

**MINUTES OF THE 45th TRING ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD AT THE VICTORIA HALL,
AKEMAN STREET ON MONDAY 23rd APRIL 2018 AT 8 p.m.**

Present: Councillors: G. Wilkins, Town Mayor (presiding)
J. Bowden
O. Conway
H. Grace
P. Hearn
S. Hearn
M Hicks
P. Hills
N. Hollinghurst
N. Nutkins
R. Ransley
C. Townsend

Also present: Michael Curry (Town Clerk)
Dawn Slade (Deputy Clerk)
Colin Jones (Town Warden)
Ray Flanigan (Information Officer)
Insp J. Scott

53 registered electors of Tring Town

429. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from the following members of the public: Tim Amsden, Barr Kazer and Greta Brown.

430. MINUTES

The Minutes of the forty fourth Annual Town Meeting held on Monday 24th April 2017 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Mayor.

431. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor, Cllr Gerald Wilkins, begin by saying what an honour and privilege it had been to represent the people of Tring as Mayor. He thanked the residents of Tring, the staff and volunteers of the Town Council and fellow Councillors for their support.

He outlined projects to enhance the Town using the funding received following the production of the Town Plan:

- the Pond Close Play Area refurbishment with equipment for a wider range of ages (He thanked Hannah Grace Munday for bringing this matter to the attention of the Council)
- the Meadowbrook open space project was nearing fruition having taken longer than expected because of issues with the Canal and River Trust
- Tring in Transition were doing a marvellous job with the community garden in Duckmore Lane. The Scouts were also involved, working towards their community badge
- A street vacuum and weed ripper have been purchased to keep the town clean
- A 'Visit Tring' website has been launched and support given to the 'Enjoy Dacorum' and 'Visit Herts' initiatives to encourage visitors to the town and so help maintain a vibrant High Street.

Plans to commemorate the end of WW1 were ongoing and further details would be forthcoming. There was to be a rededication of the war memorial on Saturday 30th June. He thanked Dacorum for the wonderful display of hyacinths at the entrance to the Memorial Gardens.

With regard to planning matters:

- a planning application for LA5 was awaited
- The Town Council submitted a response to the Dacorum's Single Local Plan following two public meetings and extensive consultation with local organisations. The preferred option of the Town Council was a mixed development on Dunsley Farm including housing, small business units and sports pitches. Dacorum was still working on its response.
- The Town Council considered 259 planning applications and recommended refusal 30 times. Notable applications were for the St Francis School site, the Brook Street garage, Miswell Lane Recreation Ground, various buildings in High Scrubs Wood and on-going changes at The Silk Mill Industrial estate.

He stressed that Tring Town Council makes a recommendation to Dacorum who, as the planning authority, make the final decision.

Changes to the High Street have been rapid with the closure of banks and the opening of new restaurants. The Council have corresponded with the Chief Executive of RBS Business Banking and were informed that Sarah Thompson has been appointed as Community Banker for this area.

Turning to the environment:

- a Friends of Millennium Wood group has been established under the guidance of Colin Chambers, the former Dacorum Tree Officer. A small group of volunteers carry out maintenance work using tools provided with a grant from the Chiltern Society
- There are 5 half allotment plots available at the Duckmore Lane site
- Thanks were given to John Savage for monitoring the footpaths around Tring and reporting problems to Clayton Rae, the DBC Footpath Officer. The recently produced walks leaflets (with a grant from the Parish Paths Partnership) have been well received

Work has been undertaken on the Council's properties:

- The Information Centre in Akeman Street has been completely refurbished and modernised
- The offices on the first floor of the Market House have become vacant and the tenancy is available
- A joint Town Council – Tring Together working party has been established to plan for the eventual replacement of the Nora Grace Hall
- A consultant has been appointed to present a scheme to use the Market Place as a car park in order to alleviate the parking problems in the town centre
- The Duckmore Lane grass keep has been re-seeded, fenced and let on an annual tenancy

Council officers are working hard on compliance with the new General Data Protection Regulations which come into force on 25th May 2018.

In his civic role as Mayor, Cllr Wilkins attended 69 events and functions. The highlight was a visit to the Natural History Museum when he met Sir David Attenborough. He also enjoyed Friday lunch at the Baptist Church and was honoured to represent Tring at the Passchendaele Memorial Service. He thanked all the voluntary groups and charities who he met during the year.

The Mayor's chosen charities were the Pepper Foundation and Macmillan Cancer Support. Having held 2 fund raising events, he was pleased to donate £1550 to each charity and he asked the Mayoress to present the cheques to the Charities' representatives. The representatives thanked the Mayor and gave a brief outline of their work.

432. ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2017/18

Councillor P. Hearn, Chairman of Finance & Policy Committee explained the Committee was responsible for the oversight and general control of the finances of the Town Council. This included making recommendations to the Council on the budget and precept.

2018/19 was to be the fourth and last year of this Council. The financial situation facing the Town Council was mixed. There is pressure to do things that historically have been done by the County or District before austerity, and the generous grant from Dacorum Borough Council for the implementation of the Town Plan is running out.

However the Town Council was now receiving money from the Community Infrastructure Levy – a charge on all new housing. There are conditions attached, however, that restrict what the money can be spent on. The amount received is variable which does not make planning easy.

There has been a 2% increase in the Town Council's element of council tax. This is a 50p increase for a band D property with the charge for the year being £26.17. This meant that the Council's income will just keep pace with expenditure as inflation increases costs. For example, there has been a national two percent wage increase this year. The budget set for 2018/19 will give a small surplus.

Until the Town Council builds up its CIL receipts and gets a sense of the likely income generated over time, there is little scope for projects. However, money has been allocated to support the commemoration of the end of World War I.

Money is also being set aside for potentially using the Market Place as a car park. Pressure on the Town's car parks is constantly growing through residential growth, new builds and change of use. Using the Market Place as a car park will not damage this piece of the town's heritage whilst meeting a community need. Also, it does not have to be a permanent change should, at some time in the future, circumstances change.

An important aspect of the Finance & Policy Committee is monitoring the Council's finances. Each year the Committee reviews the Council's financial regulations, its financial risk assessment and the Council receives monthly and quarterly financial statements. It also monitors the work of the Council's internal auditor, who completes two inspections each year.

433. A PRESENTATION BY TRING YOUTH COUNCIL

Michael Seaton introduced himself as a member of the Youth Town Council (YTC) with five years service. He explained the involvement of the YTC in the Town's main events: a stand at the Christmas Fair, the dog show at the Summer Carnival, and the bake-off in Tring Park.

In 2018 the money raised will support Woodlarks, a summer camp for disabled youngsters, and Hectors' House, a suicide prevention charity.

The Tring YTC has been collaborating with the Aylesbury YTC.

Emma Cave, Youth Town Council Clerk, spoke about the various projects the YTC are working on. Firstly a project to promote the installation of pedestrian crossings in Brook St at the junctions with New Road and also at Shugars Green with Hertfordshire Highways. Both are regular crossing points for Tring School students and, also, younger children and families attending Grove & Dundale Schools. Both areas are very congested with traffic and so were dangerous on a daily basis.

The second project is to improve the skate park on Pound Meadow, replacing the existing equipment with a concrete 'wave'-based area. This gives a better facility for the skaters and looks better.

Another project is exploring ways to use young people's IT skills to teach others.

They concluded by thanking the Town Council for their support.

434. REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

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

435. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM, HERTFORDSHIRE POLICE

Inspector Jeff Scott said that he had been the head of the neighbourhood teams across Dacorum since July. He was well acquainted with Tring and summarised the Town's position from the police's perspective as:

- Having a dedicated police station
- The local team has a new sergeant (Ryan Hemmings) with Martin Leadbetter continuing to be the dedicated PCSO
- Tring is a low crime area

More generally, the police were facing increased demands on their resources whilst budgets were cut. The nature of crime was also changing – many of which have not yet reached Tring e.g. gangs out of London (The Inspector had been at a conference during the day on gangs).

He concluded his report with a call for volunteers, explaining that there was a wide range of volunteer roles releasing officers from tasks that took them away from their main function.

The Mayor thanked him for finding the time to attend.

436. "AN OLD TRING LECTURE" A MAGIC LANTERN SHOW

The Mayor introduced Cllr Grace, great-nephew of Robert ('Bob') Grace. Cllr Grace gave a slide presentation travelling around Tring using a projector (magic lantern) made in the 1890s with slides taken by Frank Grace.

The presentation covered the historical development of the Town and included:

- Tring Station & Hotel
- Wingrave Road & Brook Street
- The Robin Hood, the High Street and Akeman Street
- Park Street
- Views from Stubbing's Wood
- Parsonage Farm
- Western Road

The Mayor thanked Cllr Grace for his fascinating presentation.

437. BEST KEPT ALLOTMENT 2016/17

The Best Kept Allotment prizes, sponsored by Tring Market Auctions, for 2017/18 were presented by Councillor S. Hearn, as follows:

Winner	Mr K. Seabrook
2nd Prize	Mr K. Pemberthy
3rd Prize	Mr J. Budd
4th Prize	Ms J. Opie

438. THE ANNUAL COMMUNITY AWARD 2017

Having congratulated all those volunteering in Tring on their achievements and giving a brief resume of the winner's contribution to the Town, the Town Mayor announced that the winner of the Annual Community Award of £300, to be donated to a charity of the recipient's choice, was Michael Demideski, Secretary of the Justice & Peace Group, Tring

439. OPEN FORUM

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

Mr K. Tucker asked about the preparation of the emergency plan referred to in the Town Crier. Cllr S. Hearn explained that the plan was at the data gathering stage, collating the facilities offered and possible requirements.

Ms M. Ford commented on disruptive parking by delivery vans in the High Street that was dangerous, especially at the zebra crossing by Restaurant 23 where it obscures the zig-zag lines. Cllr S. Hearn acknowledged the problem. The Clerk will explore the enforcement of no parking on the zigzag lines enforced (and getting the lines repainted).

Mrs A. Nobbs explained that Rossway Riding for the Disabled has relocated to Shardeloes Farm Equestrian Centre, Cherry Lane, Amersham following the closure of Hastoe Stables.

Ms M. Whiting asked that an additional bench be provided on Pond Close. The Clerk will see if funds are available.

The Mayor concluded the evening by thanking everyone for attending.

The meeting ended at 9:35 p.m.

Signed
Town Mayor