

**MINUTES** of the proceedings of the **ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE TOWN MEETING** held at The Community Centre, Oak Street, Fakenham on **Monday 21 May 2018** at 7.00pm, those present:

Town Councillors: G Acheson (Chairman), S. Brown, A. Vertigan, G. Foortse, M. Coates, J. Holdom, S. Mears, T. Edwards, T. Duffy, G. Thorpe, R. Lynam and D. Wakefield.

District Councillors: J Rest, J. Punchard, A. Claussen-Reynolds and R. Reynolds

County Councillor: T. Fitzpatrick

Press: None

Police: PC R. Dawson

Town Clerk: L Jennings

Deputy Town Clerk: A. Kerrison

Speakers: Col. David James, Royal British Legion

Public: 27 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 25 April 2017 were on the proposition of Cllr Holdom, seconded by Cllr Coates, APPROVED and signed by the Chairman.

**4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman gave his Report on the Town Council's activities for 2017-2018 as follows:

The Administration Assistant has been promoted to Deputy Town Clerk. 4 Councillors have left the Council and 3 new ones joined. A further co-option will take place at the June Full Council meeting. The Council's accounts have been transferred to a new public sector software package which has allowed the role of Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to be undertaken by Accountancy firm Stephenson Smart. This will be overseen by the newly formed Finance sub-committee and the newly appointed Internal Financial Controller. North Norfolk District Council has decided not to redevelop Highfield Road car park. It is to stay as a car park, but will no longer be free. It is to be converted to pay and display car park, with local residents whose properties back on to the park getting one free space. Coaches will not be able to park there but it is hoped that 2 spaces will be made available for them on the Limes car park. A CCTV camera has been installed in St Peter's garden following anti-social behaviour there. The Trap Lane pavilion has been spruced up with the help of Little Angels pre-school staff and Tesco community team. North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) and FTC are pursuing central government funds to help with road improvements that FTC feel are essential for the Northern Development to proceed. It is hoped that the Aldiss rebuild will be completed in the very near future, and in time for the arrival of the Break Go Go Hare in June. The Hare has been sponsored by Kinnerton's to celebrate their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of chocolate making in the town. Following the Aldiss fire a temporary market road closure was obtained to close the roads from 5am instead of 9am, on safety grounds. It is now proposed that the earlier road closure should be made permanent. Councillors have been consulting with local businesses affected by this to gain their opinion. Cllr Acheson asked the meeting if anyone was unhappy with the idea. Nobody was. Council has also been consulting with town centre businesses regarding smartening up the town, including hanging baskets, re-painting etc. The Council is bidding for regeneration money from NNDC, and also EU funding for a heritage trail and to improve the riverside walk from Hempton Road to 3 Brick arch. The Council also plans to adopt the phone boxes in the market place

one of which would be to house a defibrillator. They are looking in to renovating the Chapel in Queen's Road cemetery. They have also taken over the grass cutting responsibilities in the town from Norfolk County Council Highways. Areas cut by NNDC will be considered next year when the contract comes up for renewal. Cllr Foortse organised a second fashion show to raise money for Cranmer House. This raised £2000, with a further £1000 coming from Barclays.

A member of the public asked if we had enough places of interest to be able to have a heritage trail. Cllr Acheson said that at present we had approximately 40 sites of interest.

Cllr Acheson asked people whether they were in support of a heritage trail. A show of hands showed most people were in favour, and nobody was against the idea.

## **5 TOWN COUNCIL'S FINANCES**

Cllr Holdom presented unaudited accounts for the year 2017-18. 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.

A resident asked why Market Tolls accounts appeared as zero on the report. Cllr Holdom explained that the Council had been advised by the auditor that these accounts should be separate from the Councils accounts, as they are part of the market tolls charity, and had therefore been removed.

Another resident asked why the Charity accounts had not been presented at the meeting. Cllr Holdom said that this had not happened in the past but would investigate as to whether it should be the case and will address this for next year's meeting.

## **6 REPORT FROM FAKENHAM POLICE**

PC Rich Dawson introduced himself as beat manager for the Fakenham station. He reported that there had been a lot of upheaval over the last 12 months with the loss of PCSO's and the closure of the front offices at police stations – with the exception of Kings Lynn, Norwich and Great Yarmouth. He said that 150 PCSO's were lost from Norfolk, of those 40 have become police officers, 29 have moved in to staff roles and the remainder have left the force. Five teams of 6 police officers currently operate out of the Fakenham station, there is a move to re-invigorate the special constabulary and SNAPS (Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel) still meets every 3 months.

A resident stated that there appeared to be a recent crime spike and wondered whether this was attributable to the loss of the PCSO's and their intelligence gathering role. PC Dawson replied that there are spikes and troughs throughout the year and that this one is no worse than last year. In overall terms crime figures have gone down from last year. He hoped that the new initiative of PC's getting out of their cars and being more visible would also reduce crime rates. PC Dawson also stated that the police officers will be intelligence gathering when they are walking the beat.

## **7 PRESENTATION BY COL. DAVID JAMES – ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**

Col. James introduced himself as the chairman of the Fakenham and District branch of the Royal British Legion, a role he has held for a number of years. He said the branch had always been very good, winning a number of awards and being one of the first branches to roll out the covenant which all major organisations in the town had signed. They had also managed to

get names added to the war memorial of those people who had been omitted. Col. James then went on to explain the difficulties that the branch had undergone which had resulted in them having to leave their home at the General Townshend Club which they had occupied since the First World War, and take up residence at the Conservative club. As result of the upheaval the branch lost 100 members and is now recruiting to increase numbers. He noted that members do not have to have served in the armed forces, but need to care about those who have. They have also had a new standard which has recently been dedicated at the church.

**8 MAYOR'S MILITARY CADET SHIELD**

The Mayor's cadet this year will be from the Air cadets, but as yet they have not put anyone forward. The shield will be presented once they do.

**9 COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER AWARD**

Cllr Acheson introduced Richard Green, District Explorer Scout Commissioner for Central Norfolk. Mr Green reported that four years ago there were only 6 members of the Fakenham Wensum Scout Group and it was on the verge of folding. At that time Bobbie Stevenson asked if she could become the Group Scout Leader. Since then she has built the Group up to 60 young people in the Group consisting of Cubs, Beavers and Scouts. They have 2 additional Scout Leaders and are now a vibrant active Group. The Group are actively seeking more adults from the Fakenham area to help run the group. Cllr Acheson presented the community volunteer award to Bobbie.

**10 COMMENDATION AWARDS**

Commendation Awards were also presented by the Mayor to Jonathan Court, Tom Sutton and Andrew Dix. Thomas Ware and Richard Easter who could not be present will also be given Commendation Awards. These gentleman and their 4x4 vehicles helped some 120 drivers stranded in the snow during the 'Beast from the East'.

**11 QUESTIONS TO THE PANEL**

A question was asked about the swimming pool on the old College site on Highfield Road, and whether this could be used by the residents of the town. County Cllr Fitzpatrick stated that the site had been returned by the Fakenham Academy to Norfolk County Council. Discussions are ongoing regarding retaining the site for educational use. He said that the swimming pool was closed due to high running costs. If funding could be found it may be possible to retain it. He will feedback any decisions on this.

A resident asked if anything could be done about the increasing number of Muntjac deer that are in the town and ruining people's gardens. Cllr Fitzpatrick will try and find out more information. Cllr Claussen-Reynolds said that she had approached NNDC about the subject.

A resident noted the appalling state of the car park at Millennium Park. Cllr Acheson said that this is owned by the Fakenham Recreation Ground Charity and that they only have limited funds which are not enough to repair the car park. The charity is looking to apply for heritage lottery funding to improve the park for disabled/elderly access and improve the car park at the same time.

The panel were asked if the town will receive any compensation from the Aldiss insurance company following the loss of facilities as a result of the fire. Cllr Acheson said that they have

compensated the Town for the loss of the market space and the money has been paid in to the Market Tolls. The money will be used to pay for the permanent earlier road closure as mentioned above.

**12 ANY OTHER BUSINESS RELATING TO ANY PUBLIC MATTER OF A PROCHIAL NATURE**

The Clerk informed the meeting of a project being run in conjunction with the Church to make poppies to decorate the war memorial and the Church for Armistice Day and the commemoration of the 100 years since the end of World War one. She said that patterns for Knitting/Crocheting/ sewing the poppies were available from the Town Council offices and the Church. Cllr Acheson said that the Town Council would hold their memorial service at the War Memorial at 11am as usual on 11<sup>th</sup> November. As this is a Sunday, the march through the town to the Church service will take place as usual in the afternoon. At 7pm a beacon will be lit on Beacon Hill. The Council have already secured the services of a bugler for the day, but as yet have been unsuccessful in finding a piper. He urged people to let the office know of anyone who may be able to do this.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the Meeting.  
The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

**CONFIRMED** this

day of

2019.

**CHAIRMAN**