



MINUTES of the Annual Town Meeting held on Tuesday 21st April 2015.

Chair, Mr Peter Eldridge

Vice-Chair, Mrs Pat Dore

Clerk, Mrs Alison Doe

- 1. The Chair opened the meeting,** thanking all for attending, 28 members of the public attended the meeting. The meeting was informed that Mrs Carolyn Edwards had decided to resign from her position as Clerk to the Council. Mr Eldridge offered his thanks and praise for Mrs Edwards service to the community and wished her well for the future. Mrs Alison Doe was introduced as the Acting Clerk in the interim.
- 2. Apologies for absence** were received from Kate Whitwell, Heather Parle, County Councillor Margaret Dewsbury, Town Councillors Calvin Edwards and Barry Flaxman.
- 3. The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting** of Tuesday 15th April 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters Arising

The Post Office has now opened within the Lincoln Hall. Mrs Anthea Iveson expressed that the Post Office seems to be working but may only be a stop gap until a more permanent solution for the Post Office can be found. Mrs Iveson also stated that no payment or contribution toward heating/electricity costs is made to the Lincoln Hall from the Post Office.

5. Chairman's report

Mr Eldridge stated that his report had been published in the parish magazine and on the website. And asked if there were any questions regarding its content.

Mrs Jane Mackie queried the maintenance of the town clock. A response has not been received from Smiths of Derby, Clock Repairers. Rev. Colin Reed advised that action is being taken to prevent pigeons from accessing the clock area.

Mr Eldridge thanked the Town Councillors for their work and support during the last four years, stating that many experienced councillors would be retiring. Thanks was also offered to the County and District Councillors for their support of the town.

6. End of Year Accounts

The accounts were presented by Mrs Pat Dore as draft accounts. It was proposed by Mr Bendle and seconded by Mr Robin Chan that the draft accounts be accepted. Carried. Mr Eldridge thanked Mrs Dore for producing the accounts with such limited time.

7. Report from Norfolk Constabulary

PCSO Marie Albinagorta was not present at the meeting. The report was read by Mr Eldridge.

The report states a change in PCSOs leaving two to cover Wymondham and the surrounding area. The reported crime rate has increased from the previous year with a spike in crime for December 2014. Concerns were expressed that it may be local people committing the crimes. Mr Eldridge had been advised that a PCSO for Hingham would cost the Town Council in the region of £17,000 per year, but would be able to be called upon to attend incidents outside of the town.

8. Reports from Organisations within Hingham

Hingham W.I - Mr Eldridge read the report which stated membership now stands at 33 and detailed the main fundraising and celebratory activities.

Hingham Bereavement Support Group – Represented by Rev. Colin Reed who stated that the organisation was formed just over a year ago and has got off to a very positive start now having 12 regular attendees. Rev. Reed recognised that the service may not be for everyone suffering a bereavement but added it provides a lifeline for some and looks forward to the group continuing to offer support to those in need in the future.

STARS – Mr Eldridge read the report which stated membership stands at 12 but a few more members would be welcomed. It was explained that STARS is a hand bell ringing group.

Hingham and District Gardening Club – Mr Eldridge read the report which detailed social activities and plant stalls. Treasurer Paddy Wilkin added that the club has had a very successful year, they meet on the second Tuesday of the month and anyone wishing to join would be welcome.

Hingham Methodist Church – Mr Eldridge read the report which detailed the churches fund raising activities, services and coffee shop mornings held on the first Saturday morning of every month. Heather Parle's thanks to everyone for their support was passed on.

Hingham Primary School – Mr Eldridge read the report detailing the school activities and aims. The Chair of Governors, Phil Robinson added that despite dwindling resources it is a vibrant school with a proactive head teacher and staff. Rev. Reed and Mrs Dore offered their support to the school for their forthcoming OFSTED inspection. Mr Chan asked if there was a way those without children could offer their support to the school, Mr Robinson advised him of the Friends of Hingham School, whose fundraising activities are a great support.

Hingham Society – represented by Chairman Tom Cowin who stated that last year the society had 500 members which is approximately a quarter of the town. He praised public support for the funding of the plaque to commemorate Field Marshal Lord Ironside and advised that on 1st May there would be an opportunity to put questions to candidates for the local elections.

Hingham Education Trust – Mr Eldridge read the report detailing the grant system. It was advised that grant application forms are available from Mrs Chapman the Clerk of the trust and from the newsagents.

Hingham and District Community Car Scheme – Represented by Alison Lys, scheme co-ordinator who stated that their main change last year was providing trips to Great Ellingham Post Office, although only 35 trips took place and believes that this is due to the fact that neighbours have been providing lifts to those in need. Mrs Lys praised this community spirit within the town and advised that the scheme was in desperate need of new drivers, as there are only currently 4, who are all elderly themselves. The organisation has had difficulty with bank account access and has not claimed the last 4 quarters funding from the Town Council.

Hingham Pre-School Playgroup – Mr Eldridge read the report detailing the Playgroups activities and fundraising, with thanks to the staff.

Hingham History Centre – Mr Eldridge read the report detailing the group's activities, fundraising and book publication and also the launch of their website.

Hingham Rectory Bowls Club - Mr Eldridge read the report stating the club has 40 members and detailing the leagues in which they play.

Hingham Charity - Mr Eldridge read the report detailing how funds are raised through the land owned by the charity, this enabled them to make 48 grants last year and gifts of food to Pilgrim House although high maintenance costs have left the accounts in deficit.

St Andrews Heritage Fund – Mr Eldridge read the report detailing fund raising activities, planned projects and the costs of up keep the church building. Rev. Reed advised that the Heritage Fund, looking after the largest building in Hingham, needs a committee and he would like to recruit people from the town as well as the church community.

Hingham Playing Field Association – Represented by Chairman, Alison Lys - the report details the role of the HPFA, a charity run by 6 volunteers, which manages and maintains the sports hall building, 2 children's play areas and the playing fields, and how the association is funded. The report also details the maintenance activities for the year and fundraising activities that took place. It was reported that Hingham Sports and Social Club membership has increased. Mrs Mackie congratulated the HPSA on the job they do in particular the improvements made by installing the balcony which has increased the footfall into the sports hall. Mrs Lys also invited people to photograph dog walkers who do not clean up after their dog in the play areas and playing field. Photographs will be displayed on a "Roll of Shame", on the notice board outside the hall.

Lincoln Hall Social Centre – Represented by Anthea Iveson, the report details improvements made to the building including flooring and instant hot water boiler. The lunch club is very successful and Mrs Iveson reported that the Post Office seems to be working, the main hall now offers refreshments on a Friday morning.

9. Reports from District and County Councillors

District Councillor Yvonne Bendle – advised that her report had been published in the parish magazine. South Norfolk Council have agreed to freeze their portion of the council tax and have managed to increase the size of their reserves. The report focuses on the "Housing and Business Growth Plan", Public Health Agenda, the 'Fit 4 Business, Fit 4 Life' project and recycling. Cllr Bendle spoke about how Building Control was now proving to be a lucrative source of income for SNDC and was enabling more money to be put into the community. Hingham clubs and societies have benefitted from Neighbourhood Grants. Hingham History Society received a £2000 grant to help develop a Web site which is now up and running, and the Hingham Sports and Social

Club received £1600 to help with their recent redecoration and refurbishment. The Youth Café has also benefited from a grant. Cllr Bendle welcomed local clubs and societies to approach her regarding funding

Mr Eldridge thanked Cllr Bendle for her all of her hard work during her time as Councillor.

County Councillor Margaret Dewsbury – Cllr Dewsbury was unable to attend the meeting for health reasons. Mr Eldridge and Mrs Dore apologised that they were not able to access Cllr Dewsbury's report prior to the meeting. Mrs Lys recognised and offered her thanks for all of Cllr Dewsbury's hard work.

10. Any Other Business

Rev. Colin Reed reported that the project to provide heating in the church was now awaiting planning permission, if granted the project should get underway over the summer months. He apologised for the lack of heating and the discomfort that it has caused during the winter. The plan for toilets to be provided in the tower room will hopefully soon get underway. Rev Reed explained that historical money from the sale of land was being used to fund the projects and should benefit the community by making the church a more useable venue.

Rev. Colin Reed also spoke about the Ecclesiastical Allotment Association, which provide allotments to relieve poverty. The small rents charged provides the association's only income.

Rev. Colin Reed praised the work of the Youth Café, the only society in the town for adolescents, mainly those in the early years of secondary school. The Youth Café has been running for 3 years with hardly any trouble, which he described as a "testament to the youth of the town". He thanked the HPFA for use of their facilities which has boosted Youth Café numbers.

Mr Dore asked Rev. Reed to clarify the situation with the Yew trees, which require drastic pruning. Rev Reed advise that some would be pruned others may have to be removed and believed a faculty would only be required for the removal of trees. Concern was also expressed about a holly tree.

Mrs Lys requested that the Town Council provide a facility for a co-ordinated events list to prevent future events from clashing. Mrs Mackie advised there was a folder in the Library for local events. Mrs Dore advised there was a diary function on the Town Council website which could possibly be used for this function.

Mrs Mackie requested that all of the reports provided for this meeting be made available at the Library. This was agreed.

Mrs Iveson advised that the Town Council minutes that were available in the Library and on the website were not up to date. Mrs Dore explained this situation will hopefully improve with the future appointment of a new Town Clerk.

Rev. Colin Reed suggested that the minutes appear on the website as draft before they are agreed and signed at the following Town Council meeting.

Mrs Mackie expressed concerns regarding the proposal by SNDC to replace the existing public toilet facilities with toilets that there is a charge to use, a plan that would also provide less toilets. Mrs Mackie expressed that the Town Council wish to keep and refurbish the current facilities. Cllr Bendle explained that no meetings regarding this had taken place for 3 months as the Director dealing with this has left SNDC. Cllr Bendle stated that it was a 2 way dialogue between SNDC and the Town Council and such changes would not simply be imposed upon the town.

Mr Robin Chan asked what action was to be taken about the fallen hawthorn tree on the green. He expressed that as it was still living, residents would find it preferable to save and somehow reinstate the tree. Mrs Vee English expressed that it was not acceptable to her that the tree not be saved as it was still alive. Mr Eldridge explained that the council had already made the decision to have the tree removed as to reinstate it as a

permanent measure was cost prohibitive compared with the cost of replacing it with a new tree of a descent size. Mrs Sarah Davis asked that it be replaced with an indigenous blossoming tree.

Mrs Dore advised that 2 oak trees on the green would have to be removed as the fungus within the trees had made them a danger to the public. These trees would be replaced although not in the same positions.

Mrs Deborah Fairburn asked about the status of the footpath behind the school. Mr Cowin advised that he had spoken to Graham Shingfield regarding this, Mr Shingfield was unaware that the field had been ploughed to the extent that it had, but was happy for people to still use the footpath and it was his intention to cut the hedge back after the bird nesting season. Mr Colwin reported that Mr Shingfield would consider designating it a permissive path.

Mr Eldridge offered his thanks to David Ramm for all of his hard work and maintenance within the town, and to Sarah Davis for organising the litter pick.

Mr Eldridge thanked everyone for attending and Robin Chan for providing the refreshments.

Mr Eldridge closed the meeting.

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Chairman