**Minutes of a Town Meeting in Market Drayton held on Wednesday 6 September 2017 at 7.00pm in the Festival Drayton Centre, Frogmore Road, Market Drayton.**

**Present:** Councillors: R. Aldcroft, M. Erwin (Mayor), S. Glover, C. Purcell, R. Smith and M. Whittle.

**Clerk:** Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk.

There were also approximately 40 members of the public present and 1 member of the press.

1. **Welcome by the Town Mayor**

The Mayor welcomed the residents of the town and introduced himself. He said this is not a meeting of the Town Council; it is a meeting for the residents of the town, to give them an opportunity to ask questions.

1. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies have been received and accepted from Councillor J. Beckett, T. Beckett, J. Cadwallader, R. Gould and R. Hughes.

The Deputy Mayor; Councillor Whittle said this is a meeting for town members so item 3 on the agenda will be taken then the meeting will go as the residents want it to go and not what it states on the agenda.

1. **Car parking issues with regard to Shropshire Council’s consultation paper.**

The Mayor handed over to Councillor Aldcroft who is a Shropshire Council Councillor to give a brief report.

Councillor Aldcroft reported that Shropshire Council are trying to save twelve million pounds; five million from the town’s car parking; their proposed changes to Market Drayton car parks are:

The introduction of an hourly car parking rate instead of a set amount for a set time; 50p per hour in Queen Street and Frogmore Road car park and 30p per hour at the swimming baths car park, to do away with the free fifteen minutes pop and shop facility and a charge time to run from 09.00 to 20.00.

Councillor Aldcroft said this item has been brought to Council and it was suggested that Town Council would propose that Queen Street and Frogmore Road car park, the two Towers Lawn car parks to be charged 30p per hour which is a slight increase, to keep the free fifteen minutes pop and shop facility, the swimming baths car park to remain free and to keep the paying times to 08.00-18.00.

The Mayor opened the meeting for question from the public.

Mr. Vernon said he is talking on behalf of Festival Drayton. He said the town is livid with the proposed parking changes and it would have a massive impact on the centre so much so he started a petition which has up to now 2,500 signatures and talked in the Councils Community and Governance Committee meeting on 27 July. He said he was very dissatisfied with only six members of the Town Council being here tonight and asked what initiatives have the Town Council launched, what questions have been asked and who has spoken to Shropshire Council to ask what the logic is behind the proposals.

Councillor Aldcroft said Town Councils view have been put forward to Shropshire Council and we have promoted that the consultation papers which can be picked up from the Library or Customer First are filled in and submitted so that the Officers on the board can see residents views.

He said there is a Council meeting in two weeks; he suggested an item going on the agenda to collate further comments to submit.

The Mayor encouraged residents to fill in the consultant papers and submit them to Shropshire Council.

Next week there is a Local Joint Committee meeting to be held at Festival Drayton on Wednesday 7 September at 7 pm with the appropriate Officers to give further information and urged residents to attend.

Councillor Purcell asked if there is any feedback Councillor Aldcroft could report on the on-line questionnaires from public figures submitted.

Councillor Aldcroft said he has got no information to report on.

A member of public said the Town Council should have been canvasing the town giving them up to date information; it should not have been Mr. Vernon; he is not part of the Council.

Mrs Bevan thanked members of the Town Council for calling a town meeting at an appropriate time for the public to be able to discuss the car parking situation and said this is consulting the town.

She said she has read the consultation papers, she knows it costs a lot of money to hold consultations and thought the money would be better spent on renewing pot holes etc.

A member of the public said the consultation papers sound like town councils are subsidising larger towns such as Shrewsbury and thought this was unfair as Market Drayton have also recently lost bus routes as it is.

Councillor Whittle said it was unfortunate that a member of Town Council who is also a Shropshire Councillor is not present tonight; they would have been more informative.

He said with the loss of bus routes the town cannot afford to have the proposals implemented; Town Council are doing what they can but have to stick to Shropshire Councils structured procedure.

Mr. Smith asked what position Mr. David Minnery holds in Shropshire Council.

Councillor Whittle said Mr. Minnery is the Portfolio holder to Finance and Councillor Hughes is his deputy; both have been informed of this meeting tonight.

Mrs Frances Bevan proposed, Mr Roland Senior seconded and it was **RESOLVED:**

**That this Town meeting does not believe that the proposals for car parks will improve air quality, minimise congestion, support retail centres and improve vibrancy in Market Drayton.**

**That this meeting believes parking arrangements should remain as the existing ones or possibly be free as in Newport where businesses are flourishing.**

A resident said Shropshire Council are standardising parking in the county; he knows in Newport and Shifnall have free parking and thought this town should be lobbying for the same.

Mr. Smith asked if Shropshire Council can explain why these two towns have free parking.

The Mayor said this question could be asked; he was not personally in favour of the majority of proposals and encouraged residents to attend the Local Joint Committee meeting on 7 September where more information could be provided.

Councillor Aldcroft said with resident’s views being reported to Shropshire Council from this meeting combined with comments from the Local Joint Committee meeting he hoped they would have an impact at Shropshire Council.

Mr. Vernon said if the free pop and shop facility was to be scrapped this would have a major impact on our local standalone shops, it could even cease them trading. An introduction of charging on a Sunday would be better because this would only interfere with the larger national organisations which can stand this impact.

He said he has read all fifteen pages of the consultation papers and feels it is flawed; it is very long winded and should be more to the point. He is very pleased to have 2,500 signatures on the partition he started against the proposed parking changes.

Mr. Vernon said the two other County Councillors should have attended the meeting tonight because they are more qualified to talk on this issue; he appreciated Councillor Aldcroft attending but knows he has only recently become a Shropshire Councillor.

Mr. Smith said he is a member of the Road Safety Group; all members are against the increased parking charges. He was personally against the proposed time increase change on the Frogmore Road car park because this will impact on Festival Drayton which is a hugh asset to our town and didn’t want it jeopardising in any way.

Mrs. Smith said Shropshire Council should be treating our town as an individual; we are a small market town and should not have the same protocol as the larger towns.

Mrs. Smith proposed, Mrs Bevan seconded and it was **RESOLVED:**

**That this Town Meeting does not believe the proposals will improve air quality, minimise congestion, support retail centres and improve vibrancy in Market Drayton.**

**That this meeting believes parking arrangements should remain as existing or pre-lobbying be here as in Newport where business are flourishing.**

**Shropshire Council should not be treating market towns the same as larger towns such as Shrewsbury.**

The Town Clerk said Town Council will hold an Extraordinary Council meeting next week.

A resident asked how much do Shropshire Council receive from the car parks.

Councillor Aldcroft said the portfolio holder of Finance would know this and will make enquiries to find out.

A resident said he was disappointed not to see the other two County Councillors here tonight; they are elected in by the residents so have a duty to be here and thought they should be disciplined.

Mr. Vernon said he was surprised to read the political manifesto in the West division in May. The two County Councillors stated they have a ‘Consistence record of success helping secure the future of Festival Drayton’ and ‘Support our community and ventures’. He was appalled they have not shown up tonight, they last supported the centre in 2011 and have not been in the building since and thought they were trying to use the success of this centre for their own needs.

A lady said she has personally wrote to three town councillors with concerns of the outside swimming pool being closed. She thought this facility was a real asset to the town and asked for more information about it.

Councillor Aldcroft said he noticed in 2015 the pool was not getting used, this was because they had closed it due to the lack of people using it. He said there has not been enough advertising of the pool with regards to opening times etc. Between July and the end of August 2016 there was an average of 3 and 4 people per day using the pool and he was shocked to learn that the trust were unaware of the pool being closed but the decision to close was because the lack of funds and qualified people to keep it open.

He said the Town Council have not been informed of any restrictions if they had they would have backed the pool to remain open in the summer months as much as they could. The outside pool needs approximately £11,000 to clean it up and to employ qualified life guards.

Councillor Whittle suggested Town Council should look into part funding the pool to try and get it opened next year.

A resident asked who is on the Swimming Pool Trust.

Councillor Aldcroft said members of the public, representatives from Serco who run the pool and Shropshire Council Officers.

The resident asked if the Trust are liable and what is their remit; it is negligence that the pool is closed and this should be looked into.

Councillor Aldcroft said Town Council have never had a leisure report from the Swimming Pool.

A resident said there has been no promotion that she is aware of informing people the opening dates and times for the open air pool; she thought this need to be made to ensure the asset is well used.

Councillor Whittle agreed; it is a very good family activity that the town has and Town Council will look into it.

Mr. Morris proposed, Mrs Bevan seconded and it was **RESOLVED:**

**For Town Council to ask Shropshire Council regarding the Swimming Pool the following under the FOI act:**

**Swimming Pool figures,**

**A list of trustees forming the Trust,**

**Who is in charge of the grounds,**

**Why has the pool been neglected,**

**For the Town Council to be kept updated and informed with future decisions.**

Councillor Whittle said this will also be an item on an agenda at Town Council.

Mrs. Bevan said funding to open the facility may be too expensive for Town Council and suggested it may be a better to fund the publicising of the facility. The Mayor said as soon as Town Council have received the figures they will let the public know.

A resident said the outside pool is not a cash pod; she thought Serco have not fulfilled their job to try harder to make it work it is admirable that Town Council have suggested paying the costs to open it next year but feels it is unacceptable that Shropshire Council and Serco have not fulfilled their duties.

The Mayor said all the information will be gathered up and put on and agenda where members of the public can attend.

Mr. Smith said the River Tern that runs by the swimming pool has also been neglected and asked for Shropshire Council to update Town Council on this.

The Mayor said Town Council will write to Shropshire Council and ask what their intentions are for this river.

A resident said the concrete railings by the pool have been damaged; they look unsightly and will need repairing.

The Mayor said Council will look into this.

Mr. Morris said there used to be security railings around the skatepark and asked if they are going to be put back because he was concerned users would come off the park straight onto the car park.

The Mayor said Town Council are currently looking into making a decision on this.

A resident asked who is responsible for sweeping the streets.

The Town Clerk said Shropshire Council deal with street cleansing; if there are issues Town Council can complain to Shropshire Council on their behalf.

Mrs Bevan asked if Town Council have a copy of Shropshire Council Street cleansing schedule of works.

The Clerk said we used to but the work is now outsourced. She knows the contract will soon be up for renewal and will ask if she can have a copy of the schedule in due course.

A resident asked if the litter bins were Town Council or Shropshire Councils responsibility because there have been a number of bins either not emptied for months or burnt out and feels there should be more bins put up in strategic areas.

The Mayor said the litter bins are Shropshire Council’s responsibilities if she pops into the Town Hall with further details these can be addressed.

Councillor Aldcroft said Town Council wrote to Shropshire Council requesting more rubbish and dog bins to be put up within the town in particular in lanes; this has clearly not been done so will put it on another agenda to action.

Mrs. Bevan asked what Town Councils schedule of works were in place for cleaning the bus shelters, benches and litter bins.

The Clerk said all the benches within the town have been refurbished last year, Town Council look after the bins on the play parks which are emptied every day, the bus shelter at the bus park does not come under Town Council and will organise for the other shelters to be cleaned.

Mrs Smith asked if the playgrounds are checked with a rolling programme in place because some parks are in need of being painted.

The Clerk said the parks are checked and litter picked every day other than Christmas day and New Year’s Day and has a RoSPA report on all the equipment completed each year. There is currently a Working Group that is going around auditing the parks which will come back to committee soon.

A resident said he is aware that The National Trust and The Canal River Trust have spent £25K on moorings at Riverside Drive; a lot of boats stop here and he feels it is very hard for people to walk up into town due to the hills. He asked if the service bus could possibly stop at the moorings in the summer months to help people get into the town and the foot paths are in need of upgrading.

Councillor Aldcroft said he knows The River Trust are looking for volunteers to assist the upkeep of the paths; if people would like to assist the community could take charge of a section.

Mr. Smith said the town service bus operates at the back of Riverside Drive already so would need advertising to make boat users aware of this facility.

A resident asked what efforts have Town Council done to help make the roads within our town more usable; there are many with pot holes which needs addressing.

Councillor Whittle said residents should get in touch with their Ward Councillor who can address the road in need of work at Shropshire Council level.

Mr. Morris said there is no street lighting at Chancel Drive Play Park which makes it a hub for anti-social behaviour and the see saw has broken.

The Clerk said she is aware of the see saw being broken; the parts have been ordered and will look into the lighting situation.

Councillor Whittle said having CCTV on parks is being looked at by Council as we speak.

Mr. Smith said the road leading up to Pell Wall by the public toilets should be a 30 m.p.h. zone; he has put the speed board up in that area and have recordings of up to 70 m.p.h. Can Town Council help with this?

The Mayor said this can be addressed in Council if the Road Safety Group put it in writing to them.

A resident said he believes Town Council should be more proactive on the parking and swimming pool situation; we should not have to come to a meeting to discuss this our town should be at the top of the Councillors priority list.

Mrs. Bevan said she feels the Town Council are doing a good; they are reporting back to residents and listening to people’s issues with a hope of actioning them.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 8.35 pm.