

WIMBORNE MINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING held on TUESDAY 2 APRIL 2019 at 7.30 pm in the Quarterjack Suite, Allendale Community Centre, Hanham Road, Wimborne.

THOSE PRESENT AT THE MEETING

Cllr Mrs K F Webb - Town Mayor & Chairman of the Council (in the Chair)
Cllr S K Bartlett
Cllr Mrs S A Bell
Cllr J Burden
Cllr Mrs C Chedgy
Cllr R D Cook
Cllr Mrs P A Hymers
Cllr Mrs D J March
Cllr R P Nunn
Cllr W Richmond
Cllr Mrs A E Roberts
Cllr T F Wheeler

18 Local Government Electors

1. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2018

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 28 March 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

3. ANNUAL REPORT BY THE TOWN MAYOR AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL – Cllr Mrs K F Webb

This year has seen a significant increase in the amount of work for our officers and Councillors for a number of reasons but LGR and the new developments have played a large part in this.

At the start of the year I decided to keep a record of the amount of hours I would spend as Chairman and Mayor, on Council business. This is because so many people ask the question about the time it takes being a Councillor. I can tell you that the weekly hours are generally about 12hrs, but it isn't unusual for it to be around 20hrs.

Other Committee Chairman also may input a significant number of hours.

I have picked out some of the significant works we have had to deal with this year to give you a flavour of the Town Council's activity;

- Consulting on Local Plan;
EDDC started working on a new Local Plan, we think in the hope that it could be finalised in readiness for the new authority. A few of our Cllrs spent a great deal of time and energy going over the detail of it and providing a comprehensive response. We're yet to hear whether the work done by EDDC and our contribution will be adopted by the new authority.
- Planning to put bunting up this year;
Community Project – so many people have come together.
- We are planning to expand our team as the work of the officers continually expands. An office we did have rented out at the Town Hall location, has been brought back in house in order to house additional staff;
- We have agreed to take on parcels of land around town to keep local assets managed locally, we are in discussion about potential additional sites when the new developments are complete. Lot of work on due diligence;
- We were pleased to have gained a commitment from EDDC for them to grant us £75k to help with transitional costs to get ready for impacts of LGR including IT modernisation and operational machinery. This analysis and working on a comprehensive report to East Dorset, took some time, but we were very pleased with the outcome. Can I express my thanks to Cllr Flower;
- Huge Christmas Light Switch on crowd as they came to get a look at a local hero Eddie Howe – not sure how we'll top that! That takes some organising – we took on feedback with issues with sound and vision so we're looking at the staging and sound equipment for this year;
- We lost our Stour and Avon Community newspaper. So are trying to reach out to other media organisations to give our news to. We know that you want to see and hear what is going on locally and have a voice.

My Civic Service this year will be held on Sunday 28th April in the Minster Hall here in the Centre, space is a bit tighter than the Minster, so we have made this a ticketed event on a first come, first served. We will be celebrating local volunteers and community groups and have some guest speakers.

Finally, I would like to say that I have very much enjoyed my year as Town Mayor. The people I have met and organisations I have spoken to really does restore faith in human nature.

May I now ask the Chairman of Resources Committee to present her report.

4. **ANNUAL REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

I am Cllr Carole Chedgy, Chairman of the Resources Committee. As I had only been a Councillor for a year when I became Chair this has been a steep learning curve. I must thank the Town Clerk and the Finance Administrator for their work during the year, and my Vice Chair Cllr Wheeler for his support and willingness to share his experience, both have been invaluable.

The Resources Committee is responsible for receiving the monthly accounts and administering the budget, considering grant applications, the maintenance and repair of the Council's buildings and office accommodation as well as land, lettings and leases.

Grants

Annual Grant awards for 2017/18 totalled £37,875 which included The Tourist Information Centre.

In 2018/19 our budget for supporting local events and for grants to local organisations was £40,000. We received applications totalling £ 62,483. We awarded £40,916, but after the application period closed we recouped £3,850 at the end of March (grant money which had not been used) so the net figure is £37,066.

This year saw the introduction of a rolling grant application period over 10 months of the financial year. This produced more flexibility for applicants, particularly for smaller or newer organisations. It also produced challenges for the Resources Committee members – particularly judging each application on its own merits but trying to stay in budget in what proved to be a fluid process right until the end of March 2019.

As a result of this a few modifications have been made such as specifying that the budget will only be exceeded in exceptional circumstances. I have worked on the codification of the process to make it more transparent for applicants - and it is all available on the website. The rolling system continues to be monitored. I have also introduced a checking system to ensure where grants were awarded for specific items or projects that this money has been utilised for that purpose. As already indicated, this did result in a repayment.

The budget for next year is again £40,000. There is no reason to think the demand for grants will decrease. Indeed, with LGR now in place we believe demand may increase, particularly from 2020 once LGR has bedded in.

Annual budget and precept

This year we considered our budget for 2019/20 at one meeting rather than the committees considering their budgets individually. The aim was to look at our finances as a whole and only conduct the exercise once.

Due to the number of homes being built, we had hoped to receive an increased tax base (this is the number of properties in Wimborne Minster from which Council tax is collected) before setting the precept which is the name given to the amount of money we ask Dorset Council to collect for our use) . However, we were sadly disappointed. Although we have more dwellings, we actually suffered a reduction in the tax base from 2962 to 2952. The reason for this is that the collection rate (which impacts on the tax base) is less in Dorset County under LGR than for EDDC – 98% compared to 99.5%. This gave a net loss to the tax base of 0.3% or 10 band d equivalents. Hopefully we shall see some increase from new homes in the future.

We were also aware that our staffing budget was increasing above inflation due to changes in grades and pensions which are determined centrally and outside our control.

Despite these challenges we managed to maintain our precept increase to 3.2 % for a band D. i.e. £4.09. We have therefore requested a precept of £387,300 for 2019/20.

The Council tax demands have just been received. As a result of the decision by Dorset Council to harmonize Council tax across Dorset we are fortunate in East Dorset to have a far lesser increase in the Council Tax demanded by Dorset Council than elsewhere in Dorset.

We also contribute to the expenses of running Wimborne Cemetery as do Colehill and Pamphill & Shapwick Councils. Cllr Wheeler and I have represented Wimborne Minster Town Council on the Joint Management Committee this year. I am pleased to say that the increase requested by the Cemetery Committee was limited to 3%.

We are also going to be receiving some capital payments. Our Chairman has already referred to a grant of £75,000 from EDDC and we appreciate her work in this regard.

We shall also receive some section 106 money (this is money developers pay to the local planning authority for the future maintenance of open space and other amenity areas) as houses are built. Careful consideration will have to be given by the new Town Council following this year's elections as to how these funds are spent and or earmarked for future expenses.

Land and buildings

We are in the process of some areas of land and buildings in our town being transferred to us by EDDC. This will continue under Dorset Council. We will also receive pockets of amenity land under the new developments in due course. This gives more control locally, but also responsibilities.

At the last planning meeting of EDDC approval was given to a community sports facility as part of the Leigh Road Development. Last year we voted that in principle we would take on this facility. The new Town Council will have the task of being involved in the detail and final decisions for this.

We have also undertaken a review of our major sports facilities we lease out – principally bowls, rugby and tennis. The lease with the Bowls Club ended in March this year and we have agreed the new lease. We have resolved to treat all activities in the same way and on a cost neutral basis to the Council. This has involved and continues to involve a great deal of work behind the scenes.

My thanks go to members of the Resources Committee for their support and contribution over the past year.

5. **REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE 2019**

I am Cllr Pat Hymers, the Chairman of the Planning & Environment Committee.

There are a number of issues to report.

Firstly, I would like to give residents an update on the three major developments in the Town.

Land North of Wimborne Minster

There has been much progress on this site over the last 12 months. Land to the east of Cranborne Road now hosts a selection of modern homes which are being advertised for sale by the developer. The replacement Wimborne First School is on target for completion and due to be opened this September 2019 and the Town Council has been invited to view the new education facility in the near future.

Further to this, the District Council (new Dorset Council from 1 April 2019) is anticipating a revised Reserved Matters application to amend the design of the houses to be sited northeast of the school as it is understood that a new developer, Bellway, has purchased this element of the site.

The Town Council has written to the new authority to raise concerns from residents about the traffic and safety issues around the new First School and to enquire about the intended purpose of the old school site. A project

proposal from local residents was put forward to the Town Council in 2018, to repurpose the old school as an office building, to absorb some of the grassed land into Redcotts Park for additional recreational use by the public and to create a car park to the north of the site. We have yet to hear back from the principal authorities on this matter.

Land at Cuthbury

The residential planning application for this site to include 203 dwellings was granted planning permission by East Dorset District Council Planning Committee subject to a S106 agreement on 5 December 2018. The application includes 33% net affordable housing as well as the replacement of the existing Aster housing on the site. The Section 106 agreement is still to be agreed and signed off by the Head of Planning. This will now fall to the new Dorset Council.

The developer's further application to stop up and divert the footpaths in the Cuthbury area, to which the Town Council had objected, was reviewed by the District Council's Cabinet Committee last month. The outcome of that meeting was to approve the footpath application. The proposed order will now go out for further public consultation. If objections are received that cannot be resolved, it will be for the Secretary of State to determine the application following a public inquiry if necessary. The Town Council will continue to object to this application.

Land South of Leigh Road

The outstanding planning applications for this development were approved by the District Council's Planning Committee on 20 March 2019, subject to the completion of a Section 106 agreement. The development includes an outline application for the erection of 174 dwellings, and a full planning application for the erection of a community sports facility comprising club house, playing pitches, parking and landscaping together with the change of use of the land to leisure. Whilst the Town Council still has some concerns regarding the low number of 3-bed affordable homes planned for the site, the provision of a community sport facility will have a very positive impact on Wimborne Minster and surrounding areas.

In March 2019, the Town Council with Colehill Parish Council were consulted on suitable road names for the new development. I am pleased to say that the two Councils' proposal for road names to include family names of local men who died in World War 1 has been agreed by the developer, Barratt Homes, and the District Council. We are pleased that this development will not only honour the centenary of the end of World War 1 but also have significant local context. It is hoped that a plaque will be positioned on the residential estate to provide information on the road names and why they have been chosen.

Traffic Problems

The Town Council continues to receive traffic related contacts and complaints from the public. There is growing concern that the roads, infrastructure and safety of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists in Wimborne is at risk, and deteriorating, due to the sheer volume of traffic now in the town. The Town Council has no jurisdiction on these matters but is working more closely with Dorset Highways to target and alleviate issues in priority areas. In 2018, we met twice with senior Dorset Highways Officers and we are monitoring progress through a traffic and infrastructure action plan which is now a standing item on the Town Council's Planning and Environment Committee agenda.

Other Planning Matters

The Planning and Environment Committee submitted formal comments to the District Council's Local Plan Review consultation in September 2018. A comprehensive response was written which documented future opportunities and current weaknesses in the Town. For example, additional opportunities included items such as using more environmentally friendly schemes and renewable energy technologies in new developments and the local residents' proposal for a transport hub on the Pippins site in the Town Centre. It also included views and concerns on matters such as traffic and parking, retention of existing footpaths and rights of way on new developments and objecting to the proposed removal of special character areas and to the housing 'infill' strategy' currently being seen in the local area to increase the number of homes.

The Town Council is reassured to hear that the that the new Dorset Council expects to have a Dorset-wide Local Plan in place by 2023 and that it will build on and utilise the work in the existing local plans.

In 2019, and with the creation of the new Dorset Unitary Authority, the Town Council hopes to pursue developing either a Neighbourhood Plan and Town Centre Plan. The project will engage key stakeholders such as the BID, local residents and the new Dorset Council to work together to see better outcomes and improvements for Wimborne Minster town.

Can I thank all Members of the Committee for their input during the past 12 months.

6. ANNUAL REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE RECREATION & LEISURE COMMITTEE 2019

I am Cllr Sally Bell, Chairman of the Recreation & Leisure Committee. Cllr Richard Nunn is my Vice-Chairman.

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

Leigh Park Play Area

The Town Council has facilitated the installation of a new play area at Leigh Park at a cost of over £30,000. The majority of the cost of this project was met by the District Council through community infrastructure contributions from the developer of the new Cranborne Road site. The new play area opened in February, later than expected because of the amount of rain we had over Christmas and New Year.

Riverside Recreation Area and Other Amenity Areas

As part of the Community Asset Transfers kindly arranged by the District Council and mentioned by the Town Mayor, the Town Council is hoping to take ownership of the Riverside Recreation Area off Station Road. This area is popular with dog walkers and also is the home of Dreamboats and Poole Canoe Club.

We are working on other pieces of land that we may look to take ownership of largely forming part of the amenity areas provided by the developers of the new housing estates.

It will be a challenge to maintain all these areas with the existing grounds staff and machinery but again the District Council has helped by agreeing to fund a new flail mower for us at a cost of £23,000.

Wildflower Beds

The wildflower beds suffered in the extreme heat and dry weather last summer. However, the beds have been cleared ready for re-sowing in a week or two. Hopefully the display this year will be as fabulous as 2017.

Redcotts Blind Lane Entrance

The new flower bed constructed out of brick at the Blind Lane entrance to the Recreation Ground will be planted out by Wimborne in Bloom during the spring.

Anti-Social Behaviour

There were problems at Redcotts Recreation Ground last summer with anti-social behaviour especially around the Roundhouse. The Police increased their patrols of the area but no doubt these problems will continue to be a challenge for the town when the weather improves. The Council had been asked to install a light in the Roundhouse to deter youths from assembling at night but it was felt that any such light would be vulnerable to vandalism.

Dog Fouling

It is hoped that the dog warden will continue to patrol the two recreation areas on behalf of the Town Council this year. I would urge all dog walkers to pick up after their dogs and be particularly vigilant when walking their dogs at

dusk to ensure that they can see when and where their dog is defecating so that they can poop scoop appropriately.

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 work with us.

7. PRESENTATION BY CLLR SPENCER FLOWER, FORMER LEADER OF EAST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCILLOR

Cllr Spencer Flower gave a presentation on the Local Government Review.

8. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Mr Don Lonsdale, Westfield Close:

Mr Lonsdale express concern that with the closure of The Primary School and plans for the transfer of football match facilities from Redcotts to the new sports ground, Redcotts Recreation Ground may be allowed to become a relatively unused space for sporting and recreational activities.

It was his view that a regeneration plan for the area be instigated to deter disruptive and undesirable elements using the ground. He also enquired as to what happened to the proposed exercise facilities being installed to provide circuit training in the park. He felt that the personal trainer that used the Recreation Ground in conjunction with the Tennis Club providing classes on Sunday mornings and training young tennis players, could be involved in circuit training.

He also referred to The Tennis Club, which he said had achieved remarkable success at the regional and national level but was struggling to meet demand with only three courts. Several youngsters were playing at the national level but that they were being poached by West Hants TC. He believed that more hard courts were needed to develop the junior tennis successfully and create great pastime for children and adults.

He suggested that other activities might include golf practice nets with those using the facility paying a subscription and providing their own equipment.

He further suggested that a cycle track would be popular for those wishing to exercise but not wanting to risk the roads, although he acknowledged that this might be too expensive.

He enquired what had happened to the suggestion for creating a sensory garden where older people could relax and enjoy the location with friends, perhaps over a cup of coffee

He summed up by asking the council is to keep the place occupied not for it to become a deserted mown space because by occupying it will continue to be the huge asset that it is to the Town.

Response from Cllr Kelly Webb:

Cllr Webb thanked Mr Lonsdale for his thoughtful suggestions and encouraged him to come along to the Recreation & Leisure Committee meetings. She confirmed that the loss of football on the recreation ground at Redcotts was unlikely to happen for about 5 years, so not an urgent matter but one that the Council was aware of. She confirmed that the Assistant Town Clerk had been doing research into what other town councils were doing to develop their recreation grounds and that the Town Council had looked at potential circuit type equipment. She also confirmed that a fund had been started to finance projects such as the ones he had suggested but that there may not be sufficient money at the moment. She further responded that there were also ideas that Cllr Hymers mentioned with regard to some land near the recreation area as well which had been put forward by a residents' action group.

Cllr Webb reported that she could not comment on the Tennis Club as their future plans were being discussed with them at the moment and also that it was a commercial concern. However, she confirmed that whoever was Chairman of Recreation & Leisure Committee in May would look at this in a more proactive way.

Claire & Mark James, Westfield Close:

What is the Council's plan for the grass tennis courts at Redcotts Park?
Are there any plans for the kindergarten field adjacent to Redcotts Park?

Response from Cllr Kelly Webb:

Cllr Webb confirmed that it was part of the commercial discussions with the Tennis Club and the outcome would be reported in due course.

She reported that Dorset County Council had been asked some time ago about plans for the school paddock but that no response had been forthcoming in part due to LGR. However, she confirmed that the Town Council had registered an interest. She confirmed that the land now belonged to Dorset Council but that the Town Council would like to have an input into what happened to it and the opportunity to do something with it if possible.

Cllr Pat Hymers confirmed that the new school had its own nursery facility and the one that existed had a lease which was causing some complication.

Question: Maria Roe, St Johns Hill.

Mrs Roe reported that she was attending on behalf of Wimborne War on Waste which was a local group which aimed to reduce waste, especially

single use plastic. She reported that last year that the town had been awarded Plastic Free Community status and consequently many local businesses had reduced their use of single-use plastic. She requested that the Town Council ban the release of balloons and sky lanterns due to their harmful affect and help to champion the Plastic Free status as well as encouraging plastic free alternatives.

Response from Cllr Kelly Webb:

Cllr Webb responded that she was aware of the concern but that the Town Council did not have any authority to ban balloons but that it could request that events organised in the town did not proactively seek to sell products like this. This could be a Town Council policy that the sale of balloons and sky lanterns were not permitted on council land. The Town Council would speak to Wimborne BID, and the Chamber of Trade to ask if they could do something to try to control balloons as well. The BID would be asked to include it on a future Town Centre Liaison Group meeting agenda.

Mr Froud, New Borough Rd:

Mr Froud asked if the relevant authority could look into the possibility of installing lights between Riverside trading centre by the Market through to the lane that runs through to Churchill Rd. He suggested that perhaps lights could be planted along the wall.

Response from Cllr Kelly Webb:

Cllr Webb reported that the Town Council was not responsible for street lighting but that it might be able to support such a request. She requested that Mr Froud remained behind after the meeting to give more information to take forward on his behalf.

Arthur White, Leigh Gardens

Mr White reported that the hedgerow between Wimborne Rd West and Leigh Rd had been destroyed, presumably by developers. He wished to know what the finished landscaping would be.

Response from Cllr Webb:

Cllr Webb reported that the Town Council did not know at the moment what the landscaping would be.

Cllr Pat Hymers stated that the Town Council could request the information from Dorset planning.

Cllr Kelly Webb confirmed that the Town Council would endeavour to find out the answer and the timescale.

Mr Froud, New Borough

Mr Froud then raised a question concerning the proposed infrastructure supporting the new developments, in particular whether there would be a new doctors' surgery.

Response from Cllr Hymers:

Cllr Hymers reported that at the planning stage at least one of the existing doctors' surgeries had been asked if it could cope with the increase in local population and they had confirmed that they could.

Mr Froud, New Borough

Mr Froud then raised the question of the forthcoming closure of Poole Hospital A&E and asked that the Town Councillors fight for it to remain open.

Response from Cllr Webb

Cllr Webb responded that this did not fall under the powers of the Town Council and that it was not even a consultee on the issue.

Cllr Webb then thanked everyone for attending including the Committee Chairmen.

The meeting closed at 8.43 pm.