



ATTLEBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, Queens Square, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 2AF
Tel: 01953 456194 - email: enquiries@attleboroughtc.org.uk

ATTLEBOROUGH ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY Held on Monday, 3 April 2017 at 7.30pm at Attleborough Town Hall

Present:

Mayor J Burton - presiding

T Crouch	K Montague	R Bond	G Ellis
T Perkin	V Dale	E Tyrer	T Cobb
A Busk	J Williams	P Spiby	S Watts
A Briggs	B Smart		

In attendance – Anne Willett – Clerk’s Assistant, Attleborough Town Council
Trisha Drewery, Administration Assistant (minute taker)
46 X Public

2017/1) Welcome by the Chairman

The Mayor of Attleborough Town Council, Councillor Jeremy Burton, welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave apologies on behalf of the Clerk to Attleborough Town Council, Gina Lopes; who was unable to attend because of previously arranged holiday commitments.

2017/2) Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on 4 March 2016

The minutes were briefly discussed and the Chairman confirmed that Cllr Tony Perkins will update members and the public regarding the Neighbourhood Plan later in the meeting.

On the motion of Cllr Dale, seconded by Cllr Spiby, it was

RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on 4 March 2016 as a true and accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

2017/3) Mayor’s Report

The Mayor, Jeremy Burton gave his report:

“Firstly, I would like to start off by thanking fellow Town Councillors for all the time and hard work that they have put into the last year and support given by Deputy Mayor Vera Dale. It’s an unpaid role being a Town Councillor and we sometimes have to make some unpopular decisions. Saying that, it is a rewarding and satisfying role and I would urge members of general public to come along to our meetings - they are all public - and get involved in grass roots democracy. Our Town Council is unusual in that we are not affiliated to political parties so do not spend time on this and possible restraints and are truly Community focused.”

I would also like to say thank you to the Town Council staff working both in the Town Hall; led by our Town Clerk - Gina Lopes ... and around the town and we have received several complimentary emails and letters regarding the good work that our Ground staff do, led by Adrian Briggs.

I believe that over the year we have worked as a Town Council closer to our Breckland District Councillor's and we have started regular meetings with the District Councillor's to talk about Town issues and how we can work together. Some of these jointly worked actions are starting to come through; like the short term / long term car parking proposals which we are currently working through.

Also, I would like to say that we are working closer with the Attleborough Development Partnership - which is a partnership of bodies working, as the name suggests, on the development of the Town. I am pleased to welcome the newly appointed independent Chair for the Attleborough Development Partnership, Chris Batten, who is here tonight. You cannot live in Attleborough over the last year and not see the housing developments which continue to spring up around the Town; the plans being worked on now will take us to another twenty years plus of continued development. In total, the Town will be accommodating circa another 5,500 houses. As a Town Council, I believe that we are at the forefront of where decisions are made and we make the opinions of the Town known. I have chaired two Public Meetings over the last year and the Town infrastructure and governance has been the two topics of these meetings, the last meeting was solely on Highways and was attended by over one hundred and twenty members of the public.

We need to keep working on the infrastructure, amenities and facilities for the Town as the last thing we want to be is a dormitory Town.

The Attleborough Neighbourhood Plan has been finished and was a huge piece of work. I thank the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group led by Councillor Tony Perkins. A lot more work has been done by the group and I won't spoil Tony's thunder by going into detail. I would also like to thank three individuals who have committed a tremendous amount to the Town this year - Elizabeth Burrows, Cliff Amos and Terry Cracknell.

The Town continues to have active community interest groups, we are known for Christmas lights display organised by Councillor Geoff Ellis. We have the Summer Carnival and Party in the Park and also Christmas Carnival. I thank the organisations who organise these events. We also have an active Funfest Group in the Town who are working hard behind the scenes and with a favourable wind hope to put on a Fireworks Display in November this year.

We have Attleborough Town FC playing Senior football for the 1st time in many years which is thriving; another sporting success story in the Town is Attleborough Boxing Club which is the Premier Club and leading light in the Eastern Counties.

Nice to see Town Market back in Queens square which is a spinoff of the Neighbourhood Plan Group.

The Town Council is modernising and is now using social media to communicate with both Twitter and Facebook; we are also using website for tendering for contracts. Also all meetings are now recorded for transparency.

I am pleased to report that the precept and budgets are closely controlled and we are forecast to be within both of these this financial year and for first time in some years now without having to go into reserves.

The projects we are currently working on are:

We have fenced in the play equipment on Gaymers and now have funding for a Multi-Use Games Arena (MUGA) to go on the Recreation Ground and have this landscaped as with all our play areas.

We continue to work on adopting from Breckland the two recreational Play Areas on Springfields estate and also taken on a new open space on the Wilcon Homes Estate. We have a mobile office coming in at the rear of the Town Hall which will be a new Town Archive Centre.

We also are in advanced negotiations and have approval for a new Town Cemetery. I hope I have not left anything or anyone out, but as you can see it has been a full year. Attleborough is a special Town and one which everyone should feel proud to live in. We are working hard and doing our best; if we all work together the sky's the limit."

2016/4) Attleborough Town Lands Charity Account

Cllr Crouch gave apologies for Revd Matthew Jackson who was unable to attend because of another commitment.

The financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2016 were presented and accepted. Revd Jackson's Chairman's report was read out by Mr Crouch as follows:

"In the year income from rent, deposits and the investment portfolio managed by Barratt & Cooke was £24,627 compared to £24,057 in 2015.

The Trustees granted £16,306 to individuals and groups serving the community of Attleborough during the year, compared with £15,040 in 2015 and £23,313 in 2014.

The main criteria for individual applications are genuine need, the receipt of state benefits and residency in the town. We would encourage organisations serving the people of Attleborough to apply on behalf of clients who meet these criteria to the Secretary, Mrs P Buttolph, at the St Mary's Church Office.

I would like to thank the Trustees and Treasurer, who give freely of their time and expertise."

The Revd Matthew Jackson

Chairman Attleborough Town Lands Charity

2017/5) Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Tony Perkins, Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group presented his report as follows:

"The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been approved by the Town Council and been submitted to Breckland District Council for Regulation 16 Consultation. Since then the Steering Group has been looking at a way forward. As yet, nothing has been decided and a Steering Group meeting will be called to try to solve the issue. Some members of the Group had a meeting with Tim Mills, last Friday 24 April to establish how the Steering Group can fit in with the Town Council and the Attleborough Development Plan. These suggestions will be put forward to the Group when they next meet. No date has yet been set to meet, this was left open until we had something substantial to put on the Agenda.

The Neighbourhood Plan itself is now in the hands of Susan Heinrich at Breckland District Council but is not on the Breckland District Council website. There are other plans listed, but not Attleborough.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been an enormous task which should not be underestimated. A lot of work has been done on a voluntary basis and the Attleborough Town Council Office staff have contributed. Time will tell whether residents will benefit.

The task now is to get it made into a legal document. Then it can come to fruition and be voted on by referendum; as a straight forward 'Yes' or 'No'. If the decision is not made to accept the Plan the options are not very good. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have tried to make the inevitable changes more acceptable by working with all parties.

Developers are seeking funding from Norfolk County Council for the link road funding, so fingers crossed that the new road is built before the housing. Interested parties on the Steering Group should be encouraged with spinoffs from the Neighbourhood Plan to continue the good work. I urge residents of Attleborough to accept the plan through the referendum; something that I feel very strongly about. The Document is a massive document/very well written. Many thanks to all involved, including Sarah Watts, Office Assistant at Attleborough Town Council.”

2017/6) To discuss and receive questions on town affairs

The Chairman invited members of the public to speak and comments received from residents included the following:

- Resident queried why Attleborough Town Council has raised the Council Tax again this year when there will be more householder's contributing due to the new builds; asking what residents will get for the increase. The Mayor responded, stating that the Town Council has had to increase the Council Tax to mitigate using reserves; as has happened in previous years. The increase is 9% which equates to pence rather than pounds and has taken into account that there are more households to make contributions. The funding that the Town Council receives is spent on the Town. All financial Reports and accounts are available for public viewing for residents to see how the money is being spent.
- Cllr Phil Spiby as a resident, queried what is happening to the former off licence on Hargham Road; as this is boarded up. The Mayor responded that the planning application for demolishing the building and replacing it with flats has been refused by Breckland District Council. Dist. Cllr Stasiak supported the proposal to demolish the building; and the Town Council refused the application in light of the proposed buildings being in a conservation area and loss of retail space. Cllr Williams said that the age of the building could be older inside, so if the flats were to go ahead, it would mean a very modern design in a conservation area. The application is going to appeal to the Secretary of State this week as the owners are appealing Breckland District Council's decision; Cllr S Taylor will be attending the meeting.
- Mr Terry Cracknell said he has lived in Attleborough for the over 50 years and is in support of the raise in Council Tax; stating that the Town has greatly expanded as a residential area; almost becoming more than the Town centre can provide. The increase in Council Tax will assist the development of the Town Centre, as improvements will require more money. It seems that the Town has taken a few steps back. Mr Cracknell believes that people working on the Attleborough Development Partnership will fight the Town's corner to get some recognition and help the Town Council and the various organisations working for the betterment of Attleborough. Mr Cracknell felt the money is not being wasted; stating it is prudent expenditure for the Town to play catch-up.
Cllr Ellis stated that the new plan for the Town will be available by the end of the week and will be in hard copy for residents to read at the Town Hall, Doctors Surgery at Station Road and Library, as well as being on the Internet.
- A resident raised issues with the Police representative regarding parts of Attleborough where there is speeding; in particular Blackthorn Road near Snowdrop Drive; is causing late night noise disturbance as speeding drivers rev their engines and have lack of care in that it is a 90 degree turn. Inspector Jo Walmsley informed the resident that speeding issues are raised at the quarterly meetings of the Safer Neighbourhood Action Partnership (SNAP).

The local Police are working closely with the Community Speed Watch Volunteers who currently Speed Watch at eight approved locations around the Town, which includes Blackthorn Road and Mill Lane; with another six requested for. The SNAP Team are well aware that most Towns and Villages, including Attleborough, have issues regarding speeding. It is something that the Police are targeting on a regular basis; there is also a mobile safety camera van and risk assessments are being done around the Town Centre including Blackthorn Road to support the Speed Watch Volunteers.

The resident also mentioned that the green area along Blackthorn Road; going towards the A11 is an issue due to cars being parked there. Inspector Walmsley said that the Police have no jurisdiction regarding parking, unless it is causing an obstruction, so it would be best to contact the Breckland District Council Highways Department, as the only change that can be made is to put yellow lines there for parking restrictions.

The meeting closed at 8.12 pm