

**MINUTES OF THE
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

Monday 9th April 2017 at 7pm

held at the Civic Centre

The Town Council Chairman

Councillor Rob Fryer in the Chair

Present:

Councillors: P Batchelor, D Brett, A Davis, S Fraser, S Jeffries, G Jolley, P Macfarlane,
T Nicklin, N Pitcher, P Ridout and C Robbins

Officers: F Fox, J Halls and V Mills

Public and press: 20 members of the public and 1 member of the press.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Amy Pantall of the Wiltshire Times; Ann Wilde from the Flers Twinning Association and Suzanne Wigmore from Wiltshire Citizens Advice Bureau.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the last Annual Town Meeting held at the Civic Centre on 10th April 2017 were accepted and signed as a true record.

3. Chairman's Report

From the Chair, Councillor Fryer presented the Annual Report which also contained the Financial Report. This was circulated to all present. *(Copies of the Annual Report are available from the Civic Centre, Community Hub, Library and businesses in the town.)*

4. Alzheimer's Support

Babs Harris, CEO of Alzheimer's Support Wiltshire spoke about the conversion of the Old Silk Works in Beech Avenue into a day care centre for dementia sufferers. A bridge has been built from the car park to the first floor which has been converted into an ideal space for the centre. The centre will cater for 12 clients and will run from Tuesdays to Fridays providing activities such as an art group and memory café. Alzheimer's Support will act as a conduit to other community groups.

The centre will have a 'soft' opening on 8th May and a grand opening on 14th May by Lady Lansdowne, patron of the organisation. The centre will cost £48K a year to run, half of which will come from fees. Service personnel can use the centre free of charge.

5. Town Promotion Sub-Committee

Cllr Nick Pitcher explained how the Town Promotion Sub-committee is examining ways to make the town more vibrant. There are already successful events that attract people, but we need to draw more in. The park was a great asset that could be used more widely, and he encouraged people to come forward with ideas.

Bill Parks asked whether the Council had thought about improving the general streetscene as regards litter and weeds etc. Cllr Pitcher said that businesses would be encouraged to take care of their areas and that individuals could pick up litter when out walking. This was a collective responsibility and liaison would be encouraged with local schools.

6. 2017–2018 Grant Recipients

6.1 Warminster Festival: Andrew Robinson

- The Festival is a biennial event, supported by the Council since 1989. It receives an annual grant of £2K, giving £4K per Festival (which costs in the region of £12K to put on).
- Benchmarking has shown the cultural facilities in Warminster to be poor; the Festival tries to address this.
- The Festival will develop and change.

6.2 Warminster Carnival: Sandra Major

- The Town Council gives an annual grant of £3K; the last Carnival cost £9.6K to put on.
- The grant is used for sponsorship of classes, bands and visiting town criers.
- There are increasing costs for marshals, who now have to be qualified to operate road closures, and for clearing up after the event. It is hoped more volunteers can be found for the latter.

6.3 Warminster Wobble: Colin French

- The Wobble is in its tenth year and was initiated to encourage cycling as a form of urban transport.
- There are now up to 150 cyclists who come for the Sunday rides at the Wobble. It would be good to see them using their bicycles more often and reducing traffic in town.
- The Town Council gives an annual grant of £3K which goes towards the entertainment on the first day of the Wobble.

6.4 Inspire: Mike Heaton

- Cultural events are investments in the town's future. Last year's Inspire was an unqualified success.
- The Town Council gives a grant of £3.5K which is spent on the PA, security and medical, band expenses and some capital costs.
- Inspire has established positive engagement with Kingdown.

6.5 Wessex MS Therapy Centre: Rosie Elliot

- There are 50 MS therapy centres in the country. The nearest to Warminster was 50 miles away but closed down, so the Wessex MS Therapy Centre covers a huge geographical area.
- The centre is very busy and the oxygen therapy is in high demand, with 150 sessions per week.
- There is a new buddy scheme where volunteers visit MS sufferers in their homes.
- The centre has an excellent physiotherapy gym. Being self-funded enables the centre to purchase equipment that patients have asked for, so it is tailored to their needs. The

grant of £1K from the Town Council paid for a hoist system to help users move from one piece of equipment to another.

6.6 Highbury Youth Football Club: Robin George

- The club was in its 34th year of giving children of all abilities a chance to play football; Robin had been involved for 33 years.
- The Town Council had given a grant of £1K which had gone towards resurfacing the pitch.
- The club has 300 boys and girls signed on and holds an annual 6-a-side tournament which draws a lot of supporters.
- There are rumours the ground will be sold but there is strong opposition to this.

6.7 Athenaeum Trust: Cllr Tony Jackson

- The £1K grant from the Town Council had been earmarked for integrating the old youth club premises into the Athenaeum, but the discovery of dry rot meant the money had to be used for remedying that.
- The Trust had been able to keep the Athenaeum going for the past 17 years.
- WAVE will continue to use the building once the asset transfer was completed.

6.8 Warminster Table Tennis Club: Brian Wilde

- The club had received a grant of £500 from the Town Council which they had used for new equipment and shirts for the youth squad.
- The club has grown rapidly and there are now eight teams. They play in the West Wilts league.
- Table Tennis England have a 'Ping' project with outdoor equipment and Brian would be happy to support the Town Council in setting this up in the park.

6.9 Warminster Town Football Club: Cllr Chris Robbins

- The £1K grant from the Town Council went towards renovating the floodlights. Each set of floodlights has nine lamps which cost £70 each to repair.
- The team plays in level 6 football, so players are unpaid. An audience of 90–140 attend home games and their entrance fees pay for the referees, assistant referees and gateman. The club is reliant on grants to continue to operate.

6.10 Warminster Flers Twinning Association: Written report from Anne Wilde

- Twinning was still thriving after 44 years.
- There would be about 50 French visitors this year and they would be visiting Devizes as part of their weekend activities.
- The £500 grant from the Town Council went towards the provision of the weekend's activities.

6.11 Wiltshire Citizens Advice Bureau: Written report from Suzanne Wigmore

- The CAB receives a grant of £2K from the Town Council.
- The CAB has moved to the library so is providing a better service to the people of Warminster as waiting times have decreased.

7. Forum

Councillor Fryer invited questions from the members of the public.

Cllr Denis Brett speaking as Chair of Kingdown Academy said the ethos of the academy is to produce an all-rounded person to become a valuable citizen of the community. The Skatepark

Group had impressed by standing to request funds at the Area Board. There are positive young people emerging and the older members of the community have a responsibility to them. We need a collective education programme on the moral responsibility for cleanliness.

Jill Coward said she would have liked to have heard more from the councillors.

Andrew Robinson asked whether the Town Council had confirmation that 3 High Street was unsafe as stated on the scaffold. He had contacted Wiltshire Council who said the responsibility lay with the Health and Safety Executive. When he contacted the latter they said the responsibility was with Wiltshire Council. **Len Turner** said Structurelle had deemed the building unsafe and the scaffolding had been erected. **Mike Heaton** suggested the Town Council could engage a structural engineer themselves. Wiltshire Council could force the building to be renovated based on loss of amenity to neighbouring properties/businesses, but they had determined that the scaffolding does not constitute a loss of amenity. **Cllr Andrew Davis** said the recent planning application implied the building was structurally sound, but it is back on the market. If the Town Council paid for a survey they would be unable to recoup the funds. The Council was still working to get the scaffolding removed. **Heather Parks** challenged the unitary councillors. Warminster was not getting anything from Wiltshire Council and this was ruining our high street. **Cllr Pip Ridout** said the listed buildings officer does not feel the building is worth saving. **Bill Parks** suggested the three unitary councillors should put pressure on Wiltshire Council at Full Council.

Meeting closed 8.25pm