

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 22 April 2008, in the Salvation Army Rooms, Commercial Road, Shepton Mallet.

Present: Chairman - Councillor C.F Lockey.

Clrs: Mrs J.D. Bartlett, Mrs J.A. Kinison, Mrs J.M. Marsh, Mr T. Marsh, Mr J.W. Parham, Mrs M.R. Robinson, Mr N.F. Shearn, Mr A. Taylor and Mrs K. Taylor.

Mr Kevin Newton (Coxley Developments) & Mr Lee Wright (Wright Associates). Mr Guy Braga & Mr Paul Tomlinson (MDC). There were 40 members of the public and 2 members of the press in attendance.

The Chairman opened the meeting, welcomed the members of the public, persons providing presentations and Councillors. Emergency evacuation procedures were informed.

The Chairman then provided a tribute to the passing of the late Cllr Stephen Robinson. "It was with deep regret and shock to us all when informed of the passing of Stephen Robinson. Elected on this Council last year, Stephen showed that he was always keen to get involved with specific issues. He was always regular in attendance at meetings, and always punctual. I am sure he will be greatly missed". There then followed by a one minute silence.

1./08 Apologies for Absence – Cllr Champion, Inchley & Lovell.

2./08 Town Development Projects and Update – Mr Kevin Newton

Mr Newton provided a 30 minute presentation which included completed and current projects to 10 Town Street (Heath & Fitness Centre), 7 – 9 – 11 Town Street with new period shop fronts, 6 Town Street and the new frontage to 3 & 4 Market Place (above the previous Boots retail site).

The delay in the new entrance to the Academy was due to legal and land swap requirements with SCC which was still ongoing, however a temporary entrance would be provided in the near future. Developments were taking place to the rear of the Academy which is to provide the last phase of the student accommodation and due completion by September 2008. Other areas facing the Church included The Fives which were currently being converted. New projects in the Market Place included number 12. Pickwicks, and he had also just acquired the previous New Look building.

Future projects included an area of development employment land on the Tadley Acres site where he hoped to develop a satellite office for the Academy. He also hoped to proceed to redevelop the Little Ostry area which would provide further Academy requirements and also other mixed use. Overall the Academy plans were proceeding well and on target for 2010 when it was hoped to have 500 students and university status. Overall the current students were happy with their facilities.

Mr Newton also provided a summary of his further aspirations for the Town which included a development of a 3 screen cinema / flexible entertainments building, a six lane 10 pin bowling alley, an indoor fun pool, commercial restaurants, recording studios and light industrial units some of which would be used by the Academy for their scenery and prop work. The preferred site of the old Tesco at Fosse Lane was currently on hold, but that he had identified two other possible sites.

Mr Newton then undertook a question and answer session with all present before concluding his presentation. The Chairman thanked Mr Kevin Newton for a most positive and enjoyable presentation which was supported by applause from the meeting.

3./08 Anglo Trading Estate Proposals – Mr Lee Wright

Mr Wright provided a 20 minute presentation to the very outline proposals currently under public consultation. He considered that now was a good opportunity to review possible development of the site given the positive interest and significant regeneration developments taken place elsewhere in and around the Town. He further considered that public consultation cover important and often local issues, the purpose of a public consultation is to encourage debate and

ensure all those that wish to contribute to the consultation get an opportunity to do so as the comments you make on the consultation document will help us shape the future development of The Anglo Brewery. The aim of this consultation document is that it should be widely distributed to the public, local stakeholders, statutory bodies and other interested parties in order to receive comments and ideas on what people would like to see happen with the site and buildings.

The site is a Grade II* Listed Building, is also on Mendip District Council's Buildings At Risk Register and lies within the Conservation Area of Shepton Mallet. The site consists of two main areas: a complex of late Victorian industrial buildings to the eastern half of the site, and a redeveloped area to the west which is owned by Brothers Drinks. The site has not been utilised fully for a number of years mainly due to the complex layout of buildings/ additions/ later additions within the site which block windows of older and more historical core and lack of parking by modern day standards.

The site offers a unique opportunity for an innovative redevelopment and would allow for a number of possible future uses which could include: Areas for storage (rental), Areas For Arts (please note arts cover a wide range and not just PERFORMING ARTS), Retail, Snack Bars, Cafes, Wine Bar, Restaurant, Hotel, Function Rooms, Offices, Business Units (B1).

Comments received would be feed back into considerations should the proposals proceed to be worked up further.

Mr Wright then undertook a question and answer session with all present before concluding his presentation. The Chairman then thanked Mr Wright for his presentation.

4./08 Shepton 21 – Jo Christoforides

The meeting was provided with an update to projects being progressed and these included; **Better Business for Shepton Mallet**. An evening event would take place on Monday 28 April 2008 from 6.30pm to 9pm.

Enhanced Market Day – Enhancement of the market was high on their agenda and a one off event would take place on Friday 2 May 2008 from 9am until 2pm.

Town Centre Facelift Project – This had now received funding from MDC via 106 monies and was due for launch in June 2008, with the aim to smarten up shop facia, signs, shop windows and display lighting within the windows.

Music in the Park – This would be a repeat and further extension of last year's event to be held within Collett Park during July with the support of the Town Council.

Local Development Framework – A public meeting would take place on the 9 May to consider this future requirement and at the same time the event would be used to seek volunteers for Shepton 21 group. It was explained that the group was made up of volunteers working for the betterment of the Town and urgently needed fresh blood and support. The Tourist Information Point in the High Street could be used for all enquiries.

A short question and answer session then took place. Enquiries were made as to progress of two of Shepton 21's main projects. The **CATEC project** was outside of Jo's remit and with many stakeholders and partners involved but that matters were progressing. The project to bring the **East Somerset Railway** into the Town, which would provide a link into the main line, was again outside of Jo's remit and Mr Guy Braga provided an update to this very large and complex project which was still being progressed.

5./08 Grove House Surgery – Rachael Whitcombe

Rachel as Practice Manager informed the meeting that due to capacity demand and developments in health care the existing site at Grove House was deemed no longer appropriate and there was a requirement to identify and develop a new site within the Town. They are currently working with developers and any suggestions or possibilities of available sites within the Town would be very much appreciated.

6./08 Public Transport – Clive Pearson

Mr Pearson provided an update and was pleased to report that his proposals for a new service route and stopping points to the Ridgway Estate was to proceed with a start date of the 27 May 2008. He requested that the Community make full use of this new facility and reiterated the saying "Use it or lose it".

7./08 Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 24 April 2007 were considered for accuracy and content.

Resolve: Proposed by Clive Pearson, seconded by Cllr John Parham, that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting of 24 April 2007 were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

8./08 Matters Arising – No matters were raised.

9./08 Chairman's Report

Planning Applications

The number of application considered this year is 164, an increase on the previous year. During this period several large planning applications received consideration, including Haskins redevelopment and the Bellway homes development off of Hitchen Lane, both of which are now in progress. Of the total of applications considered throughout the year, 4 recommended for approval by the Town Council were refused by the District Council and 8 recommended for refusal by the Town Council were granted permission by the District Council. This is a considerable increase on the previous year and the majority of these applications relate to what the Town Council considers overdevelopment and also the inappropriate loss of trees.

Public Transport

What would we do without Clive Pearson! Clive has worked hard for this Council doing invaluable service in ensuring improved Bus Services. He is arranging an additional Bus Service to cover the Ridgeway Estate. On Wednesday 2 April, he and I, together with First Bus officers and a County Transport officer, did a trial run around the estate, which included five stops. I am sure that if this is successful, it has to be of great benefit to all the residents on the Ridgeway. So my thanks to Clive, we are indebted to you.

Police

WE always extend an invitation to the Police at our full Council meetings. They provide us with updated crime figures and always willing to answer questions from both Councillors and the Public. It is so important that we work closely with the Police, and other Authorities

Regeneration Schemes

We have had several presentations including Mr Paul Tomlinson who is Mendips 'Conservation Project Officer' not only on the HERs project but the Market Cross as well, with the prospect of it coming under the care of the Town Council as trustees. Looking to the future we are now awaiting final confirmation of the (THI) Townscape Heritage Initiative, which will continue the good work through to 2011.

Lido

The Town Council completed the Lido refurbishment project and paid out the sum of over £377,000. Unfortunately the addition bid for funding of £12,000 to resurface the car park was unsuccessful but we will continue to progress this much needed enhancement.

Collett Park

Day to day Maintenance and Improvements continue and the current contract which is programmed to operate until 2011 is subject to review at this current time. It is sad that vandalism damage in excess of £5000 occurred to the Public Toilets and stone boundary walling, both of which were subject to insurance claims and repairs are now completed. The Trustees and our Park contractor have looked at and we are now working through a programme to work towards a 'Green Flag' status in the future; this will improve our 'Jewel in the Crown' even more.

Saturday June 9th 2007 was our annual '**Collett Festival**' which was again a resounding success but which suffered damage and disruption due to vandalism on the Friday evening. Thanks to Cllr Margaret Robinson for continued organisation of the event. We have now taken the decision to discourage setting up of displays and stalls on the Friday evening but to encourage setting up early on the day of the event. This year's event will look to support the Somerset & Dorset Air Ambulance and our Town Street Traders.

Allotments

The Town Council operates and manages 81 allotment plots on four sites within the Town at Hitchen Lane which we rent and Whitstone Road, along with two sites just off Allyn Saxon Drive, which the Town Council owns. Our extended waiting list for allotment gardens continues and we are striving to expand our allotment provision to satisfy the current requirement.

Supporting the Community

We have supported groups, events and projects within the community to the level of over £21,000 including our continued financial support to valued organisations such as the CAB, TIC and Mendip Community Transport. Of the total sum some £6335 was provided to support of the Town Centre CCTV system, £5,000 to support Heritage Schemes, £9,000 to support Shepton 21 and £12,287 was made by way of grants to local organisations and clubs with 4 being over a £1,000.

Community Woodland

We worked closely with SCC and the Duchy of Cornwall to provide a Community Woodland with some 2,000 native trees at Goldhill. The own Council will continue to support the facility by cutting of the grass walkways through the woodland and the Duchy of Cornwall will maintain the tree stock.

French Partners Twinning Visit and Civic Reception held in June

We always look forward to these visits from our Twin Towns. I believe these visits are all important. It not only forms a vital link between the Twin Towns, but allows us all to learn and gain knowledge from each other.

Town Council Pilot Structure, Full Council and three Committees (Planning, Service Delivery and Community Development) will continue to operate and to be reviewed in November.

Future Projects

We are still negotiating the construction of a **Pedestrian Crossing at Whitstone College**, which will come within the Safe Route to Schools Policy, and also provide traffic calming in that area. Still in the pipeline are plans to an extension of the **Strawberry Line into Cannards Grave**.

The Town Council along with partners of Mendip District Council, Somerset County Council and Shepton 21 are progressing with a feasibility study to the **proposals for a CATEC building, Civic Hall and Town Council Offices** for the Town.

It is planned to complete Repairs and **Cleaning of the War Memorial** as well as landscaping to the area surrounding the structure in the forth coming year and he also looked forward to private sector development of a new Visitors Centre at The Great House and Kilver Court.

Waterloo Road safety remains one of our priorities and it is programmed to provide amber flashing warning lights, increased signage and highway lineage outside of the Infants School. Speed Indicator Advisory signs are also to be funded and trialled for a twelve month period. All hopefully are to be installed by mid summer.

Year as Chairman

My year as Chairman has been quite eventful. I wish to record my thanks to my Vice-Chairman, Cllr Judy Bartlett, for the help and assistance. I also wish to thank all my fellow Councillors for all their hard work. A special thanks to the Committee Chairman for their help and assistance and I thank members of the Public for their involvement, which goes along way to making our meetings more interesting. He also thanked the Friends of the Cenotaph for cleaning and provision of flowers on the Memorial and also all the unsung heroes who worked and supported the Town.

10./08 Financial Report – Audited Accounts April 2007 – March 2008 – The Chairman presented the audited Accounts, a copy of which had been supplied with the Agenda. Substantial differences in totals of previous year's accounts were explained to both Income and Expenditure. No questions were raised regarding the Accounts or their supporting notes.

Resolve: That the Audited Financial Accounts for the Year Ending 31 March 2007 are noted.

11./08 Recreational Ground Trust Collett Park – Annual Report Year Ending 31 March 2008 – The report for the year ending 31 March 2008 was presented as required by Section 45 of the Charities Act 1993. No questions were put.

Resolve: That the Recreational Ground Trust Annual Report (Appendix B) as attached to these Minutes for the year ending 31 March 2008 be approved.

12./08 War Memorial Charity – Annual Report Year Ending 31 March 2008 – The report for the year ending 31 March 2008 was presented as required by Section 45 of the Charities Act 1993. No questions were put.

Resolve: That the War Memorial Charity Report (Appendix C) as attached to these Minutes for the year ending 31 March 2008 be approved.

13./08 Public Forum

Swimming Pool – Mr George Bartlett raised concern that Mr Newton’s earlier proposals for a fun pool may well conflict with the current outdoor pool. The Chairman considered that the two facilities were very different and should compliment each other.

Collett Park – Mr George Bartlett raised much concern as to the level of vandalism in the park and stressed that action needed to be taken.

There being no other matters raised the Chairman then concluded Public Forum and thanked all members of the public for their attendance.

The meeting then closed at 8.40pm.

Chairman Cllr

Signature_____

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