 to withdraw the one stop shop facility had impacted adversely the number of visitors to the Library but this had been compensated by the Library service providing more events across the week.

The Committee noted that whilst the number of visits, book issues and network sessions had declined during the opening hours subsidised by the Town Council, there continued to be sufficient use of the Library to justify the expenditure incurred. The range of new events being offered by the Library service was encouraging and indicated that the Library remained an important focal point for the community.

RESOLVED that the Report is received and the Library service thanked for compiling the Report.

76. **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

Consideration was given to a Report (Report No.8), regarding the Council's expenditure and income for the period April- December 2018.

The Town Clerk advised that the overspend on the Neighbourhood Plan had now been compensated by the award of £3500 by Locality, the Agency appointed by the Department of Communities and Local Government to administer support for Neighbourhood Planning. The costs associated with the support of the Christmas Lighting scheme would not be invoiced until the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED that the Report is received.

77. **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

The Town Clerk reported that the draft Leamington Neighbourhood Plan was now available for consultation for a period closing on the 18th March, 2019. Full details of the Draft Plan, including the policies map, are available on the Neighbourhood Plan website <http://leamingtonneighbourhoodplan.org.uk/consultation/>.

The Committee was also advised that the Steering Group had agreed a programme of drop-in sessions which would be held throughout the Town in the consultation period, details of which had been made available publicly. It was noted that most of these sessions were to take place during the working week, a request being made that in future consultations more opportunities are offered for engagement on the week-ends.

RESOLVED that the report is noted.

78. **OLD MILVERTON ALLOTMENTS – DAMAGE TO SITE BOUNDARY**

The Town Clerk reported that during the summer work had been undertaken by contractors working on behalf of Warwickshire County Council to clear a drainage culvert under the main highway at Old Milverton Road. To undertake this work access had been taken through the natural hedge boundary of the Allotments resulting in the loss of a significant part of the hedge.

The County Council had admitted liability for the damage caused and had undertaken to rectify this and restore the security of the site through temporary fencing and replanting of the hedge. Unfortunately, this had not been completed in the period since action was first indicated in September 2018. The Town Clerk had discussed this with the relevant Department and an indication that this matter would be quickly progressed to a satisfactory outcome was given.

RESOLVED that the response of Warwickshire County Council is noted and that the situation is maintained under review and reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

79. **TOWN HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBER ACCESSIBILITY**

The Town Clerk reported that the lift to upper floors of the Town Hall was currently out of order awaiting repair.

This had limited accessibility to meetings for anyone with mobility difficulties. However the initial anticipated period for repairs to be concluded had proved to be unduly cautious and work had now commenced with the date of completion being 4th March, 2019. In the circumstances, therefore, there was no need to consider alternative accommodation for Council meetings during March and April.

RESOLVED that the Report is noted.

80. **INSURANCE POLICY RENEWAL**

Consideration was given to renewal of the Council's insurance policy which was due for renewal on 25th March 2019.

The Committee was reminded that the Council had entered into a three agreement with Zurich Municipal which maintained the same premium throughout the three years with the exception of Insurance Tax increases. The Council relied on effective insurance arrangements as part of its risk management strategy and the following limits within the Policy were considered to be appropriate:–

Public Liability	£15 million
Employers Liability	£10 million
Libel and Slander	£1 Million
Office Accommodation furnishing and Fittings	£10,245
Civic Regalia	£186,444
War Memorial	£68,887
Telephone kiosks etc	£10,609
Fidelity Guarantee	£500,000
Motor vehicles	£50 Million (applicable to damage to property)

RESOLVED that the insurance policy with Zurich Municipal is renewed in the sum of £2341.67 for the 12 month period commencing 25th March, 2019.

81. **MAYORAL VISIT TO SALISBURY**

The Town Clerk reported that the Mayor and Consort had proposed visiting the City of Salisbury to show support for the Mayor of the City arising from the events in 2018 which had adversely affected the number of visitors to the area. It was intended to invite other Civic Heads and Councillors to take part in the occasion which was planned for 14th April, and would comprise a walking tour of the City, Civic reception and a visit to the Cathedral. Salisbury City Council had agreed to host the visit as a civic event.

The Mayor's Consort had undertaken to arrange transport and the cost would be met by a contribution by each participant. There was therefore no cost to the Town Council. The Committee endorsed the initiative.

RESOLVED that the Report is noted and the action of the Mayor and Consort is endorsed.

82. **ACCOUNTS**

Consideration was given to a schedule of accounts arising for payment since the last meeting.

RESOLVED that the schedule of accounts in the sum of £41,710.75, including £20,739.36 under Section 137 of the Local Government Act, 1972, is approved for payment

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.30 pm.

St. Mary's Residents' Association

A community association for the residents of:

*Waterloo Street,
Chesham Street
St Mary's Crescent
St Mary's Terrace
& St Mary's Road
between the canal and the Radford Road.*

Robert Nash
Town Clerk Royal Leamington Spa Town Council
Town Hall
The Parade
Royal Leamington Spa
CV32 4AT

Dear Mr. Nash,

Re: Re-routing of 67& 67A bus via St. Mary's Rd Leamington Spa

In September 2017, with no prior warning or consultation with local residents, Stagecoach re-routed the number 67 bus down the stretch of St. Mary's Rd that runs between Sydenham Drive and Radford Rd. Enquiries made to Stagecoach revealed that this change was made with the full knowledge and approval of the County Council. We are assured by Stagecoach that a risk assessment was undertaken but they will not let us see it. We are very concerned because, after living with this route change for some time now, in order to assess the impact and not to offer an unconsidered, 'knee-jerk' reaction, we have realised that this route is completely unsuitable for a road in a conservation area 'protected' by an environmental weight restriction. Furthermore we are extremely disappointed to note that recently there has been a distinct increase in the number of buses using the road, many of which run late into the night and that new bus stops have been sited precariously close to junctions, in one case, next to the vehicle access to 'The Old Bakery' on a bend on the blind side of the bridge over the canal.

We would like to bring the following to your attention:

- Stagecoach bus drivers experience great difficulty turning into St. Mary's Road from the Radford Road. Drivers have been witnessed on numerous occasions doing 3 point turns in order to get the buses into St. Mary's Rd from the Radford Rd. We feel that this creates safety issues. We have video footage of one unfortunate bus-driver who was obviously obliged to ask a passenger to step out of a bus in order to stop the traffic on the Radford Rd so that they could reverse back in order to be able to make the turn.
- Buses turning right into St. Mary's Rd from the Radford Rd have to swing out so far to make the turn that they prevent traffic in the adjacent lane on Radford Rd from proceeding.
- Many of us have witnessed buses driving on the wrong side of the road in order for the driver to negotiate the pedestrian refuge in St. Mary's Road. We also have photographic evidence of one such occurrence.
- There are a number of traffic jams each day caused by the narrow nature of the road preventing buses and vehicles from passing each other easily.
- There have been occasions when - enquiries have revealed - some residents' recycling has not been collected because, when the recycling lorry and the buses coincide on the road, there are

sometimes such traffic jams that the recyclers have felt obliged to move on before completing their work.

- All of the traffic jams, result in stationary vehicles with their engines idling, adding to air pollution levels
- All of the bus stops along St. Mary's Rd result in obstruction to the normal flow of traffic and this is in addition to the obstruction caused by the fact that the road is clearly too narrow for buses and other vehicles to pass each other in more than a very few spots along its length.
- Many of the new bus stops serving the route have been sited precariously close to junctions and in one case, next to the vehicle access to 'The Old Bakery' and on a bend on the blind side of the bridge over the canal. The sites chosen for these bus stops result in a threat to the safety of drivers and pedestrians in addition to that of passengers waiting for, and alighting from, the buses.
- Bus stops have also been sited outside the church, much to the dismay of the church, as no one wants to have a bus or a bus stop in their wedding photographs and the same intrusion on the sacred nature of the funerals of their loved ones. The church are afraid they are losing income as a result of these bus stops and there is the added congestion caused by buses being obliged to fight for space with wedding cars and hearses parked up during services, to consider.
- The narrow nature of St. Mary's Rd means that the houses are closer to the road than those along the previous bus route resulting in residents being more affected by air pollution. Indeed, during the long hot spell last summer, many residents felt unable to open their windows for fear of such pollution.
- St. Mary's Rd is in a designated Conservation zone. There is concern among the residents living along the road that houses are being damaged by large buses bumping over the traffic calming humps.
- There is also concern that the protected trees lining St. Mary's Road are being damaged particularly by double-deck buses.
- The current signage, indicating that there is an environmental weight limit on the section of St. Mary's Rd between the canal bridge and the Radford Rd, is unclear. This weight restriction, put in place by the council in 1987 just covers HGV's over 7.5 tons because at the time of its implementation there was no consideration that such an unsuitable road as St Mary's, could ever be used as a bus route, especially one where up to eight times an hour, eighteen hours a day, buses, weighing more than 7.5 tons drive up and down. Whilst we are aware that this weight limit does not apply to buses, HGV drivers seeing buses use the road feel that they can too. This compounds the problems faced by residents.
- We have met with Stagecoach and presented them with a petition signed by residents asking them to address our concerns and they have failed to do so.

During a meeting with Stagecoach we were told that one of the reasons for re-routing the buses was that the amount of time given to the filters at the traffic lights on the Radford Road/ Sydenham Drive junction meant that buses were not meeting their timetables. They explained that by using St Mary's Rd instead, they are saving 2 minutes on each journey, effectively using St. Mary's Road as 'rat run'. Surely there are other ways of their achieving this aim without causing so much disruption to our environment, all for the sake of 2 minutes? For example the council could change the length of time given to the filters or Stagecoach could adjust their timetables to take into account delays at rush hour times.

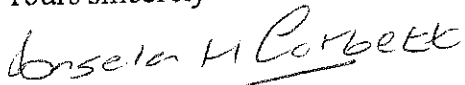
The other reason given by Stagecoach for the change of route, is to serve the residents in new houses in Union Park and the dwellings yet to be completed at 'The Old Bakery'. We would like to point out that the bus stop nearest Union Park on the old route is less than two minutes walk from their nearest one currently. Whilst the new stop closest to 'The Old Bakery' is not only dangerous as detailed above, but will result in considerable air pollution to those residents on the ground floor as the nature of terrain at that particular point has resulted in ground floor being lower than the road, meaning that the exhaust fumes from passing vehicles and buses waiting at this bus stop with their engines idling, will go straight down into any open window or door. We feel sure that the residents in these soon to be apartments would prefer to walk the extra minute or so to either a bus stop on Sydenham Drive or

one the Radford Rd, as many the staff at the bakery when it was one, have always done, than suffer the inevitable results of such extra air pollution,

We feel that Stagecoach are exploiting a legal loophole that flouts the spirit of the environmental weight limit and that, for all the reasons listed above, they should not continue with the current use of St. Mary's Rd as a route for 67 & 67A buses. It is clearly completely unsuitable, whereas on Sydenham Drive, along which the buses used to run, there are now unused, purpose built, pull-in bus stops, complete with refuse bins, in which buses can stop without causing obstruction to other traffic. The houses along the latter route, it should be noted, are set much further back from the road than those on St. Mary's Rd, meaning that local residents will be less severely affected by air pollution.

Please will you advise us as to how we can go about returning the 67 & 67A to their original, less problematic, Sydenham Drive route, respecting the spirit of the environmental weight restriction and thus restoring safety, reducing noise and pollution, and allowing traffic to flow freely up and down St. Mary's Road.

Yours sincerely



Angie Corbett
(Secretary St. Mary's Resident's Assn)

