

MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF TUESDAY 16th APRIL 2019

Chairman - Cllr Peter Eldridge

Clerk - Mrs Alison Doe

25 members of the public attended the meeting

(Copies of all reports submitted were available at the meeting and have been published on the Hingham Town Council website as Appendix A to these minutes).

1. Welcome, and to Receive Apologies for Absence

The Chairman opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. Apologies for absence were received from – Dr Shaun Conway, PC Andrew Read, The Co-Op (who were unable to send a representative to the meeting), Cllr Kate Chan, Cllr Gaby Maltby, Cllr Graham Shingfield, Dawny Christien (Youth Café), Hillary Hodges (Hingham and Hardingham Art Group), Barry Glyn (Speed Watch), Barbara Howard (Community Connector) and Jerry Dore.

2. To Approve and Sign the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting of 17 April 2018

The minutes were agreed as correct and signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting of 17 April 2018

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting of 17 April 2018.

4. Address by Hingham Town Council Chairman including:

4.1 To receive a summary report from the Chairman on the work of the Town Council during the past year and its plans for the future, (included in Appendix A).

A written report was included in the papers for the meeting and was read out by the Chairman. In addition the Chairman explained that the current Town Councillors are due to step down with the new Town Councillors taking office on 07 May 2019, following the nomination period for the 02 May elections, 7 of the 11 vacancies have been filled, leaving 4 seats on Hingham Town Council to be filled by Co-option. The Chairman thanked the Town Councillors, County Councillor Margaret Dewsbury and District Councillor Yvonne Bendle for their support of both the Town and the Town Council over the past four years, he also thanked the town Handyman and Clerk for their hard work.

Questions were invited - a member of the public reiterated thanks to the Town, District and County Councillors.

Draft copies of the 2018/19 accounts were available at the meeting (included in Appendix A).

4.2 Chairman's Award for Services to the Community

The Chairman had decided this year the award should recognize the work of Dick Stickland for his many years of service to the community through his work as a long standing member of the Town Council (46 years), founder member of the Hingham Society and the Hingham History Group, and through his interest and preservation of the ecology and history of Hingham, since having move to the town in 1967 on a "temporary basis".

The Chairman thanked Dick for everything that he has done for the town, including regular litter picking while walking his dog.

Dick was presented with the award certificate and a round of applause was given

Dick spoke to say that after 46 years he had decided to step down from his role of Town Councillor, a role he has initially took on due to concerns over comments made by the Council at that time regarding the proximity of trees to the road, (being determined to prevent more trees from being felled).

Dick also explained that he was tasked as becoming town archivist approximately 30 years ago and over the years has accumulated a vast amount of documents and around 3000 photographs. He has also drawn up a map of who owned what land in Hingham in 1595, and also has some details of land ownership from 1540/1550. Dick said he had been picking up litter in the town (now done as he walks his dog), since 1980.

Further thanks and a round of applause was given.

5. Guest Speakers (attendance from the below was dependent upon their work commitments on the day)

5.1 P.C Andrew Read – Community Beat Manager – Norfolk Constabulary

5.2 Representative from the Co-Op

To talk about the Co-op in Hingham and the Community Support it is able to offer.

The Clerk (Ali) explained that neither of the guest speakers were able to attend the meeting. Managers from the Co-Op were on annual leave and PC Read had his shifts changed and was therefore unavailable, the Clerk was planning to meet with him on 24th April and asked if there were any issues that anyone would like her to raise with him.

As no guest speaker was available, Ali offered to speak about her role as Clerk of the Town Council and her role in the community.

Ali explained that she was formerly a resident of Hingham, (now living in Rocklands) but has 3 jobs all based in Hingham, being, working for a local company one day a week, working in the Library and being Town Clerk.

Ali has worked as Clerk since April 2015 (initially on a temporary basis for 6 months, then being appointed the position permanently) having been employed by the Town Council to undertake the administration of the cemetery in December 2014. She explained that she was not the decision maker, decisions are made by the Council and it was part of her role to implement the decisions made. She then briefly outlined some of the other duties of her role (taking minutes, preparing agendas, ensuring Cllrs have as much information as possible prior to meetings, dealing with correspondence, managing contracts, projects and staff, keeping the accounts, preparing everything for internal and external audits, making sure the Council is legally compliant and working within their powers as restricted by legislation, administration of the cemetery and the website, applying for funding (through the Parish Partnership Scheme) and to SNC for tree works, liaising with other authorities and the various groups and clubs in the town). Ali also explained that she likes to be “hand on” when it comes to maintenance work and is happy to take on things outside of the “job description”.

Ali explained that she is contracted to work for 75 hours a month and the impact that working at home can have on family life and asked that people be considerate of the time of day when they telephone her and that with emails being so readily accessible via a mobile phone, she does find it difficult to “switch off”.

She explained that the role of Clerk is not always enjoyable and it can be frustrating, upsetting, and disheartening. Sometimes taking the flack for difficult and unpopular decisions, for example the removal of the Fairland Oak trees. These decisions are not taken lightly and are usually for legal or safety reasons.

She explained that it is always nice to receive a thank you when a problem has been resolved and outlined some of the councils achievements over her time as Clerk (the new footway in the Market Place, purchase of SAM Sign and extension to the 20mph speed limit, improvements to two of sections of the Public Rights of Way footpath network, currently the skate park is having some repairs and refurbishment, replacement of “long past their best” street lighting, resurfacing of the access driveway to the Lincoln Hall/Bowls Club and Library, getting the primary school children to make decorations for the Christmas tree, organising Markets and for the past 2 years organising an open evening, preventing the closure of the Public toilets by taking ownership of them).

Ali thanked all of the Cllrs for their help and support over the past four years.

Ali also spoke about Hingham Library where she has worked for 7 years, which has recently undergone some improvements, rearranging of the furniture has made the most of limited space and the staff are now looking to put on more events and now run a Lego club for children.

To end, Ali said she was a busy mum of 2 (with her daughter now being grown up and living away from home) and enjoys “escaping it all” by volunteering at the North Norfolk Railway.

6. Open Forum to Discuss Matters Raised by the General Public

- 6.1 A resident who had previously brought concerns to the Town Council regarding maintenance/drainage issues on the B1108 Norwich Road, thanked the Town Council and the Clerk for their support. He explained that he would like to start a visible roadside campaign to try to combat speeding within the town, with the help of the Community Speed Watch and Town Council, and if possible working with the police (to ensure that the campaign was fully lawful). He asked for a show of hands from those who would be interested in taking part, 7 hands were raised. It was explained that the Community Speed Watch need more volunteers to enable them to undertake more roadside activity, and it was suggested that a campaign to get more police enforcement of the speed limits, including the 20mph speed limit which they currently don't enforce, might be worth a try.
- 6.2 A representative (head coach and secretary) from the Hingham Cricket Club spoke to outline the clubs activities. He said that although cricket was generally struggling in Norfolk, the Hingham club was growing. The Club hosts "All Stars" cricket for 4-8 year olds, coaching is available for older children and is now looking to get a youth team together. The club is looking for new players (male and female) and volunteers to help out in non-playing roles, for example with net refurbishment (which will include skirting to stop hedgehogs getting stuck). The club's emphasis will be on taking part and having fun, with friendly matches being played on a Sunday, as well as the regular Saturday games.

7. To Receive Reports from Hingham Clubs, Societies, Charities and Organizations etc. (approximately 5mins each) *(Copies of all reports submitted were available at the meeting and have been published on the Hingham Town Council website as Appendix A to these minutes).*

Written reports from the following Clubs, Societies, Charities and Organizations were circulated and a verbal overview was given by the Chairman any additional verbal updates given at the meeting are recorded as below:

7.1 COMMUNITY CONNECTOR

7.2 HINGHAM COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH

7.3 HINGHAM BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

7.4 HINGHAM GOOD NEIGHBOURS SCHEME

The secretary advised that they received about 1 request a month for assistance, and was very much valued by those people who need to use the service.

7.5 LINCOLN SOCIAL CENTRE

It was noted that there had been recent issues with the toilets being blocked from paper towels being flushed and with lights being left on.

7.6 HINGHAM CHARITY

The Chairman advised that when there was a guided tour of the Turf Meadows, it was well worth a visit as it has an abundance of wildlife.

7.7 HINGHAM EDUCATION TRUST

It was advised that the trust also covers Great and Little Ellingham, providing grants for university students (applications are assessed for the individuals' financial need).

7.8 HINGHAM COMMUNITY CAR SCHEME

The scheme is no longer getting requests from the Scoulton area as these have been referred to the Watton Community Car Scheme. The Hingham Community Car scheme is in need of new drivers.

7.9 THE HINGHAM SOCIETY

At the Society's AGM, concerns were raised (following the recent violent attack in Hingham) about the darkness of the Copper Lane area, the illumination of a privately owned light in the vicinity may help. Thanks was offered to Norfolk County Council for the new replacement directional sign posts around town. It was noted that the annual litter-pick will be on 19th May.

7.10 HINGHAM HISTORY CENTRE

7.11 HINGHAM W.I

7.12 HINGHAM SANTA'S GROTTTO

It was commented that this was a nice thing to have in the town.

7.13 HINGHAM AND HARDINGHAM ART GROUP

It was noted that the annual exhibition was well worth a visit.

7.14 ST ANDREWS HERITAGE FUND

The open gardens will take place on 09 June, anyone wishing to display their garden was asked to get in touch. It was commented that there are some lovely and unusual gardens in the town.

7.15 ST ANDREWS CHURCH

Rev. Reed advised that the building of the church was started in 1320 and being that next year is 2020, it is hoped that there will be some celebrations taking place to commemorate the 700th anniversary.

7.16 HINGHAM YOUTH CAFÉ

It was noted that the Youth Café was working in a very positive way, and there had been some good feedback from youngsters who use the service.

7.17 HINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH**7.18 HINGHAM TENNIS CLUB**

The Tennis Club had been running for three years and has members from the age of 4 to 80 years. There are 2 coaches available and lots of different sessions taking place including cardio and a coffee and cake session. The club is now introducing Pickle Ball as a trial, which will take place in the sports hall. The Club will be holding a quiz night on 10th May. New members are always welcome.

7.19 GARDENING CLUB

The club meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month and has been going for 23 years. New members are always welcome.

7.20 HINGHAM CRICKET CLUB**7.21 HINGHAM PLAYING FIELD ASSOCIATION**

The Sports hall and field are well used with about 1600 people using the facility each month. All of the clubs are doing well. The building, dating from the 1980's does need updating and things need replacing.

8. To receive Annual Reports from County and District Councillors**8.1 District Councillor Yvonne Bendle**

District Councillor Bendle reported that South Norfolk Council and Broadland District Council have entered into a collaborative working partnership, not only to save some costs but to enable more grants to be obtained from Government. The Council made a slight increase to the Council Tax for 2019/20 but continue to provide 86 different services to the community, some being non statutory, such as leisure centres which are running at "cost neutral", the Wymondham Leisure Centre has seen its membership increase since the facility was refurbished. The Community Connectors continue to work within the community to get help and advice to people that may not otherwise be able to access it.

8.2 County Councillor Margaret Dewsbury

County Councillor Dewsbury reported that Norfolk County Council has balanced their budget for 2018/19 and are working to be as economical as possible and are also trying to be as digital as possible. The Council continues to work to help cover the Broadband "Not Spots" with 95% of South Norfolk now being covered. The Libraries summer reading challenge will be on the theme of space travel to commemorate the 50th anniversary of man landing on the moon. Trading Standards continue to work with the police to try to combat rogue traders and make the public more "Scam Aware". The Council have moved from a Committee system to a Cabinet system.

9. To Discuss Any Other Business

It was noted that there are 2 sets of allotments in Hingham, with the Mill Farm Allotments keen to fill their vacant plots. The Community Compost representative brought some information to the meeting and she was thanked by the Chairman.

The Clerk also advised that any community organization holding an event could forward a poster or information to her for inclusion on the Hingham Community Events Facebook page

The meeting ended at 9.00pm

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and invited them to stay for refreshments.

***REPORTS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE HINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE**

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