
MINUTES of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING held in the NEW MILLENNIUM CHAMBER, MANOR HOUSE, CHURCH STREET, LITTLEHAMPTON on THURSDAY 19 APRIL 2018 at 6.00PM

Present: 81 members of the public, The Town Mayor Cllr B Blanchard-Cooper

2017/2018

1. **EVACUATION PROCEDURES**
The evacuation procedures were noted.
2. **FILMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND MOBILE PHONES**
The procedures were noted.
3. **APOLOGIES**
There were apologies from Councillor Ayres and Jan and Roger Elliman, Arun Youth Aqua Club.
4. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**
The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 20 April 2017 were confirmed and signed as a true record.
5. **TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT and presentation of TOWN MERIT AWARDS**
 - 5.1 The Mayor, Councillor B Blanchard-Cooper welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the format for the evening. He emphasised that this was a meeting for residents of Littlehampton and not a meeting of the Town Council. As such, it was an opportunity for residents to ask questions, or comment upon, any issues affecting the Town or its residents. Referring to the recent concerns regarding the crime in the Town, he was very pleased to welcome Chief Inspector Kris Ottery from Sussex Police, who was the District Commander for Arun and Chichester. He explained that Chief Inspector Ottery would give an update on local policing and Police priorities for the forthcoming months.
 - 5.2 Commenting upon activities over the past year, the Mayor proceeded to give thanks to all the individuals, groups, organisations and societies that had worked hard to make the Town special. Regarding the recent criminal activity, he also acknowledged the concerns and sympathised with of residents. On a positive note, the Mayor was pleased to report

that many events and activities were planned for the coming year. In particular he looked forward to Armed Forces Day, the 100th Commemoration of the end of World War One, the Love Festival, the Town Show, two Screen on the Green evenings and a variety of exciting Christmas activities including the Light Switch On. He then proceeded to note the smaller events that included concerts and performances by Littlehampton groups, such as the Edwin James Festival Choir and the Littlehampton Concert Band. The Mayor also highlighted the activities planned in Wick namely, the Royal Knock Out to mark the Royal Wedding, Wick Week and Wickmas.

- 5.3** In conclusion he was honoured to have been given the opportunity to be Mayor and commented on the camaraderie he had found among his counterparts in the parishes also known affectionately as the “Chain Gang”. He thanked the Town Council for helping him to set up the Mayoral Facebook page, which allowed him to engage with more residents. He also thanked the Littlehampton Times, All About Littlehampton and the Littlehampton Gazette for allowing him a column to report on his activities and engage with the wider community.

Merit Awards

- 5.4** Turning to the Town Merit Awards, the Mayor explained that Councillors had nominated those who deserved recognition for their contribution to the Town. The awards once again highlighted the commitment that many individuals and groups had to the Town and he proceeded to present the awards. The first individual award was presented to Mrs Sue West for her sixteen years of voluntary work as a leader of the 1st Wick Guides. The Mayor thanked her for her forty plus years of voluntary work and was pleased to present her with the award.
- 5.5** The Mayor then presented a Group Merit Award to Littlehampton Shopmobility for over twenty years of service to residents and visitors to the Town. The charity had expanded over the years and played a key role in the National Registration of motor scooters. The Mayor was pleased to present this award to Mrs June Caffyn, the Shop Manager, for the invaluable service that the shop provided to residents and visitors of the Town.
- 5.6** Having concluded the presentations, it was noted that the remaining Town Merit Awards would be presented at Full Council on Thursday 17th May.

6 Presentation from Chief Inspector Kris Ottery, of Sussex Police

- 6.1** The Mayor handed over to Chief Inspector Ottery who gave an update on local policing.
- 6.2** Chief Inspector Ottery thanked the Mayor and residents for the opportunity to address the meeting and proceeded to outline the latest developments in local policing and the Police priorities for the coming months particularly regarding the recent escalation in criminal activity in

the Town. These had been reported in an article published in that days Littlehampton Gazette highlighting the action being taken to combat crime and anti-social behaviour in the Town. Due to the range of incidents being reported, work to address some of the underlying issues had commenced alongside Arun District Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team. This included out-reach work in the Town which was already showing positive results. Other action included behind the scenes work such as collecting CCTV footage and statements. Acknowledging that there was perception that nothing was being done to catch the perpetrators, he sought to reassure residents their concerns were being taken seriously and that this level of violence was not common. Consequently, more Officers would be seen in and around the Town to help tackle these issues and increase police presence. The Mayor thanked Chief Inspector Ottery for his update and opened up the meeting to the public for questions.

- 6.3** A Cornwall Road resident, expressed concerns regarding cyclists, particularly the young, that weren't visible at night either as a result of their clothing and / lacking of proper lights on bicycles. Suggesting the Police were well placed to intervene, especially at night, he asked if they could provide assistance to tackle this issue.
- 6.4** Chief Inspector Ottery responded that Officers were on patrol in the evenings and were aware of this concern, particularly in the winter months. It was noted that the police had funding available to provide lights to children to improve safety and overall visibility.
- 6.5** The owner of the Dolphin Pub, addressed the meeting and described in some detail her personal experience as a victim of anti social behaviour in the Town. She added that the Police response had left her feeling isolated within the community and that no one should have to endure this treatment.
- 6.6** There was strong support from those present for raising this issue and calls for the Police to be more supportive of the community. Chief Inspector Ottery acknowledged that there had been deficiencies in the Police response and explained that named contacts would be given to residents to help with reporting, collating information and formulating of a plan of action to tackle anti-social behaviour.
- 6.7** An Arundel Road resident who was also a Town Centre employee, expressed concerns about the lack of police presence in the evenings, particularly in the Town Centre car parks where gangs of youths tended to congregate.
- 6.8** In response, Chief Inspector Ottery explained that it was important to report incidents as they provided important intelligence enabling the Police to target patrols. He assured residents that his team was aware of this problem and the Police and District Council's Anti Social Behaviour Team were working together to tackle this problem.

- 6.9** The Chairman of the Littlehampton Badminton and Squash Club voiced concerns on the lack of a police presence after an arson attack at the Club Highlighting the potential severity of the attack had there been people there at the time of the crime, it had been fortunate that the property only had been damaged. He thanked the Arun District Council Business Wardens for the assistance they had provided at the time.
- 6.10** The Chairman of Town Traders' Partnership observed that the Police presence had improved over the recent weeks and that this move was welcomed by Traders.
- 6.11** The owner of Crafters Corner, questioned the Police response to incidents around the Town where it was thought that the culprits were known. This included incidents in the High Street, around Waitrose and the Manor House.
- 6.12** The owner of café 72, spoke of the vandalism he was facing to his property and stated that in his view the Town's reputation was suffering greatly as a result of the recent increase in the severity of incidents.
- 6.13** Chief Inspector Ottery reassured residents that tackling these issues were the Police's main priority and that part of the response was to deploy more Officers. He went on to explain that there were two parts to the solution and outline the actions that were being taken. The first was out-reach work and talking to those in the Town and seeing what is going on. The second was to investigate and invest more time and resources into the Town. It was noted that the incidences are a problem that they will be acting against, but it will take time.
- 6.14** A member of St. Mary's Church informed the Chief Inspector that drug litter was being found around the church. This was an ongoing issue that was being reported to the police.
- 6.15** A representative from the Arun Church addressed the meeting and explained that based on the work his Group undertook in the area, the majority of young people in the Town were well behaved and were not responsible for the recent escalation in problems in the Town Centre.
- 6.16** A Littlehampton Town Councillor commented that that recent escalation in problems could have been avoided if there had still been Police Community Support Officer's (PCSO's) in the Town. It was also observed that whilst the Force had faced significant reductions in resources, the Police had put a prevention team of Officers into Littlehampton to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour.
- 6.17** It was suggested that the Police needed to be more proactive in promoting the action that they were taking to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. It was acknowledged that more could be done in this respect and that in doing so, this would help alleviate some of the anger and frustration felt by residents.

- 6.18** The meeting was reminded that the Littlehampton Gazette, had that day published an extensive article that highlighted what the police are doing and provided answers to many of the questions being asked.
- 6.19** Deficiencies with the 101 reporting mechanism were raised during the meeting and it was noted that despite reassurances given at previous meetings, it had not improved. It was observed that this problem deterred people from making reports and providing the Police with some of intelligence information that it sought.
- 6.20** It was observed that a holistic approach was required to bring about the much needed change in criminal behaviour.
- 6.21** It was commented that whilst the Police and Crime Commissioner had recently announced plans to increase the number of Police Officers, the figures when spread throughout Sussex would only just meet the needs for policing in the Town and might not deliver the much needed improvements to the non-emergency reporting system. These were the things that would restore confidence in residents when they had to contact the Police.
- 6.22** A representative of the Littlehampton Baptist Church asked if the “Broken Window Policy” which looked at tackling minor crimes and had been shown to help prevent major crimes, would be adopted by Sussex Police. In response Chief Inspector Ottery explained how the Police and Anti Social Behaviour Team deployed the sanctions currently available to them to manage behavioural issues
- 6.23** In conclusion Chief Inspector Ottery thanked residents for their candour and assured them that their concerns had been heard. Highlighting the ways in which residents could report incidents he emphasised that even if they could not achieve direct contact with an Officer, voicemails and emails would always be passed on. He confirmed that he would remain after the meeting to speak to those who wished to him.

7. TO HEAR QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY GIVEN

- 7.1** There were two written questions, the responses to which had been provided and were circulated at the meeting (copies attached to the minutes).
- 7.2** An allotment had been provided with a formal response regarding the outcome of a complaint.
- 7.2** A resident of Pharos Quays, River Road had raised a number of relating the Town Council’s finances, the answers to which had also been provided.

8. TO HEAR QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC OF WHICH NOTICE HAS NOT BEEN GIVEN

- 8.1 The meeting received an update on the fund raising efforts of a resident in support local hospitals that had cared for him in recent years. A total of over £20,000 had been raised and he thanked local people for their support.
- 8.2 In response to a question about where to find advice on the planning application process, residents were directed to the District Council's website where guidance was available.
- 8.3 A New Road resident expressed concerns regarding traffic congestion in Pier Road which was compounded by dangerous parking. It was noted that West Sussex County Council had published a Traffic Regulation Order for this road which proposed increasing the restrictions in the vicinity by further prohibiting parking. Details of the proposals were available through the County Council's website and would be considered by the Town Council's Planning and Transportation Committee at its meeting on 30th April 2018.
- 8.4 The owner of café 72, asked if anything could be done to prevent vehicles passing through the High-street from Clifton Road. Observing that this was particularly dangerous for pedestrians, it was suggested that barriers be installed to stop vehicles accessing the pedestrianised space. It was noted that discussions regarding this issue were already taking place with the appropriate authorities.
- 8.5 A plea was made that the Town Council give consideration to providing long term support for the of the Wick Information Centre after the Section 106 developer funding ran out. This point was noted and it was reported that the Town Council was currently exploring proposals for community facilities in the area.
- 8.6 A resident of Cornwall Road asked if there was anything that could be done regarding the numerous potholes around the Town. It was noted that potholes should to be reported to West Sussex County Council and that if the Town Council received any reports, it would ensure that they were passed on.
- 8.7 Residents were informed of the current West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service consultation on its Integrated Risk Management Plan and urged to carefully consider the resources implications of the proposals as raised by the Union.

9. REPORT FROM REPRESENTAIVES OF LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

- 9.1 Councillor Ian Buckland, Chairman of Arun Access Group, was pleased to announce that it was the tenth year of voluntary work for the Group which aimed to ensure access for those with disabilities, wheelchair users and pushchairs. The Group met on the last Friday of the month

and volunteers were being sought. He also reported that a Littlehampton Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Club had been formed which met on Saturdays at Café 72 and he invited ex-services personnel to join the Group.

- 9.2** Mrs June Caffyn, Manager of Littlehampton Shopmobility, spoke on behalf of the Chairman and the Trustees of the Board and thanked customers for their loyalty and support. She reported that a new valeting service for scooters had been introduced and that the scooter registration service was now established thanks to the help and support of Sussex Police and the National Federation of Shopmobility UK. It was also pleasing to note that Littlehampton Shopmobility was shortlisted for the third year running in the Tom Hillier Award Competition and had been presented with a Highly Commended Award Certificate.
- 9.3** Tyndall Jones, representing the Littlehampton Bonfire Society, was pleased to announce that the Society had achieved their fundraising goal of £10,000. Thanks was given to the many people that had contributed to the collection and helped to achieve this goal. It was noted that due to the increasing costs of staging the annual event, the Society were actively looking for increased sponsorship alongside other means of generating income. Younger volunteers were also sought to help with the building of the bonfire and for the marshalling of the event. It was noted that the May Fair would take place on Saturday 12th May 2018.
- 9.4** Sarah Tyrell, Chairman of the Civic Society, briefly the interests of the Society and explained the focus of future works. This would be largely driven by the Arun Local Plan and the impact of future development particularly in relation to the West Bank.
- 9.5** Robert Boyce, representing the Littlehampton Ferry, gave an update on improvements to the service and highlighted the importance of having a vibrant waterfront in term of encouraging tourism.
- 9.6** The Harbour Master acknowledged the value of the River as a visitor attraction and observed that greater usage would provide much needed income to sustain the Harbour.
- 9.7** Mr Terry Ellis, Chairman of the Littlehampton Heritage Group, outlined the group's main aim to protect buildings and conservation areas. Mr Ellis explained that volunteers were needed to help with projects. An article featuring the Group would also be published in the May issue of progress.
- 9.8** Ben Young, representing the Arun Church, highlighted the support being provided for young people through youth projects at that operated out of a number of local venues. These were well-attended

and the work to date was positive providing a good forum to engage with young people and hear their views.

- 9.9** The Mayor, on behalf of the Friends of Mewsbrook Park, announced that he had recently been appointed Chairman of the Group which was growing from strength to strength.
- 9.10** Marie Wallace, representing the Littlehampton Town Twinning Association, reported that visitors from France would be coming over at the end of the month and from Germany later in the year.
- 9.11** The Mayor thanked everyone for their support and, once again congratulating the recipients of the Merit Awards, he brought the meeting to a close.

The meeting concluded at 8:00 pm.