

Heanor and Loscoe Parish

Minutes Of The Annual Town Meeting held on 20 May 2024

PRESENT: 71 persons as detailed in the attendance register (including 5 Members of the Town Council).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr A Sharpe (Clerk to the meeting).

001 Chair

In the absence of the Town Council Mayor and Deputy Mayor it was **Resolved** that Stefan Kruczkowski be appointed Chair for this meeting.

002 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 18 May 2023 be approved.

Note – General comment from meeting that Minutes should be published in draft on the website in a timely manner.

003 Town Council's Financial Statement for 2023/24

The Town Council year-end accounts for 2023/24 have been finalised. They show a net asset balance of £326,624.15.

The Town Council continue their tenancy agreement with Derbyshire Dales Citizen Advice for Units 3, 4 and 5 on the lower level of the Town Hall, the Service Level Agreement with Groundwork Greater Nottingham for the maintenance of The Red River Local Nature Reserve and the Service Level Agreement with Derby and Burton NHS Trust which secures their hire of The Old Fire Station for the provision of a regular phlebotomy service.

The summer planting and Christmas lighting scheme both, again, proved very popular with our residents and visitors to the area. Neighbouring Parishes and Towns contacted us to praise the Christmas lights.

The Town Council provided £11,500 in funding to support the community and enable various activities and events. This funding was received by the following local organisations :

5th Heanor Guides.
Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre
Heanor Weenies
2nd Heanor Rainbows
Heanor Vision
Heanor Town Football Club

Carousel Craft Club
Infinite Wellbeing
The Lion's Den Boxing Club
Shipley Hall Cricket Club
Sing Along With Ellie

£100k was taken from balances to fund the final 'Fit Out' of the Charles Hill Community and Sports facility in Loscoe. This building was officially opened on Monday 8 April 2024.

A number of projects were taken from balances this year, namely: ensuring the Fallen Sculpture project was completed and the sculpture is now sited in Heanor Memorial Park – a permanent reminder of those that gave their lives in WW11, replacing picnic tables and benches at The Wilmot Street Centre and installation of safety controls for the shutters at The Old Fire Station.

The Town Hall and The Wilmot Street Centre brought in revenue @ 39K. Both annual Income and Expenditure figures were very much in line with the projected budget.

The precept for 2024/25 has been set at £281,409, a 6% increase on last year.

RESOLVED that the statement be received.

004 Mayor's report

As the Mayor was not in attendance there was no report.

005 Public Comment

Members of the public asked a number of questions and made many comments relating to Heanor and Loscoe.

These comments and questions together with responses are detailed in the appendix to these minutes.

006 Any other Relevant Business

RESOLVED

(1) that the Town Council be asked to arrange a further Town Meeting to receive a follow up report on the comments and questions raised at the meeting. (Suggested date 15 July 2024).

(2) That a vote of thanks be recorded in the minutes to the Chair of the meeting and the Clerk.

APPENDIX 1

Matters Raised with Feedback. Questions and comments in **Bold**, followed by response.

Public comment

There was Confusion on Mr A Sharpes role with the Town Council and what his duties were.

Mr Sharpe –explained his role was to support the Town Council and its staff . He had initially been employed as a Locum but was now employed for 8 hours per month by the Town Council until 31 March 2025. He also explained his role in clerking this meeting.

Q1 : A Mayor has been elected for the East Midlands, why do we not get to elect our town mayor?

Response -These are two completely different events. The Local Government Act 1972 sets out how the Town Council appoints it's Mayor and it is done so at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council by the elected Councillors. There is no public vote. The law dictates this.

Request from the meeting - could the town council produce a short, plain English explanation on its website that explains the difference between elected and no elected mayors and their respective roles?

Response : This information is widely available on the internet.

Q2 : Attendance of town councillors at meeting. Where can I find this information?

Answer: On the minutes of meeting.

Suggestion: could this information be easily consolidated for the public, e.g. at a glance you can see town councillor attendance over a calendar year? (think a simple spreadsheet would do the job that could be posted on line)

Response : Noted

Q3 : Can the public here have a vote of no-confidence in the Mayor and the town councillors at this meeting?

Response: No, the meeting does not have that power.

Q4 : Suspension of 1A bus service is affecting residents and needs to be reinstated.

Response: Question to be raised with Derbyshire County Council and the service provider.

Q5 : Can TC use social media to publicise meetings?

Response – Meetings are advertised on the Town Council's website and noticeboard to comply with the law.

Q6 : As Many Town councillors are in there 60s/70s, should they retire and let younger people with fresh ideas be councillors?

(note later in the meeting member of the public took objection to this comment)

Response – The law sets out who can stand for election. Age is not a factor.

Q7 : Concern re: potholes. Why can't those responsible for potholes do the job properly?

Responses: This is the responsibility of Derbyshire County Council.

Q8 : Christmas lights were brilliant and so popular, Why don't we do more events throughout the year.

Response – The Town Council sponsor a number of community led events and are looking to increase the number of events organised on the completion of Heanor Market Place development.

Q9 : What public consultation was there on the spending of £100k? at the Charles Hill Playing Fields?

Response – The Town Council received a petition signed by 600 residents supporting the development at Charles Hill. The Town Council is elected to make decision such as this and it is not practical to consult the public on all decisions.

Q10 : Squire Mundy gifted the market place to residents (second member of public commented that he gave the Wilmot Street Recreation Ground too). Why do AVBC say they own it? Why is there not a sign to indicate the donation?

Response – This question should be raised with Amber Valley Borough Council.

Q11 : Chilton TC offices are open 5 days a week, 9 – 5, why is ours not?

Response – There is not the demand nor the finance available to justify this in Heanor.

Q12 : Regeneration plan statement (received from a member of public) -

The Action Plan is NOT a Town Centre Regeneration Plan and effectively those items in the Action Plan are all lofty ambitions but no specific detail. For example: it says: Work with partners to ensure Heanor Town Centre becomes a Vibrant economic area and attract a new generation of entrepreneurs to put roots in the Town helping build the Town as a future facing go-to destination for a new generation of visitors, But in the action column all it says is :’Discuss with relevant Cabinet members at AVBC’.

There are great developments in the town funded by the government at the Grammar and on the market place, but the Town Council seem incapable of taking meaningful and positive action to improve Heanor.

Will the Council now accept that there are significant shortcomings and explain why they have failed to engage with Dr Stefan Kruczkowski who is a Heanor resident and expert Town Planner who has offered his services for free.

And will the council accept that they have to work much harder to engage with residents and local groups and need to spend our money where it matters most on the town?

Response: This question, and many similar questions have been asked of the Town Council over the last year. The Town Council will not be making any further comments on this matter.

**Q13 : Care home closures – are people aware? Public consultation. Can the town council support efforts to resist the closure?
6 August deadline.**

Response – The Town Council is aware of this issue and have made representations. There is currently a public consultation being undertaken by Derbyshire County Council.

Q14: What do the town clerks do? Why are there three?

Response – The Town Clerks provide administrative services to the Town Council.

Q15: There was an invoice passed on the Council minutes for £2688 for a radiator.

Response – This was a mis-type – it was actually for a new website build.

Q16 : How do we get younger town councillors?

Response – The Law sets out the criteria for people who want to stand for election. Age is not a consideration.

Q17: With the Grant of £3000 to Salcare. Lindsay Farnsworth was in the photograph of the presentation. As a prospective political candidate was this appropriate?

Response: This photograph was taken by Salcare, NOT the Town Council.

Q18: On the Market place we down from 4 disabled spaces to 2.

Comments made -

Chair – was a lot of public consultation at the time by AVBC.

There's 70 spaces coming at the college and

can the spaces at the back of the town hall be used for disabled bays as public pay for these as rented by town council.

Response – The spaces rented at the rear of the Town Hall are utilised by Town Council staff and hirer's of the Town Hall.

Q19: Works in the town positive but so much more needs to be done.

Response - Comment Noted.

Q20 : Comment that too few Dentists and with the development in the area – pressure on local services.

Response: The provision of Dentists lies with NHS Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board.

Q21: Wasn't money spent on audio visual equipment at the Wilmot Street Centre? Why is there no microphone in use at the meeting?

Response – There is a hearing loop on site and microphone available to users of the Centre.

Q22 : Regarding the Showman's Guild donation which is going to the Mayors Charity . What is this money used for each year? Evidence of this money being banked requested? FOI.

Response – Noted that gentleman who raised this would put an FOI request in.

Q23 : Can we have two meetings like this a year?

Response – Request noted.

Q24: Graffiti - Can the town council do something to remove graffiti across the town?

Response – The Town Council are currently working with Amber Valley Borough Council to provide an enhanced cleaning scheme throughout the Town.

Q25 : How can we influence where the town council spends money?

Response – It was deemed that this question was directed to those attending the meeting, rather than as a question to the Town Council.

Q26: Can businesses affected by market place get additional relief on rates?

Response – Business rates are the responsibility of Amber Valley Borough Council.

Q27: HMOs': how many is too many? Multiple ones on single streets are causing issues.

Response – HMO's are covered by Planning at Amber Valley Borough Council.

Q28 : No councillors here. No minutes.

Response – There were 5 Town Councillors present and the minutes were available at the meeting.

Q29 : No tenders for the fallen sculpture that went over budget. Why?

Response – Bespoke artwork. This question has been answered on a number of occasions.

Q30 : Has there ever been any public consultation about the Town Council sponsorship of Heanor Town Football Club which only benefits a small proportion of residents – Would our money be better spent on the Town itself?

Response – The sponsorship was as a direct result of a Grant Application request.

Q31 : Can the Town Council employ a part time town centre barrow person to help keep the Town clean and tidy?

Response – The Town Council are currently working with Amber Valley Borough Council to provide an enhanced cleaning scheme throughout the Town.