



ATTLEBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

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ATTLEBOROUGH ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY

Held on Monday, 4 April 2016 at 7.30pm

At Attleborough Town Hall

Present:

	Deputy Mayor J Burton - presiding		
B Lawrence	B Waters	D Waters	R Chown
J Taylor	K Martin	T Cobb	A Butcher
V Dale	A Cummins	C Cummins	J Williams
O Eagling	T Staff	E Tyrer	S Hall
M Weaver	H Hearn	M Hearn	T Ashby
E Burrows	B Smart	R Smart	A Briggs
P Bracey	P Spiby	G Ellis	T Crouch

In attendance (minute taker) – Gina Lopes – Clerk to Attleborough Town Council
Anne Willett – Clerk's Assistant, Attleborough Town Council

2016/1) Welcome by the Chairman

The Deputy Mayor of Attleborough Town Council, Jeremy Burton, welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave apologies on behalf of the Town Mayor, Tony Perkins, who was unable to attend because of previously arranged holiday commitments. The Chairman introduced the Town Clerk, Gina Lopes, Clerk's Assistant, Anne Willett and Tony Crouch representing Attleborough Town Lands Charity. The Chairman advised that representatives from Breckland District Council, Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Police, Attleborough Academy and Highways had all been invited but unfortunately were not in attendance.

2016/2) Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on 2 March 2015

The minutes were briefly discussed and the Chairman highlighted the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan in the past year and confirmed there was a presentation by Mr Hall later in the meeting.

On the motion of Mr Ellis, it was

RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on 2 March 2015 as a true and accurate record of the meeting and they were duly signed by the Chairman

2016/3) Mayor's Report

A written report from Attleborough Town Mayor, Tony Perkins, was read out by the Chairman and accepted by those present as follows:

Firstly may I begin by sending my apologies for not being with you tonight? The thought of me sunning myself whilst you are in a very important meeting for the town and its

residents is worrying, but please let me assure you it was arranged without the forethought of becoming Mayor this year.

I was immensely proud to be elected Mayor in November to represent the Town, nearly as proud as my mum! I hope I will not disappoint you.

This is an extremely important time in Attleborough's history as we face the prospect of expansion on an unprecedented scale. You only have to look west and soon east to see the developments are pushing the boundaries of housing outwards. This coupled with the developments on smaller pockets of land and houses being squashed into gardens trying to quench the thirst for evermore housing.

Talking to the public at street level you soon realise the overwhelming opinion is that the people of the town are resigned to accept development, providing an equal amount of infrastructure is in place to accommodate it. That is why the Attleborough Neighbourhood plan is vital to present the evidence and put in place the policies, to help secure the future of Attleborough. Only some of you in this room will be aware of the countless emails, meetings, reports, hard work and dare I say, tears, it has taken to get the plan to where it is to date. Work continues at a pace and on behalf of the town, I thank the steering group for their efforts. Only once the plan is adopted, will the town council be asked to realise the many projects that seek to redress the deficit that Attleborough has for many years suffered. These include healthcare provision, formal and informal open spaces, play areas, educational needs and with a little luck, some of the traffic issues.

The town council is well placed to accept responsibility for administering and maintaining these projects. An increased professional work force is essential to put in place the requirements and decisions of the council. A forward thinking council, with better understanding of its responsibilities, will work more efficiently for the residents of this lovely town. This year we made some difficult financial decisions that will hopefully show us in a better light in the years to come.

When you talk to non-residents of Attleborough they are nearly always envious of our beautiful town square, our excellent educational achievements, our thriving town centre, our superb sports clubs, our low crime rates, our business community, our Christmas lights, Summer Carnival, our brilliant bikes and above all our prospects. We look forward to exciting times ahead for our town and whilst I am under no illusions of the amount of hard work that lays ahead, we should not be daunted. I urge you all to embrace and resolve to face the challenges and work together to forge a way forward for the good of the town.

I would like to finish by thanking my fellow councillors, in particular my deputy, Cllr Jeremy Burton for standing in for me most ably. Thanks also to the staff in the Town hall office, Gina, Anne and Sandra, for their support. The grounds staff for our ever improving open spaces and lastly thanks to the residents for making Attleborough the special place that it is.

I will now hand over to Cllr Tony Crouch to present the accounts for the Attleborough Land Charities.

Thank you

Cllr Tony Perkins

Mayor

2016/4) Attleborough Town Lands Charity Account

Mr 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 2015 were presented (Appendix A) 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 £24,057 compared to £23,125 in 2014.

The Trustees granted £15,040 to individuals and groups serving the community of Attleborough during the year, compared with £23,313 in 2014 and £16,416 in 2013.

*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*

2016/5) Neighbourhood Plan

The Chairman welcomed Mr Steve Hall from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and invited him to make his presentation as follows:

Although it would appear that the process is slow there has been a lot of work going on in the background. Due to a change in circumstances Liz Wrigley our planning consultant has now taken up the mantle of progressing and completing the Neighbourhood Plan.

One of the major delays was that, due to a High Court Challenge with regards to another Neighbourhood Plan, we have had to seek a screening opinion from Breckland Council to see if we need to do a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) on the whole Plan. As this is the first NP that Breckland have done they had to seek external guidance. We recently had advice that an SEA was only needed on part of the plan and this is being progressed. It is then hoped that we will be able to go out to formal consultation within the next couple of months with a referendum following within two months.

A project team was formed to continue to gather evidence to enable the policies to be continue to be developed based on evidence and help drive the ANP forward under the guidance of Liz Wrigley.

As evidence and policies are fine-tuned presentations are being given to the Town Council and to the Steering Group. To date Open Space and Play, Health and Social Care have been presented with Sport Leisure and the Community facilities to follow.

A major piece of work that has been produced is the response to Breckland Council's Local Plan. This was an important document to respond to as it is the strategic overview policy document for the District and needs to link generally in with the ANP. During this process we have found many policy deficiencies and some more positive policies in other areas. This response was 12 pages in length and commented on most policy areas.

Strong representation has been made to Breckland Council through this process and in bringing the ANP policies forward regarding employment land. Breckland Councils own studies have shown that Attleborough needs 10 hectares of employment land yet in Thetford that has a similar growth they are allocating 22 hectares. This in our view is not sustainable growth based on jobs and if not careful will lead to Attleborough becoming a dormitory town. The ANP/Town Council have made representation to bring forward approximately 19.5 hectares of employment land which we wish to see well designed buildings for quality SME's. Larger, more industrial type business we wish to be based at Snetterton.

The ANP/Town Council is disappointed about the recent publicity for the A11 corridor for business that does not even mention Attleborough. This is also mirrored in the Strategic Economic Plan produced by New Anglia (LEP) and we need to continue to make strong representation.

However, sustainable growth is not just about building housing and employment, which is what we believe that Breckland Councils policies are generally based on as it raises Council Tax and Business rates. To build a sustainable community we need to have access to good Health and Social Care Facilities, Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities, good quality Open Space and Play, well designed and attractive housing with a good tenure mix to cater for Attleborough's requirements and a strong vibrant Town Centre.

Attleborough is designated as a key settlement for housing growth (i.e. with 4,000 new dwellings being allocated), it is only projected to need a further 1,588 sq.m. of comparison retail floorspace in the plan period compared to Dereham's 3,275 sq.m. of floorspace, when Dereham is only be allocated 158 new dwellings in the same period. This does not make sense and the ANP is working with Breckland to understand this. The Health and Social Care Report show some very worrying deficiencies. If the population do not have access to facilities that benefit's the well-being of the Community both physically and mentally, then that in itself will be a barrier to a quality motivated workforce.

If all that is delivered is housing and a relief road without addressing these other key areas then Attleborough will not be a pleasant place to live and work which will not be a benefit to anybody.

The Town Council will have to continue to embrace this change and ensure that its structure and resource are able to meet the requirements for a Town that is going to double in size over the next 20 years. The Town Council and the policies from the Neighbourhood Plan, if supported by the Towns' population, will enable the Town Council to become a strategic partner in its growth. Attleborough will only succeed if a true partnership is formed with Breckland and Norfolk County Councils and other partnership agencies.

2016/6) 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:

- Mr Chown attended a demonstration by Breckland District Council on planning and was told that Breckland planners do not have to do anything about infrastructure, queried if anything had changed

- Mr Hall (Neighbourhood Plan Group) advised Breckland must have a S106 agreement on all major developments, there has been significant contributions to education, library and some highway infrastructure. LEP has £4.6million allocated for town centre improvements for highways but still waiting to see plans. Some may come into the town centre and to start the relief road which will help but is not the answer. There has been no contribution to health. The town council can ask for contributions for projects, needs to be systematic. The Neighbourhood Plan Group want to get the Plan finished so projects can be identified but there have been no infrastructure improvements in the last year, however, there were not huge funds only small amounts of S106 available for sports and play. Developers have given over land that they do not want.
- Mr Ellis (Attleborough Town Councillor) queried if the £4.6million would come to Attleborough or was for the whole of Norfolk. Noted there was no-one in attendance from Breckland Council or Norfolk County Council to answer residents' questions although all say they want to work together. No major infrastructure to relieve the roads to-date.
- Mr Ashby (Breckland District Councillor) confirmed that the Attleborough Development Partnership is a new group including representatives from Breckland District Council, Norfolk County Council and the town and local parish councils. £4.6million would not go to the relief road and will be used for infrastructure and will be discussed and there are time limits
- Mr Hall (Neighbourhood Plan Group) stated that Breckland Council would have objected to more developments but the government directive "ties their hands" unless Highways, Anglian Water, etc put in objections it is difficult for them to object as it can go to appeal and cost Breckland Council a lot of money
- Mrs Taylor (Attleborough Town Councillor) queried if this would have been the same if Breckland had their 5 year land supply. Appreciates the frustration of clubs that are trying to access S106 funds but Breckland must scrutinise carefully or they would be criticised
- Mr Hall (Neighbourhood Plan Group) advised that original allocation of 15,000 houses but then increased to 19,000. With the Neighbourhood Plan Attleborough can influence decisions and S106 funds are there and should be able to access
- Mr Thompson (Attleborough Football Club) expressed dismay at the difficulty of applying for S106 funds for his club
- Deputy Mayor Burton (Attleborough Town Councillor) confirmed that a couple of clubs are applying for the funds and the district councillors and the town council is considering funds available for use
- Mrs Burrows (Neighbourhood Plan Group) advised that the majority of the money for the new school was S106 funding but this was Norfolk County Council
- Mr Martin (Breckland District Councillor) confirmed that when a large application is considered often the District and town council have refused but it has gone to appeal and the housing has been allowed. Noted that the precept had increased significantly by 34% and hoped the Town Council would spend wisely and had specifications for work and the Chairman confirmed that whilst the percentage looked high it was only a small amount per household and the Council had used reserves in the past but this could not continue and only 1 resident had queried the increase and this was reiterated by other members present
- Mr Tyrer (Attleborough Town Councillor) advised that developers will argue viability of a scheme, there is affordable housing, etc. Too late to ask for money

on agreements that are already signed, need to be involved in future with identified, costed projects and the Neighbourhood Plan Group is working on this and developing a delivery strategy and need to work with partners

- Mrs Hearn asked if the land from developers would be for allotments and the Chairman confirmed that there was land allocated for allotments which would be available in due course as the development reached different stages
- Mr Lawrence queried if the town council had considered the impact of the national living wage within their budget and asked if there would be street cleaning and the Chairman confirmed that the living wage had been accounted for and that the street cleaning was the responsibility of Breckland Council. Further suggestion to place a dog waste bin in New North Road as dog fouling was a problem and also loose drain covers were noisy and needed attention. Mr Lawrence had also reported the puddle in Connaught Road to Highways and they had now attended.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and talking about the town and assured them of Attleborough Town Council's best intentions.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm