



MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **COUNCIL** held at The Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow on **MONDAY 28TH OCTOBER 2024** at **7.00 PM**.

FC/198 **PRESENT**

Chairman: Councillor B. Waite

Councillors: Child; Garner; Gill; Ginger; Hall; Harris; Miller (7.34pm);
Parry; Tapley; Thompson and S Waite.

Officers: Gina Wilding, Town Clerk
Kate Adams, Deputy Town Clerk

ABSENT

Councillors: De Gersigny and Jones.

FC/199 **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Mayor, Councillor B Waite, welcomed everyone to the Full Council meeting and made some health and safety announcements.

FC/200 **RECORDING OF MEETINGS**

The Mayor notified those present that under the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014, recording and broadcasting is permitted during public session of Council Meetings.

FC/201 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors De Gersigny (unwell) and Jones (working).

FC/202 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
Councillor Parry Ludlow in Bloom

Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Parry Ludlow in Bloom

Personal Interests

None

FC/203 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION (15 minutes)

Three members of the public were present.

A member of the public addressed the Council regarding Item 11 on the agenda – presentation from Transport for Wales. He said that the refurbishment of the station has been largely completed, although the lift is currently out of order due to ingress of water. The planning started under Government Initiative (Access for All) five years ago. It included lobbying re the station and safety of public on the forecourt, due to the same access point for pedestrians and cars, which has now been remedied, but poor parking remains an issue. He looked forward to hearing an update from Transport for Wales.

Councillor Waite explained that unfortunately a representative was unable to attend due to the major incident which took place last week and would attend the next Full Council meeting.

FC/204 POLICE CRIME COMMISSIONER AND LUDLOW POLICE UPDATE

West Mercia Police Crime Commissioner John Campion addressed the meeting and Police Inspector Damien Kelly provided operational information.

John Campion addressed the Council.

Since being re-elected, he is looking at priorities of the area in his new term. His plan is to drive activity on officer's time and how money is spent. This plan will shortly be released.

It will consist of four themes:

- 1) Cutting crime – there are stubborn and worrying trends, although burglary levels are down, they want to be able to present more quality evidence to enable prosecutions
- 2) Victims and survivors – to provide the correct support to enable them to recover
- 3) Policing with the community – they need to ensure there are enough resources to make this happen, it is important that policing is visible and accessible to everyone
- 4) Productivity and efficiency – Looking at resources and how they are used. Ever greater drive to spend resources efficiently, including looking at how buildings are used.

Questions asked, and responses given:

Q. We have issues with rough sleepers taking drugs. When reported via 101 were told they were busy dealing with floods and call handler hung up.

R. All phone calls are recorded so please report any issues such as this. Any service failures would need to be investigated.

Q. In a Mayor's forum meeting prior to the election a representation of West Mercia Police stated that 500 officers were available and could come from Telford, which is a long way and response times would be unacceptable.

R. It was agreed that this wasn't explained very well regarding the movement of officers around the county.

Q. When reporting things via 101 was instructed to report online. No response/update was ever received.

R. The call handler team will receive info from 101 and online so there was no need to tell the caller to end the call and report it online. This should be reported so that service improvements could be implemented.

Q. You stated some crime has reduced – could you be more specific?

R. Perception of crime is higher than the actual number of incidents.

Q. Drug concerns have increased over the last 12 months according to local GPs, but perhaps this doesn't come to the notice of the police?

R. These are increasing types of addiction in society (within households) that aren't necessarily dealt with by the police.

With regards to the illegal drug element, we know there is an issue, and our approach varies in each area. The local organised crime team is based in Shrewsbury, and they are active; we aim to do better at updating Council and the public.

The main local priorities are rural thefts, drugs, antisocial behaviour, and speeding.

There are four pillars of action associated with these priorities:

1) Education and prevention; 2) Support with drug users; 3) High intensity targeting (covert and overt); 4) Reassurance – feeding back to Councils and the public.

Q. Ludlow needs a police presence on a Friday and Saturday night to stop drunken anti-social behaviour on the streets.

R. Feedback from the public to the police is vital, we need people to report their concerns and complete independent surveys to understand what people think is happening. If it doesn't start to feel different, we will revisit.

Q. What is the emergency response time for 999 calls in SY8?

R. Target is 20 minutes. Do not achieve this in rural towns, but there are more officers located locally than there were.

Q. Is there anything we can do to help?

R. We want to get better at sharing and building relationships. The Town Council is the closest tier of local government to the community, and we want to work with you. Keep giving us feedback/reporting problems.

Q. During a recent incident there was a report of a firearm on Sandpits Road in the vicinity of a school. Parents were collecting young children, people were panicking. Why wasn't the school locked down?

R. Thankfully this was shocking because it is a rare type of incident in this area. Be assured that the safety element is well-practised.

7.34pm Cllr Miller joined the meeting.

Q. There have recently been three drug related stabbings and there is lots of drug dealing. No responses are ever received from reports.

We had a great PCSO, another joined the area, then the original PCSO was moved to a different area.

R. The movement of PCSO Thomas was planned. The Ludlow Safer Neighbourhoods Team is full and consists of 1 police officer and 2 PCSOs.

Q. Relieved to hear that we have more police, but we never see anyone on the streets.

R. PCSOs are useful as they are not weighed down by caseloads and there should be an improvement in visibility.

A Road Safety consultation is currently taking place until 8th November, please share with residents and your contacts.

FC/205 LUDLOW'S UNITARY COUNCILLORS SESSION

Councillor Parry (Ludlow South) apologised that some bus information she initially provided to the town council was not accurate and provided an update on bus provisions and improvements following discussions Unitary Cllrs are having with Shropshire Council officers.

FC/206 MINUTES – 16TH SEPTEMBER 2024

RESOLVED BW/TG (11:0:1)

That the open and closed session minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 16th September 2024, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

FC/207 ITEMS TO ACTION – 16TH SEPTEMBER 2024

RESOLVED BW/EG (unanimous)

That the Items to Action of the Council meeting held on 16th September 2024, be noted.

FC/208 BIOCHAR PRESENTATION

The Council received a presentation from Mark Foxall from Shropshire Council's Waste Management team.

The presentation provided an overview of the process and plans for it coming to Ludlow. There is a public consultation event taking place next week at Ludlow library.

Queries and responses:

Q. What is the estimated income?

R. Hope to pay back the set up costs within 5 years. The biochar product sells for between £300-£1,000 per tonne dependent on quality. We are aiming for £600 per tonne and carbon offset sales. There will also be a small value for the electricity produced and an outlet for the heat.

Q. I understand this can have a detrimental impact on the soil biome?

R. This depends on the quality of the input, we will have a clean input of timber and in the UK the maximum amount of biochar you can use on land is 1 tonne per hectare. There are currently lots of conflicting studies as this method becomes established.

Q. I have heard it being said that biochar is combustible?

R. When the woody matter is heated the gases/oils are harvested and burnt. The biochar itself is not combustible.

Q. When the site was used by the anaerobic digester there was a terrible smell, will this happen again?

R. The waste used in this process was food waste which was decomposing on site. Food waste is not used in the biochar process and there will be no smell.

Q. How many years did the biodigester run for?

R. It ran for 6 years.

Q. Will this plant last longer?

R. We estimate a biochar plant will have approx.20-year ear lifespan.

Q. What pollutants are released during the process?

R. Pollutants produced are not emitted but are captured by a filtration system. It is heavily regulated by the Environment Agency and is a thermal process rather than a biological one.

Q. How do the logistics work of it being in Ludlow? If you are accepting 10,000 tonnes of dry material – will the roads, be too busy? Also, there is no material in Ludlow so where is it coming from?

R. Anticipate purchasing from near Bishops Castle and using tree waste from Shropshire Council sites. Don't anticipate vehicles being an issue as the site is only a short distance from the A49.

Q. How many 38 tonne lorries will be visiting the site per day?

R. Anticipate 1 lorry in and 1 out per day. In terms of size for comparison a refuse lorry is a 26 tonne vehicle. In terms of capacity for waste the plant can take 10 tonnes per day. Delivery times will be decided as part of planning permission.

Q. What type of vehicles will be used?

R. Curtain side lorries.

Q. Why was Ludlow chosen? It states planning permission will be required. Will Ludlow Town Council's opinions be considered?

R. It was chosen because of the site with existing plant and access. The planning decision will be made by Shropshire Council following the usual processes.

Mr Foxall was thanked for his time.

FC/209 CO-OPTION

RESOLVED BW/EG (11:1:0)

To continue advertising the co-option vacancy for Gallows Bank ward until the next meeting.

Councillor Parry left the meeting.

FC/210 ANNUAL CORE GRANT – LUDLOW IN BLOOM

The Council voiced their sincere appreciation for the work undertaken by Ludlow in Bloom (LIB) and acknowledged that beautiful floral arrangements are an important enhancement in the town.

RESOLVED SW/AT (unanimous)

To decline awarding a grant to Ludlow in Bloom in 2025 / 26.

The Council decided that the application did not meet the required criteria due to a lack of detailed financial information, which created an inference that the grant had been used to pay debts because financial losses were reported in more than one year. This is not permitted in the criteria. The Council noted that outside of the town centre in Old Street the planting was more patchy, and often the efforts of residents and businesses rather than volunteers from LIB.

Councillor Parry rejoined the meeting.

FC/211 PROJECT SUPPORT GRANT - LAR

RESOLVED SW/TG (unanimous)

To approve the award of a £900 Project Support Grant to Ludlow Assembly Rooms for the Lit Fest project.

FC/212 BUDGET TIMETABLE AND CONSULTATION

RESOLVED BW/DT (unanimous)

To approve the budget timetable and the release of the budget consultation.

FC/213 LUDLOW MUSEUM AT THE BUTTERCROSS FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED TG/DT (unanimous)

To approve Ludlow Museum at the Buttercross Forward Plan 2024/ 2026.

FC/214 LUDLOW CASTLE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

RESOLVED BW/RH (10:2:0)

To note the feedback from the meeting.

FC/215 LUDLOW MARKET PARKING UPDATE

RESOLVED BW/SH (unanimous)

To note the update from Unitary Councillor Boddington that Portfolio Holder Councillor Dan Morris was awaiting a legal view before finalisation of a draft decision that was returned to the team on 15/07/24 and will be reviewed. The officer who was leading on this report has left the authority. The job will be re-assigned, and we should be able to progress with the authority to proceed in the next few weeks. The process after the approval of the Decision Report will be public consultation via a Traffic Regulation Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

FC/216 LUDLOW FRINGE FESTIVAL

RESOLVED BW/DT (unanimous)

To note the update of 2025 and 2026 dates for the Fringe Festival led by Ludlow Assembly Rooms.

FC/217 NEW ICO TOOL TO HELP FOI REQUEST HANDLERS IN SMALL PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

RESOLVED BW/SW (unanimous)

To note the update.

FC/218 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

RESOLVED BW/EG (unanimous)

To approve the following amendments to Committee membership:

- a) That Councillor Miller joins Services and Policy & Finance Committees
- b) That Councillor De Gersigny is removed from Representational Committee
- c) That Councillor Hall is removed from the Budget Task & Finish Group, and the Grants Task & Finish Group. That Councillor Hall joins the Climate Action Task & Finish Group.

That Councillor Thompson is removed from Policy & Finance Committee and joins the Climate Action Task & Finish Group.

FC/219 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

RESOLVED BW/EG (unanimous)

As recommended by Policy & Finance Committee on 21st October 2024, to approve the Sexual Harassment Policy, the Sexual Harassment Action Plan and Risk Assessment, and the amendments to the Disciplinary and Grievance Policy.

FC/220 COMMITTEE MINUTES

RESOLVED SW/TG (unanimous)

To receive the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee on 9th September 2024.

FC/221 RESOLVED BW/SH (unanimous)

To receive the minutes of the Services Committee on 4th September and 16th October 2024.

FC/222 RESOLVED GG/RH (unanimous)

To receive the minutes of the Representational Committee on 30th July and 27th August 2024.

FC/223 RESOLVED GG/EG (unanimous)

To receive the minutes of the Representational Committee on 24th September 2024.

FC/224 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC: PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED BW/SW (unanimous)

That that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business pursuant to section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public be excluded, and the meeting continue in closed session.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Town Mayor

Date

Closed session minutes will be issued for this meeting.

ADDENDUM NOTE:

After the meeting the Council was provided with extra information stating Ludlow In Bloom's financial reserves.