

MINUTES of the proceedings of the **ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE TOWN MEETING** held at St Peters and St Pauls Church, Fakenham on **Tuesday 14th May 2019** at 7.00pm, those present:

Town Councillors: G. Acheson (Chairman), R. Lynam, G. Foortse, M. Dutton, M. Coates, J. Holdom, T. Duffy, D. Andrews, J. Rockett

District Councillors: J Rest, J. Punchard, C. Cushing

County Councillor: T. Fitzpatrick

Press: None

Police: PC R. Dawson

Town Clerk: L. Jennings

Deputy Town Clerk: A. Kerrison

Speakers: N. Westmancott (Fakenham Charities), H. Yates (Fakenham Museum of Gas and Local History),

L. Maple (Fakenham Community Archive)

Public: 24 members of the Public

1 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting and made introductions.

2 NOTICE CONVENING MEETING

The Clerk read the Notice convening the Meeting.

3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 May 2018 were on the proposition of Cllr Acheson, seconded by Cllr Foortse, APPROVED and signed by the Chairman.

4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman gave his Report on the Town Council's activities for 2018-2019 as follows:

He spoke of the sad death of former Councillor Ian Grand, and that the Council hopes to approve a donation to the Firefighters Charity in his name at the next Full Council meeting.

Seven Councillors have left the Council, Cllrs Crook, Smith, Brown, Sandford-Cook, Wakefield, Edwards and Vertigan. Cllr Acheson thanked them for their work and commitment. Cllr Dutton joined the council, and two new members will be joining at the next Full Council meeting; Cllrs D. Andrews and J. Rockett. Cllr Acheson noted that there are still 5 vacancies to be filled by co-option and anyone who is interesting in joining the Council should contact the office for more details. A new part-time Groundsman has been taken on to help our existing groundsman.

The main change over the last year has been the outsourcing of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to Stephenson Smart accountants. This ensures that expertise and staff cover is available 52 weeks of the year. A Finance Sub-Committee has been set up to examine the finance business carried out by Stephenson-Smart every month and reports back to the Council. All members of the Council receive all the finance reports.

The Council took over responsibility of the Grass Cutting Contract in the town, excluding the bypass and the roundabouts. This has resulted in a significant drop in complaints about the grass cutting. Highfield Car Park has been retained as a car park thanks to the lobbying of the Town Council.

Unfortunately, it was not able to prevent it becoming a paid park. Coaches are still not able to park here, but it is hoped that two coach parking spaces will be provided on the Limes Car Park once the building work on the Baptist Chapel is complete.

The Council has adopted the two telephone boxes in the Market Place from BT. They have recently been repainted.

Planning permission has been granted for an extension to the Argos building. This will result in the loss of 30 car parking spaces and the closure of the main entrance to the car park from Whitehorse

Street. All traffic will have to enter and leave via Cattle Market Street. Fakenham Town Council has insisted strongly that the South end of Cattle Market Street should be re-opened to allow one-way traffic to enter from the South to avoid chaos at the other end. Despite strong arguments by our District Councillors Rest and Punchard, planning permission was granted without this proviso. The Town Council continue to talk to the Millers Walk Manager to try and resolve this issue. Similarly, they are trying to get something done about the waste land at the top of Whitehorse Street, with little success to date.

The re-development of Bridge Farm on Rudham Stile Lane has started. This involves some work on the entrance to the allotment site. The Town Council are also lobbying for the retention of the streetlight at the junction of Rudham Stile Lane and Claypit Lane when the road layout is altered. The Council also continue to fight for the necessary road improvements needed when the Northern Development is started.

North Norfolk District Council is holding a consultation on the draft development plan in the Community Centre on 24th May 2019.

The Council were in receipt of a Market Towns Initiative Grant (MTI) for the repainting of some of the buildings in Norwich Street. This proved controversial with some who thought that public money should not be used to improve private property. However, the Council believed that improving these buildings would encourage others to do the same to help rejuvenate the Town Centre. It is hoped that this will encourage more people to visit the Town bringing trade and prosperity. With that in mind, the Council are also trying to speed up the removal of scaffolding that has been in place around the Newman building for more than a year. There will be an official opening when the work has been finished.

The Heritage trail is on course to open this summer, provisionally Saturday 14th July, but this may change. This has been supported by LEADER fund and Big Society grants. A further MTI grant has been gained to produce a brochure to go with the trail. Another MTI bid has been submitted to landscape the area between Drifters and the library where one of the Trail map tables will be placed.

The BREAK Hare was in Town during the summer thanks to the generous sponsorship of Kinnertons. This was a great success.

The Council participated in the WW1 100 year anniversary celebrations culminating in the lighting of a beacon on Beacon Hill. A special thanks was given to the Clerk and her team of volunteers, and the Church for the knitted poppy display on the war memorial and in the Church. A WW1 and female emancipation poetry and music evening was also organised by Cllrs Brown, Foortse and Holdom. Councillors held public engagement sessions in the market in summer 2018 and again during the Fakenham Fayre in April. Cllr Acheson thanked Liam O'Sullivan for organising this highly successful Fayre.

The kitchen in the Trap Lane Pavilion is about to be replaced and the play area tidied. A litter picking day was carried out last month. Grateful thanks to the Racecourse who provided most of the labour.

Outside of the Council, councillors as trustees of the Fakenham recreation Ground Charity continued to manage Millennium Park and Aldiss Park. The Millennium Park car park was repaired with a more permanent job planned when the charity can afford it.

Cllr Acheson also pointed out that this year there will be no Mayors cadet. Unfortunately, current regulations mean that neither the Air Force Cadets nor the Army Cadets are allowed to put anyone forward for this role.

5 TOWN COUNCIL'S FINANCES

Cllr Holdom presented unaudited accounts for the year 2018-19. These will be audited in mid-June by the external auditor and will be available for inspection during dates to be confirmed in July, once the end of year return has been submitted. She also introduced the team from Stephenson Smart accountants.

6 REPORT FROM FAKENHAM POLICE

PC Rich Dawson introduced himself as beat manager for the Fakenham station. He reported that the last 12 months has been a challenge. Following a drop in staff numbers for various reasons, the area is now back to a full complement of staff consisting of 27 PC's, 5 sergeants and 1 chief inspector. An engagement surgery is held on a Thursday between 1pm and 3pm at the Fakenham station. There will be a regular column in the Fakenham Sun and the SNAPS committee meet 3 monthly to set the local priorities for the coming months. Current priorities are 1. Rural crime 2. Drugs 3. Scams. The team have made good use of the CCTV in the town which has been invaluable in investigating crime.

7 PRESENTATION BY

Nigel Westmancott - Fakenham Charities.

Mr Westmancott gave a background of how the Charities came in to being, and how they are administered. They can assist residents of Fakenham and Hempton only, and funding is only available to individuals not groups. People may apply for help with educational needs such as books and uniform etc., household furniture and much more. Application forms can be obtained from the Council offices and First Focus. Mr Westmancott said that the organisation is always looking for volunteers to help.

Henry Yates – Fakenham Museum of Gas and Local History

Mr Yates gave an overview of how the museum came in to being. It is housed in a scheduled monument which means it cannot be demolished. It is the only one of its kind in England and Wales. He informed the meeting of the museums plans for the future and said that volunteers are always needed.

Lyn Maple – Fakenham Community Archive

Mrs Maple gave the background to the group and how they work with the Gas Museum and the Local History Society. They meet on the last Tuesday of each month between 2pm and 4pm in the Church. New volunteers are always welcome. They also have a regular column in the Fakenham Sun.

8 COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER AWARD

The Community Volunteer award was presented to Laura Woods. Laura approached the Council last June regarding extra play equipment for the Whitelands play area. A mum with two small children, she could see a need as more children now live in that area. She set up a Facebook page to encourage people to support the Town Council "Bags of Help" appeal at Tesco, organised a Body Shop party, Bingo and raffle and managed to raise more than £1400 towards the play equipment.

9 QUESTIONS TO THE PANEL

- A member of the public asked if the Travellers site was open again following recent vandalism. District Councillor Rest said he would chase this up tomorrow and let the Town Council know the outcome.
- A member of the public asked what could be done about the antisocial parking in the Town. PC Dawson informed the meeting that parking issues area complicated and powers to deal with parking issues were taken away from the police in 2009 and taken over by the borough councils and enforced by Civil Parking Enforcers. Double yellow lines are not painted as the Market Place is a conservation area. Cllr Acheson said that NCC is currently doing a traffic survey of Fakenham, particularly in the Market Place and the outcome is awaited.

- A member of the public asked if the Council were happy about the safety of the access to the back entrance of the Community Centre via Gladstone Road, which crosses the footpath of Church Lanes. Cllr Acheson stated that the Community Centre management was outside the Council's remit but he understood the concerns about signage had been reported to and dealt with by the landlord, NNDC, and the police to the satisfaction of the trustees. The member of the public asked for this to be formally minuted.
- A member of the public asked about the Town Council website and missing minutes from the last Full Council meeting. The Clerk said she was not aware that they were missing and would investigate tomorrow.
- County Cllr Fitzpatrick was asked when the County Council were going to replace the missing Setts in the Market place as it had been agreed that these would be replaced as soon as the new Aldiss building had been completed. Cllr Fitzpatrick said that the area had been surveyed that afternoon and the work was scheduled to happen in the autumn but he was pushing for it to be completed earlier if possible. He said the work had not been done sooner as NCC had not been informed that the building work was complete.
- Cllr Fitzpatrick was asked what was happening with the old College site and whether the swimming pool is going to be retained. Cllr Fitzpatrick said that the site was in the process of being returned from the Academy back to Norfolk County Council, and this is currently waiting to be signed off by the Secretary of State. It is hoped the site will be retained for educational use. He agreed that there is a need for a swimming pool in Fakenham but could not say if the pool on the Academy site will be retained. It was originally closed as it was very expensive to run. It has been closed for more than 4 years and has deteriorated considerably.
- A member of the public asked if there had been any progress regarding the Millers Walk car park regarding the removal of the ticket machines and issuing of fines. Cllr Acheson said that Fakenham Town Council continue to put pressure on the managing company for the site.
- The Council were asked if they have a recycling policy regarding cleaning products etc. It was felt that maybe a composting area could be provided at the Creak Road cemetery for old flowers removed from graves. This will be added to the agenda for the next Leisure & Environment meeting.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS RELATING TO ANY PUBLIC MATTER OF A PROCHIAL NATURE

There was no further business

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the Meeting.
The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

CONFIRMED this

day of

2020.

CHAIRMAN