

Minutes of an Annual Town Meeting

Held on 26 March 2025 at 7.00pm at The Festival Drayton Centre, Frogmore Road, Market Drayton.

Present: Councillors: R. Aldcroft (Mayor), P. Glover, G. Groves, W. Love, T. Manton, and I. Nellins.

Clerk: Town Clerk and Assistant Clerk.

There were also 19 members of the public in attendance.

1. Welcome by the Town Mayor.

The Mayor, Councillor Aldcroft, introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the Annual Town meeting.

Councillor Aldcroft said it is an honour to have been elected as Town Mayor by my colleagues over the last year. The work the Town Councillors, our external staff and administration have done over the last years promoting the Town, it's Indoor and Outdoor markets, organising events, keeping well maintained floral displays and ensuring parks and playgrounds are safe, often goes unrecognised, so, I would like to place on record my thanks on behalf of all our residents for their commitment and professionalism.

The Town Council has responsibility for: Parks & Recreation Areas, including the skateboard park and new youth shelter, 248 streetlights, CCTV, The Cemetery Buildings and Records and Public Toilets. Maintaining close liaison with Shropshire Council who deal with the wider issues such as Highways and Environment. With regular meetings regarding Community, Finance, Planning, Services and Facilities at which members of our community may attend and speak at. Meetings are also recorded and livestreamed for those unable to come to the Town hall.

We work very closely with the Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams on a variety of issues, Speeding and Anti -Social Behaviour being just a couple, which I am sure the Police Commissioner will be touching on during his presentation.

Our Admin Staff organise the Christmas Lights Festival, and work with the RBL regarding Remembrance Sunday and Victory celebrations.

We are also working on several Community projects with the Grove Academy, Representatives from Police, Shropshire and Town Councillors, Youth Workers, Head Teacher, Sixth Form and Students, Local GP Services to develop sports facilities, health & crime awareness, community involvement. Promoting the school and our community in a very beneficial partnership.

The Council is also supporting the move of the Town's Museum to a larger site at the Joules Brewery site being developed at the Stag. This will create a visitor point with the Brewery Tours, Museum and function/dining facility

hopefully increasing our tourism footfall and supporting the redevelopment of Greenfields Sports Gound, which will result in a facility that Market Drayton can be proud of.

Of late we are in the process of upgrading the public toilets at Towers Lawn which will include a drivers rest room, which will be particularly useful with the potential introduction of the new Whitchurch to Telford service and increased services on the Arriva 64.

Working with 'Visit Shropshire' the town has received some positive publicity in the media, and we have been able to promote the Town through their website, and judging by the increases in footfall within the Town their work with our Councillors is proving fruitful.

To make the best of the Town Centre buildings, we have a team of Councillors who regularly inspect the Town to identify potential eyesores, this involves some delicate negotiation on occasion with landlords.

The Town Council supports the Greenfield Sports Association with over £20,000 per annum in terms of grants to support the many sporting activities that take place there, SYA are contracted to provide two youth club sessions at the Pheonix Centre on a Wednesday evening and funding has been awarded towards running costs of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Small grants totalling £6,500 have been given to community groups during the year, again supporting a wide range of activities for a wide range of ages.

This is very much a snap - shot of the council's activities during any year each of which brings new challenges which I have no doubt as a Town we can rise to. I should add that none of the above would be possible without an army of volunteers supporting our community in all sorts of ways.

2. To receive a presentation from John Campion, Police and Crime Commissioner on Local Policing.

The Mayor welcomed John Campion to the meeting,

John Campion said he was pleased to be invited to the meeting; it provides him with an opportunity to communicate with the local community and share the progress and issues the police are having, it also gives residents the opportunity to ask questions.

He explained that his responsibilities within the West Mercia police force consists of planning, prioritising, budgets, employing chief constables and holding them to account. He was pleased to announce the newly appointed Chief Constable; Richard Cooper will start his new role within the next few weeks.

The priority for this area is to drive resources to the front line and increase police from 2000 to 2500 police officers; the budget to pay for this will come from investment from central government.

The focus priority for the community is to have visible police presence; this helps reduce antisocial behaviour, helps with police intelligence and helps residents feel safe.

John Campion said he works closely with the Chief Constable to make improvements; burglary is now reduced by 30% but there are still improvements to make. There is investment being made in early disturbance of organised crime and sexual exploitation.

Recently there has been some road fatalities that the police have had to attend; he is working on enforcement systems and education to make roads safer within Shropshire.

John Campion welcomed any questions.

- Q. A resident said there is issues with off road vehicles being used improperly on green areas; he asked if the police have powers to stop this from happening.
- A. Police have the power to respond appropriately to ensure everyone's safety is met. Intelligence is required from the local community, i.e. locations, dates, times to help the police with their enforcement.
- Q. A resident said there is an abandoned lorry trailer on the A53; a panel is loose and could fall onto oncoming traffic. What are the police doing about this?
- A. Due to the incident still being live he was unable to discuss further however they are working alongside Shropshire Council to resolve the issue.
- Q. A resident asked how do you improve the perception of the police?
- A. This takes time, anti-social behaviour has improved, there is more police presence within the town; improvements need to be made on responding time.
- Q. A resident said you talk about efficiency and increasing the public sector from 2500 to 3000 police; what though has been given to the advancement of local policing?
- A. Saving have been made through efficiencies, hotspot policing using intelligence is an example of improving practices. We are not quite there with catching up with technology.
- Q. A resident said there is a Crime and Safety Watch Group on social media which has published contact details for the police, as not everyone uses the internet Mr Campion was asked how residents can find the police contact details. He was also asked for his view on Facebook sites.

- A. Facebook sites often result in crimes not being reported via the correct channels such as 101, 999 or the official websites. Police contact details can be found outside the police station and outside the Town Hall.
- Q. A resident said the infrastructure within the town is not up to spec and asked if Town Council could get help from Shropshire Council to rectify this problem?
- A. The Mayor said the infrastructure comes under Shropshire Council's remit; some of the work has been scheduled to be corrected. Town Council report and encourage residents to use Shropshire Council's 'Fit my Street' portal to ensure any issues are logged and can be actioned appropriately.

There were no more questions asked.

The Mayor thanked John Campion and the Safer Neighbourhood Team for attending the meeting.

John Campion and the Safer Neighbourhood Team left the meeting.

3. To confirm the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 8 May 2024.

The minutes were made available for residents to see.

Councillor R. Aldcroft proposed, Councillor T. Manton seconded, and it was **RESOLVED:**

To confirm the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 8 May 2024.

4. This is an open forum for any town residents to ask questions or raise any concerns they may have in connection with the town.

The Mayor asked if there were any questions residents would like to ask.

- Q. A resident said the towns cleanliness has declined, badly maintained and dirty signage, uncut foliage obscuring the highway, frequently abandoned furniture being left on the pavement by the Towers Building in Cheshire Street and the caravan shell being left on the side of the A53 do not give a good impression of the town and asked if these can be addressed?
- A. The Mayor said these are all issues that Shropshire Council are responsible for. Town Council have reported them on the Shropshire Council portal 'Fix my Street' and encouraged all residents to do the same. If they are unable to use the internet residents should call into the Town Hall and this can be done on their behalf.
- Q. A resident said the town should be presentable to make a good impression; to the West of the town there is a lot of McDonalds litter, have Town Council approached them to ask if they can arrange a litter pick?
- A. The Mayor said McDonalds regularly litter pick, he will pass on the resident's concerns.

- Q. A resident said with the introduction of green waste charges do Shropshire Council get money back from recycling this waste?
- A. Shropshire Councillor Ian Nellins said no.
- Q. A resident asked what is the Town Councils policy for allowing seven barber shops to open in the town and who sets the business rates?
- A. The Mayor said Shropshire Council deal with both; Town Council have no involvement.

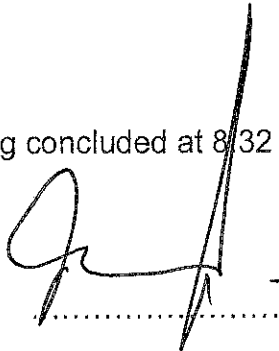
There were no more questions asked.

5. The Mayor's closing remarks

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

The meeting concluded at 8/32 p.m.

Signed:



Date:

29-04-26