

LEDBURY TOWN

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held in The Community Hall, Ledbury on Thursday 28th April 2016

PRESENT: The Town Mayor, Cllr A Crowe, Chairman

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|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| Councillors | D Baker | R Barnes |
| | P L Bettington | M Eager |
| | M Eakin | E Fieldhouse |
| | K Francis | E Harvey |
| | A Harrison | A Manns |
| | N Morris | J Roberts |
| | N Roberts | A Warmington |
| | R Yeoman | |

Approx. 42 members of the public

APOLOGIES: Cllr M Mackness

Participatory Budgeting Grant Distribution:

The following Community Groups attended with information stands and members of the public were able to ask questions of them and cast a vote for the organisations they felt should receive a grant from the Town Council:

Age UK
Ledbury Community Brass Band
Catcher Media
Maritime Cadets
Herefordshire Wild Play
Visually Impaired Group
Marches Family Network
Ledbury Food Group
JMHS Library
Ledbury Community Day

Voting results will be presented to the Town Council's Finance & General Purposes Committee when it considers the applications for funding.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 30th April, 2015, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

The Town Mayor, Councillor A Crowe, welcomed everyone present to the Annual Town Meeting and read out her report on the Town Council's achievements and actions during the administrative year 2015/16. (Cllr Crowe provided a written report which will be placed on file with the Minutes)

Cllr K Francis, Deputy Mayor paid tribute to the Mayor for all her hard work during the year and for her efforts in fundraising for Salter's Hill Charity. He apologised to the

residents of the town for not having been able to fully fulfil his role as Councillor due to being distracted by ongoing internal council issues. He then drew attention to a number of special events to be held during the year, such as HM The Queen's 90th Birthday celebrations and Armed Forces Day.

3. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

3.1 Environment and Leisure Committee

Councillor M Eager Chairman of the Environment & Leisure Committee, presented a summary of the work undertaken by the Committee during 2015/16. (Cllr Eager provided a written report which will be placed on file with the Minutes)

There were no questions on the report from members of the public.

3.2 Planning and Economic Development Committee

Councillor E Harvey, Chairman of the Planning & Economic Development Committee, gave a summary of the work undertaken by the Committee during 2015/16. (No written report provided - transcript placed on file with the Minutes)

There were no questions on the report from members of the public

3.3 Finance and General Purposes Committee

Councillor A Harrison, Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee presented his summary outlining the work undertaken by the Committee during 2015/16. (No written report provided - transcript placed on file with the Minutes)

Copies of the Town Council's estimated expenditure for 2015/16 and the budget for 2016/17 were made available to the meeting. Cllr Harrison briefly summarised the reasons for a 3.92% increase in the precept request for 2016/17 compared to the previous year. Additional funds (£12,000) had been budgeted to cover expenditure for grass cutting on areas owned by Herefordshire Council; £8,000 for an Operational Review; £5,000 for the Neighbourhood Plan. An increase of 12.24% in the Band D equivalent was mainly due to the reduction of £21,623 in the amount of Council Tax Relief Grant passed down from Herefordshire Council.

There were no questions on the report from members of the public

The Town Mayor thanked the Committee Chairman for their reports.

4. COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS FROM ELECTORS OF LEDBURY PARISH

The following matters were raised:

1. Ledbury Swimming Pool

A local resident welcomed the redevelopment of the Ledbury Swimming Pool facility, but voiced strong concerns about the conversion of the separate changing rooms to the communal "Village Style" changing facilities, a matter which Ledbury residents had objected to during the planning process. The reason given by Halo was that it was a Sport England requirement.

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED: That the Town Meeting request the Town Council to investigate through the local MP and Ministers why this style of development has been imposed over the wishes of residents.**

2. Portas Consolation Grant

A local resident requested an answer to the same question he had asked at the Annual Town meeting in 2015, regarding the status of the Mary Portas £10,000 grant and whether any of the money had been spent since it had been received in 2013.

Councillor Harvey advised that the project had not moved forward. The bid team had pledged 50% of the Portas money to go to the youth drop-in which meets on a Wednesday in the Barratt Browning Institute. Rather than having several meetings to consider applications they had been waiting for Herefordshire Council's decision on when they would be releasing their grant money to the youth drop-in before making a call for other applications so that all applications could be considered at the same time. Application forms were ready and it was expected that they would get a committee to sit within the next month.

3. Neighbourhood Development Plan

A local resident said that having read a letter in the local press relating to the Neighbourhood Plan, she was concerned that the statements made could be misleading and sought clarity by asking the following questions:

Is it true that the Neighbourhood Plan as originally set up did not have the support of the Council?

The Mayor replied that it had the Council's full support both financially and administratively.

Can you explain why the first Committee was dissolved?

The Mayor explained that the first group started in February 2013, however progress was slow and it wasn't working cohesively. The group was not functioning effectively and there were irreparable relationship issues therefore the Council decided to close it down.

The letter in the paper suggested that the town was being asked for too many views at one point in time, was this correct?

The Mayor suggested that perhaps this comment related to the consultations going on at the time. However, she stressed that this was necessary as it is the people of Ledbury who decide what goes into the Neighbourhood Plan.

Who has actually initiated the current consultation process?

The Mayor replied that the Town Council asked for volunteers to serve on the new Neighbourhood Development Plan working group which is made up of Councillors and local residents and this group together with the consultants were carrying out consultations under the auspices of the Council.

Do you have confidence in the Consultants and the progress being made to date?

The Mayor replied that she did have confidence in the consultants and the progress made, and gave details of all the consultations events, Ambassador visits, Business breakfasts, etc.

Is the Town Council fully committed to the Neighbourhood Plan?

The Mayor affirmed that it was.

The local resident asked whether her understanding was correct that anyone who was interested could join the working group. The Mayor replied that this was definitely the case.

A local resident and member of the Neighbourhood Plan working group stated that the plan was progressing well and that they were nearing the end of the Objectives consultation period and would be moving on to Policies by the end of June. From her experience the Council is 100% behind the Plan and anyone wishing to join the group would be welcomed.

7. DISTINGUISHED CITIZENS AWARDS 2016

The Town Mayor invited the Deputy Mayor Cllr Keith Francis to reveal the winners of the Distinguished Citizens Awards for 2016 and speak about their achievements and work in the community. The individuals who had made the nominations introduced the award winners and spoke further about their achievements.

Awards were presented to:

- Mr Robert Waddington, for outstanding work as Chairman of the Friends of The Master's House. The Deputy Mayor advised that unfortunately Mr Waddington had been unable to attend the meeting as he was away on holiday but had been delighted to accept the award before going away
- Pauline Bates, for her involvement in the Carnival, Ledbury Strömstad Twinning Association, charity and community work.
- Laura Clarke, for her tireless work in support of Ledbury Children's Centre, Ledbury Primary School and Ledbury Brownies.
- Sheila Gladwin and Linda Smith – joint award for their incredible fundraising efforts, having raised in the region of £50,000 for local charities. Unfortunately Mrs Smith had been unable to attend the meeting to collect her award.
- Sally Holliday, for her work with the Town Plan, Heritage Centre, U3A, Youth Council, Community Day and Food Group.

The Town Mayor thanked everybody for attending and closed the meeting at 9.11pm.

Signed..... Date
Town Mayor