

ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held in Ellesmere Town Hall on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2019

<b><u>PRESENT:</u></b>	Town Mayor (Chair):	Cllr R Hartley
	Councillors:	Cllrs Mrs J Clayton, G Elner, J Frost, P Goulbourne, M Hancock, B Reincke and Mrs A Wignall
	Acting Clerk and RFO:	Jo Butterworth
	Assistant Clerk:	Phil Smith
	Unitary Councillor:	1
	Members of the Public:	3
	Press:	1
	Guests:	3

ATM 1/19 **Apologies for Absence**

None.

ATM 2/19 **Minutes**

It was moved by Cllr P Goulbourne, seconded by Cllr J Frost and

**RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting on 9 May 2018 be approved and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.**

ATM 3/19 **Speaker – Shaun Burkey, Country Parks & Sites Officer (North) – Shropshire Council**

The Town Mayor welcomed Shaun Burkey, who gave a presentation about the planned new café/visitor centre for The Mere, and other proposed developments for the Swan Hill depot site.

Mr Burkey stated that visitor surveys had identified demand for an indoor facility at the Mere. Local stakeholders were in support of the project, including the Town Council who had provided financial support towards the project. He showed drawings and plans for the proposed design and layout of the café/visitor centre. It would be a wooden construction, and was designed to fit into the landscape. It would have provision for an indoor play area and exhibition space. It was intended that the facility would be run by a third party, and would be self-funding. The cost for phase 1 of the project (including the visitor centre/café and new equipment for the adjacent play area) was around £419k, with £291k coming from EU funding, £118k from Shropshire Council and the Town Council contributing £10k. A planning application would be submitted by 21 June 2019, followed by a full application for funding to the European Rural Development Programme. Discussions had been held with the tenants at the Boathouse, and they did not see the proposed facility as conflicting with their business. Phase 2 of the project would include additional car parking provision and developing the rest of the old depot site for use by compatible small businesses – eg; canoe hire.

Further information was provided in response to questions, including:

- the proposed new-build facility would have little or no impact on wildlife, and would help visitors to have a better appreciation/experience of the outdoors and nature.
- The exhibition space in the facility could be used flexibly for providing information and displays on the town and its history;
- Any activities/outdoor sports on the Mere would be carefully managed in terms of numbers allowed on to the water at any one time.

ATM 4/19

#### **Honorary Freeman**

The Town Council had agreed to award Honorary Freeman status to Mrs Averil MacDonald and Mr Ian Ward in recognition of their long service as former members of the Town Council and their contribution to the community through voluntary work and looking after the interests of the town. Both individuals had served as Town Mayor for two years.

The Town Mayor congratulated Mrs MacDonald and Mr Ward, and presented them each with a certificate to mark their becoming an Honorary Freeman of Ellesmere.

ATM 5/19

#### **Town Mayor Report on the Civic Year 2018/19**

Cllr R Hartley, Town Mayor, presented his annual report for the people of Ellesmere, as follows:

“It has been an honour to serve as Town Mayor for a second year. And it has been a privilege to have awarded our two outstanding past Councillors and Mayors their Honorary Freeman Status.

My first year seemed to pass by uneventfully though the same cannot be said for the Clerk. However this year has been a little more turbulent! It is for this reason that I would like to thank our Town Councillors and especially our Town Hall staff for their excellent support and effort over this period.

We were shocked and disappointed to receive the resignation of our Town Clerk due to health reasons. Mrs Mandy Evans had served the Council for 10 years bringing it up to speed for the modern era. This had involved much work over and above the normal running of the Council with many new rules and regulations, and she was especially keen to keep the Council and Councillors on a legal footing. I would like to thank our two Assistant Clerks for stepping into the breach and standing in for Mandy whilst on sick leave, and after her resignation - Jo Butterworth for working as Temporary Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, and Phil Smith for assisting as much as possible - and our Caretakers, Clive Parry and Des Harvey, have helped man the Reception two mornings a week, and stood in for extra duties due to Assistant Caretaker illness.

We have been unfortunate to also lose some Councillors. Two long-standing ex Members have passed away this year, Mrs Kath Owen who was Mayor in 1979 and 1980, and Glyn Lewis who served for many years. We also received the resignations of four Councillors in the latter part of the year. One position has been filled, we are advertising the other vacancies and hope for a good response

from the community.

It is good to report that we have been able to keep the increase in the precept to 1% for a second year despite having many unforeseen costs, these have included £5,000 for the Library, £10,000 towards a feasibility study at the Swan Hill site, and £3,400 to match fund improvements to the Mereside Cottage. At the Town Hall we are commissioning work to improve the entrance, plus replacing the street lights with LED , all of which should save energy and help with the green agenda.

May 19th is the centenary of the meeting at the Royal Albert Hall organised by Eglantyne Jebb and her sister Dorothy when the Save the Children Fund was founded. The Council have erected signs on the roads into town to signify that she was born in Ellesmere. The Ellesmere Sculpture Initiative Group are commissioning a Memorial to Eglantyne to go in the Cremorne Gardens. Also at the Mere it is great to see that the Sshhh sculpture has been replaced. The Arboretum is being rejuvenated and a group of volunteers are tidying up the Promenade and Gardens.

Down at Birch Rd in conjunction with Shropshire Wildlife Trust we are in the process of getting the area of the pond and Recreation Ground designated as a Local Nature Reserve.

We are currently updating the Place Plan with Shropshire Council. This is involving our Vision Group which was instigated by Councillor Ben Reincke, and should bring more structured future development in the Town.

The last year was the centenary of the end of World War 1 and it was wonderful to see the community coming together at many events and occasions to commemorate this with The Royal British Legion at the forefront and having a record breaking Poppy Appeal.

Ellesmere is a growing town and continues to have a buoyant retail centre. The many community groups cater for a wide cross section of interests. This all makes it a great place to live and long may it remain so”.

ATM 6/19      **Elector’s Issues and Concerns**

No issues were raised.

The meeting ended at: 6.53pm

Town Mayor: .....

Date: .....