

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 21 MAY 2019

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting.

PRESENT

The Mayor – Councillor Davies
Councillor Adams
Councillor Barlow
Councillor Brady
Councillor Garvey
Councillor Hall
Councillor Hart
Councillor Hawley
Councillor Jackson
Councillor Jones
Councillor McLoughlin
Councillor Perkin
Councillor Redfern
Councillor Rogers
Councillor Rushton
Councillor Salt
Councillor Sheldon
Councillor Smith
Councillor Swift
Councillor Yates

Also in attendance:
The Chief Officer
Events and Partnerships Officer
Member of the press

The Mayor presented the chain of office to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor John Jones, who had been unable to attend the Annual Meeting of the Town Council as he was visiting Buckingham Palace. The Deputy Mayor thanked Councillors for their support.

1.19 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence and reasons accepted were received from:

Councillor Harper

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Minutes of the Annual Town meeting held on 15 May 2018 were signed.

3. ANNUAL REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Annual Report and unaudited Financial Statement for the year ended 31 March 2019 were received.

4. TO DISCUSS ANY OTHER ISSUES RAISED BY ANY ELECTOR PRESENT

Councillor Salt had been asked to read a letter from Elaine and Nick Witham:

I am writing to express my considerable concern for the general state of the pavements/ footways in Biddulph. Unfortunately, my mother fell on uneven paving stones on King Street three weeks ago and sustained a deep laceration and severe bruising that required hospital treatment.

I have since heard of several other incidents where older people have fallen in the street recently due to uneven and poorly maintained pavements and crossing points. The uneven paving is particularly bad outside the Biddulph Health Centre, parts of the High Street, Halls Road and other locations that are too numerous to mention.

It is my concern that this [is] affecting people's independence and confidence in walking in the street. There is already a growing concern amongst our elderly residents of social isolation and the failure to maintain safe pavements and footways is increasing this concern.

Although I am aware of budgetary constraints, I wish to bring this to your attention as a matter of urgency.

Councillor Salt noted the issues in the letter and expressed concern about the content. Councillor Salt understood that Mrs Witham's mother was now scared to leave the house. Councillor Salt felt that the Town Council should raise these issues with the District and County Councils, who have these responsibilities.

Councillor Jones noted that Highways was the responsibility of the County Council, but it was important for the Town Council to communicate effectively about the issues in the town.

Councillor Hawley felt that the issues raised by Mrs Witham were also prevalent on Biddulph Moor; elderly residents were now unable to walk to the shops because the pathways were so poor. Councillor Hawley had raised this issue with Councillor Lawson. This letter should be sent to the County Council and a response requested.

Councillor Yates noted that the Wharf Road car park was the responsibility of the District Council.

Councillor Davies felt it was a shame this car park had been patched and not re-surfaced when the Health Centre was developed.

Councillor Jones felt that the state of the roads had never been as bad in his memory; he despaired of the District and County Council as there was a lack of commitment to the area. The grass on Biddulph Moor was like a jungle. The District is Officer-led and not Councillor-led. Councillor Jones felt the pavements are dangerous and wheels and tyres are frequently destroyed. If a cyclist hit some of the potholes in the town, there could be a fatality.

Councillor Jones felt that the Town Council should make strong representations.

Councillor Davies agreed.

Councillor Hall noted that procurement had been undertaken on the Wharf Road car park.

Councillor Redfern had been lobbying for the pavements on Park Lane to be re-surfaced for four and a half years; the infrastructure in the town is breaking down. Councillor Redfern is concerned about Mill Hayes Road and backed up Mrs Witham's concerns about the Wharf Road car park and Halls Road.

Councillor Jackson had been promised when he was a County Councillor that the pavements on Park Lane would be re-surfaced within 6 months, but this had not happened. He was aware that Councillor Flunder had also made these requests.

Councillor Jackson wondered who was making the decisions. The County Council should be a Councillor-led administration.

Councillor Yates wondered if the Town Council could press for a date for the re-surfacing of the Wharf Road car park. The edging on the roundabouts on the A527 is also a concern.

Councillor Salt made a proposal that the Town Council writes to the County Council to request that a site visit is undertaken; all Councillors will have the opportunity to contribute to the content of discussions at this site visit.

It was agreed that this proposal should be added to the Town Council agenda in June 2019.

The meeting closed at 6.17 pm

Signed Date