

EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** of the Town of Evesham held in the Town Hall, Evesham, at 6.30pm on **MONDAY 14 APRIL 2014**

Those present:-

Chairman: Councillor M S Goodge (Town Mayor)

Councillors: Cllr A P Booth, Cllr J Bulman Cllr P R Boyd Cllr M D Elliman,
Cllr Mrs B A Gurden, Cllr M Hammon, Cllr C D Homer, Cllr Mrs L S Jakeman,
Cllr R A Jakeman, Cllr R S W Jones Cllr G O'Donnell, Cllr Mrs D R Raphael,
Cllr R W Raphael, Cllr Mrs J E Sandalls, Cllr Mrs F S Smith, Cllr J H Smith,
Cllr I J Stewart, Cllr Mrs J M W Taylor, Cllr N S Tucker, Cllr Mrs R J Whiting.

Officers: Mr S D Carter (Town Clerk), Mrs C Chambers (Finance Officer)

Approximately 23 members of the public and 1 member of the press were present.

1. Welcome by the Town Mayor

The Town Mayor, Councillor M S Goodge, welcomed the public to the meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were submitted

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

A copy of the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 8 April 2013 had been circulated with the agenda it was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes be taken as read and adopted.

4. Annual Report by the Town Mayor

The Town Mayor read gave a report of his mayoral year.

5. Items Raised

- (a) Rosalie Daubney asked why the Council had ceased its free collection of bulky waste, highlighting that she believed it would lead to an increase in flytipping.

In response it was explained that this was a Wychavon District Council (WDC) service and that as a result no direct answer could be given. It was noted that WDC had carried out consultation when considering what services to keep and which to remove.

- (b) Emma Haynes asked if anything could be done about the approached to the roundabouts on the ring road as they were overgrown and untidy.

It was explained that the Town Clerk had already contacted Worcestershire County Council (WCC) about this, and would chase up again.

Clerk's Note: WCC have confirmed that this is the responsibility of the Highways Agency and that they would take this up with them directly.

- (c) A question as asked regarding empty shops and whose responsibility it was to clean vacant units. It was felt that a number of untidy vacant shops were letting the centre of the town down. Particular reference was made to the former health food shop at the junction of Melsungen Allee and Bridge Street.

Cllr O'Donnell responded by stating that it was usually the lease holder who would be responsible for returning a shop to its former state, though the legal agreement between them and the landlord may state something different. Cllr O'Donnell went on to say that despite being empty many of the businesses were still paying rent to the landlords.

- (d) Ron stated that he had heard a rumour that the shopping centre was to close and be turned into flats and asked if this were true.

Cllr G O'Donnell responded by stating that WDC continued to talk to Axa who owned the shopping centre about its future. There were no plans to turn it into flats.

- (e) Vicki Wood asked if any progress had been made on the heating system at the town hall.

Cllr Mrs D R Raphael explained that this had been put on hold pending the outcome of New Homes Bonus funding, however, now this looked to be secure, it would be investigated once again.

- (f) Gus Thomson, referred to the proposed Waitrose development and asked who was paying for it.

Cllr J H Smith OBE stated that WDC were paying for the building of the store and would lease it back to Waitrose. When asked about Waitrose pulling out and leaving a 'white elephant' Cllr Smith stated that they had done their market research and there would be many legal obligations involved in the lease. He went on to explain that WDC would get a return from this investment. When asked about the fire station relocation, Cllr Smith confirmed that negotiations were on-going.

- (g) James Powell asked if the Town Council would support the Civic Society's plan for traffic management in Evesham. Their proposal would make a one way route around the town centre with mini roundabouts and no traffic lights.

The Town mayor stated that the Council could not either support or not support this proposal, instead it would have to go through the committee process.

- (h) David Way of the Civic Society informed Members that they were in the process of applying for funding to develop a Conservation management Plan for the Abbey Precinct.

- (i) Mr Purser asked when the unsightly toilet block would be knocked down.

The Mayor confirmed that this had been approved by WDC and would be happening in the very near future.

- (j) Mr Marshall asked if Hochtief had been asked to clean up the mess around the bridge, stating that the residents had been insulted by the lack of transparency surrounding the bridge project and that councillors did not bother.

It was explained that the final parts of this Worcestershire County Council project were still on-going and that the mess would be cleared up. It was explained that Town Council Members were residents too and that they did care as much as everybody else, which was why they were on the Council, which was entirely voluntary.

- (k) Mr Colin Tether informed Members that Heritage open Day was to be held over the September 14th weekend which also coincided with Evesham Cyclefest, and he asked whether the Town Hall would be open for visitors to look at? Last year it was not.

Both the Mayor and the Town Clerk assured Mr Tether that the Town hall would be open on the Sunday of the Heritage Open Day weekend.

- (l) Speaking about the number of developments being built in Evesham, Mr Jones asked whether the Town Council had a say on where they go?

It was explained that the Town Council is a statutory consultee, but ultimately the final decision rests with the District Council or even the Planning inspectorate. The Town Council expresses its opinion about housing and traffic but that we operate within a system. Central Government dictates how much housing is allocated to each area, and there is little option over this.

- (m) Ms Smith stated that there was nothing going on in Evesham and that the town was scruffy and the pavements dirty.

It was stated that far from nothing going on, the town was full of various festivals during the summer months, the majority of which were financially supported by the Town Council. Regarding, street cleaning, this was the responsibility of Wychavon District Council, and these concerns would be passed on.

- (n) Ms Margaret Thomson said that there were too many disabled parking spaces on Vine Street and High Street and that you had to reverse into the places which in turn blocked traffic.

In response, it was stated that this was the responsibility of Worcestershire County Council Highways Department, but that the disabled parking space allocation was inline with national guidelines.

The members of the public were thanked for their participation and their interest in the town. They were also informed that there would follow a formal Town Council meeting which they were welcome to attend if they so wished.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.15pm

COUNCILLOR M S GOODGE
TOWN MAYOR