



Minutes of The Annual Town Meeting Held in The Main Hall, Southfields Jubilee Centre, Southfields Road, Littlehampton. On Thursday 9 March 2023 at 6pm.

Present:

60 members of the public including Councillor Long – Town Mayor, Councillors Butcher, Price, Tandy, Turner and Woodman.

2022 to 2023

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:

Mrs June Caffyn, Littlehampton Shopmobility
Mrs Bourne, The Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner
Steve Trueman, Kamon Martial Arts
David Harris, The Littlehampton Heritage Railway
Mark Rodger, All Saints Wick
The Leader of Arun District Council, Councillor Shaun Gunner
Town Councillors Blanchard-Cooper, Buckland, Chace, and Dr Walsh
Councillor Tandy had a prior meeting and hoped to join the meeting as soon as he was able.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 21 April 2022 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

5. Town Mayor's Report and Presentation of Town Merit Awards

- 5.1.** Reflecting on the last twelve months, the Mayor began by commenting on the changes in the community and the whole country. Having overcome the challenges of the pandemic many were now facing a cost of living crisis that no one could have foreseen. As the Town Council did and continued to do its best to support the community, other nationwide events had also played a big part in how the country came together during 2022. Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee brought many back together to celebrate a truly memorable

event and mark the achievements of the second Elizabethan era. All too soon the country came together again to remember and mourn the loss of Her Majesty and witness the Proclamation of the new King, His Majesty Charles III. These times were difficult for everyone. The meeting paused for a few moments to reflect on those that had been lost in the last year.

- 5.2.** Speaking of the challenges that lay ahead in the coming months, the Mayor commented that these were huge and much different from those of the last two years. The threat of global conflict was sadly still with us, and the Town and residents faced unprecedented pressure on their budgets. The Town Council had done its best to meet that challenge and at the same time minimise the financial impact on residents, but vigilance would be the watchword going forward. She was proud to say that the great sense of community that she had witnessed during her Mayoral year continued to shine through and that this would help in the coming twelve months. Looking to the future, more change was expected as the Town Council built on the investment that had benefitted the Town with the imminent completion of the public realm improvements in the High Street, the start of the construction work that would deliver a new youth and community centre in Wick and the Town Council's continued investment in key partnership initiatives such as the Community Warden Scheme. She was pleased that some of the Wardens were able to join the meeting so that residents could hear more about their work and ask questions.
- 5.3.** The Mayor was pleased to report that the Town Council's events programme had returned for its first full year since the pandemic and that with the support of residents, the programme continued to be the envy of much bigger towns and showcased Littlehampton's thriving sports clubs and arts scene. The latter had shone during the many holiday activities that the Town Council was able to host in the High Street and the Mayor thanked everyone involved. She also looked forward to seeing these activities again – hopefully when the weather was brighter and kinder! The Mayor also congratulated Littlehampton Town Football Club on reaching Wembley as runners up in the FA Vase competition and finishing the 2021 to 2022 football season in first place in the Sussex County League Division One.
- 5.4.** Before moving on to present this year's Merit Awards, the Mayor wanted to pay tribute to one gentleman who had given much of his spare time over many years supporting both the Town Council and residents by ensuring that the Town remembered the debt owed to its servicemen and women, past and present. Mr Derek Moore had been central to the work of the Royal British Legion in Littlehampton for many years and as Mayor she had come to rely on him on at the ceremonial occasions that the Town Council hosted. For his part, Derek had done this without question whilst balancing the demands of organising the annual poppy collection activities for Littlehampton and the neighbouring parishes. Derek was finally retiring from that role and moving from the area. To thank him for his contribution over the years, the Mayor presented him with a special award with the best wishes of the Town and a donation of one hundred pounds to the Poppy Appeal. In receiving the award, Mr Moore thanked the Mayor for her kind words and accepted the donation on behalf of the Poppy Appeal.

5.5. Town Merit Awards

Turning to the Town Merit Awards, the Mayor explained that public nominations had been sought for those who deserved recognition for their contribution to the Town. The Awards again demonstrated the strong and vibrant community which was there for its residents and committed to the Town.

- 5.5.1.** The first individual Merit Award was presented to Roger Arthurs in recognition of his services to Littlehampton and Wick residents and organisations.
- 5.5.2.** The second individual award was presented to Vivienne Prior in recognition of her services to Littlehampton residents and organisations.
- 5.5.3.** The third individual award was presented to Casey Gardner in recognition of her services to young people in Littlehampton.
- 5.5.4.** The Mayor then presented the first group Merit Award to Creative Heart in recognition of providing a welcoming hub in the heart of Littlehampton. Since opening its doors, the hub had gone from strength to strength and provided an active and welcoming environment in the centre of town which was both positive and inclusive. The award was accepted by Fliss Jay who, acknowledging that today was International Women's Day, was proud to receive the Award on behalf of the hub.
- 5.5.5.** The second group award was presented to the Veterans Volunteer Service in recognition of providing support and services to veterans and young people in Littlehampton. The service aimed to bring all age groups together with their innovative programmes; supporting young people by teaching them new skills, providing hot meals, and inspiring them to be the best they could be. The award was accepted by representatives of the service who were also pleased to announce that King Charles III's Chaplain, Roger Hall had recently agreed to become a Patron.
- 5.5.6.** The third group award was presented to Littlehampton Armed Forces and Veterans Breakfast Club in recognition of services to veterans and their families in Littlehampton and was accepted by Ian Neville on behalf of the Club.

6. Community Wardens

- 6.1.** The Mayor welcomed Littlehampton's Community Wardens to the meeting and invited them to speak about their work in the community. Beginning with Community Warden Michelle Killick, she introduced herself and her colleagues, Jamie Riggs and James Colacicco. Michelle congratulated those who had received Merit Awards. She outlined her background as a PCSO, her local knowledge and encouraged residents to introduce themselves to the Team while they were out and about in the Town. Jamie Riggs took over and explained that the Team could be seen on foot patrol in Littlehampton and Wick and that they worked closely with the Arun Antisocial Behaviour Team and the Police to gather intelligence and tackle issues. The Meeting then heard from James Colacicco who explained in more detail some of the ways in which the Team interacted with community groups. This included attending

local events, delivering pop up sessions in community hubs and local venues raising awareness of issues, delivering advice and guidance, and working in partnership with other agencies such as Arun Youth Projects and Turning Tides to provide support to a wide range of vulnerable people. Emphasising the engagement aspect of their role, he ended the presentation by highlighting the importance of sharing information and again encouraged residents to approach the Team when they saw them in the parish to understand better how they worked and see the positive outcomes that the Wardens aim to deliver in the community.

- 6.2.** The Mayor invited residents to address the Wardens on matters of Community Safety and there was a brief discussion about the recent dangerous driving incident at the Toddington Lane level crossing. There had been widespread coverage in the local media which had highlighted concerns held by residents about the safety of the crossing and anti-social driving. It was noted that the Wardens were aware of the incident and that the Police were pursuing lines of enquiry. On behalf of the meeting, the Mayor thanked the Wardens for their presentation and invited them to stay and meet residents after the meeting.

7. To Hear Questions From The Public of Which Notice Had Been Previously Given

There were none.

8. To Hear Questions From The Public of Which Notice Has Not Been Given

- 8.1.** Mr Tyndall Jones raised two questions:

Regarding the Littlehampton gasometer, the site was so prominent and in its current poor condition did not in his view reflect well on the Town. He therefore asked if the Town Council could bring any pressure to bear on the owners to get the facility renovated. Also, lamenting the littering that could be observed in the High Street, Mr Jones requested assistance from the Town Council in reinstating the daily street cleaner service and encouraging hospitality businesses in the High Street to do all they could to discourage the litter from cigarette butts.

In response the Town Clerk undertook to investigate what could be done on both fronts particularly regarding the latter point which he would raise with both the District Council and local landlords.

- 8.2.** Acknowledging the contribution made by the Littlehampton Organisation of Community Arts, LOCA, to local activities and events, Mr David Bishop from the District Lions Club asked if the funding they had received in the past could be directed to other events.

In response the Town Clerk stated that LOCA's contribution had provided invaluable support for Town Council events. He added that both the Town and District Council were working in partnership to ensure that Town Centre events could continue and fill in some of the gaps. He also invited Mr Bishop and other local groups to share any thoughts they may have on events for the Town.

- 8.3.** A question was asked regarding the Arcade and what could be done to improve the site.

In response the Town Clerk stated that the site had recently come under new ownership. He added that through the Town Council's' Town Centre Action Group it was hoped that in time the Council would be able to bring all the landlords in the High Street together and look at ways to tackle issues such as this.

9. Report From Representatives of Local Organisations

9.1. Littlehampton Dairy Arts Group

On behalf of the Group, the Chairman expressed his thanks to the Town Council for its longstanding support of the organisation.

9.2. Littlehampton Shopmobility

Councillor Turner addressed the meeting and read out a statement on behalf of Littlehampton Shopmobility that had been prepared by the Manager of the Centre, Mrs Caffyn. The Shopmobility Committee expressed its thanks to the Town Council for its ongoing support. With the support of its trustees and volunteers, the Shop continued to provide its customers with help and support covering a wide range of mobility issues. and having survived the pandemic was looking forward to celebrating its twenty fifth anniversary this year. The Charity had recently worked with White Meadows School on a project to help young people gain a better understanding of issues that faced those with mobility issues and hope to expand this to other local schools in the parish. To celebrate the silver anniversary of the charity a special AGM and Open Day was planned, and residents were encouraged to keep an eye out on social media for an announcement about the date. In conclusion, the Charity expressed their sincere thanks to the Town Clerk and wished him well on his retirement.

9.3. Littlehampton Bonfire Society

Mr Tyndall Jones gave a summary of activities on behalf of the Society. In 2022 the Society had celebrated its seventieth anniversary with the welcome return of the annual bonfire event. Good weather had helped make the evening special and the firework display had been widely praised. Mr Jones also thanked the Town Council for its ongoing grant support. The Society, in common with its neighbours, was facing unprecedented increases in the costs of staging annual fireworks displays and had taken the difficult decision to retain the street collection last year. The Society hoped that this action would provide more financial stability and enable the Committee to continue to stage the annual event, which was a huge attraction for the Town, into the future. The Society continued to attract recognition and the support of societies through reciprocal visiting arrangements which also enabled the Society to promote the Town and the annual event. The 2023 event was planned for Saturday 28 October and the Society would be fundraising at the Guide Hall on Saturday 13 May.

- 9.4.** Before bringing the meeting to a close the Mayor paid tribute to the outgoing Town Clerk and on behalf of residents expressed gratitude for his tireless work representing the interests of the Town.

In response, the Town Clerk, Mr Herbert stated that it had been an honour and a privilege to serve the Town.

- 9.5.** The Mayor thanked everyone for their support, congratulated the recipients of the Merit Awards and brought the meeting to a close.

The meeting concluded at 6.54 pm.

Chair