

UPTON UPON SEVERN TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES

Of a meeting of the Town Council held on Tuesday 21st March 2006 in the Memorial Hall at
7.30pm

87/05/06

Present: Chairman Town Mayor J Thompson
Vice Chairman Deputy Town Mayor Mrs S Walsh
Councillors E White, T Perry, C Mair, M Morgan, J Surtees, T Drake,
S Wilkinson, P Thomas, S Yates

Also Present: District Councillors Mary Wilkinson and Mrs Sue Adeney,
County Councillor Bob Bullock
The Clerk Ms G Jennings

1. To receive apologies and declarations of interest

Apologies received from Cllr. Mrs A Morgan, Cllr. T Dickson, Cllr P Martin

2. To agree the Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 21st February 2006

Agreed

3. To adopt the Minutes of the Open Spaces & Cemetery Committee of
28th February 2006

Adopted

4. To adopt the Minutes of the Planning Committee of 21st February and
7th March 2006

Adopted

5. To adopt the Minutes of the Finance, Hall & General Purposes Committee
of 7th March 06

Adopted

6. Adjournment for Public Participation

No members of the public were present

7. To consider applications for co-option

Mr John Dean had applied for co-option and his application was proposed/seconded and accepted. He signed his declaration in the presence of the clerk.

8. Items for Debate

8.1. The state of Upton's pavements and streets – Cllr. Mrs S Walsh opened the debate by saying that the pavements were in a dangerous condition in Gardens Walk, there was also subsidence in the road, dips filled with puddles and no dropped kerbs to facilitate pushchairs/disabled. Dunns Lane, Old Street pavements were patched with odd materials, uneven and gave a bad impression of the façade of the town. Cllr Mrs Surtees felt that the roads were dangerous for cyclists. District Councillor Mary Wilkinson advised that the Scrutiny Committee believed there should be a partnership between MHDC, Worcs County Council and the Town Council to tackle issues together. She hoped that something would be set up in the next 6 months. Cllr Mair asked whether there was funding for such a partnership and said he felt 6 months was a long time to leave matters unattended. He advised that the drainage culvert never cleared of water in Hanley Road carpark and there was a large pothole at the entrance. The High Street was also a problem area. Cllr. Wilkinson felt that residents could not be expected to provide road/pavement maintenance out of the precept rate. This was a facility used by people from outside the town in visits to the library, banks, medical centre. He reported that Worcs County Council had acted swiftly in response to a report by the clerk and that they should be approached to attend to other problem areas.

8.2. The provision of a Town Council Saturday surgery - Cllr Mr C Mair felt that the Council should consider the provision of a 2 hour slot in which residents could visit councillors to air their views, alleviating the MP of parochial matters and raising the profile of the Town Council. There was general support for this idea but the logistics of it would be passed to Hall, Finance & General Purposes Committee.

8.3. High Street toilets – Comment on decision by Malvern Hills District Council & subsequent meeting of the Town Councils (Cllr. J Thompson/Cllr C Mair)
Cllr. J Thompson gave a report on a meeting he, Cllr Mair and Cllr Perry attend wherein MHDC's decision to close the toilets was made. It was felt that discussions were muddled, the decision was misguided and made on political grounds. Cllr. C Mair reported that he and

Cllr. Mrs J Surtees had attended a subsequent meeting with Malvern & Tenbury Town Councils. Following that meeting the clerks had been asked to compile an impact assessment. It was agreed that a letter to go to individual District Councillors asking for reconsideration – also letter to MP requesting assistance. **Action GJ**

Cllr White congratulated Cllr. Mary Wilkinson on her concerted efforts to reopen the debate through a meeting on the 3rd April. He asked Cllr. Mrs S Adeney to pay attention to the views of the people.

9. To receive a report from County Councillor

County Councillor Bullock suggested that road/pavement surface problems should be referred to the HPU **Action GJ**

He stated he was surprised that the Jazz Festival Chairman had voted against keeping the toilets open. How could elderly people be expected to walk from the town to Hanley Rd. for toilet facilities? He felt MHDC were remiss in their decision.

10. To receive reports from District Councillors

Cllr. Mary Wilkinson said she felt there was some confusion in some minds between the roles of Community Services Officers and the Street Scene Warden. At present neither had the power to book illegal parking but 2 fines of £75 had been issued by the Street Scene Wardens for dropping litter since the scheme started. She said she understood Cllr. E White would prefer a policeman to patrol but this was not going to happen.

Cllr Mrs Sue Adeney reported that concessionary bus fares would be available from 1st April 2006. She said councillor's time seemed to be taken up on consultations with NHS/Transport Plans/Police. She commends the public speaking time at development control meetings which members can attend without giving notice. Hanley were taking part in Shindig events which were very successful. Concerns about bird flu should be passed on to DEFRA.

Councillor S Wilkinson questioned the sanity of introducing car park charges after 6pm. He felt this would stifle the theatres and night entertainment in both Malvern and Upton. Cllr. Mary Wilkinson said that the proposal had been agreed through the budget (which she had abstained from voting on) but the implications had perhaps escaped councillors. She would try to obtain a change to parking permits.

Councillor T Drake questioned Cllr Adeney as to the reason behind her vote to close the High Street toilets. She stated that she represented Hanley and Upton and felt confident in the research taken 2/3 years ago and that with that information she had made the right decision. She regretted that the matter had not been handled very well. She felt that she represented the entire district and commented that only 2 people had approached her with concerns. She was asked whether she had been aware of the 600 signature petition. She did not reply and Cllr. Mary Wilkinson said that things had now moved on from there.

11. To receive reports from Town Councillors

a. Cllr. S Wilkinson had attended a meeting to discuss the Upton hub, also attended by Cllr. B Bullock and Cllr Mary Wilkinson. Although the design was approved it was still not clear what services MHDC intended to provide from the site. A request would be made for provision of an occasional planning officer and registrar.

b. Cllr. Mrs S Walsh had attended a meeting of the PCCG at which a presentation was given by the Deputy Chief Constable on the proposed merger of forces. Public opinion was 69/70% in favour of keeping the force as it was. The merger would incur high costs, in particular some forces carried huge debts with them, for example Warwickshire (£40,000,000). The next meeting on 7th June in the Upton Baptist hall would have a speaker from the CPS.

c. Cllrs. E White & T. Dickson had attended a meeting on the NHS reconfiguration which was not well attended by the public. PCT to be split into 2 parts instead of 4 and proposal to save money by reducing staff. Nurses and ancillary staff would be bought in. It was felt that this was regional governance by stealth and that it would not work.

d. Cllrs. E White & P Martin together with Mark Kerrigan had attended a meeting of the Estate of Edward Hall Charity. Funds of £2623 were divided £1311 to church repair fund and the remainder to necessary purposes. Grants were given to Upton Arts Music Group, Friends of Upton Church, Upton in Bloom.

e. Cllr Perry had held an informal meeting with local organisations to discuss better joint working and networking. There was general feedback that people felt let down by local authorities.

12. Worcs CALC

12.1 To consider the implications of the Charter agreement and the County Association's changing role. Cllr S Wilkinson advised that CALC seemed to be assuming the role of a statutory body within the charter agreement. This was not a welcome move as CALC seemed to be pushing themselves forward as mediator on a number of issues for example he felt uncomfortable with their involvement in the Standards Committee.

12.2 To review membership to the Association in best value terms –The renewal membership is £618 – does membership add anything to the activities of the Town Council? Cllr Mike Morgan had recently been elected to the Executive Committee of Worcs CALC. He and Cllr Wilkinson both felt that more could be achieved from inside the group than on the outside. He agreed that other member councils were not happy about the changing role of the Association. Cllr. Mair said he awaited delivery in that CALC should do “what it says on the tin”. Cllr. Wilkinson proposed that membership was renewed but that Worcs CALC were still on probation. This proposal was carried. **Agreed**

13. To authorise payments & donation to Citizens Advice Bureau (£400)

Cheques 4857 – 4873 agreed for payment. The Council agreed a donation of £400 to The Citizens Advice Bureau **Agreed**

14. Information/Correspondence

Mercia Inshore Rescue had thanked the Council for their donation of £150 and had offered to make a presentation on their services and plans to the Council. The clerk would arrange this. **Action GJ**

15. Date of Next Meeting – 16th May AGM

The following items were discussed excluding the press and public due to the nature of the business to be discussed 16 (legal agreements) 17 (security):

16. Skateboard Park

To consider the letter of the SMC of 2nd March 2006 – response and action required. The Council agreed that an amended constitution was needed in order to instruct their solicitor. The Council also agreed that the requirements of the Insurance Co. for a 6ft high hooped fence must be followed. The Council agreed to allow time for £5000 maintenance fund. **Agreed**

Cllr Thomas felt that the Town Council were receiving bad press on the subject of the skateboard park and it should be made clear that the Council were acting in the best interests of its residents and not with malice towards the skateboarders.

17. Hall Security

The Council discussed new hall security arrangements following vandalism of the gents toilets. Cllrs. Mair, Drake & Thomas were supportive of the clerk in requiring better security. The Council agreed to authorise the clerk to purchase a new lock to the front door of the hall. In future the door would operate on closures to prevent the door being left open. **Agreed**
The Council were asked to consider new opening hours for the office as the clerk felt it impossible to deal with the level of interruptions and cope with the day to day work. Cllr E White considered there should be no change, he said he felt that the clerk should be accessed by the public whenever she was in the office. Cllr. Wilkinson proposed that the matter should be reviewed after the new lock had been fitted. **Deferred**