

Madeley Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting of Madeley Parish Council held on Monday 25th February 2008, at Jubilee House, High Street, Madeley, commencing at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Councillors D Davies (Chair), J Jones (Vice Chair) B Duce, D Edwards, E Evans, G Green, J Handley, S Harrington, S Law, A Mackenzie, E Swift, M Swift, S Taylor
Clerk

Karen Roper – County Secretary, Shropshire Association of Local Councils

07/75 **Apologies**

Cllr Dylan Harrison	-	Family commitments	-	Accepted
Cllr Rupert Coldicutt	-	Unwell	-	Accepted
Cllr Peter Taylor	-	Work commitments	-	Accepted

07/75 **Declarations of Interest**

There were none

07/76 **Remarks from the Chair**

There were none

07/77 **Public Discussion**

No members of the public were present.

07/78 **Presentation**

Karen Roper, County Secretary of the Shropshire Association of Local Councils, spoke to the meeting about the organisation and services it provides.

The Shropshire Association is the local arm of the National Association of Local Councils who are the specialists for small councils. Membership covers both organisations and larger local councils (such as Madeley) have direct access to the NALC. The service provided by the local and national organisations includes advice, guidance, and information on changing legislation. The Shropshire Association, through the National Association has links with government and other bodies such as the Standards Board for England.

The SALC are aware that they have traditionally been more relevant to Shropshire and rural parishes and are making efforts to correct this. They

are now based at Civic Offices one day per week and are holding more of their meetings and training events at Telford venues. They are in the process of reviewing their constitution to include better representation from urban/Telford based councils.

Member Councils of the SALC receive two publications – Clerks Clippings and Parish Pump, membership also provides the opportunity to share good practice and to access to a variety of training. Additionally there is the opportunity to become involved at a more local level through the Wrekin Area Committee as well as at a National level through the NALC and their conferences.

There was general discussion concerning individual Councillors experience of SALC meetings and events. Concerns were expressed regarding the ability of the SALC to deliver benefits to the value of the annual subscription.

Individual Councillors experiences of SALC and WAC at committee meetings have not been positive and Madeley feels excluded from the National Conferences by their geographical location and the associated expense.

However, the meeting agreed that the move to Telford is positive in that it recognises the difference between urban and rural parishes is taking steps to be more relevant to Telford members.

Although unconvinced that the current arrangements offer value for money, Councillors recognised that efforts are being made to change and this is encouraging. If expansion and development continues to include events such as conferences on local issues then continued membership could be justified.

Resolved

To renew membership to the SALC for 2008/2009 and to monitor the services received for further review in March 09.

All Councillors were encouraged to take advantage of the training offered by SALC and to report back on its quality.

07/79 Vacancy

The position for Cuckoo Oak Ward has been vacant for some time, proper notices were displayed and no election was called. The February issue of Madeley Matters had carried an article asking for interest in the local community and this had resulted in two enquiries. The Clerk had met both candidates and asked them to submit their interest in writing, but only one letter had been received by the time of the meeting. The first applicant was considered to be very suitable but in order to afford both parties an equal opportunity, the Clerk was asked to send a reminder to the second candidate.

07/80 Minutes

Councillor Davies stated that item 70.1.4. Partners and Communities Together did not accurately reflect his report. In his view the PACT meetings are for partners (which includes Councillors) and residents equally and he asked for the paragraph to be revised.

The signature of the minutes was deferred until the next meeting (AGM).

07/81 Committee Reports

81.1 Leisure & Community

Councillor D Edwards presented the report of the Leisure Committee. The report was noted.

81.2 Environment

Councillor E Swift presented the report of the Environment Committee. She reminded members that evidence is needed to secure the footpath creation/modification and asked those who were able to do so to send in their forms to the Deputy Clerk. The report was noted.

81.3 Finance & General Purposes

Councillor J Jones presented the report of the Finance & General Purposes Committee. Councillor Sue Taylor's name had been omitted from those present. The report was noted.

81.4 Personnel

Councillor D Davies presented the report of the Personnel Committee. The report was noted.

07/82 Budget & Finance

87.1 Expenditure Approval

The Clerk presented the Expenditure Approval List for approval.

Resolved

That the expenditure transactions be approved for payment.

87.2 Financial Budget Comparison

Noted.

8.00pm Councillor Janice Jones left the meeting

07/83 Strategic Direction

The Clerk presented the Business Plan (Appendix A) for member's information – noted.

83.1 Boundary Signage

This item was referred from Environment Committee on 10.12.07. The Deputy Clerk had prepared a report (Appendix B) with associated mapping and recommendation that a programme of replacement boundary signing be approved.

A comprehensive discussion on the associated issues ensued, the principle points being: -

- The issue of the title of 'Town' versus 'Parish'. Some members favour the changing of Madeley Parish Council to Madeley Town Council, other feel strongly against this proposal. It was felt that this issue would have a bearing on signage and needs resolution before investment in signage can be made.
- Signage at the boundary could encourage community cohesion or alternatively, the estates of Sutton Hill and Woodside may object to being rebranded as Madeley.
- Some members felt there may be future opportunities for partnership working with the developer of Madeley Centre.
- Concern was expressed at the current proliferation of signage which can be confusing, particularly for visitors.
- Parish boundaries may change whereas District and Neighbourhood Centres remain the same.
- The advantages of defining the parish boundary with signage are not clear.

No firm conclusion was reached. Councillor Mackenzie proposed that: 'A replacement programme of boundary signage should not be implemented now, but the matter should be revisited at a more appropriate time'.

Resolved

By majority vote.

83.2 Retirement Policy

Amended Retirement Policy referred from Personnel Committee for approval.

Resolved

That the amended policy be adopted.

07/84 Representation

84.1 Reports from MPC Representatives

84.1.1 Telford Crime Prevention Panel (18th January 2008)

Councillors Betty Evans and Simon Law reported that the panel were keen to promote the services that are available to victims of Domestic Violence. It was suggested that Madeley Matters could be a suitable vehicle.

84.1.2 BBC Question Time (22nd January 2008)

Attended by a number of Councillors who reported a lively and interesting debate.

- 84.1.3 Clerks meeting with the Borough (24th January 2008)**
The Clerk reported that the meeting had been very productive and had included a presentation on the Climate Change Strategy, a presentation on changes occasioned by the 'Local Government and Public Health Act', forthcoming changes to the Members Code of Conduct and a Draft of the review of the Parishes Charter.
- 84.1.4 Abraham Darby Consultation (24th January 2008)**
Councillor Gill Green had attended in her role as Borough Councillor and reported that members of the public had brought up many local concerns, not all directly associated with the change in status of the school.
- 84.1.5 West Midlands Regional Assembly (28th January 2008)**
Councillor Dave Davies attended the Annual Conference of the West Midlands Regional Assembly where he listened to an interesting presentation from Bill Morris followed by group work. He reported that the powers that remain with the Assembly are to be transferred to Advantage West Midlands, which would the Regional Assembly largely impotent and had implications for local democracy.
- 84.1.6 Heartstart Training (12th February 2008)**
Councillor David Edwards reported that the Heartstart training that he attended had been illuminating. Both he and Councillor Peter Taylor, (who also attended) had been also impressed they suggested that Madeley Parish Council might investigate how members of the local community could access and benefit from this vital instruction.
- 84.1.7 Bus User Group (13th February 2008)**
Councillor Dave Davies had been unable to attend this meeting due to a prior commitment.
- 84.1.8 Voluntary & Community Forum (19th February 2008)**
Councillor David Edwards reported that the Forum is offering a range of training for voluntary groups and has a wealth of advice on funding opportunities. It is developing into an umbrella organisation that aims to embrace all voluntary activity in the area.
- 84.1.9 Consultation on Prevention of Alcohol Misuse and Harm Reduction Policy (19th February 2008)**

Councillor Dave Davies had attended the consultation which explained the Draft strategy and sought the views of the attendees. Councillor Davies joined a discussion group on alcohol, anti-social behaviour and general health issues relating to misuse.

84.1.10 Woodside Forum (20th February 2008)

Councillor Mike Swift had been unable to attend the meeting but had received a briefing from Will Schofield, the substance of which was conveyed for Councillors information: -

There has been anxiety within Transforming Telford over the regeneration funding earmarked by Telford & Wrekin and whether it would still be available to complete the final phase of the Regeneration Scheme. This would pose a serious problem as funding from other organisations is conditional on the contribution from Telford & Wrekin. However, it is believed that the difficulties are largely solved but a level of concern remains.

84.1.11 Hope 08 Partnership (22nd February 2008)

Councillor Dave Davies and the clerk had attended the Hope 08 presentation in the expectation that there would be an opportunity to discuss future work and areas where Parish Council and church organisations could work together. There was a presentation on work that has taken place in the Dawley area but unfortunately no discussion of new or future proposals.

84.1.12 Severn Gorge Countryside Trust

Councillor Liz Swift reported that the secretary of the Trust is leaving; interviews for her replacement are scheduled to take place in mid March.

The Trust is experiencing a difficult time – extensive repairs to Jiggers Bank will take place in the summer and they are in the process of commissioning construction of the new offices, for which they have chosen an Eco friendly wood design, to be built on land at Sunnyside, Coalbrookdale.

84.1.13 STROWP

Councillor Mike Swift reported that the STROWP Project Officer would be working 3 days a week as from 1st April 2008. The committee is hopeful that a funding bid will be successful and enable a change of direction and development of the work.

84.1.14 Woodside Family Groups

Councillor Mike Swift reported that Woodside Family Groups and Sutton Hill Families Project will be merging as from 1st April. This is a positive move for both organisations, there is financial assistance offered from Telford & Wrekin Council and the future for both groups is much more secure.

84.1.15 Senior Citizens Forum

Councillor David Edwards had attended the Senior Citizens Forum where there was an audience of 200 people. Senior Citizens were reminded that bus passes are available on application and that those eligible should take advantage of this opportunity as it offers travel concessions throughout the country. Councillor Edwards offered to write a piece for the next Madeley Matters.

07/85 Parish Profile

Business Plan (Appendix A) presented for Councillors information – noted.

07/86 Correspondence

86.1 Wellington Town Council – Invitation to Civic Dinner & Dance.

Noted.

86.2 NALC – Invitation to submit motions for discussion at the National Conference. Noted

07/87 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Madeley Parish Council is the AGM which is scheduled to take place on Monday 12th May 2008, commencing at 7.00pm.

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting closed at 9.05.

Signed..... Dated.....