

WIMBORNE MINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING held on TUESDAY 5 APRIL 2016 at 7.30 pm in the Town Hall, West Borough, Wimborne Minster.

THOSE PRESENT AT THE MEETING

Cllr S K Bartlett - Town Mayor & Chairman of the Council (in the Chair)
Cllr Mrs S A Bell
Cllr J Burden
Cllr Mrs S A Cook
Cllr L G Harvey
Cllr Mrs D J March
Cllr Mrs A E Roberts
Cllr T F Wheeler

20 Local Government Electors

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the 2016 Annual Town Meeting for electors of the parish of Wimborne Minster. I am Cllr Shane Bartlett, Town Mayor and Chairman of the Council.

The meeting this evening will follow the usual format with myself and each Chairman of Committees or their representative reporting on issues of particular importance.

We shall then take questions from the floor.

1. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON 31 MARCH 2015

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 31 March 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed.

2. ANNUAL REPORT BY THE TOWN MAYOR AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL – Cllr S K Bartlett

It is often said to me when I talk to other Mayors of market towns in Dorset – *How is it that Wimborne Minster seems to be so vibrant and thriving?*

I reply that it is a combination of the fantastic army of volunteers from our community and the Town Council's proactive attitude in partnership with the BID (which represents the business community) to ensure that the town looks the best it can with facilities to match.

We are hoping that the BID wins its battle for re-election this year so that this partnership continues.

One of the major challenges we will face over the coming months is the desire and necessity in the County for unitary local government and the implications for the Town Council. If it happens, and I am a supporter of the option of a rural Dorset unitary, it is likely that the Town Council will be asked to take on more and more services. Given our limited resources

and tax base we have to ensure that adequate funding comes with the service we are to provide.

On that point, it is still an anomaly in the financing of local councils like ours that a neighbouring parish, for example Colehill which has a larger tax base than we do, enjoys the facilities of the Town but its Band D council tax is only £33 whereas ours is £108.45.

We are talking to the local MP about this problem in the hope that there can be an equalisation of council tax throughout the District. It is a problem that affects all market towns in the Country.

On a more positive note the Town Council has recently become part of the Wimborne Minster Dementia Friendly Community. Councillors and staff have had training sessions which were valuable and a real eye opener.

The Town Council is also hosting an afternoon tea on 21 April 2016 for residents who celebrate their 90th birthday this year, the same year as Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Finally, two improvements on the PR front. First it was a priority to improve communications this year and as a result a Cllr Mrs Kelly Webb was appointed PR Coordinator. During the year we have had an Open Day here at the Council offices to allow residents to come along and see what we do and take a look around the buildings and grounds. We have re-started production of newsletters with one hard copy edition going out in November last year and short bulletins being sent out via email regularly. Social media activity has stepped up too, so you can follow us on Twitter or like us on Facebook to get regular updates and public service announcements as well as see some photographs of events taking place. If you would like to be on the email list - please leave your email address before leaving this evening.

Second, to recognise the change in boundaries last year the Town Council has provided two new noticeboards in the Wimborne East Ward, one at the junction of Cranfield Avenue and St Johns Hill and one on Leigh Road near Parmiter Road.

My Civic Service this year will be held on Sunday 17 April 2016 in The Minster and everyone is very welcome to attend.

3 **ANNUAL REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE – Cllr L G Harvey**

I am Cllr Les Harvey, Chairman of the Recreation & Leisure Committee and my Vice-Chairman is Cllr Richard Nunn.

This Committee is responsible for managing the Town Council Sports & Recreational Activities at Leigh Park and Redcotts Recreation Ground.

In recent years the Chairman's report has featured major events such as a new skateboard facility or Children's Play Area. Nothing of that significance this year but a busy year nevertheless from which I have selected a few items.

Railings at Redcotts Recreation Ground

The original railings at the Victoria Road entrance to Redcotts have been refurbished and a section of the tarmac drive resurfaced. This has much improved the appearance of the main entrance to the recreation ground. Other entrances have also been resurfaced and gates repainted or replaced where necessary.

Pavilion Hedge and Wild Flower Beds

The untidy mixed hedging at the front and east side of the Pavilion has been removed and replaced with flowering shrub hedging (*Griselinia littoralis*) in order to improve its appearance.

The Committee has also agreed that wild flower seeds will be planted in 3 areas of Redcotts to supplement the existing daffodils and 2 areas of Leigh Park Playing Fields. More areas may be seeded if results are good.

Bat & Bird Boxes

A report on something a little more unusual – Bats.

Many bat and bird species are in decline and areas such as Redcotts can provide supportive habitats. The River Allen Bat Roost Network Group carried out surveys in Redcotts Recreation Ground last autumn to determine whether the installation of roosting and nesting boxes would be effective in supporting existing species there.

The survey showed that there were five species of bats using Redcotts and the Committee approved their recommendation that 10 bat boxes and 10 bird boxes should be installed in trees around the recreation ground. They are now in place.

Wimborne Minster Tennis Club

The Town Council has approved in principle a proposal by the Wimborne Minster Tennis Club to install a removable dome during the winter months and add an additional hard court on the north east end of the existing 3 hard courts.

The Tennis Club is becoming a centre of excellence for the sport. Its members have achieved success at County level in senior and junior age groups. Coaches from the Tennis Club currently visit Wimborne Schools to

promote fitness and encourage the younger generations to play tennis. The Club is planning to introduce a further programme to enable disabled children to become involved, and the additional court and dome would permit these activities to continue through the winter months.

Both proposals are subject to planning applications and all costs will be met by the Tennis Club.

Cedar Tree at Redcotts

Some of you will have noted that the cedar tree in front of the Pavilion was damaged in a storm in February and had to be removed. It is the intention of the Town Council to install a replacement tree and also a 'Human Sun Clock' in the same area.

Riverside Facilities

Finally, The Town Council has provided a grant of £1,500 to ensure safe access to water and electricity by event organisers using the Riverside facilities at Leigh.

On behalf of the Town Council, I am proud to say that Redcotts Recreation Ground won a Silver Gilt Award in the South and South East 'In Bloom' competition last year, missing the top 'Gold Award' by a very small margin.

My thanks go to the Recreation and Leisure Committee for their support suggestions and debate in the past year and also to the ground staff who turned concepts and ideas into reality.

4. REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF RESOURCES COMMITTEE – **Cllr T F Wheeler**

My name is Cllr Terry Wheeler and I am Chairman of the Resources Committee. Cllr Mrs Kelly Webb is my Vice-Chairman.

The Resources Committee is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the Council's buildings and office accommodation as well as for lettings and leases. We also manage and monitor the Council's accounts and recommend grants to local organisations.

The accommodation at the Town Hall, which is available for hire and utilised for Civil Ceremonies, together with the privately rented office on the ground floor, raised over £13,500 in the last year. The Committee Room in particular is popular with local groups.

Annual Grant awards for 2015/16 totalled £20,075 for which 23 local organisations will benefit. In addition the Town Council also contributed one-off sum of £17,500 so that the Colehill & Wimborne Youth &

Community Centre could be completed. Colehill Parish Council provided the other 50%.

We also contributed £2,000 towards the purchase by the Allendale Centre of 160 stacking chairs and a trolley as well as £500 towards the Sting in the Tale Festival, £500 towards the Wimborne Food & Drink Festival and £1,000 towards the Sacking of the Minster Re-enactment event.

With the introduction of an on-line, paperless planning system by EDDC the Council needed to upgrade its media facility in the Committee Room in order to view e-planning applications.

A retractable projector screen and a multimedia projector has been installed which can be accessed by any group hiring the Committee Room. We have also installed Wi-Fi in the Committee Room and Council Chamber.

The Town Council and Wimborne BID jointly funded the £20,000 cost of the Christmas Lights in 2015. We hope the BID is re-elected in May so that these and other costs can continue to be shared.

Again, this year the Town Council contributed £8,500 to enable The Priest's House Museum Trust, which runs the Tourist Information Centre, to employ an assistant to the Manager. Although largely manned by volunteers this was considered vital for the sustainability of the Tourist Information Centre. In addition to the Annual Grants mentioned earlier the Town Council also provided £1,000 each to the Priest's House Museum and the Model Town towards the purchase by these organisations of commercial dishwashers

Finally, the Town Council's portion of the Council Tax remains the same in 2016/17 as it was for 2015/16.

5. **REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – Cllr S K Bartlett**

As the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning & Environment Committee are unable to be here, I am presenting this report on behalf of the Committee.

There are a number of issues I have been asked to report.

Land North of Wimborne Minster

The Outline Planning Application for residential development, a new local centre, a replacement Wimborne First School, public open space and new allotments and associated infrastructure on land to the east and west of Cranborne Road has been approved by the District Council. The Town Council had raised a number of concerns with the planning officers relating to flood risks, three storey and high density homes flanking the Cranborne

Road and the reduction in the numbers of affordable and social housing on the site. Traffic control and traffic calming measures were suggested for the approach roads to the site including additional waiting restrictions. A traffic management plan for construction traffic has also been requested.

The Planning Officers are still negotiating with the developer and the detailed 'Reserved Matters' applications are awaited including the Construction Management Plan.

Town Centre Maintenance

The Town Council continues to be pleased with the outcome of the scheme jointly funded with Wimborne BID to keep the town centre tidy.

Land at Cuthbury

Most of you will know that Wyatt Homes have submitted a full planning application to build 210 houses together with offices, a café and open space on the land at Cuthbury allocated for development in the Core Strategy. The Town Council has made preliminary comments on the plans including environmental, highway and parking concerns. It has also sought the construction of a footbridge alongside Julian's Bridge.

East Dorset planning officers are raising these and other concerns which they have with the developer. It is unlikely that the planning application will be ready to go before the District Council's Planning Committee until the autumn.

Land South of Leigh Road

Planning applications for the development of the land allocated in the Core Strategy at Parmiter were submitted by two developers (Wyatts and Gleesons) in the late summer/autumn last year.

The Town Council objected to several proposals in the plans including the increase in the total number of houses proposed to those indicated in the Core Strategy as well as the reduction in the amount of land allocated for the relocation of the Rugby Club.

The other problem with the plans was that each developer was proposing a separate access for their developments even though planning permission has already been granted for one access to serve both developments.

Negotiations with the developers continue with the District Council Planning Officers and no determination date is on the horizon.

The Square

The two sitting out areas appear to be popular with customers and give the area a vibrant feel.

Waitrose Bridge

The District Council will be going out to tender this month (April) with a view to work starting late summer.

East Borough (North)

Dorset County Council has agreed to implement the changes to solve the shortcut problem by introducing a No Entry just south of Tice's garage for all motor vehicles except buses and removing the No Right Turn restriction in Priors Walk.

Litter

Whilst this is a national problem, in Dorset, outside of the town centres, particularly on the highway verges, the County is looking a disgrace because DWP is not doing its job as effectively as it should. Through our various networks we will continue to lobby for improvements in litter clearing.

On behalf of the Chairman can I thank all Members of the Committee for their input during the past 12 months.

6.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC RELATING TO TOWN MATTERS

Mrs Tidd, 24 West Street – asked whether CCTV cameras in the Town were going to be phased out and referred to a 25% reduction in costs in the past year. The Town Clerk responded that there was no plan to reduce spending on CCTV or the number of cameras in the Town. The reduction in spending in a particular year might have been as a result of less maintenance being necessary. However, there would be a need to relocate the control room when the police station closed.

Mr M Tidd, 24 West Street – asked why the cameras were not routinely manned. The Town Clerk responded that the CCTV in the Town had always been run by volunteers and it was not practicable nor cost-effective to have them manned continuously. However, they were manned during peak periods such as Friday and Saturday evenings and during major events in the Town such as the Folk Festival.

Mrs Wood, 38 Lacy Drive – asked whether the modifications for the Allendale Community Centre as accommodation for the relocated District Council offices had been discarded. Cllr Bartlett said that the accommodation project was going before the Scrutiny Committee at East Dorset District Council (EDDC) that evening. It was not feasible for the District Council to remain at Furzehill due to the high costs. The Allendale

Centre was owned by EDDC and the Centre would benefit if the District Council used it for its Council Meetings. It was not possible to relocate to the Police Station as this building was owned by the County Council and not the District Council.

Mrs Wood also asked who owned the iron railings on Julians Bridge as they were unsightly, being neglected and rusty. The Town Clerk said it was probably Dorset County Council but he would make enquiries.

Mr Tidd – asked why Councillors not resident in the parish could not attend the Annual Town Meeting yet they could be Councillors. He also said that those Councillors who were both a Town and District Councillor could have a conflict of interest. The Town Clerk said that the law required that only those people who were electors of the parish could attend the Annual Town Meeting but curiously the law allowed non-parishioners to stand for election if they lived within 3 miles of the boundary. Mr Tidd was unhappy that all Members were not present and could not be questioned if they were Chairmen or Vice-Chairmen of Committees. Cllr Mrs Cook replied that some Councillors had not been able to attend due to other commitments. However, parishioners were always welcome to attend the Town Council and its Committee meetings which were advertised on the website and on noticeboards around the Town.

Mr Tidd then raised the question of proliferation of A-Boards and other banners around the town. Also why when a contractor carried out repairs which required digging up a road the paving slabs were replaced with tarmac. Cllr Mrs S A Cook said that she was aware that Cllr R Cook had investigated this matter at County level and also that the tarmac that had been laid in Crown Mead replacing brick pavements was also being dealt with.

Cllr T F Wheeler reported that he knew that the cracked paving slabs in East Borough had been replaced with tarmac due to the fact that the dray lorries delivering to the Man in the Wall continually drove on to the pavement and damaged the slabs. Cllr Bartlett sympathised and was aware that tarmac was often used as it was cheaper, although acknowledged that this was not as aesthetically pleasing. Mr Gerrish of 17 Minster View felt that this was an unsatisfactory reason and that the lorries should be prevented from driving on to the fragile paving slabs or that recompense for the damage caused should be sought from them. Mrs Tidd thought that the lorries on the roads were too big. Mrs Sturgess of 24 West Borough said that bollards could be installed to prevent the lorries mounting the pavements. Cllr Wheeler sympathised but said that it also needed to be borne in mind that businesses had to be able to operate.

Mr Tidd then asked why the Town Council's budget was not available to view on the website and felt that a lot more financial information could be made available on the Town Council's website. The Town Clerk invited Mr Tidd to come into the office to discuss his concerns.

Mr G Gray, 17 Minster View - also thought that transparency and the availability of information was important.

Mr A Oliver, 34 Park Lane – raised two points. Firstly that the litter from the kebab shop had not improved and asked whether the matter had been referred to the District Council. He felt that despite “Clean for the Queen” the Town still looked as bad as ever from a litter point of view. Secondly, he was dismayed at the green BT boxes that had appeared in the town without consultation, especially the second one that was now located outside Church House.

The Town Clerk referred to the agreement with Wimborne in Bloom which greatly helped to reduce the litter in the Town. Cllr Bartlett said that it was largely an education issue and more needed to be done with young adults and children to make them aware of the impact of littering. He also felt that Wimborne Minster fared well against other towns in the region.

Cllr Mrs A E Roberts – asked for an update of the zoning proposals for Cuthbury. The Town Clerk asked her to call into the office and he would explain it.

Mr Wood, 38 Lacy Drive asked when the sign for the Cricket Club was to be installed. The Town Clerk said that the Club were in the process of applying for a ‘Brown Sign’ and that it should be granted this year.

Mr Alex Kelley, Flat 3 The Square – raised the issue of noise pollution, specifically the band that played at the Alpine Bar over the Christmas period late on a weekday night which he felt was unacceptable.

Cllr David Morgan reported that the District Council had powers under its licensing arrangements to respond to this.

Mr Andrew Kelley, Flat 3 The Square – further added that in the past five years the nature of The Square had changed and that there had been a noticeable escalation in noise levels, particularly amplification from music etc. He mentioned the Alpine Bar and Christmas time. Music was too loud, too late.

He further reported that he believed that the number of residents around The Square would increase and that more consideration should be given to the sensitivities of those who lived there.

Cllr Bartlett said that this matter could be raised with the Licensing Officer at EDDC. Mr Kelley replied that he had raised the matter several times with the Licensing Officer but had never received a response.

Mrs Tidd – raised the question of the Christmas Lights as she thought the all white lights were bland. Cllr Wheeler responded that a decision had been made by the Town Centre Liaison Group to have a white colour

scheme a few years ago as this was the preferred option. It was not possible to change from this now without incurring considerable cost. Cllr Mrs D J March reported that she supported the all white scheme. Mr Tidd asked if there were plans to increase the extent of the scheme. Cllr Wheeler said that this might be possible but it depended on whether the BID renewal was successful. Mr Tidd suggested that other parishes had used crowd funding to increase revenue and Cllr Wheeler said that he was happy to look at this option. Mr Gray reported that he too was disappointed with the all white display.

Mr Tidd asked whether Wimborne residents would have an opportunity to comment on the plans to reorganise local authorities in Dorset. Cllr Bartlett reported that at the moment EDDC did not have a seat at the table although the possibility of a meeting for residents to discuss the options might be possible towards 2019. He further added that Westminster were forcing councils down the unitary route.

Mr Froud, 35 New Borough – raised a question concerning Wimborne Hospital and asked whether there were going to be any changes made there. Cllr Wheeler said that as a Trustee of the Friends of Victoria Hospital he was unaware of any changes other than improvements e.g. expanding the minor injuries unit.

Mr Froud then said that he had heard rumours that the Council was experiencing a problem which could have significant financial implications for the Council. Was this true? The Town Clerk responded that the three Councils which had representatives on the Wimborne Cemetery Joint Management Committee were being sued concerning matters which dated back to 2013 but he was unable to comment further. Mr Froud asked again whether this would have financial implications for the Council. The Town Clerk said he could not say.

Cllr Wheeler then referred back to a point that Mr Tidd had raised earlier concerning the information available on budgets etc. He advised that the Resources Committee sat every month and considered the accounts. The Committee meetings were always open to the public.

The meeting closed at 8. 35 pm.

Signed Date
Town Mayor & Chairman of the Council