

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Tuesday 12th March 2019 at 7:00pm in the Guildhall, High Street, Shaftesbury

Present:

Councillor Brown (Chair)
Councillor Taylor (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Loader
Councillor Cook

Councillor Kirton
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Todd
Councillor Lewer

In attendance:

Claire Commons, Town Clerk
Brie Logan, Business Manager
Zoe Moxham, Office Administrator
2 members of the press
23 members of the public

MINUTES

1. Chairman / Town Mayor's Opening Remarks

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and drew attention to the purpose of the meeting to hear from the electorate and local organisations about how the Council can work together to achieve objectives together.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Town Councillors Hall, Proctor, Perkins and Austin and Jackie Upton-King.

3. To receive the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 17th May 2018

The minutes were adopted.

4. Shaftesbury Town Council Annual Report 2017/18

(a) The Mayor of Shaftesbury, Councillor Piers Brown highlighted the key elements of his report and presented a brief recap of the past years activities as a Council and the positive progress made, this included:

- Applying for the Local Council Awards Scheme
- The Wilderness Project
- Project Belle
- A 0% rise in the precept for 2019
- The office staff being fully trained
- Work carried out by the grounds team

(b) Representatives of the following Town Council Committees also presented their reports:-

Councillor Cook, Chair of the General Management Committee, summarised the work completed in the past year and outlining projects that support the strategic plan including:

- Improving financial regulations
- Issuing £21,000 to local organisations as part of the community grants process
- Applying to make the West Minster Memorial Hospital an Asset of Community Value
- Scrutinising the Budget
- The Local Council Award Scheme

Councillor Brown, Chair of the Planning and Highways Committee spoke on the work of the Committee in the past year which included;

- Providing consultee comments on over 75 planning applications
- Engaging with developers at the Pre-Application stage of the planning process
- Building up relationships with Dorset Highways and working in a more collaborative way
- Traffic Studies carried out to enable a Speed Indicator Device to be installed
- Working closely with the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee

Councillor Kirton, Vice Chair of the Recreation, Open Spaces and Environment Committee spoke about some of the larger projects undertaken over the past year including;

- Replacing play equipment at Enmore Green
- Carrying out a tree survey that covers all of Shaftesbury
- The Wild about Shaftesbury Ecology Competition
- Plans for the A30 Allotments
- Land at Mampitts Square being transferred
- The Wilderness Project
- The path at St James Park, Councillor Kirton made the point that lessons have been learned from this project and going forward more thorough public engagement will take place before final decisions are made.
- Working alongside the Open Spaces Group and Shaftesbury Tree group, Councillor Kirton expressed thanks to both groups for their support and hard work also.

Councillor Lewer, Vice Chair of the Human Resources Committee spoke about the remit of the committee and highlighted the fact that the HR meetings held are public like all other meetings, however due to the sensitive and personal information often discussed regarding Staff contracts some of the items must be held in confidential session.

Councillor Brown recapped briefly on a few more of the projects undertaken this year, including:

- The refurbishment of the Public Toilets, working with a new community interest group, Build Love.
- Plans to refurbish the Swimming pool ready for the 2019 season

Councillor Brown also highlighted the upcoming elections and encouraged as many local people to stand as possible and submit applications by April 3rd, 2019.

Note: The Annual Report contains the full text of the above reports and is available on request from the Town Hall Offices.

5. Reports from County and District Councillors

No reports were received.

6. Feedback from Local Organisations in Receipt of Grants and Support from Shaftesbury Town Council:

North Dorset Citizens Advice Bureau - Reported that they have advised 300 Shaftesbury residents over the past year, helping with over 3,000 issues. They highlighted the weekly drop-in session on a Wednesday held at the Shaftesbury Library and encouraged people who need advice to also contact by phone or email. Many issues in Shaftesbury this year have been around benefits and changes to the system, in particular the new rules for Pension Credit.

Shaftesbury Youth Club – Heather Sanger reported that they continue to hold two weekly sessions, attended by 30- 35 children per session, and focus on social skills, sports activities and arts and crafts. The Club now has a 'Mobile Free' policy and no longer have any PC's or computer equipment, this encourages social engagement between those attending. The youth club also hold a monthly, 'Little Giants' session which caters for children and young people with a variety of special needs. This has highlighted a need for the youth club to upgrade the disabled facilities to include a hoist and changing area, which is the project they are currently trying to fundraise for.

Shaftesbury Community Choir – This continues to be hugely popular and attended by between 40 -80 people each week. It is held on a Wednesday evening at the Town Hall at 7.30 pm.

7. Questions from the Floor

Q. What progress has been made to organise a Youth Council in Shaftesbury?

A. This is incorporated in the five-year strategic plan and is still in the pipeline, initial enquiries have so far met with no enthusiasm.

Q. Pedestrian Crossings by the Commons and Angel Square were requested.

A. This matter will be discussed with Dorset Highways.

Q. Can the Town Council do anything to ensure buildings along the high street are maintained?

A. Legally no, however the Visitor Experience Advisory Committee is working on a big project to foster an atmosphere of civic pride in our town which will hopefully encourage all responsible for properties to keep them well maintained.

Q. Has the Town Council considered designing and installing walks installing better signage around Town?

A. Work has been done on this and will be continued, new Councillors when elected may wish to take up this project.

Q. Please could the speed limits around the Town Centre be looked at as it varies from 20-30mph?

A. This is a Highways matter but please feel free to submit your request to the Town Council for discussion by the Planning and highways committee and County Councillor Derek Beer to potentially lobby on your behalf.

Q. Where are the locations for the Speed Indicator Devices?

A. Areas that have met the criteria are, A350 by Littledown, Near the underpass along the B3081 and down near Long Cross.

Q. What is happening about Pound Lane and the potential Bus Gate?

A. Still with Dorset County Council, we too are waiting on an update. Contact County Councillor Beer for more information.

Q. What is the current situation regarding developments along the A30 and A350?

A. Littledown development – outline plans have been submitted and the Town Council is engaging closely with the developers on their plans for the site.
Land South of the A30 – Persimmon Homes have just submitted a planning application, and this will be discussed by the Planning and Highways Committee at their next meeting on the 19th March 2019.

Q. Will Shaftesbury benefit financially from the developments that are planned?

A. There will be s106 money available for schemes that have already been set out by The Council, however any ideas from members of the public are always welcome.

Q. Is there any update on the Lidl site?

A. We are waiting to hear

Q. Once again, what progress is being made to organise a Youth Council? And can you bring your plans forward.

A. Thank you, duly noted.

The Deputy Mayor thanked everyone for attending.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:11pm.

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