

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY TEWKESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD IN THE TOWN HALL ON 7th APRIL 2017 AT 6:00 PM

PRESENT

Councillors K. Brennan (Chairman), A. Smith, T. Walker, P. Workman, S. Raywood, P. Aldridge, P. Clatworthy, H. Burns, M. Sztymiak, C. Danter, M. Poxon.

APOLOGIES

Councillors V. Smith (via P.A.) K. Cromwell, TBC, J. Greening, TBC, R. Mills (holiday)
No apology received from S. Carter

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

10 Members of the public attended and recorded their names.

DISPENSATIONS

Councillor M. Sztymiak is in Purdah

Chairman – The Chairman introduced the meeting by reminding those in attendance that all electors of the Parish are of equal status and have a right to equal say.

1. It was proposed by Councillor P. Clatworthy and seconded by Councillor P. Aldridge that last year's minutes were a true record.
2. The Town Clerk read out the Police Report. The police no longer attend so the Town Clerk gave guidance on accessing this information on-line.
3. The Environment & Amenities committee report was read out by Councillor M. Sztymiak (attached).
4. The Buildings & Moorings committee report was read out by Councillor P. Workman (attached).
5. The Severn Ham committee report was read out by Councillor P. Aldridge (attached).
6. The Planning Report was read out by Councillor S. Raywood (attached).
7. The Finance & Staffing committee report was read out by Councillor K. Brennan (attached).
8. The Neighborhood Development Project report read out by Councillor S. Raywood (attached).
9. The Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer read out the Finance report (attached).
10. The Museum Report was given by Steve Goodchild, Chairman of Tewkesbury Museum.

The Museum's main objective is to increase the numbers of visitors.
In 2012 there were 2000 visitors and this has risen in 2016-17 to 4,500 visitors.
Problems: Expenditure has exceeded income. It is a free museum and donations from visitors average 50p per person.

The main fundraisers are visiting Father Christmas and a range of talks.

Other points to note:

- More volunteers are required
- There is a need to make improvement to the building's roof
- The Town Council is preparing a 99 year lease to aid grant applications.
- The Trust will be converted into a modern Trust – Incorporated Charitable Status.
- The Ashchurch Army Camp Exhibition is open now.

11. Town Mayor's Report was read out by Councillor K. Brennan (attached).

12. Public participation

Questions

Bill Adie - the Town Council has continued to do good work, for example in the children's play parks.

Mr Adie also made the following comments:

- The Council maintains properties and this is impacting on expenditure.
- The Town Hall is not fit for purpose or as a council office. Income does not cover expenditure.
- He suggested the Council dispose of the Town Hall or adapt it for another use
- The 5 members of staff's salaries total £100k and they are housed in a large building which is very expensive.

Alan Snarey - asked why apologies had been received via Cllr Aldridge from the Borough Councillors. Councillor Aldridge responded. Mr Snarey said it showed a lack of interest in the Parish Council. The Annual Parish Meeting is widely advertised in April.

He also requested that Councillor Carter's absence without apology was minuted.

Mr Snarey congratulated the Council on the development of the moorings.

Planning is also a success but neighborhood planning is not really achieved and only worked on when there is a perceived threat. He suggested leaving neighborhood planning until time can be dedicated to it properly. The Council does not have the resources or enthusiasm to complete it.

Councillor Brennan responded by saying that other town and parish councils have managed it so Tewkesbury Town Council should try to achieve this using model documents prepared by other councils. Hopefully the newsletter will bring new involvement.

Bill Adie reminded Councillors that consultants will help with this process.

A member of the public asked whether the proposed 99 year lease to the Town Band of the Saffron Road toilet building would involve the Council being involved in the maintenance? Councillor Workman responded the Town Band would be doing this.

A question was asked about how the Council planned to improve the income at the Watson Hall.

Councillor Workman responded that the Council are taking steps to promote this building which is Tewkesbury's 'Parish Hall' by engaging the expertise of Barbara Pond from Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum.

Councillor Poxon also suggested that a business model should be produced as he feels the Council should look at the Watson Hall's sustainability and analyse its running costs.

Mrs. Raywood commented that the disposal of the Town Hall would need to be a viable business proposition as this is a key property on Tewkesbury High Street.

Mr. Raywood noted that tourist visitor numbers are high and that more could be done to divert them into the museum on Barton Street and onto the High Street.

Councillor Aldridge responded that Tewkesbury needs to promote itself to coach companies.

The meeting ended at 7:00 pm

Annual Assembly Report of the Environment and Amenities Committee 2016-17

The Town Council has taken up the responsibility of maintaining litter bins, dog bins and bus shelters from the Borough and County Councils. In the past the installation of litter bins, dog bins and bus shelters has been done by a mix of Borough, County and Town Council and issues of maintenance have proved difficult to resolve as to who is responsible for ongoing maintenance costs. In order to provide clarity and a better public service the Town Council has grasped the nettle and will provide new bins and replace broken bins as well as undertaking periodical cleaning of bus shelters. This should enable the parish to be cleaner and tidier.

The Council have chosen a new company, Boxer, to provide our cleaning and maintenance services - for the Environment and Amenities Committee they will cover the tasks of cleaning the alleys and main streets of Tewkesbury (over and above the Borough Council's duties), litter pick our play parks, relocate the Vehicle Speed Indicator sign and help maintain our benches and other street furniture. After meeting with them I believe they will introduce new more efficient ways of working such as the use of a litter cart and new mechanical street cleaning machine that will benefit the town.

Our new mobile Vehicle Activated Speed Signs have been installed for 5 months now and each month we aim to move it from Bredon Road, Mythe Road and Gloucester Road to remind drivers of their speed and reduce it if necessary. In addition the signs collect speed data and once we have two months worth of data from each location we will analyse it to see what trends it tells us and we can then use this as evidence to support any requests for further speed restriction measures.

Members of the public might like to know that we have introduced a memorial bench policy whereby any one wishing to remember a loved one can purchase a bench with a plaque in their memory. Details are available from the Town Hall or on the Town Council website.

A major success of the Council this year was the transformation of the Mitton Play Park from a dreary, run down park into something bright, entertaining and enticing for young children up to 12 years old. This was made possible by the efforts of the Friends of Mitton Play Park and the securing of funding from Tewkesbury Borough Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Mitton Area Community Association, the Swimming Bath Trust, councillor donations and local community fund raising as well as money from the Town Council. This was significant effort and one the children are really enjoying.

Our play park project for the coming year is the upgrade of Warwick Place Play Park. We have worked with the Heart of Priors Park organisation to come up with ideas for a redevelopment of the park and will shortly together be consulting with the local children and residents about the plans and how they would like it to look. We will also be commencing fund raising towards those improvements and looking to apply for grants.

We have also introduced a new grassing cutting contract for our play parks which should enable more strimming to take place and make them look better.

The toilets in Spring Gardens and Gloucester Road have been maintained with various minor works required and these provide a well used facility. We have had a problem with one of the taps which has meant higher water bill than expected but we have put in place a reporting procedure to reduce the risk of this happening again.

The Town Council has secured a grant towards sending our CCTV pictures direct to Tewkesbury Police Station so they can be accessed by them when necessary without waiting for the Town Hall offices to open. Currently we have hit a delay in implementation due to finding a suitable line of sight to be able to send the signal but hopefully this will be overcome shortly.

Councillor Mike Sztymiak

Annual Report of the Buildings and Moorings Committee 10th April 2017.

This year has seen the buildings and moorings committees combine in an effort to make the Council more efficient. Currently this committee oversees the Watson Hall, Town Hall, Museum, Saffron Rd Toilet buildings together with the Moorings and War Memorial.

This year we have finally installed a new boiler into the Watson Hall. After a few teething problems we now have a more efficient way of heating this building making it a better environment for users. There have been concerns for a while that we have not treated the Watson Hall in line with the original charity documents and as such are making moves to separate the hall off from the Council in terms of administration. The charity commission documents make it clear the Town Council is the trustee but the ultimate ownership is with the people of Tewkesbury rather than a Council owned property. The Council wants to see the hall used more and wherever possible reduce the subsidy and to this end we are seeking views and advice from the public via a newsletter (which by the time this is written should have been delivered) and also the Gloucestershire rural community council.

The new heating is now completed in the Town Hall and is now a much better place to hire and do business. Again we are looking for ways to increase demand and income whilst recognising this should be a cost effective place for parishioners to use and enjoy.

The Museum trustees are working hard to get grants to improve the building and its use. To this end the Town Council is extending its lease to the trust to help show our commitment to them, in preserving many aspects of the towns history, and helping in their grant application process.

The formal registration of the Moorings continues but it is a slow process, nevertheless progress is being made in this area by the Moorings Working Group. Repairs have been made this year to the area used by the boat trips (mooring no 2). 2016 saw the Severn Leisure take on the boat trips and they now provide a short trips and also ones that go to the Fleet Inn at Twyning stopping at Croft Farm. The first year was successful and trips for this year have already started with the same company.

The Saffron Road toilets have been redundant for several years and we now hope to create a 99 year lease with an ongoing nominal rent to the Town Band for their storage and practice room. There will need to be planning permission for a change of use but we do hope this project can be completed soon. This will give the Town Band a permanent home which we are pleased to be able to help in.

The War Memorial was damaged last year when the traffic flow had been temporally changed. The Council allocate £250.00 per year for maintenance and the repairs were done just in time for Remembrance Sunday. The Tewkesbury War Memorial group meets regularly and Cllr Danter and Cllr Aldridge are the Councils representatives on this group. They feed into the committee however the group act separately and their main focus at the moment is looking to add some missing names to the Memorial. This is time consuming work and authority from the War Memorial Trust is required together with Listed Building Consent. It is hoped the names can be added by March 2018. They have held Commemoration services and fund raising events. The group would welcome new members.

The current Lead Councillors for the Watson and Town Halls are Cllr Helen Burns and Cllr Chris

Danter respectively.

Cllr Philip Workman
Chair of Buildings and Mooring Committee.

Report on Severn Ham

The past twelve months we have continued on our learning curve as more information becomes available with regard to the Natural England Higher Stewardship Scheme.

There is still a great deal to do to get the Ham up to the required level needed under the HSS but we are getting there. The flora and fauna has declined to the point where certain species that used to be on the Ham had died out, but with help we are addressing this by bring in grass and wild seed from other areas of a similar type.

To this end we have appointed a consultant, Caroline Corsie on a three year contract (about half way through) to put in place a five year plan of action. This will enable the committee and Town Council to achieve the levels that are needed to meet the HSS requirement. One thing we have to actioned is that no cattle feeders will be allowed on the Ham without exception only cattle licks can be used. The use of very heavy farm machinery has in the past caused damage farmers have been advised to use lighter vehicles as the heavy vehicles compact the ground too much. This

has the effect of rutting the ground making it dangerous for walkers etc.

Natural England has asked for higher level of cattle to be introduced this would comply more with the Act that covers the area. This has been agreed but sometimes reduced cattle movements mean it not always the case.

The sale of grass will take place in May this year see local press for details.

We have been advised that we now have Curlew nesting in certain parts of the Ham. These birds are on the endangered list also we have other birds on this list using the Ham. Notices have been placed on the ham advising people to please take care and to keep their dogs on leads and keep to the edges.

In June 2016 we were advised by the EA that work was to commence on the sluice at the Abbey Mill in August. Various meetings then took place and it transpired that that there was a lot of permissions to get. They wanted to put a roadway on the ham after talks a route was agreed this has now been down for three months much to long as it has already killed the grass it will be reinstated when work has finished. The work should

have been completed by now but there have been various delays. A kayaker going over the weir at Stanchard Pitt then work at the marina in all over a month of delays we are now advised that work will not be completed until June or July much later than at first advised.

Lastly our Auctioneer of many years of many years John Richards has retired were are in the process of appointing another Auctioneer probably Mike Cluley of Carver Knowles he has already obtained a grant under the SPS and will also act for us in obtaining compensation from the EA and ST at no cost to this council.

Cllr Pete Aldridge

Chair Seven Ham Committee

TTC Planning Committee Report for the 2016/17 Civic Year:

Over the past 12 months the planning committee has been undertaking its designated role in responding to Planning Consultations undertaken by Tewkesbury Borough Council as LPA. The committee has therefore responded on a number of advertising, outline, reserved matters, full planning and listed building consent applications over the past year within the parish.

Meeting frequency has been increased to a fortnightly schedule during the year and has been undertaken at 19:00 rather than 18:00 as previous practice in order to ensure the committee could be quorate. This has facilitated timely responses to be given to most applications with some meetings being cancelled due to a low number of consultations to be processed during meetings.

During this year we have continued to provide committee experience to new councillors with both Councillor Walker and former Councillor Monk becoming members during the past 12 months. All members of the committee have provided useful insights and provided feedback on additional topics to Tewkesbury Borough Council. Notable examples of this include the identification of access concerns, raising concerns regarding the dragging distances and parking designs for new developments.

Some of the developments we have provided feedback on are:

- The proposed anaerobic digester at Fiddington;
- The Wheatpeices 1A residential development on Jubilee Way;
- The proposed five dwelling development at 77 Church Street;
- A new shelter at Tewkesbury School in Newtown; and,
- The demolition of the former Cascades Swimming Pool in Oldbury Road.

NDP Report for the 2016/17 Civic Year:

Over the past 12 months there has been limited meeting activity within the group for a number of factors. It is however, the cases that progress towards the NDP has still been ongoing with development of a second scoping questionnaire to gain a greater understanding of the desired scope of the plan. During the last year there has been no expenditure on this project paid from the funding previously allocated.

We have now got access to the Tewkesbury holistic city website which has been set up for us. This website allows us to collate aspects which people live, dislike and thinks needs addressing within Tewkesbury on a map. To date points have been made on the location of assets such as bins, benches and public art. As this website is publically available any member of the public may and would be encouraged to add points to the map. A link to access the holistic city website is available within the External Bodies section of the Town Council Website.

Finance & Staffing Annual Report 2017.

Town and Parish Councils are facing another challenging year. Grants are being cut at all levels of local government and for us the impact of this is two-fold; firstly that the grant to TTC from TBC this year has been reduced, and will be further reduced next year, and secondly that the tightening of County and Borough belts has resulted in community grants that were previously available have been reduced or scrapped.

Most of our committees this year have looked to reduce their outgoings. The Finance & Staffing Committee is currently examining possible options to improve efficiencies and reduce costs.

The precept this year has been increased by 5% but this does not provide much room for manoeuvre within the budget. The aspiration to set aside £10,000 for youth work has to be cut to £3,000 with alternative methods to raise more money now being part of that working party's remit. The grants that TTC makes to outside bodies will also be reduced this year.

Some progress has been made in formulating a 3yr Plan and a newsletter and survey has recently been produced to be delivered to every household in the parish; many of these have already been completed and returned. The experiences and knowledge of members of the parish are extremely important to the Town Council and can help in the creation of a sustainable plan that can ensure the future vibrance of the area. This information will also assist the progress of the Neighbourhood Development Plan which is in need of support from community groups and residents to bring it to fruition.

The councillors are organising a Community Event at the Watson Hall on Saturday 13th May and will be inviting community groups to show case what they do. This event not only aims to exhibit the tremendous diversity of activities that are available to local residents for them to participate in but also to encourage some of those not already involved to volunteer their services. This could also include sharing skills to support the council by joining working groups, for example NDP, youth, Watson Hall and Town Hall. More volunteer help could help the council to keep costs down and at the same time to increase the number of projects achieved.

Tewkesbury Town Council
Responsible Financial Officer's Report
2016/17

1. Introduction

The year has progressed positively as the Scribe Accounting System continues to deliver reports to councillors and the information required by internal and external auditors in an income & expenditure format. The monitoring of cost centres identified by Councillors and their committee have also been maintained by this system. These reports are attached to the agenda of each monthly meeting, both full council and individual committee, and can be accessed via the Town Council website.

2. Audit

The Town Council has a new independent auditor, Kim Bedford, who is contracted through the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils. Kim will be responsible for the internal audit checks required by the external auditor, Grant Thornton. The audit improvement plan is an ongoing work programme managed by the full council, supported by myself as the Responsible Financial Officer.

3. End of Year Overview 2016/17

Item	Amount	Comment
Income	£409,105	George Watson Hall was under target by £5000
Expenditure	£363,325	Expenditure was managed positively
Bank Balance	£113,404	Healthy balance
Reserves	£50,535	Invested in Lloyds Sterling Savings
Earmarked Reserves	£9500 £10,000 £7000	Warwick Place Park Priors Court Moorings Severn Ham Pathway

We continue to manage expenditure carefully, although unexpected demands on the budget can never be ruled out. This year the precept was raised by 5% to £268.805 and will be distributed in the way illustrated on the attached report which shows cost centres identified by the councillors and their committees.

4. Future Approach

As Proper Officer and RFO to the council my aim is to guide the full council in making improvements to financial processes to ensure maximum transparency and efficiency in the management of tax payer's money. Specifically:

- Regular Financial Reports to Committees
- Application of the new financial processes executed over the past 6 months in response to audit requirements
- Delivery of more improvements as recommended by auditors to improve the council's audit score

Helen Railton-Price

Responsible Financial Officer

04/04/17

TEWKESBURY MUSEUM

ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

Operationally, the Museum has performed well. Visitor numbers continue to be buoyant, with a year-on-year increase of 200, exceeding 4,500 for the first time. This compares with a low point of 731 in 2010. The Museum was open for 267 days in the year, but only for three hours except at weekends. Opening is constrained by the availability of volunteers. The scarcity of visitors on winter weekdays is also a factor.

Friends and Volunteers are the life blood of the Museum, and new initiatives which we hope will improve recruitment and retention are being introduced in 2017/18.

The Museum's key objective is to preserve and display Tewkesbury's history and heritage. As well as the collection which is displayed for visitors, the Museum has been heavily engaged this year in an HLF-funded project to research the history of the Ashchurch camp through memories. It is also working with the 'Alleycats' project on the heritage aspects of the alleys.

The Museum hosted the original and genuine Father Christmas again in 2016, and has hosted several groups of ghost hunters. These are fund-raising activities as are the spring and autumn talks programmes, mostly, but not exclusively, concentrating on local topics. We have also delivered talks to local groups and conducted town walks on request.

In the 'back-room', progress with the painstaking checking and recording of the collection on a digital system continues, and will do so for some time. Digitising and recording the Museum's photographic archive is also progressing. This work is primarily carried out by volunteers, who include a work experience student from the Alderman Knight School. The Museum regularly provides work experience placements for children from Tewkesbury and Alderman Knight Schools.

Volunteers are currently well into the Museum's annual spring spruce-up.

The continuing problem is one of finance. Costs have been cut to the bone, but expenditure still exceeds income. Without the support of the Town Council, the problems would be very serious.

There have been three exhibitions in the year:

1. The history of the Boy's Brigade in Tewkesbury
2. An exhibition of Ashchurch camp photographs and memorabilia.
3. An exhibition of Tewkesbury's old pubs and breweries. This was in co-operation with CAMRA, and was launched on the winter ale festival weekend, with a lost pub walk leaflet and 'I was once a pub' posters around the town.

The Museum website has been completed and is 'live' with new content being added regularly. 4,000 people new users visit the website every year to find out about the museum and the town of Tewkesbury

Problems with the building structure continue, and the only sensible solution is a project to carry out major structural and conservation work, at the same time re-organising the layout of the Museum. This has been agreed in principle with the Town Council, who have agreed to support the Museum in seeking the funding needed.

Two important first steps are progressing. The Museum's lease is being updated to remove some anomalies and to give the security of tenure required by funding bodies. The Museum's constitution is being replaced with a Charitable Incorporated Organisation structure. This involves a 'root and branch' overhaul of a governance system which has been in place since 1962.

We are well aware that we rely on a grant from the Town Council to deliver our services, and we acknowledge that. We are also aware that the grant is regularly challenged by Councillors concerned about value for money. Demonstrating value for money, or even economic benefit, when nearly everything we do is free to users is difficult. However, feedback from visitors, 75% of whom are from outside Tewkesbury, is consistently positive. We are helping to portray a positive image of the town.

Small Museums are the memories of their communities. In every sense, be it displaying artefacts, providing photo exhibitions for elderly people, providing talks for the less elderly or raising interest in old pubs in the town centre, we work hard to fulfil our role.

We hope that the Town Council consider that we are worthy of continuing support.

Mayor's Annual Report 2017.

It has been a great privilege to have been Tewkesbury Town Mayor this year. It has been an interesting and sometimes challenging experience. However, the Council is making progress and I have every expectation that the coming year will be greatly improved.

I have attended many and varied community events which has been a great pleasure and I hope that in some small way I have helped to promote them. I was extremely fortunate when Shelby Powell agreed to be my Mayoress as she immediately adopted the role of photographer and press officer; this may have resulted in her spending more time behind the camera than in the photos but we hope that the publicity she has generated has been of benefit to local groups.

I have been truly astonished by the facilities that have been created at the Cricket Club, the Sailing and Cruising Club, the Bowling Club and the Sea Scouts Hall where much of the work done has been by volunteers who have so generously given their time and their skills. These groups, and many others, ask for small grants and used them for maximum impact.

My charities for this year have been Hope for Tomorrow and riverside projects. I am extremely grateful to local organisations and community groups for their generous support of these projects. It was, and is, important to spread awareness that a facility such as the mobile chemo-therapy van exists and visits Tewkesbury Hospital every Tuesday. Having been there, I hate the thought that someone may be travelling to Cheltenham for treatment with all that that entails when they could be 'enjoying' a far less stressful experience by visiting the mobile unit. The target was hit earlier this year and a new, updated van, came into service in February. Funds will be continually required as the unit has running costs £15,000 a year to be cover. There are plans for improved areas for local residents and visitors on the old quay by the Mill Avon and it is hoped that the money we have raised for this project will help obtain funding from elsewhere to enable the completion of the project.

The Vintage Fair on 22nd April at the Watson Hall and the 50s/60s/70s night that follows at Theoc House conclude the events to be held to raise funds for my charities.

I thank everyone for their support during the year and hope that the incoming Mayor has a good year.