



<b>Committee and Date</b> Bridgnorth, Worfield, Alveley and Claverley Local Joint Committee Wednesday 18 May 2011 6.30 p.m.
--

<b>Item/Paper</b>  <b>5</b>  Public
---

**NOTES OF ACTIONS AND DECISIONS FROM THE MEETING HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2011 AT WESTGATE, BRIDGNORTH**

7:00 – 9.15 p.m.

**Responsible Officer** Anne Cousins

e-mail: [anne.cousins@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:anne.cousins@shropshire.gov.uk)

Tel: (01743) 252743 Fax (01743) 252713

**Committee Members Present:**

Shropshire Council

Mr John Hurst-Knight

Mr Christian Lea (Chairman)

Mr William Parr

Mr Les Winwood

Mrs Tina Woodward (Vice Chairman)

Town/Parish Councils

Mr David Voysey, Alveley and Romsley Parish Council

Mr Terry Lipscombe, Badger Parish Council

Mr Geoff Bodenham, Bridgnorth Town Council

Mr Richard Cotham, Claverley Parish Council

Ms Susan Biddle, Quatt Malvern Parish Council

Mr Malcolm Duff-Walker, Ryton and Grindle Parish Council

Mr Peter Dent, Tasley Parish Council

Mr Len Ball, Worfield and Rudge Parish Council

**Shropshire Council Officers present:**

Martin Withington, Head of Transportation (agenda items 6 and 7)

Vicky Turner and Tom Brettell, Community Working Team

Anne Cousins, Committee Officer

**There were approximately 40 people present in total.**

**43. Apologies and Substitutions**

43.1 Apologies were received on behalf of Mr Allan Chatham, Sutton Maddock Parish Council; Mr Simon Elcock, Astley Abbots Parish Council; Mr David Tooth, Beckbury Parish Council and Mrs Isabel Faithful, Quatt Malvern Parish Council. Ms Susan Biddle substituted for Mrs Faithful.

**44. Declarations of Interest**

44.1 Ms Biddle declared a personal interest in the agenda item 8, funding applications from Quatt Cricket Club and Quatt Malvern Village Hall.

44.2 Mr Christian Lea declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 8, funding application from Bridgnorth Low Town Action Group and left the room during consideration of this application.

**45. Notes of last meeting**

45.1 **RESOLVED:** That the notes of the previous meeting, held on 6 October 2010, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**46. Census 2011**

46.1 Alistair Bates, Census Manager for Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, gave a short presentation on the importance of the 2011 Census. He explained that most funding for public services was based on census data and therefore it was important to ensure the data was as accurate as possible. At the last census, in 2001, there had been a 97% return rate in Shropshire. Although this was good, it still meant approximately 9000 people had not completed their forms.

46.2 The Census Manager went through the process involved and reassured the audience that it was a simple procedure, even though the form was large. Census forms could be completed on-line or via the post. Help was available from a telephone helpline, and from drop-in centres based at libraries and other public buildings between 27 March (Census Day) and 6 April. He introduced Paul Turner, Census Co-ordinator for the Bridgnorth area, who had just taken up his post. His role would be helping people with their forms and following up on forms which had not been returned.

46.3 The Census Manager drew attention to the census materials on the tables and invited everyone to help any vulnerable people they knew to fill in their census form. He informed the audience that jobs were still available for census collectors.

46.4 In response to questions, it was clarified that any students living away from home on census day could be included in their parents' census return and that there were no longer any questions on the census

forms on sexual orientation.

**ACTION**

#### **47. Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service**

- 47.1 Dave Dickens, District Manager (South), gave an overview of how the impending budget cuts would affect Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service. He explained Shropshire was facing the second worst budget cut in the country, with only Newcastle-upon-Tyne having a greater cut to find. For some reason, Shropshire, a small, rural authority, had been included with all the metropolitan fire authorities. The Fire Authority was challenging the government on this.
- 47.2 The District Manager explained Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service had already carried out preliminary work to reduce costs without affecting frontline services. The authority had to reduce its budget by 25% in the next two years, with more reductions expected in years three and four. Sixty staff would be leaving, but there would be no compulsory redundancies. Other changes included reducing maintenance costs of buildings and extending the life of fire engines. The Community Fire Safety Budget would in future be targeted at vulnerable people and groups. No fire stations would close and the emergency service would continue as before.
- 47.3 Mr John Hurst-Knight, a Member of the Fire Authority, confirmed that fire-fighters at every fire station in the county had been informed of the scale of the cuts and asked for suggestions as to how this could be managed. He said it was a very tough settlement for Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service and the community would have to take more responsibility.

#### **48. Consultation on Local Transport Plan and Draft Bus Strategy**

- 48.1 Martin Withington, Head of Transportation at Shropshire Council, explained how people could become involved in forthcoming consultation on the Local Transport Plan and current consultation on the Draft Bus Strategy which will end in March 2011.
- The Local Transport Plan covered all aspects of transport and would set the strategy for the next 15 years. Funding for transport was decreasing and the authority had to identify key priorities in order to make the best use of the funding available. The Head of Transportation encouraged all to complete the questionnaires on the tables.
- 48.2 The main implications of the bus strategy for the Bridgnorth area were a reduction in frequency of the 436 service; removal of Sunday service subsidy for the 436 service; withdrawal of subsidy from 120 service (predominantly carrying non-entitled school children) and withdrawal of the Thursday service of the 492 bus (high cost service). The Head of Transportation explained that a withdrawal of subsidy did not mean that a service would be automatically withdrawn, as the operator could decide to continue running the service without the subsidy.

48.3 A Member asked about the possibility of being able to use concessionary bus passes before 9.30 a.m. in isolated rural areas, where the bus service was infrequent. The Head of Transportation explained decisions about concessionary fares had been made by Council in December. The authority was aware of the difficulties faced by passengers in some rural areas and were looking into the possibility of exemptions to the pre 9.30 rule in certain circumstances. A Member explained Bridgnorth Town Council was also due to discuss this matter in the forthcoming week.

48.4 The continued support to community transport in the Draft Bus Strategy was welcomed and it was confirmed there had been no reductions in support to community transport for the past two years.

48.5 There was discussion about how the bus consultation had been carried out and the Head of Transportation explained a variety of methods had been used to ensure the views of bus users were obtained, including posters on buses and roadshows.

#### **49. Shropshire Council Budget 2011-12**

49.1 In the absence of the Lead Officer, Martin Withington, Head of Transportation, gave the presentation on the key messages in the Shropshire Council Budget 2011-12.

49.2 The presentation set out the savings required to be made by the Council, which amounted to £66 million over the next four years, excluding the £10 million savings already found in the 2010-11 financial year. £31 million savings had been identified, which left £47 million to be found over the next three years.

49.3 In response to a question about where the cuts were likely to fall, the Head of Transportation explained it was not possible to say at this stage but confirmed that all options were being considered.

49.4 The Vice Chairman expanded on this and referred to the challenges facing elected members at this time. All members were aware of the difficulties faced by those with concessionary bus passes, for example. She assured all present that members were doing their best in these difficult times. In the future, she believed the way forward was for everyone to direct their energies into their own communities.

#### **50. Consideration of Funding Applications**

50.1 The Chairman introduced the report, which contained two applications for Community Chest funding and 10 applications for larger grants. He paid tribute to the work of Vicky Turner, Community Regeneration Officer, who was now leaving the LJC to cover another area. He welcomed Tom Brettell, who would be taking over from her at Bridgnorth.

**ACTION**

- 50.2 There was some discussion about the applications for funding by the Children’s Festival and Bridgnorth Music and Arts Festival. It was clarified that these were two separate festivals, but because there was an overlap in timing, they had worked together to reduce their costs.
- 50.3 A member of the public observed that Shropshire Council was spending money on arts consultants, as the former Bridgnorth District Council had done in the past, and suggested money should be given directly to festivals, not to pay consultants.
- 50.4 In the discussion on the funding application by Alveley Cricket Club, it was agreed to remove the wording “If Members are minded to support the project, would encourage group to make it available to other groups in the vicinity whenever possible”. Members felt this was not a practical suggestion because the mower was specifically designed for cricket pitches and could not be used for other purposes.
- 50.5 There was an application for funding by Quatt Cricket Club. In response to a question, it was confirmed the club’s current lease had just expired and they were negotiating with the National Trust to obtain a new 30-year lease.

50.6 In discussing the application by Quatt Malvern Village Hall, it was confirmed their lease was for 99 years.

50.7 **RESOLVED:**

A That each application received for the Community Chest and the Larger Grant Scheme be considered in the light of the officers’ recommendations.

B That the following grant approvals be confirmed:

**Community Chest**

C8 Squirrel Bowling Club – water remover	£500
C9 Bridgnorth Low Town Action Group – Historic assessment of Bridgnorth.....	£500

**Larger Grant Schemes**

9 Beckbury Village Hall – replacement windows	£4,136
10 Children’s Festival 2011 – festival costs.....	£4,000
11 Bridgnorth Community Hall – new chairs.....	£1,615
12 Alveley Cricket Club – new mower and shed.....	£3,675
13 Rally in the Valley 2011 – festival costs.....	£2,250
14 Bridgnorth Dry Bar Trust – project worker.....	£5,000
15 Quatt Cricket Club – electricity supply.....	£5,000
16 Bridgnorth Music and Art Festival 2011.....	£5,000
17 Oldbury Village Hall Committee – legal costs.....	£1,125
18 Quatt Malvern Village Hall – extension phase 2	£5,000

**Lead  
Officer**

**Lead  
Officer**

**ACTION**

**51. Funding Guidelines for 2011-12**

51.1 The Chairman explained all LJC budgets for 2011-12 had been reduced by 50%. For Bridgnorth, Worfield, Alveley and Claverley LJC, this meant the budget would be £35,000 instead of £71,000, plus £10,000 carried forward from 2010-11. In view of this, the report set out proposed changes to criteria for grant applicants.

51.2 There was a suggestion that the criteria should contain information on security of tenure to ensure that private owners did not benefit from grants given to community groups.

51.3 There was debate about the proposal that applicants could not come back for funding for the same project in subsequent years. Some felt it was sensible to encourage applicants to become sustainable; others felt it was unreasonable to expect festivals, for example, to cope without any subsidy. Another point of view was that Members should have discretion to consider each application on its merits.

51.4 Two proposals were put to the vote and agreed. The first was to remove the restriction on applicants returning the following year for funding for the same project and the second was to add another criterion to ensure funding applicants who were not property owners demonstrated security of tenure.

51.5 **RESOLVED:** That the guidelines indicated in the report be adopted as the basis for decision-making for LJC grants during 2011-12, subject to the following:

A That the fourth bullet point on page 2 of the report be **REMOVED:** “applicant cannot come back for funding for the same project in subsequent years”.

**Lead Officer**

B That another bullet point be **ADDED:** “applicants who are not the owners of the property or land for which they are applying for funding must provide evidence of security of tenure or lease.”

**Lead Officer**

**52. Public Question Time and Identification of Future Agenda Items**

52.1 A member of the public said he had been contacted by the press for his views on Shropshire Council’s proposal to charge event organisers £1000 for clearing rubbish after an event. As an event organiser, he had not had any communication from Shropshire Council and suggested the council should consult with people directly affected before issuing press releases. The Chairman was unaware of this proposal but agreed to look into the matter further and report back.

52.2 It was further suggested that the council should arrange a workshop for all event organisers in the area where they could find out about all current legislation. It was agreed this was an excellent suggestion.

**Community Action Officer**

52.3 Another member of the public requested that the dangerous junction by the Esso garage at Cann Hall Road should be looked into by Highways officers. It was also suggested that the bus change-over outside the British Legion should be moved because it caused traffic jams.

**ACTION  
Lead  
Officer**

52.4 A suggestion was made that direction signs should be put up to encourage people to use the large car park at Westgate. It was felt this was under-utilised and many visitors to the town may not be aware of its existence.

**Lead  
Officer**

52.3 The Chairman asked if anyone had anything they wished to be included on a future agenda. A suggestion was made that there could be a discussion about the role of the new Police and Crime Commissioners.

**Cttee  
Officer**

**53. Date of Next Meeting**

53.1 Wednesday 18 May 2011 at 7.00 p.m. at Alveley Village Hall.

Deadline for receipt of funding applications to be considered at this meeting: Monday 18 April 2011.

**Signed.....Chairman**

**Date.....**