



ATTLEBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall, Queens Square, Attleborough, Norfolk NR17 2AF

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**Minutes of the meeting of the Annual Town Assembly
Held on Monday 25th April 2022 at 7.00pm at the Town Hall**

Present:

Cllr P Leslie Town Mayor – presiding

Cllr V Dale Cllr E Tyrer Cllr A Busk Cllr J Ellis Cllr A Smith
Cllr A Westby Cllr D Lane Cllr R Redfern Cllr R Bond Cllr P Wenham
Cllr S Mackinnon

In attendance – Michelle Barron – Town Clerk, Anne Willett – Clerks Assistant (minute taker), Paula Witham - Admin Assistant, Tim Jonas, James Smith – Grounds Staff, Dist. Cllr K Martin, Reverend Matthew Jackson, T/Sgt Shelley (Norfolk Constabulary), Neil McShane (Executive Principal – Attleborough Academy), Andrew Holdsworth (Assistant Director – Economy & Growth Breckland Council), Cllr Paul Hewett (Breckland Council), Public x 6

007/2021) Welcome by the Chairman

Cllr Leslie welcomed everyone as well as the guest speakers.

008/2021) Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on 26th May 2021

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

RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on 26th May 2021

009/2021) To receive the Mayor's Report –

Cllr Leslie acknowledged he was nearing the end of his second term and what a wonderful community we had with people willing to do the right thing and helping people around them. Also at the end of this second term Cllr Leslie had taken the time to reflect on the difference to the Council now and the day he had inherited it. During the period of transition, a fantastic Town Clerk had been appointed and the staff and Councillors were thanked for allowing this co-operative action to have taken place. Also acknowledged the progress made in becoming more transparent, with significant change to Standing Orders and policies. We are now in a position where we can make a difference to our Community and had started to see results from our labours into various projects and we have also built better communications with our stakeholders. We also hope to have informal community forums hosted quarterly, as a Town Council we would like to support our community rather than take over any initiatives. Our new website is very close to going live and we realised the importance of communications. We have started to see the ambition of the Neighbourhood Plan whether it be through the SUE, sustainable housing, sports provision or Linear Park, with movement on the increase in health care facilities. We have focused together with Breckland Council on the area of employment, both employment land and the nature of employment locally, we don't want this Town to become a commuter Town, we need employment opportunities. The new Wheel Park would add to the facilities for the Community and we are looking to achieve a lot more which may mean we have another challenging year ahead of us.

010/2021) To approve the Attleborough Town Lands Charity Account

(Rev Matthew Jackson)

Reverend Matthew Jackson, Chairman of the Attleborough Town Lands Charity Account presented the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2021.

- In the year 2021 income from rent, deposits and the investment portfolio managed by Barratt & Cooke was £21,877 compared to £17,550 in 2020
- The Trustees granted £39,467 to individuals and groups serving the community, compared with £11,467 in 2020 and £28,508 in 2019
- 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 Pat Buttolph, at St Mary's Church office.
- I would like to thank the Trustees and Treasurer, who give freely of their time and experience.
- On a personal note you may have noticed we gave away a lot more money than we received but that's not always the case, our real difficulty is connecting with people who are in genuine need. So for all of you who come across people in genuine need, please send them our way and we look favourably on applications from groups as well.

011/2021) Guest Speakers

- **Rev Matthew Jackson, St Marys Church** – Reverend Jackson went onto explain the role of the Church in the Community. St Mary's is open every day, with main Sunday service at 10am, there is always a warm welcome and with coffee afterwards. The choir is made up of amateur singers (new members always welcome). If people can't get to Church they are not forgotten, we visit widely in the Community and telephone people to stay in touch. We have a You Tube channel and throughout the year there are meals together including Shrove Tuesday and Christian Aid Lunches. Our Community lunches are fortnightly on Fridays and enables people who usually eat alone to share a meal with others and we are hoping for more people to come along. We offer refreshments at our Christmas Carnival, Summer Fete and this year a Jubilee picnic. Lots of Community groups use the hall space; members of the Mothers Union meet regularly. Attleborough Day Centre meet Monday, Tuesday and Wednesdays or drop in on a Saturday morning when you will find coffee and chat in full swing at the Church hall with craft market once a month. Mums and children can drop in and play on a Thursday morning. For the future we have been awarded a grant from Youth Music to employ an out-reach worker for two years to visit schools as part of the Churches music and building project. After school music clubs will be set up to focus on singing which improves mental health and well-being. This is the first phase of the project to work towards the Churches vision of being a centre for musical excellence, leading to concerts to raise money to restore the organ to its former glory. Also looking to extend the Church hall. We are here for everyone whether they come to Church or not, we see ourselves very much as part of this community, part of it's past, present and future.
- **Sgt/Shelley (Norfolk Constabulary)** – Sgt Shelly introduced himself and explained together with his Beat Managers PC Andy London and PC Damian Wicks are responsible for the Community and they receive support from their response colleagues at Thetford. Covid has changed and hampered policing significantly, doing most things on line which doesn't have the same effect but things are improving and now doing more face to face. It is important to have a good relationship within the community, there are things that keep people safe in the community "Street Safe" being one of those. At local level "Coffee with a Cop" had been set up and also pop up surgeries where people can go along and have a conversation with officers. PC Andy London had been doing some walk around Town with Councillors to see what is going on in the Community. Also been working closely with schools to build relationships, Primary School visits taking along a police car and standing in front of lots of schoolchildren. Our next SNAP meeting is being held on 6th May 2022 working

closely with Councillors and the community. We now have two quad bikes available which can be brought along to events but as always we are incredibly busy, our primary role is to look after Attleborough and Thetford.

- **Neil McShane (Executive Principal – Attleborough Academy) –**

Neil McShane gave a brief history of Attleborough High School opened in 1967 as a Secondary Modern School originally built for 250 students now holding a capacity of 900 plus. A massive computing building was added, then the sports hall and in 2002 a Humanities building. The idea was for a Sports Village and feasibility studies were carried out, a lot of time and effort was put into plans to make something ideal for the Community. We knew we would have to move our sixth form to the infant school site but there was no specific capital funding and at that time in 2014 we chose to become an Academy, first phase up to 1,100 students and second phase up to 1,400. We applied for and received a grant to put a building out front to replace the mobiles. The existing sports hall was deemed fit for purpose which was disappointing. A further feasibility study was carried out, the cost of £12 million to develop being unrealistic, this wasn't progressed. Masterplan version 2 is being drawn up, it does have a defined plan for the Science block and it does this time recognise sports provision as needing development. Unfortunately, the housing growth has slowed and there is less money coming in, we can't use school improvement funding for communities so we are dependent on developers. As soon as we develop the sports hall our sixth form will have to move out so we need to make sure we develop the infant school. We need to push the Sports Village forward so we can use it with joint use of the Community.

- **Andrew Holdsworth (Assistant Director, Economy and Growth Breckland Council)**

Andrew Holdsworth introduced himself and said there would be lots of opportunities as well as challenges facing Attleborough. Change is coming but it should be positive but we will have to fight hard for investment particularly on national government infrastructure. Breckland as a District authority are working to understand what are the most important priorities to each of our five market towns. Also as the local planning authority we are engaged in an update of our local plan. We believe Attleborough represents what a market town should be, secondly increasing availability of employment land already started at Snetterton and thirdly a connectivity piece, how can we make sure that we can connect easily across the Town and take full advantage of having a railway asset and think about what the role of the car is going to be. There are areas where Breckland can make investments, we are able to help small business start-up and will look to make larger investments.

012/2021) Open Forum (30 Minutes)

Resident asked Neil McShane in 2017 there was discussion regarding the small Victorian school being closed and redeveloped and there were thoughts about using that school for skills training to bridge the gap between sixth form and employment for local youths.

Mr McShane replied yes absolutely still possible, it is still on the table but no real plans drawn up at the moment.

Resident raised a general comment to everybody regarding communication, there is often a general assumption that everyone has Face Book & Twitter but not everyone uses electronic communication.

Resident thank Andrew Holdsworth for an enthusiastic presentation, the themes picked up on very similar to Neighbourhood Plan so when you talked about the local plan update how far does that recognise the Neighbourhood Plan?

Mr Holdsworth replied it will be significantly formed by what is already there, it provides an

opportunity to refresh some of the underlying policies.

Resident flagged up Briton Brush factory had been closed for years and was trying to raise with leader of Breckland Council to arrange a site visit.

Philip Leslie replied he and the Town Clerk Michelle would also like to attend if that took place.

A resident stated he was pleased to have the report from our police and pleased they wanted to work with our community but is it possible to improve your network of communications because you are so important, you keep law and order.

Sgt Shelley replied that was a very big question and their means of communication are very electronic and social media orientated so much to the point where we have an Engagement officer whose role it is to monitor and post on social media, we are open to suggestions and happy to display posters but it is more now about online reporting.

The Chair thanked everybody for attending and closed the meeting at 8.40pm