

**Minutes of an Annual Town Meeting**

**held on Wednesday 26 April 2023 at 7.00pm at The Festival Drayton Centre,  
Frogmore Road, Market Drayton.**

**Present:** Councillors: R. Aldcroft, M. Erwin, W. Love, T. Manton, I. Nellins, A. Sanderson and M. Whittle (Mayor).

**Clerk:** Town Clerk and Assistant Clerk.

There were also 26 members of the public in attendance.

**1. Welcome by the Town Mayor**

Councillor Whittle introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the Annual Town meeting. He said the Town Council has completed several projects this year, some are on the noticeboards at the front of the room for residents to see; there will be an opportunity to ask any questions later in the meeting.

**2. To receive presentations**

The Mayor was pleased to introduce and welcome representatives from The Citizens Advice Service and Market Drayton Foodbank.

**Citizens Advice Service**

The Specialist Service Manager from CAB gave an informative presentation.

The CAB has been delivering services in Market Drayton since the early 1980's. They believe no one should have to face problems without good quality, independent advice. CAB give people the knowledge and the confidence they need to overcome their problems. They help people find their way through complicated processes and difficult situations they may have never faced before.

Since 2012 CAB have helped 1,243 unique clients with 6,014 queries:

- 77% were aged 15 to 64 years old.
- Helped individuals increase their income by over £1.7 million.
- 50% were managing a disability or long-term health condition.
- 57% needed Benefits advice.
- 20% needed help with Debt issues.
- 34% of clients were helped via the telephone; 66% of clients were helped in person.

Problems resolved included employment, housing, relationship and family, utilities, charitable support and foodbanks, education, consumer, GVA and hate crime, immigration and asylum, tax, travel, and transport.

Anyone can support the CAB work by making a donation; for every £1 invested in the service in 2021/22 they generated:



- £1.43 in savings to government and public services (fiscal benefits) Total £2.7m
- £10.35 in wider economic and social benefits (public value) Total £19.7m
- £4.80 in financial value to the people CAB help (specific outcomes to individuals) Total £9.1m

Informative leaflets were available for residents and any questions were welcomed.

Councillor Sanderson asked how appointments can be made for people to seek advice.

The CAB Manager said CAB contact details are on the leaflet, people can either call and make an appointment or alternatively people can go into the doctor's surgery, and they can make the appropriate appointments. All face-to-face appointments are held at the surgery on Fridays.

A resident said she is aware CAB have received financial support from the Town Council; she asked if this is still the case?

Councillor Aldcroft said Town Council have supported the valued service for a number of years, currently there is £3,000 in budget for this financial year to continue with the support.

There were no more questions asked. The Mayor thanked the CAB Service Manager for attending the meeting.

### **Market Drayton Foodbank**

The volunteer from Market Drayton Foodbank gave an informative presentation.

The Foodbank is a part of the Trussell Trust and has been open in the town since 2012.

Since October 2022, the start of the cost of living and energy crises, Market Drayton Foodbank have given out 553 food parcels feeding 870 adults and 476 children; a total of 1346 which is an increase on the same time in the previous years. During this time, the Foodbank has distributed 18 tonnes of food.

The Trussell Trust end of year figures:

The new figures show that the network provided almost 3 million emergency food parcels to people experiencing hardship over the past twelve months, with over one million parcels going to children across the UK. This is a 37% increase from 2021/22 and figures have more than doubled in the last five years.

The Foodbank operates from the Parish Rooms within the town, they have very supportive and generous local manufacturers and supermarkets that donate products and volunteers who put together nutritious parcels including toiletries and animal food for residents that have been issued an E voucher.



Any questions were welcomed.

Councillor Erwin asked if the Foodbank offer cooking classes?

The representative said no; it would be lovely to offer this service but there is no space available at the Parish Rooms.

A resident said some people using the Foodbank are in temporary accommodation such as B&B's; how are they able to cook fresh food? Or for those in their homes may be reluctant to cook due to the fuel costs?

The representative said no perishable meals are given out; the food is tinned such as tinned meat, vegetables, and fruit.

Councillor Manton said the Foodbank do an excellent job and are a real asset to the town. He said there are a lot of apps now available such as Too Good To Go and asked if they effect the Foodbank?

The representative said she is unaware of the apps; she said the Foodbank do receive short life sandwiches from the local supermarkets, these are not allowed to be put with the parcels due to the short life date but are freely available to people to take themselves when collecting their parcels.

Councillor Sanderson asked if there were any other support the Foodbank would like to have?

The representative said the Foodbank would like their own bigger space, currently it is at the Parish Rooms where they must set up and tidy up each week.

There were no more questions asked. The Mayor thanked the representative from the Foodbank for attending the meeting.

**3. To confirm the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 4 May 2023.**

The minutes were made available for residents to see.

Councillor Aldcroft proposed, Mr S. Glover seconded, and it was **RESOLVED:**

**To confirm the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 4 May 2023.**

**5. Questions from the electors**

The Mayor opened the floor for any questions residents may want to ask.

Q. A resident said the expansion of new houses on the A53 has ongoing issues with the sewers especially when it rains; can Town Council liaise with Shropshire Council and the building contracts to rectify the issue?

A. Councillor Nellins said there is a process to go through to obtain planning permission; all issues such as the sewers would have been considered at Shropshire Councils planning committee for the application to be granted. This issue will have to be dealt with as part of the planning decision.



- Q. The Royal British Legion Vice Chairman said the RBL will be celebrating its centenary this year; they are planning to hold a parade and a church service on 16 September. He said the Mayor proposed to award the RBL to have freedom of the town but instead resolved to award the RBL with a plaque. This has angered a lot of residents within the town and asked why a plaque has been agreed and not a freedom of the town given?
- A. The Mayor said it was resolved to award the RBL with a plaque to show Town Councils support of all the good work the RBL do. Freedom of the town has not been discussed at a Council meeting; it will be put as an item of the next agenda for Councillors to discuss further.
- Q. A resident said he has a seven-page document setting out what the RBL has done and the amount of money they have raised since 1923; he asked if he can forward this to the Clerk for members to read at the next meeting when considering the freedom of the town.
- A. The Mayor said yes.
- Q. A resident representing the Market Drayton Climate Action said he was pleased to see Town Council adopt the updated Climate Action report last week; He asked if he could see updates on the action plan more regularly instead of annually?
- A. Councillor Nellins said he agreed and will bring the report forward at relevant meetings however Town Council only have part time staff which may delay some work.
- Q. A resident said he has already emailed the Clerk with his concerns about the current state of the indoor and outdoor market situation; the indoor market caters for twelve stalls, there are only two currently occupied and the outdoor stalls are also reducing. He asked what the current contractor for running the markets has in place to attract new business such as reduced rent, free car parking to increase the footfall visiting the market and asked if Town Council are supporting the market?
- A. Councillor Manton said all members of the Council are concerned about the reduced numbers in market stall holders attending the market; he said unfortunately people have changed their shopping habits. He said there is a working Group set up to discuss the market, a meeting with Shropshire Council and the market contractor took place a while ago but nothing has materialised, another meeting has been set up on 17 May with the market contractor to discuss what they have in place to improve it.
- Q. A resident said they have only had one meeting with the market company who have said they have no interest in the indoor market, they only deal with external markets. The indoor market traders feel very hard



done by, they never see the market contractors, the building is not looked after, and he asked if Town Council could take over the market?

- A. Councillor Manton said Town Council has recently signed up to Visit Shropshire to promote Market Drayton as a vibrant market town, but it is Shropshire Council's responsibility to ensure the market is run as efficiently as possible.

Councillor Aldcroft said Town Council are having a meeting with the market contractor where details and costings will be asked for, so that Council could consider taking on the market, however there are a number of issues that this will impact, the precept would have to be increased to cover the running and staffing costs.

The Mayor said information will be shared with the market stall holders after the meeting with the market contractors.

- Q. A resident said she is appalled with the amount of litter on the town streets and asked why they are not regularly cleaned?

- A. Councillor Aldcroft said this is the responsibility of Shropshire Council; he applauded McDonalds for ensuring there is no litter in the area and that it is a shame some of the town centre establishments are not doing the same. He said why should rate payers pay for people not cleaning up after themselves.

- Q. A resident said she is aware that Town Council set up a regular scheme of works to ensure the streets, benches and bus shelters are cleaned, as far as she can see none of these have been cleaned and asked why?

- A. Councillor Sanderson said all the benches within the town have recently been refurbished and the street furniture has been repainted.

Councillor Nellins said he is aware that the people tidying the streets have low level supervision and will address the issue again with Shropshire Council.

- Q. A resident said the coin machines on the car parks are always clogged up, can this be sorted?

- A. The Mayor said Shropshire Council are in control of the coin machines; this will be raised with them so it can be rectified.

- Q. A resident said the town has a real issue with vehicles speeding, someone will be hurt if no action is taken and asked if Town Council can enforce anything to reduce the speeding?

- A. Councillor Manton said this issue is a real concern to the Council, two Vehicle Activated Signs have recently been installed at the two main entrances to the town to help reduce speeding. Council has recently

joined operation Snapp; this is an online portal where you can upload footage of suspected driving offences, every submission is viewed, and action is taken when needed. There is also a community speed watch group within the town which is always in need of new volunteers.

A resident said he has spent many hours collecting and collating data from a speeding device, the data is then passed on to the police. He is also aware of two number plate recognition located around the town which could help identify potential speeding vehicles.

Q. A resident said there are vehicles parked constantly on pavements at Longslow Lane causing an obstruction.

A. The Mayor said this is a matter for the police; they should be contacted to deal with the issue.

Q. A resident asked for an update on the Longford Turning area which has been earmarked for the new sports facility?

A. The Clerk said Shropshire Council's Local Plan has currently not been adopted so the new sports facility site has not been allocated.

Councillor Manton said Town Council have looked and considered the proposed housing development at Longford Turning; this was not supported.

Q. A resident said she is aware Town Council had meetings with Shropshire Council and Lakeside regarding the circular bus within the town. The current route was carefully thought out and should be kept. She asked if there will be any changes?

A. Councillor Nellins said the meeting was called because the town has grown over the years so new areas are not covered by the circular bus and the X64 service bus which covers some areas has reduced in service making it difficult for some residents to get around the town. Suggestions have been discussed such as the bus going up to McDonalds Restaurant, this will enable people to use the bus to go to work in that area and people to get to the restaurant and to include the new housing estates. The bus may have to circulate each hour instead of every thirty minutes to cover the areas. He stressed any changes will take time to be implemented; a consultation will need to take place and be overlooked by the Traffic Commissioner.

Q. A resident asked what is happening to the towns swimming pool?

A. Councillor Nellins said he regularly uses the facility and it offers a good service.

Councillor Aldcroft said he is aware that Serco are investing in the pool.

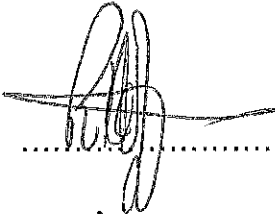


There were no more questions asked.

6. The Town Mayor's closing remarks.

The Town Mayor thanked residents for attending and for all their questions.

The meeting concluded at 8.30 p.m.

Signed:  .....

Date: 2/5/2023 .....