



**Minutes of Wem Economic Forum Meeting
Roden Suite, Edinburgh House, Wem
24 September 2019 at 4pm**

Present: Cllr Tim Wilton-Morgan (Wem Rural Parish Council) (Chair), Viv Edgar (Dementia Friendly Wem), Rose Horner (Wem Town Hall), Cllr Connie Granger (Wem Town Council), Cllr Chris Mellings (Shropshire Council), Cllr Edward Towers (Wem Town Council), Oliver Richardson (Wem Civic Society), Willis Turner (Eckford Sweetpea Society)

In attendance: Wem Town Council Clerk Penny O'Hagan (minutes) Gwilym Butler (Shropshire Council).

1 Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended his welcome to Gwilym Butler from Shropshire Council and Willis Turner from Eckford Sweetpea Society

2 Apologies

Wem Rural Parish Council Clerk Carole Warner, Peter Marsh, Sue Griffiths, Rosemary Dodd, Phil Glover and Simon Thornley.

3 Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on 8 July 2019

The minutes were agreed and duly signed as a true record.

4 Voting Members for Expenditure - to appoint representative of Wem Town Hall as the Hospitality member.

RESOLVED to appoint Rose Horner as representative of Wem Town Hall as the hospitality member for the forum.

5 Wem Sweet Pea Show – discussion with members of the Eckford Sweet Pea Society
Mrs Turner reported that the 2019 show was very successful with over 3500 visitors on the Saturday alone. The Societies AGM had been held and it has been confirmed that the Society will not be organising a show in 2020. The committee is however open to someone else taking on the show and members of the committee are willing to offer advice but do not want to be involved physically. She also reported that committee members had also expressed concerns that if any other organisation was to take on the running of the show it would have to be run to the same standards as in previous years.

Mrs Turner explained that the society will now focus on the promotion of the sweetpea and they may continue to attend local shows.

Thanks were expressed for the work that the society has carried out over the last 30 years as they have made an enormous contribution to the economy of the town. A general discussion took place on the need to continue to run a sweetpea event in some form as it was important to the identity of the town. A suggestion was made that a Sweetpea Festival could be held on Jubilee Square on the same weekend in 2020 which could be organised by a local grower who could encourage other nurseries to book stalls selling products related to sweetpeas and horticulture. Several suggestions were made about who to approach and Mrs Turner agreed to approach a past stall holder from a local nursery who has attended many of the previous shows to see if she would be interested.

6 **Working Groups – update**

a) Traffic – Cllr Towers reported that a meeting was held 10.9.19 but no Shropshire Council officers other than David Gradwell attended so a new date had been agreed 11.10.19.

b) Emergency Plan – Cllr Mellings reported that since the last meeting a letter had been sent to local organisations to inform them of the plan and offer them the opportunity to meet to discuss things in more detail.

c) Review Markets – Rose Horner reported that a facebook page has been established for the market and that a survey is currently being undertaken via the facebook page to seek views on stalls. She explained that she would like to improve the signage between the indoor and outdoor markets and was looking into promotional flags/ banners to raise the profile of the market.

Peter Broomhall and Rose Horner left the meeting at 4.40

A suggestion was made that WEF could fund the membership of NAMBA and seek their advice on how to attract more stall holders.

A general discussion on the work of the forum took place and views were expressed over the poor attendance at meetings and that the forum was struggling to meaningfully engage with local businesses. Cllr Butler suggested that representatives from the forum could perhaps visit the headquarters of Cleobury Country which provides business support to local businesses in the form of training, sign posting, and holding networking events to see whether something similar could be developed by the forum in Wem.

d) Dementia Friendly Wem – Viv Edgar reported that Wem has been formally recognised as a dementia friendly community. Thanks were expressed for the tremendous work that has gone into this initiative. Viv reported that they had also



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received feedback from local businesses that the window stickers were welcomed by people suffering from dementia.

- 7 **Heritage Actions Zone** – it was reported that the grant application was unsuccessful however the team at Shropshire Council had indicated that they were still keen to work with the community to address some of the longstanding problems in the town.

Oliver reported that the heritage weekend was very successful and brought a number of people into the town.

- 8 **Climate Change** – Clerk outlined that work that the Town Council had undertaken to date including
- Organisation of public meeting on 16.10.19
 - Development of action plan
 - Commissioning of carbon survey
 - Grant application submission

- 9 **Other matters of interest**

Economic Development Strategy - The Clerk reported that a meeting had been held with Shropshire Council officers from Economic Development and it had been agreed that the team would support the creation of an economic strategy for the Town similar to the ones carried out in the larger market towns. The first stage of this process would be to hold an open meeting facilitated by officers from Shropshire Council. It was agreed that the forum would be the best group to drive the strategy forward and dates were suggested for a meeting to be organised for one evening w/c 11th November and that the session would be organised between 4 and 7pm.

- 10 **Agree date of next meeting:**

Agreed that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 22nd October 2019 at 4p.m

Thanks, were expressed to Cllr Butler for his input into the meeting