

PETERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

The 39th Annual Meeting of the Town was held at the Rose Room, Festival Hall, Petersfield on Wednesday 9 April 2014 at 7 pm.

PRESENT: Cllr P Marshall (Town Mayor), Cllr Mrs S Harwood (Deputy Town Mayor), Cllr V Clarke (also HCC Councillor), Cllr J Deane, Cllr Mrs L Farrow, Cllr W Organ, Cllr A Tarver, Cllr Ms M Vincent and Cllr G Watkinson.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mr N Hitch (Town Clerk), Mrs A Church (Committee Administrator), Mr R Ayer (EHDC Councillor), Mrs H Ayer (EHDC Councillor), Petersfield Herald and 82 members of the public.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs J Dickinson, Cllr G Budden and Cllr C Mills.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Minutes of the 38th Annual Meeting of the Town for 2013.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 3 April 2013 be authorised to be signed as a correct record.

2. TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT ON THE PAST MUNICIPAL YEAR

The Town Mayor welcomed everyone to the 39th Annual Meeting of the Town and introduced the Town Councillors, the representatives from East Hampshire District Council and Hampshire County Council, and Mr Jamie Matthews and Mr John Callaghan who would be speaking on the Neighbourhood Plan and on the King's Arms respectively.

The Town Mayor gave his annual report which summarised the key decisions and actions that had been taken by the Town Council over the last twelve months and outlined some of the projects for the coming twelve months. He explained the work done by each of the four Town Council Committees that report to the Town Council - Planning, Grounds, Public Halls and Financial & General Purposes.

The Town Council was now in a much better financial position than this time last year. This was the result of reducing the number of full-time employees and consequent salary costs by 25%, and seeking additional sources of income other than the Council Tax precept. The Town Council has received a 2.7%

increase in its Council Tax precept for the financial year 2014-2015 which is equivalent to approximately £3.00 per year for a Band D property.

The work done on the Neighbourhood Plan had resulted in the Draft Plan being in place during April 2014. The Draft Plan would be shown at an Exhibition in the Festival Hall over the weekend of 9 - 10 May 2014 when the public would be asked to support the plan. A Public Referendum would follow in October 2014. It was vital that the public support the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that the local community was given protection from developers waiting to move into the area.

3. PRESENTATION ON THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Mr Jamie Matthews, a member of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, gave a visual presentation of the work done on the Neighbourhood Plan and the results of public opinion from the various workshops that had been held in the town, including those with residents groups and community groups. There had been an interactive map on the website where comments could be posted by the general public.

Mr Matthews reiterated the comment made by the Town Mayor that it was very important that the general public support the final Neighbourhood Plan in the referendum to be held in October 2014 if the town was to keep control over future housing development.

Mr Matthews paid tribute to Malcolm Walton, the original Chairman of the Steering Group who had sadly died in April 2013. Malcolm had guided members through the initial processes of the Neighbourhood Plan and had contributed enormously to its progress.

4. OPEN FORUM FOR QUESTIONS

Q.1 The first question came from a previous Town Mayor and Councillor who firstly wished to congratulate the Town Council for the present Annual Town Meeting which had the largest attendance of the annual meetings held over the last twenty-four years.

With a high percentage of older residents in Petersfield, will the need for additional disabled parking be addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan ?

A This will be taken on board at the public Exhibition on the 9 - 10 May. Transport issues, including blue badge parking and a pedestrian-friendly town, will be included.

Q.2 With staff overheads decreasing, why is the Town Council increasing the Council Tax precept again ?

A. The current increase in precept is approximately £3.00 per year on a Band D property. Part of the precept income has been for Council Tax benefits payments paid by central Government. This payment, now called a grant, is no longer part of the normal payment from central Government and is expected to be cut next year.

Q.3 Why was the Open Air Swimming Pool not invited to the stakeholders' meeting on the Neighbourhood Plan on 7 April 2014 ?

A. A decision was made to limit the meeting to stakeholder "themes" affected by providers such as water, electricity, Hampshire County Council. The same themes had been coming out of all consultations and this meeting was held with service providers to ensure that nothing had been missed.

Q.4 If the Neighbourhood Plan goes through, how will it make Petersfield, which is already a nice place to live in, better for everyone ?

A. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to maintain the special compactness of Petersfield, which makes it different from other similar-sized towns, by limiting its spread.

Q.5 If the Neighbourhood Plan is successful, what will be its status at that point ?

A. Following the views of the public at the Exhibition on 9 - 10 May 2014, the Plan will be agreed and will have draft status that can be used for planning guidance. After the Referendum, it becomes the Town Plan which has legal status. The Town Council would then be able to influence the number of houses to be built on any particular site and the mix of housing types.

The Neighbourhood Plan had to be in accordance with the Joint Core Strategy.

Q.6 Should the Government Inspector not accept the Neighbourhood Plan, would there be a chance to re-submit it ?

A. It is important that the Neighbourhood Plan is worked through prior to submission and, if it is then largely sound, it will come back with recommendations from the Government Inspector. Of six Neighbourhood Plans already submitted by other towns, five had been returned for clarification.

Q.7 Does the Town Council have responsibility to ensure that the needs of elderly and mentally infirm residents are provided for ?

A. The Town Council does not have direct responsibility but it is represented by Councillors who are members of outside bodies. If an organisation feels strongly that the Town Council should be involved with it, it could ask for a Councillor to be on their Board. In addition, should any organisation have any misgivings on such issues, they should advise the Town Clerk as the Town Council can then try to put pressure on the people who make the decisions.

5. PRESENTATION ON THE KING'S ARMS

Mr John Callaghan, Trustee and Chair of the King's Arms, gave the presentation. He thanked Peter Marshall, the Town Mayor, for having chosen the King's Arm as his Charity for the year and for his support in the current challenges the youth club was facing in the need to find new premises.

Mr Callaghan explained the history of how a run-down lampshade factory had, over the last fifteen years, become a top youth club in Petersfield that had helped thousands of young people and provided a safe and fun place for around 300 every week. It was supported by the local churches, the Town Council and the District Council.

Mrs Caroline Lacklinson, Operations Manager, then gave further information about the team of 8 leaders and 25 volunteers who supported the following weekly clubs, projects and sessions:

- o *After School Club*
- o *Mentoring*
- o *Special Needs*
- o *Future (Activities)*
- o *Escape*
- o *Life Skills*
- o *Next Step (NEET - not in education, employment or training)*

Young people from the King's Arms then stood up and each gave their views, in a very confident and well-presented manner, on how the King's Arms helped them.

Following the presentation, some concern was expressed by members of the public present on the possible site of The Avenue as the new venue for the King's Arms. The Town Mayor said that two sites were currently being looked at by a Working Party and that there would be plenty of opportunity for the general public to give their views. However, the general consensus was that the town needed the King's Arms and that it should continue to be supported.

6. PRESENTATION OF TOWN MAYOR'S MEDALS

The Town Mayor presented a Certificate and Medal to the following in recognition of their outstanding service to the town:

David Burstall
Evangeline Bowen
Dr David Jeffery

7. PRESENTATION OF COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Town Mayor presented cheques for the 2nd Tranche of the Community Grants for the year 2013 - 2014 to the following organisations:

Adhurst Allotments Association
Children's Concerts
Community First East Hampshire
Hampshire Astronomical Group
Headway Portsmouth & South East Hants
Home-Start Butser
Petersfield Musical Festival
Petersfield Orchestra
Petersfield Rugby Club
Petersfield Town Football Club
Petersfield Youth Theatre
Ramshill Residents Association
Rotherlands Conservation Group
Victim Support

Peter Marshall, Town Mayor, then presented a cheque to the King's Arms, chosen by him as his Charity. The total raised by the Town Mayor for the Charity during his year of office 2013-2014 was £6825.00.

8. PRESENTATION OF DANIEL DAY LEWIS AWARD

Cllr Ms M Vincent had initiated the idea of a Daniel Day Lewis Award during her term of office as Town Mayor in 2012 - 2013. With his permission, an annual award for outstanding acting achievement by a young local person was put in place. The awards, a letter signed by Daniel Day Lewis and a book of the complete works of William Shakespeare, were then presented to the following outstanding young local actors:

Charlie Essex for 2012 - 2013 (first Daniel Day Lewis Award)
Presented by Cllr Ms M Vincent, Town Mayor for that year.

Alex Lawther for 2013 - 2014.
Presented by Cllr P Marshall, Town Mayor for that year.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.45 pm followed by light refreshment, provided at the personal expense of the Town Councillors