

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Friday 21st May 2021 at 7pm

held at the Civic Centre

The Town Council Chairman

Councillor Steve Jeffries in the Chair

Present:

Councillors: S Allensby, D Brett, A Cooper, A Davis, S Fraser, R Fryer, S Jeffries, P Keeble, P Macdonald, P Macfarlane, B Parks, C Robbins and J Syme

Officers: T Dommett, J Halls, S Legg, S Atherton

Public and press: 14 members of the public and 1 members of the press.

1. Apologies

Received from:
Amanda Wilkes
Tony Jackson
Sylvia Gilmore
Steve Kervell
Liz Keenan
John Powell
Shirley Moriarty
Karen Monk

2. Minutes from last Annual Town Meeting

The minutes of the last Annual Town Meeting held at the Civic Centre on 8th April 2019 were accepted and signed as a true record.

One member of the public noted that the minutes had not recorded the closure of the Smallbrook surgery due to doctor recruitment. The minutes were amended to record this point.

Cllr Jefferies then handed the chair to Cllr Robbins being best placed to report upon the year having been Mayor of Warminster 2020-21.
Cllr Robbins to the chair.

3. Chairman's Report

From the Chair, Cllr Robbins (Mayor 2020-21 presented the Annual Report which also contained the Financial Report. This was available to those present. *(Copies of*

the Annual Report are available from the Civic Centre, Community Hub, Library and the Warminster Town Council Website.) Cllr Robbins acknowledged the difficult past year and the adaptations to life that have had to be made. Cllr Robbins thanked the Town Council for continuing to run throughout this unprecedented time. Thanks, were also given to the community groups that also kept running throughout the ongoing pandemic.

Cllr Robbins noted that there was still the outstanding project of the paddling pool replacement in the Pleasure Grounds. The paddling pool will now become a 'splash pad'. The Covid pandemic and restrictions temporarily halted the project but this project is now back up and running and completion is estimated to be spring 2022. Cllr Robbins also acknowledged the introduction of the 'Basil Brushes' road sweepers, thanking them for their work and the difference they have already made to the streets of Warminster.

4. 2020-2021 Grant Recipients

- 4.1 Alzheimer`s Support
- 4.2 Athenaeum Trust (Warminster) – written submission
- 4.3 Cop Heap Volunteers – Nigel Linge
- 4.4 Groveland Countryside and Wildlife Park – Len Turner
- 4.5 Warminster Community Hub – Lan Turner
- 4.6 Help Counselling Service – Amanda Wilkes
- 4.7 Incredible Edible Community Garden
- 4.8 Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre (Wessex) Ltd
- 4.9 Relate Wiltshire and Somerset - Sylvia Gilmore
- 4.10 Salisbury Plain Rights of Way -Nigel Linge
- 4.11 Sustainable Warminster – Harriet James
- 4.12 Warminster and Westbury Visual Handicapped Club – Steve Kervell – written Submission
- 4.13 Warminster Arts Week
- 4.14 Warminster Community Choir – Liz Keenan - written submission
- 4.15 Warminster Carnival – Sandra Major
- 4.16 Warminster Cricket Club – John Powell – written submission
- 4.17 Warminster Town Football – written submission
- 4.18 Warminster Sight

Cllr Robbins thanked those who had reported on how they had spent their grants and the long hours of voluntary work that had gone into the success of the projects. He also pledged that the Council will do as much as they can to continue the support of the community of Warminster. Cllr Robbins reported that Alzheimer`s Support were unable to send a representative to the meeting but had contacted him and asked for their grateful thanks for the grant they received to be recorded.

Representative speakers

Salisbury Plain Rights of Way - Nigel Linge

350 cycle signs were bought to sign post routes on and around the Plain. Thanks were given to Stuart Legg – Parks and Estates Officer and Cllr Parks for their support of the charity.

Cop Heap Volunteers – Nigel Linge

Used the grant to buy power tools for volunteers.

Sustainable Warminster – Harriet James

There were great developments for the wildlife safety in Warminster as a result of the grant. 150 highway signs were bought to raise awareness of the local wildlife such as otters, amphibians and hedgehogs. Hedgehog safety and awareness has been heavily promoted. 20 information packs were sent out to local primary schools. The charity has used social media sites, the Warminster Journal and Wiltshire Times.

Warminster Carnival – Sandra Major

Due to the pandemic, there was no carnival. It is proposed that there will be a Carnival Fun Day held in the Pleasure Grounds, this summer. This will include a fancy-dress parade around the lake and local charities will be invited to host a stall to supplement their loss of income due to the pandemic.

Groveland Countryside and Wildlife – Len Turner

There has been a substantial amount of volunteers, 12-14 each session. With the grant allocation, the purchase of battery-operated equipment was possible. A great success of the voluntary upkeep of the informal footbridge was to be celebrated. This will be an ongoing commitment.

Warminster Community Hub – Len Turner

There continued to be a steadfast support from volunteers throughout the pandemic, for the hub. The hub managed to stay open for 15 weeks of the year. There has been an increase in enquiries to transport links to and from Warminster as lockdown restrictions were being lifted. There have also been many enquiries about summer events and opening of the parks and recreations areas.

Reports received

Warminster Community Choir

Due to the pandemic, the choir has not been able to meet in person and have not bought the music scores that they were planning on. They will however be buying some for the re-opening of Warminster Community Choir at St John's school hall in September.

Warminster Cricket Club

Warminster Cricket Club was lucky enough to be awarded a Town Council Grant in June 2020. Warminster Cricket Club and its members are very thankful and grateful of the support they have received. The Town Council grant made it possible for the cricket club to purchase two rollers for both sites: Sambourne Road and Land Warfare grounds.

The pitches are used by cricket club members for games and practise with members both young and old being able to appreciate the investment in the club. All members benefit from the excellent playing surfaces that are prepared, which help to attract new players and fixtures to the club. The junior section continues to grow. There are currently over 100 juniors, both boys and girls at the ground every Friday evening for training sessions, as well as three adult teams on Saturday, Sunday and midweek sides. The continued investment in the club has also attracted Wiltshire County

Cricket matches, at senior and junior level, that will be hosted throughout summer 2021.

Warminster Town Football Club

Sincere thanks were given to the Town Council from the Warminster Town Football Club for the grant received in 2020. It enabled the fitting of a high spec security door at the front of the club house. After experiencing several break-ins some years back, causing a significant damage, it has added more robust security.

Wiltshire Sight

The grant awarded by Warminster Town Council enabled continued support to those living with sight loss living in Warminster. They are proud of the way they have responded to the very challenging times of the last year. They were able to continue to offer practical and emotional support to people living with sight loss in Warminster by adapting our services; offering practical support that people could use and access without leaving their homes including individual coaching and teaching on using technology.

They have been able to create audio-described fitness classes to help people stay active and encouraged people to try our free audio-book postal service.

Throughout lockdown, many events – including regular social clubs to support the most vulnerable and isolated older people – were moved online or suspended.

The majority of our support has been over the telephone. As soon as they were able to put safety measures in place, they have been seeing people face-to-face in their offices. They have shown people how to maximise their remaining sight, by using magnifiers effectively and trying out a variety of lights. People also have the opportunity to try a wide range of technology and equipment.

Cllr Jeffries moved a vote of thanks to all the community groups, this was unanimously agreed.

5. Forum

Councillor Jeffries invited questions from the members of the public on any subject related to the town or town council.

Cllr Macdonald asked what commitment there was from the Town Council on the upkeep of the grass verges.

Cllr Jeffries responded: all grass verges are under the jurisdiction of Wiltshire Council.

Cllr Macdonald went on to ask how the Town Council would be going about reducing their utilities running costs given that other building and companies in Warminster had introduced sustainable energy alternatives.

Cllr Jeffries stated that the Town Council were committed to reducing costs that support the issue around climate change having adopted a Climate Change Strategy.

Churches Together representative.

The representative sought support from the council to be able to put up posters around Warminster against modern slavery, including contact information for those who may need it. The posters would be in multiple languages to reach the widest audience.

Cllr Parks spoke in support of this initiative and suggested that Churches Together also seek support from Wiltshire Council.

Cllr Jeffries replied that the Town Council would be in support of the posters.

Harriet James raised the question; was there a now climate change action plan in place by the Town Council? This had been expected to be in place in 2020.

Cllr Jeffries acknowledged that the Town Council had now voted and agreed that a Climate Change officer would be recruited. In the meantime, there had already been significant gains made towards a greener Warminster. These were changes such as the changeover of all powered equipment to battery power and the purchase of low emission vehicles. All vehicles are due to be replaced with electric vehicles when next changed.

Cllr Jeffries invited anyone from the public to join the working groups for the climate change agenda. Cllr Syme welcomed the support of this matter.

Harriet James requested, further thought be given to consequences of the installation of the flood lighting on the tennis courts, on the Pleasure Ground. The thought being that the bat population in the Pleasure Ground area is currently strong and that the floodlights would drive them out of the area.

Cllr Jefferies was not aware of the introduction of floodlighting.

Malcolm Mellersh welcomed the opportunity that the Annual Town Meeting gives as a democratic forum. He raised the question of how the other Warminster town residents could be reached.

Cllr Jeffries reminded the attendees of the meeting that each meeting is live streamed, agendas and minutes are available on the Town Council website. He also stated that details of all upcoming meetings are published in the Warminster Journal, on social media sights and posted on the Civic Centre notice board two weeks before the meeting. He also reminded the floor that members of the public are welcome to attend the meetings.

Cllr Parks also highlighted that there are local area boards that are used by the community to communicate with councillors and co-ordinate with each other.

Anthony Shoult requested consideration for a town centre regeneration proposal including details of traffic issues in Silver Street. He requested that the Town Council draw up a plan, including consultation with town centre residents. He suggested the following for consideration:

1. Reduction of the speed of traffic travelling through the town centre, (20 mph speed limit from Warminster School through The Obelisk to the Post Office roundabout).
2. Reduce the number of heavy vehicles travelling through the town centre.
3. Improve pavements for the safety and utility of pedestrians by footway widening and the installation of pavement posts where necessary.
4. Install traffic calming measures.
5. Develop a strategy to attract good quality retail to the town centre in part to take over unsightly empty retail premises while encouraging existing shop owners to properly maintain their properties.
6. Instigate a plan to re-establish a full weekly market day in the town and bring forward proposals to regenerate the antiques quarter.
7. Provide incentives for existing hospitality outlets to create pavement facilities for the enjoyment of residents and visitors and to improve the general environment of the town centre.
8. Establish processes and procedures for the monitoring and preservation of town centre historic buildings for the benefit of future generations.

Accordingly, Warminster town centre residents request that a comprehensive town centre regeneration plan should be prepared and published by the newly elected Town Council by no later than December 2021.

In the meantime, he suggested that bi-monthly updates as to its progress be posted online and published in the Warminster Journal.

Mr Shoult suggested that a committee of town centre residents should be formed for liaison with the Town Council in respect of development and implementation of the proposed plan without further delay.

It was noted during discussion, that the matters raised had already received considerable attention from various bodies including the Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner and Wiltshire Council Highways.

Meeting ended: 8:18pm

Signed..... Date.....