

# **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE PARISH OF OAKHAM TOWN HELD AT THE VICTORIA HALL ON WEDNESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017 AT 6.30PM**

## **Councillors in attendance:**

Cllr Adam Lowe (Chairman)

Cllrs Michael Haley, Peter Ind, Mrs Anne Skipworth, Miss Sally-Anne Wadsworth, Martin Brookes, Richard Haynes and Andrew Bennett

9 members of the public were also in attendance

## **01/17 OPENING REMARKS BY THE MAYOR OF OAKHAM**

The last 13 months have gone pretty quickly, and the Town council has dealt with many changes. Change means opportunity to me and despite the high turnover of Councillors over the years, not just this year, I believe OTC have gone from strength to strength, we have learnt many lessons as a team and we have many more to learn and the key focus for me should be for the Council as a whole is to embrace diversity, the communities we live and work in, have changed and are changing and we must adapt to stay current as the localism, ironically, agreed with a coalition government in 2011, continues to drive change and testing times for all Councils.

Oakham Town Council is responsible for the provision of allotments, management of the open green spaces and parks we own and where achievable ensure we have some return, although the focus is on the provision of these recreational facilities, like the Tennis and Bowls club for example.

With the localism Act came the inevitable passing of responsibility and associated costs, losing the support grant circa £17K, taking on the cost of unmetered energy for community (street) lighting, circa £12K, the Town Council kept the precept increase very low even with the additional cost incurred and on top of that have helped facilitate and fund the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

After careful consideration the Town Council did not to take over responsibility for managing the cemetery, partly due to it not being a requirement of the Parish to Maintain the Cemetery, more importantly though was ensuring we can continue to deliver minimal increase in future precept demands for the residents of Oakham.

### **Neighbourhood Plan.**

The Town Council with the interests of the residents of both Oakham and Barleythorpe opted to take up their right to initiate the development a Neighbourhood Plan.

Importantly, this should be for the community and with this in mind OTC determined that it should be developed by the community.

Council engaged with those who live or work within Oakham and Barleythorpe and invited applications to serve on a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. To ensure it is a genuine community led plan, the Steering Group's constitution is such that it only has two Town council members, neither of whom can Chair the Group, the other members are all drawn from the communities of Oakham and Barleythorpe.

The members have spent much of their free time engaging with the community, with events here at the Victoria Hall, at Tesco's, Aldi's and out in the street.

More recently a letterbox drop survey was conducted which gives the communities a chance to tell us how they would like to see both Oakham and Barleythorpe develop over the coming years.

The anticipated high response is indicative of the genuine interest everyone has in the place with live and work, and the Council is grateful for the ongoing work of the Steering Group and the community for responding in such a positive way. You will be hearing from the Steering Group shortly.

## **Audit**

The period between year-end (31 March) and June is a particularly busy time, with end of year accounts produced and approved by Council, the Internal audit is carried out and exacting financial information is sent to the External Auditors.

Providing End of year accounts are accurate, the Internal Auditor is satisfied and provides a satisfactory report and the External Auditor is satisfied with our financial controls, an unqualified External Audit Certificate is provided.

I am pleased to say that the Council received an unqualified audit for the 2015-16 fiscal year and i have no reason to believe we will not achieve the same or the year just ended.

The Council have in the last year outsourced some accounts work and payroll functions, apart from being value for money it is an additional sense check over a key area of responsibility of the Office and helps the staff ensure we achieve the highest standards whilst handling public money.

## **Staff**

Due to the resignation of the Clerk to the Council most of last year we had to engage the services of a Locum Clerk, Mr Malcolm Plum, being a qualified and very experienced Clerk, he helped to guide us through the year and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Malcolm for his invaluable service and commitment.

At the same time and with Council's and Malcolm's encouragement, our Assistant Clerk, Allison Greaves is undertaking training to become a qualified clerk and I am pleased that the Council chose to appoint her as the new Clerk to the Council, effective as from 1 May 2017.

Subject to Council's agreement, Malcolm will remain with us, in the role of a consultant Clerk until we can recruit a part time office assistant which will be advertised in due course.

## **Mayors Charity**

During my year I chose to support Round Rutland, part of the Rural Community Council of Leicestershire and Rutland, they support people and sustain communities and the emphasis is on health and wellbeing. Round Rutland is run by Sue Renton and they are based at the Oakham Enterprise Park.

Having taken a slightly different approach this year, I chose, after discussion with Sue, that raising charity money was not essential criteria. The focus has been around supporting by attending the social events that the Round Rutland have arranged to help encourage the Rural Community Council approach of supporting people with the health and wellbeing being very much at the forefront of the events.

Round Rutland receives its main funding from a lottery grant, so without the need to raise funds I did however choose to make a personal donation of £1000 to the events direct to Round Rutland, The Victoria Hall and by purchasing gifts and chocolates for the events.

Over the last year we held a; Summer Cruise Tea; Craft Cafe and McMillan Tea; Christmas Tea where everyone received a present from myself dressed as modern Father Christmas in a red tweed suit; Easter Movie Matinee at Oakham School where everyone received a chocolate bunny rabbit and several Easter eggs and an Afternoon May Tea with a 40's theme and on that occasion, I was dressed as a Captain in the Rutland Home Guard. Nearly all the events have also been supported by the attendance of the Lord Lieutenant of Rutland Dr Laurence Howard and Mrs Christine Howard, High Sheriff 2016, Dr Sarah Furness and High Sheriff 2017, Mr Craig Mitchell.

## **Thankyou**

The year has been a great success and that is not just down to me, there are several people who I would like to acknowledge, without whom things would of been a lot harder, if not impossible and certainly not as enjoyable.

Mayoress, Mrs Julie Lowe  
Lord Lieutenant Dr Laurence Howard and Mrs Christine Howard  
High Sheriff, Dr Sarah Furness and Peter Furness  
High Sheriff, Mr Craig Mitchell  
Clerk to the Council, Allison Greaves  
Deputy Chairman, Councillor Michael Haley  
Robert Clayton, Rutland County Council  
Sue Renton and her team  
Conrad Nancarrow, Oakham School  
Locum Clerk Mr Malcolm Plumb  
Cllrs, Joyce Lucas, Martin Brookes, Stan Stubbs, Sally-Ann Wadsworth,  
Richard Haynes, Peter Ind, David Romney, Andrew Bennett, Anne Skipworth

### **02/17 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON MAY 11<sup>TH</sup> 2016**

It was unanimously agreed that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016 be signed by the Chairman as a true record of that meeting

### **03/17 TO CONSIDER ISSUES RAISED BY THOSE ATTENDING RELATING TO THE TOWN OF OAKHAM**

Mrs Patsy Clifton raised issues over the town centre road works and the proposed one-way system

*The Chairman replied that all comments were noted*

Cllr Martin Brookes raised an issue over the Mayors Charity account and asked if he had provided the office with receipts?

*The Chairman replied a spreadsheet has been given to the office regarding the nominated charity I supported this year. There were no receipts as this was a self-funded charity this year and the Council did not support it in any financial capacity, I did have some support from some Cllrs on occasion and for that I am very appreciative.*

Cllr Anne Skipworth asked if any donations had been paid into the Mayors Charity Account?

*The Chairman replied, no, I chose not to raise any money*

In closing the meeting, the Mayor Cllr Adam Lowe invited members of the public to attend the Annual Meeting of the Oakham Town Council which would commence in the Town Council Offices at 7.00pm

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 6.52pm

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chairman  
8<sup>th</sup> May 2018**