

WESTBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**AT THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING held at THE LAVERTON, BRATTON ROAD,
WESTBURY on MONDAY, 25th APRIL 2016 at 7.00 pm.**

PRESENT: Cllr D Bradshaw (Chairman)

Mrs D Urch (Town Clerk), Mrs A McCann

15 members of the public

1 member of the press

T.3501 APOLOGIES:

Cllr I Cunningham	-	Unwell
Cllr Mrs S Ezra	-	Personal
Cllr Mrs C Mitchell	-	Personal

T.3502 MINUTES. The Minutes of the Town Meeting held on the 27th April 2015 were confirmed and signed by the chairman.

T.3503 REPORT by the TOWN MAYOR.

Good evening Ladies, Gentlemen and fellow Councillors

Each year we seem to say it has been a busy year; again this year has been no different. It has been an interesting year and one in which I have thoroughly enjoyed.

Some difficult decisions have had to be made and there will be more to make in the future. Wiltshire Council have been advising that due to their budget being cut many services will be affected and ultimately if local Town and Parish councils do not take over these services they will close. As a result Westbury Town Council has recently agreed to take over the Public Toilets in the Car Parks at Warminster Road and High Street, together with the maintenance of some flower beds in the town centre that were previously maintained by Wiltshire Council.

Also we are trying to finalise taking over the Allotments in Queens Road which is a process that has taken almost two years.

Going forward discussions will take place regarding Play Areas, Bus Shelters, Car Parks and the Cemetery.

We have been planning for the possibility of taking over these services for a couple of years now and this has resulted in our precept increase being quite high for the last two years and as a result we are in a better position financially

to be able to manage any services that may be taken over. This year's precept increase was 26p per week on a Band D property and we advised local residents of the potential increase in advance through our Christmas Booklet, our Newsletter and the local press. As a result we only had two letters from local residents asking why the percentage increase was so high compared with Wiltshire Councils increase. The Clerk wrote to both individuals with a detail explanation, one did not reply and the other wrote back thanking for the explanation saying he now understood why we had to take this course of action.

Also as a result of receiving a reduced level of service from Wiltshire Council we have employed a Town Caretaker to enhance any service that we will receive from Wiltshire Council. He has a wide remit which will include, keeping the town centre clean of litter, weeding in our flowered borders, keeping our footpaths clean from litter, dog mess and brambles, plus minor maintenance tasks. We hope this will encourage everyone to help us keep the town clean and take pride in our town.

Our Committees:

Our Highways Planning and Development committee meet on the third Monday of each month discussing many planning applications, consultations and highways issues. However many hours have been spent on two particular Planning Applications in the last few months, one being the development of the Westbury Hospital site and the other the development of the Westbury Sailing Lake site. Many consultations have taken place on topics including Rail Transport, Local Bus Services, Car Parks and Public Toilets. Local highways issue seem to be increasing including requests for Double Yellow Lines and complaints about Parking on pavements.

We have recently obtained a Speed Indicator Device (SID) and we will be sharing this with Dilton Marsh. This will be placed in various locations known to have problems with speeding vehicles.

Our Policy and Resources committee, formerly General Purposes, has over the past year been looking ahead. Firstly by redefining and confirming the remit of each committee. They currently have a working group who are finalising a Business Plan which will be presented to Town Council.

This is a very active committee who are working hard to ensure that Westbury Town Council has all the Policies and Procedures in place together with the resources available to deal with the changes and challenges facing the town council in the future.

Working Groups:

From my comments above you can see the Delegation of Services group are currently very busy and will continue to be for some time dealing with Community Asset Transfers.

Out Town Improvement Group and Tourism Group between them have worked on a number of projects. Early in the year we updated our Town Maps, we installed 10 Blue Plaques and produced a Blue Plaque Trail leaflet. These are available in the Heritage Centre and from the town council offices and we understand a number of people have requested these leaflets. with older residents in the town.

Unfortunately Balfour Beatty did not complete the task of painting our Bollards in the High Street but officers at Wiltshire Council are currently obtaining new quotes for us.

Earlier in the year we had new parking restriction signs erected in the High Street and whilst these works were being carried out we had two bicycle racks installed, one outside McColl's newsagent and one opposite the Library.

The Streetscene working group have almost completed the task of replacing all our old benches in and around the town. This year included Hospital Road, Oldfield Road and Westbury Leigh. We also installed a new one outside the Telephone Exchange which has proved very popular with older residents walking from the High Street to Morrisons.

Our events are increasing in size and popularity and before we start organising any event we need to meet the compliance of Wiltshire Councils health & safety requirements, licencing and road closure processes. As a result the town council recruited an Events Coordinator who started in August.

We did not have a Summer Event in 2015 but our Christmas Events Day and the Lights Switch-On, was again another success all thanks to our Town Council staff and members of the Events working group, Councillors and members of local groups and organisations. A big thank you to all those who attended and helped make the events so successful.

The events working group are busy preparing our Summer Street Faye and Evening Music Concert in July.

Also last week we celebrated the Queen's 90th Birthday by lighting the Beacon on the White Horse and the weekend before the Horse was cleaned ready for the event.

This was only a wash with the actual repaint due later in the year.

Our Great War working group has again continued to bring further exhibitions and displays to the town particularly at The Laverton. We had the very popular display for almost two weeks with the World War 1 bunker, recruitment campaigns and static displays. This was followed by the wonderful Art Display by Helen Chester. The Great War working group have recently finished the production of a short film featuring local relatives of those involved in WW1. They have also produced a Heritage Trail leaflet which is very interesting and concentrates on the older parts of the town.

For the first time bookings at The Laverton will achieve or be very close to achieving its target. Marketing still needs to continue as local competition for venues increases.

Our regular clients are, the Church and Dance group on a Sunday, Tai Chi on a Thursday, Credit Union on a Friday we also have the Masons, a Health Group, Labour Party, Youth Offending Team, Toddler Group, Training Express and Music and Arts Festival using the facilities regularly. Shortly we will have another Mother and Toddler group here with Active Trowbridge organising the activities.

Also we are about to start another stage of the Laverton refurbishment project. This will include the replacement of an old shed to the rear of the building and increase the size of a storage area at ground level to the rear of the building.

The Play Areas working group continues to inspect the Play Areas regularly and replaces equipment where necessary. As mentioned Play Areas is an asset that Wiltshire Council may want town and parishes to take over.

Again this year we were complimented on our Hanging Baskets and floral displays which this year included a border of flowers around the rotunda outside the Library and flowers in the borders at the top of Edward Street and Haynes Road after stripping out old shrubs. Our roundabouts again this year were very colourful and of the 22 spaces available 18 have sponsored signs in place. The spare ones are taken by Westbury Town Council and Laverton signs.

Mayoral Duties:

I and the Mayoress have attended almost 90 events representing the town as Mayor and I think the purchase of the Mayoral Robes has been a great success. On many occasions I have attended functions in robes and it was good to be with the majority rather than the minority. This was most evident at the Magna Carta celebrations in Salisbury where thousands lined the streets and gathered around the Cathedral grounds. Of all the towns taking part only three Mayors were without robes. One being Warminster and I see in the press recently there is talk of a local resident wanting to buy them some robes.

This year for the first time in several years we held a Civic Service in All Saints Church, A procession left the Laverton and went to the Church and following the service just under 100 returned to the Laverton for refreshments.

At our Civic Reception I presented three Civic Awards, to Crosspoint, Carole King and Lily Munday. I also presented the cadet of the year award to Eland Frost.

Yesterday I returned from our twinned town Chateau du Loir in France with our Twinning Group, being the first Mayor to attend in an official capacity representing the Town Council, where we inaugurated the road Rue De Westbury, in Chateau du Loir, jointly with their Mayor.

Summing up:

Recently our Town Clerk retired and our new Clerk, Deborah Urch joined us having previously worked for Somerset Council, and she is joining the Town Council at an exciting and challenging time for town and parish councils.

Finally I would like to thank all those who have helped with my fundraising events for my two charities, Welfare for the Elderly and Crosspoint who at the end of my Mayoral year should each receive £ 1500.00.

As I mentioned at the beginning I have thoroughly enjoyed my year as Mayor and I wish the new Mayor and Westbury Town Council the very best wishes for the future.

Cllr Sutton thanked the Mayor and Mayoress for all the work they have done over the last year.

T.3504

QUESTION TIME:

Dr Biggs

- Annual Town Meeting is a public meeting and needs to have more publicity.
- Disappointed with the number of town councillors in attendance tonight.
- Congratulations on the cleaning of the White Horse .
- Blue Plaques have just enough information and are well sighted.
- Flower beds are fine but when will you need to replace the dying flowers with new?
- What is the Town Council doing and what is the plan for say 5 years time?
- Campus - Westbury Town Council should start considering taking this on and looking to develop Westbury Library as the hub. Can you pool the Section 106 monies from new developments to develop the library as the hub?
- Leisure activities – Ask Wiltshire Council what they plan to do regarding the both the pool and the recreation centre. Westbury Town Council should look to improve conditions for the town.

Mr Jones

- Thank you to all the councillors for their hard work.
- New responsibilities from Wiltshire Council – what representations were made to them?
- Why has the council tax increased as services have been lost?
- Is Westbury Town Council promoting the High Street? Is it a focus of representations?
 - Gordon King answered this question by stating Westbury Town Council has a Business Plan Working Group which is developing 12 objectives, one of which is the complete enhancement of the High Street.

With regards to delegation of services Gordon King advised Mr Jones to contact his MP.

Regarding the council tax Gordon King explained Wiltshire Council's budget has been cut from central government.

Helen

- Fantastic job on the White Horse
 - As a regular user of Leighton Recreation Centre, concerned if funding is cut that it may have to close.
 - Is anything being planned to be done about the empty buildings in the Market Place?
 - Gordon King replied that Wiltshire Council have no plans in the future to close Leighton Recreation Centre.
- With regards to the empty properties in the Market Place it will be up to the owners to take this forward.

David Tout

- At last year's Annual Town Meeting a Parish Poll was requested – why was this not held and were letters sent to the people listed informing them why?
 - Pooling of Section 106 money (referred to by Dr Biggs above) – With regards to current developments Westbury Town Council and Wiltshire Council cannot change what they are already allocated to.
 - The toilets in the High Street – one is out of order and the disabled toilet has no paper.
 - Street Cleaning/Litter Collecting – is this being done regularly as some parts of the town are a disgrace?
 - Gordon King answered that the Parish Poll did not go ahead after the advice received from Wiltshire Council was that the question for the poll was not lawful. All those involved were advised not to proceed and agreed not to go ahead.
- Regarding neglected issues around the town the new Town Caretaker would address these when he takes up post in May.

Keith Harvey

- Westbury Bypass – could this be placed on a future agenda as lorries have increased through Westbury.

Mike Sutton

- Traffic through Westbury is a big problem.
- Parish Boundaries – Westbury Town Council is looking to review the Parish Boundaries and if the White Horse can be included in the boundary of Westbury. Westbury Town Council recently contributed £7000 towards the cleaning of it and it is currently in Bratton Parish. This is all part of the 5year plan to review the boundaries.
 - Bill Braid: Boundary Commission should extend the Westbury boundary and have said so for years. Army Officers Selection Board is to be sold to build houses. Matravers School have outgrown their site and were looking for a new site a few years

ago. A developer should look to move Matravers to the AOSB site and move the High Street to the Matravers site and then turn the current High Street into housing.

- Gordon King - We are about to embark on a Neighbourhood Plan
- Mr Jones – Will the NHP revisit a Bypass?
- Gordon King – We would hope so, the reason why it was turned down was because we hadn't considered alternatives and Wiltshire Council had no appetite in pursuing it.

The Mayor of Westbury, Cllr David Bradshaw thanked everyone for attending.

8.15 pm

**Signed on behalf of the Meeting
this twenty fourth day of April 2017**

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