

Sleaford Town Council

Annual Town Meeting Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Wednesday 10th May 2017 at 7:00pm at The Town Hall, Quayside House, Navigation Yard, Sleaford, Lincs, NG34 7TW

Present: Cllr D Suiter, Chairman of the Council

Officers: Clerk.

Members of Staff: 3

Press: 0

The meeting was attended by approximately 25 members of the public including Sleaford Town Councillors and staff

ATM. 1 Apologies

Apologies, with reasons had been received from Councillors P McCallum and J Brealeycook. These were accepted.

ATM.2 Minutes

IT WAS RESOLVED that these notes from the meeting held on 18th May 2016 be accepted as Minutes of that Meeting. The majority of those in attendance agreed. The Resolution was carried.

ATM.3 Mayor's Report

Changes to Sleaford Town Council over the last twelve months

Cllr D Suiter reported that Sleaford Town Council has undergone massive change over the last twelve months by restructuring its system of governance and has further modified it for the coming year.

Sleaford Town Council has abolished its five Committees and Working Groups. The remit of these Committees will be split between Panels who will report recommendations to Council. The majority of the Council's work will be dealt with by the Council as a whole. This will increase democratic participation and reduce the time between meetings, increasing efficiency and hours spent at Meetings.

As from the Annual Meeting to be held on 17th May 2017, the role of Leader will no longer exist within Sleaford Town Council.

Staff

A support of thanks was expressed to all Members of Staff for their ongoing hard work and dedication.

Town Hall

The Town Hall has now been purchased by the Council with a low interest rate loan. Rooms within the Town Hall are all available for hire, to members of the public.

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Date:

Signed:

Tractor Shed

The Tractor Shed has now been refurbished and is the central hub for the Services Team.

Neighbourhood Plan

Sleaford Town Council now has a Neighbourhood Plan, jointly with Kirkby La Thorpe which should give Sleaford residents more control over the Town's future.

Council Tax

Sleaford Town Council has for a long time kept Council Tax frozen. Council tax support scheme money is diverted away from Town and Parish Councils which leads to increased Council Tax level for the same income. Town and Parish Councils cannot in the long term sustain this pressure.

Markets

A Market Business Plan is awaited. The Town Council is ready to make improvements.

The Town Council has put resources into making the Christmas Market a success and provides Christmas Lights.

Maintenance and Relationships

Boston Road Recreation Ground and other areas have new equipment and the Skatepark has received major investment and has been refurbished.

The Town Council runs a large, generally well maintained Cemetery and a War Memorial.

Sleaford In Bloom has long been supported by Sleaford Town Council together Sleaford Museum and other good organisations within the Town.

Sleaford Standard together with the Town Council hold an annual Town Awards evening which is very successful and celebrates those great achievers.

Sleaford Twinning is often seen as an outside organisation to the Council which is not strictly true. This organisation carries out a task assigned to it by the Town Council. The Mayor reported on his recent visits to Fredersdorf-Vogelsdorf.

Mayoral/Chairman Duties

Much of the Mayor's role is ceremonial with extensive travelling around and outside the County, representing Sleaford. A support of thanks and appreciation was shown to Cllr K Fernandes and other Councillors who have acted as the Mayor's chauffeur. During the role as Chairman, Cllr Suiter reported that he has endeavoured to keep all Councillors working together, during some difficult and important times. Thanks, was given to Mr M Allan (former Councillor and Deputy Mayor) and Cllr J Mathieson for their role in supporting him.

ATM.4 Clerk's Report

Financial Matters 2016/17 & 2017/18

The Clerk reported the following:-

- Budget 2016/17 £587,349
- Precept £563,277 equivalent to £104.07 per BandD
- Balances/reserves £576k (£716k in 2016/16)

- Budget 2017/18 £607,715
- Precept £594,716 equivalent to £107.50 per BandD

14 staff (11 full time); 14 acre Cemetery; 150 allotments; 7 parks/play areas; 140 bins; 4 sets of toilets; overseen by 18 unpaid Councillors.

Financial Matters 2016/17 Main Reserves are:

- Eastgate Car Park Refurbishment £150k
- Parks & Playing Fields Capital Programme £88k
- Other Assets Capital Programme £75k
- General Reserves £160K
- Elections £22K
- Dickinson Fund £26k
- Planning Consultancy £25k

Achievements in 2016/17

- Purchase of The Town Hall
- Refurbishment of Tractor Shed
- Refurbishment of Cemetery Toilet Block
- Refurbishment of Skatepark
- Expansion of Christmas Lights
- Woodside & Schools Tree Planting (Tesco & SREP Projects)
- New way of working in the Council Chamber
- Delivering against our 3 year plan
- More public engagement

Challenges for 2017/18

- Progressing and finalising matters on:
Market Rights (NKDC)
Boston Road Site Access (Tesco)
Improved signage in Sleaford (NKDC & LCC)
Street Cleaning (NKDC)
River Slea (Environment Agency)
Eastgate Car Park
- Complete review of assets and make changes
- React to likely issues with grass-cutting and grot spots
- Improve website and engagement with residents

ATM.5 Questions from the Public

- Who is responsible for poor (“ugly”) quality of buildings in and around the Town?
- Who is responsible for privately owned houses with unkempt gardens?
- Why is the gate at Millfield Terrace end of the Cemetery locked?

The Clerk together with several Town Councillors explained that buildings and houses etc come under the remit of NKDC. Names of NKDC Officers were supplied to the Public.

The Shop Front Scheme was also explained. This scheme has involvement from NKDC, English Heritage and STC. STC has agreed to contribute for three years at £5,000 per annum.

The focus of the scheme is the improvement of the historic environment within the town centre where it has suffered due to lack of investment and inappropriate alteration and loss. By focussing the scheme on a tightly defined area within the town centre it is hoped to maximise the impact of the changes.

The Clerk explained the current situation and problems caused by vehicles parking at the Cemetery and did recognise the issues for parents in taking their children to and from school. The Clerk will review the matter.

ATM.6 Ideas and suggestion for future Council consideration

- Set up a Sleaford Pride Group - to tackle the River Slea and other grot spots – possibly to include Community Service Involvement
- Clubs and Societies Listing – Publication on STC’s Website
- Traffic – Relocation of Traffic Lights and Zebra Crossings.
- New Toilet Block in the Town Centre
- Activities within the Town – STC have appointed a Panel to cover this remit
- Engagement with Residents, Stakeholders, Business and Visitors
- Service Provision Listings – detailing remit of LCC, NKDC and STC

A support of thanks and appreciation to the Service Team for their continued efforts in keeping the Town Centre clean and tidy.

There were no more questions and the meeting closed at 8.30 pm