

**MINUTES OF THE 42<sup>nd</sup> TRING ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD AT THE VICTORIA HALL,  
AKEMAN STREET ON MONDAY 20<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2015 AT 8 p.m.**

**Present:** Councillors: Stephen Hearn, Town Mayor (presiding)  
John Allan  
Barry Batchelor  
Penny Hearn  
Mike Hicks  
Nick Hollinghurst  
Denise Rance  
Roxanne Ransley

**Also present:** Michael Curry (Town Clerk)  
Claire Hill (Deputy Clerk)  
Vivianne Child (Guest Speaker)  
65 registered electors of Tring Town

388. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Councillors Georgina Roberts and Stuart Tolley

389. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the forty first Annual Town Meeting held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

390. **TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT**

Councillor S. Hearn outlined the work of the Town Council over the course of the year.

He explained that a technical list of the powers of a Town Council gives a picture of a limited range of somewhat random concerns. However, in relation to what the Town Council has been doing the past year this was clearly a false impression, citing the Town Plan, the location of the markets, a new community centre at New Mill and promoting tourism then the commemoration of the commencement of WWI at the Memorial Gardens and the unveiling of a memorial plaque for Edward Barber VC are examples of the diverse contribution the Town Council has been making to improve the local community.

He highlighted a common theme of these initiatives was engaging with people whether members of the public or representatives of local organisations. The first gives an evidence base for Council decisions and the latter gives a boost to partnership working, so vital when resources are tight. He gave three examples of the latter illustrating the benefits that can be achieved in three quite different spheres of activity.

Firstly the Council established a working group to secure Dementia-friendly Community status for Tring under the chairmanship of Cllr John Allan. This has grown from an initial meeting of five people to a network of nineteen. Whilst we have achieved the aim of registering for Dementia-friendly Community status the real benefit has been bringing together the main organisations locally involved in providing services to sufferers and carers to exchange information and ideas. The Group secured funding from Dacorum Borough Council to produce a range of information leaflets. Cllr Hearn thanked Cllr Allan and Mr Dick Lovelace for their commitment to the project.

The second example is working with Sue Lea, Dacorum Borough Council's Tourism Officer. The preparation work for the Town Plan identified the value that tourism can play in the prosperity of the Town. Working with Ms Lea, Tring organisations were well represented at a workshop to determine Dacorum's Tourism Strategy for the next two years and, as a follow up, the Town Council hosted a meeting on the preparation of a specific Destination Plan for Tring.

As part of the development of the Tourism Strategy, Dacorum employed a consultant to conduct mystery shopping exercises in local towns. He was full of praise for the reception he received in Tring. Cllr Hearn was particularly pleased to say that he singled out the Council's Information Centre for praise and thanked every member of our Information Team for the work that they do.

The last example was on a smaller scale, but one which has lots of potential. Following conversations with Dacorum Borough Council's Local Food Coordinator, Nicole Jackson, the Town Council made available part of our holding at Bulbourne for a community garden initiative being run by permaculture group associated with Tring in Transition. Currently a section of the site is being prepared to illustrate the project's potential for schools and local community groups. So watch this space.

The Council has responded to a range of consultations throughout the year. These include:

- Herts County Council's consultations on Library Services and Bus Services
- The Department of Community and Local Government's consultation on Parish Polls
- Dacorum Borough Council's introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (This is a new way of collecting contributions from developments towards the provision of infrastructure required to support growth within Dacorum), its Conservation Strategy and the Tring Conservation Area Appraisal

It has also been liaising closely with Dacorum Borough Council's Planning Department on the draft master plans for the LA5 development between the Aylesbury Road and the Icknield Way and the supplementary site allocations. To reiterate the Council's position on LA5:

*(i) The Council supports the Draft Master Plan for LA5 overall, with the exception of the proposed Gypsy Site. The Council understands and supports the need for Gypsy sites, but the LA5 position on an AONB is totally unsuitable, there are more suitable places to put one.*

*(ii) The Council's support is subject to adequate provision being made for school places and infrastructure, which it wishes to be specified as soon as possible.*

The Council will continue to work with Dacorum Borough Council as they begin their 'Early Review' of the Core Strategy – the strategic vision and objectives for the borough for the next twenty years.

The Town Council considered and made recommendations with regard to 216 applications last year. In the vast majority of cases the Town Council's recommendation was in agreement with Dacorum Borough Council's determination. The Council was pleased to have invited Colin Chambers, Dacorum Borough Council's Team Leader for Trees & Woodlands, to a meeting to discuss the considerations behind planning applications concerning trees.

The Town Council is working with local residents, the Church, Dacorum Borough Council and Herts County Council on the provision of a new community facility in New Mill. It is not something that can be resolved quickly, but Cllr Hearn was pleased to say that there are encouraging signs that a possible solution has been identified.

The future of town's two markets is a concern throughout the town. With Lord Rothschild's view that to hold markets on Church Square & Mansion Vista does not break the covenant on them we are liaising with the respective market operators on the practicalities of relocating them for a trial period.

2014 saw the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the commencement of WWI. The Town commemorated the event by adding a plaque of remembrance at the Memorial Garden. On the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2015 the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the award of the VC to Tring's Edward Barber was commemorated by the laying of a memorial plaque in Church Square. A party attended a memorial service organised by Tring High Street Baptist Church at Neuve Chapelle.

The Mayor stressed the achievements of the Youth Town Council – an area of the Council's work that the he felt was overlooked. Current projects include a musical evening to spotlight local young talent,

making a documentary with Dee TV and improvements to the skatepark – the experience of being a member of the Youth Town Council develops them individually. This was clearly demonstrated by excellence of their contribution to the Town Plan and many members have made outstanding starts to their careers. At their meetings this year they had speakers from the Police, Druglink and Mental Health providers. The Mayor was pleased to mention Emma Cave, the Clerk to the Youth Council, under whose guidance the Youth Town Council operated. He also thanked the Town Warden, Colin Jones, and his assistant, Philip Cartwright for their work for the Town Council.

Cllr Hearn thanked those Councillors who are not standing for re-election for their contributions to the town - Cllrs Harvey Alison, John Allan, Barry Batchelor, Georgina Roberts, and Stuart Tolley. Special mention was made for the contribution of John Allan and also Barry Batchelor who joined Tring Town Council in May 1991 – 24 years ago.

The Mayor concluded by saying that the current members, working together throughout the last four years, were leaving for the new Council a clear sense of direction from the community as to the way forward and a solid basis upon which to progress for the next four years.

### 391. **ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2014/15**

Councillor Harvey Allison, Chairman of Finance & Policy Committee reported on the Estimates of Income and Expenditure for 2015/16.

The previous year the Town Council approved a budget that, practically speaking, was a balanced budget – a deficit of £978 less than 0.5% of the total planned expenditure at £217,342.

This with a new strategy for the apportionment of the Council's reserves completed the consolidation of the Council's financial position at a time when there was a degree of uncertainty due to changes to Local Government finance e.g. the loss of income from the precept because of the Government's restructuring of the Council Tax Support.

Against this backdrop of further pressure on Local Government funding the Town Council felt it necessary to increase its charge on local residents by 2% to maintain the balanced budget in face of increased costs. This brings the charge for a Band D property to £24.67 from £24.19

There is one item of exceptional expenditure in the budget. That is £5,000 to be drawn from the unspecified reserves to help upgrade the Christmas lights infrastructure in conjunction with Dacorum Borough Council.

In 2014/15 the Council focussed on the completion of the Town Plan and making preparations for its implementation. A new Council Committee will be formed dedicated to the Town Plan and to the Town's infrastructure. The Council has allocated £10,000 towards the implementation of the Town Plan and will reallocate the balance of the Charter 700 Contingency fund in the Budget towards the Town Plan implementation. With the successful Charter Heritage Lottery bid, the expectation is that the majority of the £7,000 contingency will be available. The Council were delighted with the award of £100,000 from Dacorum Borough Council for the Town Plan.

Each year the Town Council gives grants to local organisations. In 2014/15 awards were made to the following:

- Tring Community Centre on behalf of Forget-Me-Not Nursery – improvements to the outside play facilities £1,000
- Keech Hospice Care - or the establishment of a 24 hour specialist telephone helpline to support local families with terminally-ill children £250
- Tring Carnival £2,000

- Tring & District Local History & Museum Society – Annual Endowment £2,000
- Tring Together Ltd – support for Tring Christmas Festival £1,000
- Tring Youth Project £5,000
- Tring Together - Office Grant £5,000

Cllr Hearn thanked Cllr Alison for his work as Chairman of the Finance & Policy Committee.

392. **REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

A list of representatives had been provided. There were no questions.

393. **GUEST SPEAKER**

The Mayor introduced Vivianne Child, Tring Together, who spoke on the preparations for Charter 700.

395. **BEST KEPT ALLOTMENT 2014/15**

The Best Kept Allotment prizes for 2014/15 were presented by Councillor Stephen Hearn, as follows:

Winner	Mrs Tipson
2nd Prize	Mr Ken Pemberthy
3rd Prize	Mr Kenneth Seabrook
4 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Mr and Mrs Bolton

397. **THE ANNUAL COMMUNITY AWARD 2014**

The winner of the Annual Community Award of £300, to be donated to a charity of the recipient's choice, was announced by the Town Mayor as Doris Bardell.

The Mayor explained how in 1970, when Nora Grace was persuading everyone to support the funding of the Red Cross Hall, Nora decided it was to be a building of high standing in the Community and that meant making it as practical, attractive and welcoming as possible. It had to have a raised stage for shows or demonstrations and such events taking place on the stage needed to be suitably decorated to supplement and support the activity involved. Nora decided to approach a friend of hers who she knew was active in many ways and had an artistic flair.

That lady was Doris Bardell, who was already a founder member of Tring Floral Art Club. She initially agreed to do a flower arrangement for the stage once a fortnight, to coincide with the very popular Good Companions Club for pensioners. This service has now continued since the hall opened in 1971 and Doris has been arranging the flowers for over 43 years

In addition Doris is a very community minded person looking after the interests of her friends and neighbours and making regular visits as they become ever more frail and confined to their homes.

398. **OPEN FORUM**

During this item the following comments were received from members of the public:

Mr David Smith (Cobbetts Ride) raised the poor state of the High Street road surface. Cllr Hollinghurst in his role as County Councillor answered saying that the condition of the surface has been raised and it would be maintained as part of the County Council's routine work. However, he felt that a fundamental reassessment of the surface was required – this was echoed by the Mayor - because of the shallowness of the substrate and the underlying chalk base. Cllr Hollinghurst also commented on the process to introduce 20 mph speed limits. The Ms Frances Turan (Icknield Green) and Mrs Elizabeth

Bendall (Harcourt Road) supported a return to a more conventional road surface, if necessary, to achieve a solution that was going to be fit for purpose.

A question was asked if traffic lights had ever been considered at the cross roads in the High Street. The consensus of members was that this had not been considered. The proposal would be put to the committee being established to cover the implementation of the Town Plan for it to consult with Hertfordshire County Council.

Mrs Katherine Al-Maadani (Highfield Road) expressed concern that the installation of the zebra crossing on Miswell Lane was over-running and the signage confusing for pedestrians. Cllr Hollinghurst apologised on behalf of the County Council unreservedly, explaining how exasperated he was with the County Council's contractor's performance on this matter. There had been a fundamental oversight with regard to the electricity supply which had caused the delay.

Derek Foxley (Meadowbrook) highlighted the need for traffic calming along Wingrave Road and Brook Street. Cllr Hollinghurst outlined that the situation was included in the County Council's Tring, Northchurch and Berkhamsted Urban Transport Plan (Scheme 33). His preference was for parking bays. He also gave an update on progress towards having traffic lights installed on the Wingrave Road canal bridge. Mrs Sue Yeoman (Grove Road) asked that the possibility of a mini roundabout at the junction of Silk Mill and Wingrave Road be considered too.

Mrs Yeoman raised two further points – the problem of an excessive number of cars parked along Cow Lane and the old A41 Sunday mornings for the rugby club, and empty shops in the High Street.

Cllr S. Hearn acknowledged that both problems were known to the Council and Cllr Hollinghurst, as a County Councillor, was also concerned with the potentially dangerous situations arising from the parking in Cow Lane. There would be continued attempts to reach solutions to both problems but it would not be easy.

Mrs Barbara Jones (Adam's Way) noted that whilst the recent incident of a tree falling across Brook St did not cause any injury, it could be a portent of further such incidents resulting in serious injuries. The Mayor explained that Dacorum Borough Council's Tree Wardens conducted regular inspections of old trees to hopefully avoid this happening.

Mr Andrew Bolton (Longfield Road) briefed the audience on the success of the Longfield Road play scheme with its fortnightly road closure to promote street play and community interaction.

The Mayor concluded the evening by thanking everyone for their interest.

The meeting ended at 9:11 p.m.

Signed .....  
Town Mayor