

Minutes of an Ordinary Meeting of Wem Town Council held on Thursday 23rd January 2025
at 7 p.m. in the Town Council Meeting Room, Wem Library, High Street, Wem

Present:- Councillors, D Parry (Mayor) G Soul, B Barker, P Broomhall, R Dodd (Deputy Mayor), C Granger, E Towers, D Hill, P Johnson.

Mrs P O'Hagan (Town Clerk).

832/25 **To receive apologies and reasons for absence.**

Resolved:- to note the following apologies for absence Cllrs Hoffmann, Glover, Meakin, Gascoigne and Drummond,

833/25 **Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests and Interests of bias or pre-determination.**

a) To receive any disclosure of pecuniary interest - Members are reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

Councillor	Item	Dispensation Awarded
Cllr Towers	Shropshire Council Twin-hatted member declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.	Dispensation to allow participation and voting on all matters relating to Shropshire Council
	Item 835/25 Wem Swimming and Lifestyle Centre - Disclosable pecuniary interest as a Board Member.	Allowed to discuss but not vote in discussions regarding WSLC
	Wem Sports and Social Assoc. - Bias interest as a Trustee.	Allowed to discuss but not vote on all matters relating to WSSA
Cllr Broomhall	Item 838/25 Precept – Pecuniary interest as council tax payer in the town.	Allowed to discuss and vote on the annual precept
	Shropshire Council Twin-hatted member declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the Town Council's relationship with Shropshire Council.	Dispensation to allow participation and voting on all matters relating to Shropshire Council
	Item 835/25 Wem Swimming and Lifestyle Centre - Disclosable pecuniary interest as a Board Member.	Allowed to discuss and vote on discussions regarding WSLC
Cllr Johnson	Item 838/25 Precept – Pecuniary interest as council tax payer in the town.	Allowed to discuss and vote on the annual precept
	Item 835/25 Youth Club. - Bias interest in the application for funding as on the committee.	

	Item 838/25 Precept – Pecuniary interest as council tax payer in the town.	Allowed to discuss and vote on the annual precept
Cllr Soul	Item 836/25 Wem Town Hall - Pecuniary Interest as Trustee. Item 838/25 Precept – Pecuniary interest as council tax payer in the town.	Allowed to discuss but not vote on matters relating to Wem Town Hall Allowed to discuss and vote on the annual precept
Cllr Granger	Item 838/25 Precept – Pecuniary interest as council tax payer in the town.	Allowed to discuss and vote on the annual precept
Cllr Dodd	Item 835/25 Whitchurch Road Cemetery - bias interest as member of the Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery. Item 838/25 Precept – Pecuniary interest as council tax payer in the town.	Allowed to discuss and vote on the annual precept
Cllr Parry	Item 835/25 Whitchurch Road Cemetery - bias interest as member of the Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery. Item 838/25 Precept – Pecuniary interest as council tax payer in the town.	Allowed to discuss and vote on the annual precept
Cllr Barker	Item 838/25 Precept – Pecuniary interest as council tax payer in the town.	Allowed to discuss and vote on the annual precept
Cllr Hill	Item 835/25 Whitchurch Road Cemetery - bias interest as member of the Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery. Item 838/25 Precept – Pecuniary interest as council tax payer in the town.	

b) To consider any applications for Dispensations under s33 of the Localism Act 2011
Cllr Hill applied for a dispensation under item 838/25 Town Council precept to allow him to discuss and vote on the setting of the Council Precept.

Resolved: - to award the following dispensations to Cllr Hill to permit him to discuss and vote on the annual precept during the electoral term.

834/25 **Fees and Charges for 2025-26** - to review the following charges

a) Love Lane Cemetery charges.

Resolved: - to set the following fees for Love Lane Cemetery.

<i>Plot Purchase and Interment Fees</i>	<i>2025-26</i>
<i>Children*</i>	
A child under the age of 1 month at death	£20

Plot purchase underage of 18	£640
Interment Fee under age of 18	£130
<i>*the actual fee to the family will be £0 but the indicated costs will be recovered from the Children's Funeral Fund</i>	
Purchase of plot for persons exceeding 18 years at death	£640
Interment Fee (for each interment over 18 years of age)	£320
Interment of ashes in existing grave	£190
<i>Memorial Fee for the erection of a Headstone</i>	
To a height not exceeding 3 feet	£300
In excess of 3 feet but not exceeding 3ft 6inches high	£800
Additional Inscription	£35
Transfer of Exclusive Right of Burial	£35
<i>Renewal of Exclusive Right of Burial prior to expiration</i>	
For a period not exceeding 25 years from the date of expiration of existing rights	

b) Love Lane Allotments – Annual rents, admin and waiting list fees.

Resolved: - to increase fees by £2 per quarter plot and not to change existing admin and waiting list fees

c) Market Rents.

Resolved: - to maintain weekly pitches fees at £8 per pitch for a casual pitch.

d) Market Licences.

Resolved: - to maintain licence fees at 2024-25 rates.

835/25 **Larger Contributions** - To consider contribution requests received from larger organisations running services or facilities within the Town.
Cllr Towers and Broomhall declared an interest on this item.

Wem Swimming & Lifestyle Centre

Resolved: -

- To award Wem Swimming and Lifestyle Centre a financial contribution of £55,000 towards the running of Wem Swimming and Lifestyle Centre for the year 2025-26.
- To consider a 3 year contribution in the 2026-27 financial year.

Cllr Towers did not vote on this item.

Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery

Cllrs Parry, Dodd and Hill took no part in discussions.

Resolved: - to award Friends of Whitchurch Road Cemetery a financial contribution of £2000 towards maintenance and upkeep of the Whitchurch Road Cemetery for the financial year 2025/26.

Wem Youth Club

Cllr Johnson left the meeting and took no part in discussions.

Resolved: - to award Wem Youth Club £2,500 towards the running of the Youth Club for the financial year 2025/26.

Cllr Johnson returned to the room.

Wem Millennium Green

Resolved: - to award Wem Millennium Green £2,000 towards the maintenance and upkeep of the Millennium Green for the financial year 2025-26.

Wem Sports and Social Association

Resolved: to award Wem Sports and Social Association £14,000 towards the maintenance and upkeep of the land and properties managed by the Association and £7000 towards equipment costs.

836/25 **Town Hall Trust Funding Agreement** – to consider recommendations of the working party.

Resolved: to approve a one year funding agreement from 1.4.25 – 31.3.26 of £14000 subject to the following funding objectives:

- **To support the development of Wem Town Hall so that it can continue to provide and develop new activities and services that cater for residents of Wem of all ages, backgrounds and circumstances.**
Reporting criteria - evidence must be provided of the number of new activities and services developed by the Town Hall Trust along with socioeconomic data about those making use of the Town Hall. This must not include any data relating to the café.
- **To support economic activity in the town of Wem including supporting initiatives that aim to directly benefit the local economy**
Reporting Criteria – evidence will be required on how this objective is being met. Private room hire agreements, unless the hire fee is discounted by the Town Hall to support the business, should not be included. This must not include any data relating to the café.

Further Resolved: that future meetings of the Town Hall Trust Liaison Group should be held with only trustees and Councillors present.

Cllr Soul did not vote on this item.

837/25 **2025-26 Budget**

7a) To consider the Town Council budget for 2025-2026.

Street Lighting

Resolved: - to approve the recommendation of the Finance and Corporate Governance Committee that the Public Lighting Budget be set at £57,700 with £5,000 allocation from general reserves for column replacement.

Cemetery

Resolved: - to approve the recommendation of the Finance and Corporate Governance Committee that the Cemetery Budget be set at £25,550 inclusive of the contribution to Whitchurch Road Cemetery with £13,000 allocation from Neighbourhood Fund for the hedge removal and fencing works.

Allotments

Resolved: - to approve the recommendation of the Finance and Corporate Governance Committee that the Allotments Budget be set at £1,500.

Recreation

Resolved: - to approve the recommendation of the Finance and Corporate Governance Committee that the recreation budget is set at £40,300.

Toilets

Resolved: - to approve the recommendation of the Finance and Corporate Governance Committee that the Public Toilets budget is set at £22,800.

Bus Shelters

Resolved: - to approve the recommendation of the Finance and Corporate Governance Committee that the bus shelter budget is set at £1,800.

Miscellaneous Amenities/Services

Floral Planters

Resolved: - to approve the recommendation of the Finance and Corporate Governance Committee that the budget for floral planters is set at £6,000.

CCTV

Resolved: - to approve the recommendation of the Finance and Corporate Governance Committee that the budget for CCTV is set at £6,000.

Administration

The Clerk outlined the recommendations of the Finance and Corporate Governance Committee.

Resolved: -that the Administration Budget is set at £48,185 allocation from reserves of £2000.

Cllr Expenses

Resolved: - to approve the recommendation of the Finance and Corporate Governance Committee that the Cllr Expenses budget is maintained at £1,075.

Staffing

Resolved: - To approve the recommendation of the Staffing Committee and Finance and Corporate Governance Committee that the Staffing budget is set at £162,905 and that an incremental pay rise be awarded to the Groundsman and the RFO.

Contributions

Resolved: - to approve a contributions budget of £25,500 to include an allocation of £5000 from general reserves towards the Christmas Lights infrastructure upgrade and £1000 for event infrastructure.

Swimming Pool

Resolved: - to approve the Swimming Pool budget of £73,300.

Miscellaneous.

Wem Town Hall

Resolved: - to allocate a budget of £14,000.

Cllr Soul did not vote on this item.

Markets

Resolved: - to allocate a budget of £1,000 towards the running and management of markets.

Town Improvements

Resolved: - to allocate a budget of £5,000 for Town Centre improvements.

Resolved: - to approve a 2025-26 expenditure budget of £492,615.

The Clerk outlined the income budget and it was

Resolved: - to set an income budget (excluding precept) of £68,700 inclusive of an allocation of £26,000 from earmarked, Neighbourhood Fund and general reserves.

7b) To consider the 3 year forward budget report.

Resolved: - to note the 3 year forward budget report.

838/25 **Town Council Precept** - To agree the Town Council precept for 2025-2026.

Resolved: - to set a Town Council precept for 2025-26 of £423,915.

Meeting ended 19.45

Mayor.....