

PETERSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

The 44th Annual Meeting of the Town was held at the Rose Room, Festival Hall, Petersfield on Wednesday 6th March 2019 at 7 pm.

PRESENT: Cllr Mrs H Ayer (Town Mayor), Cllr J Deane, Cllr J Palmer, Cllr G Watkinson, Cllr Ms M Vincent, Cllr Mrs V Morgans, District Cllr B Ayer, District Cllr Mrs J Butler, District Cllr B Bentley, County Cllr R. Oppenheimer, County Cllr R. Mocatta.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Mr N Hitch (Town Clerk), Mr S Field (Office & Committees Manager), and 48 members of the public.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr P Humphries, Cllr A. Glendinning, Cllr Mrs L Farrow and Cllr Ms M Vincent.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. Minutes of the 43rd Annual Meeting of the Town for 2018 were approved.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the 43rd Annual Town Meeting held on 25th April 2018 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 44th Annual Meeting of the Town and gave her report for the past Municipal Year (*attached as Appendix A*).

3. CAUSEWAY FIELDS: TALK FROM PETER PRICE

Peter Price, a local archaeologist, presented a talk to the Meeting regarding the archaeological history of the land which the Town Council has recently purchased adjoining the Causeway Farm Development. Mr Robin Hart commented that he felt it was important to increase the tree coverage in the Town and that a tree strategy is needed.

4. NEW TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE

The Town Mayor advised the Meeting that the new website had been launched by the Town Council and was now live and urged those present to use it.

5. OPEN FORUM FOR QUESTIONS

The following comments were raised:

C.1 *Liz Bissett asked whether there had been any progress with regard to the area of water meadow land next to the Tesco store.*

A.1 The Town Clerk advised that a letter had recently been received from Tesco on the subject advising that they are currently reviewing their

land allocation and that there is unlikely to be any progress on this matter for some time.

C.2 *Tom Norgate raised concerns about the lack of a police presence in the Town and the need for police officers to be stationed in the Town with a more visible presence.*

A.2 It was agreed that this would be a matter to put to the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the Town Council to consider.

C.3 *A question was raised by a member of the public regarding the recent purchase by the Town Council of the land adjacent to the Causeway Fields development and whether the Town Council can support the cost of their maintenance and the infrastructure required.*

A.3 The Town Clerk responded that it is not anticipated that the cost of maintaining the land will be significant, it is expected that the land will need to be left to dry out and recover for a few years and that if the Town Council then decided to carry out any improvements it would need to allocate resources from the Town Council's annual budget.

C.4 *A question was raised by a member of the public regarding the maintenance of 3 planted tubs and the hedges at the end of Sussex Road (at the Causeway junction) which require attention.*

A.4 It was thought that this area is the responsibility of East Hampshire District Council and not the Town Council but this will be investigated.

C.5 *Robin Hart stated that he has carried out an extensive water survey around the Town and that the water meadow land next to the Tesco store takes a large volume of water from neighbouring areas.*

6. DANIEL DAY LEWIS AWARD

The Daniel Day Lewis Award 2018-2019 was presented to Nikolai Gibbons who was nominated by the Winton Players for various acting roles and assisting other young actors.

Certificates of Commendation were presented to Oliver Fogelin, Adam Tutt and Halcyon Sheen (all from Churchers College).

7. PRESENTATION OF 2ND TRANCHE COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Town Mayor presented cheques for the 2nd Tranche of the Community Grants for the year 2018 – 2019 to the following organisations:

Petersfield Youth Theatre (in attendance)

Petersfield Counselling Services (in attendance)

Revitalise

The Petersfield Lions Club (in attendance)

Victim Support (in attendance)

Havant and East Hampshire Mind (in attendance)

Petersfield Musical Festival (in attendance)

Headway Portsmouth & East Hants (in attendance)

8. PRESENTATION OF TOWN MAYOR'S AWARD FOR SERVICES TO PETERSFIELD

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

<i>David Petche</i>	-	<i>Building Steps, Adhurst Allotments</i>
<i>Amanda Greenlee</i>	-	<i>Petersfield Town Partnership, Dementia Friendly Campaign, Petersfield Community Garden</i>
<i>Sue Besant</i>	-	<i>New Savoy Cinema</i>
<i>Jo Watts</i>	-	<i>Sew Creative and involvement in the community</i>

9. **MAYORS CLOSING REMARKS**

In her closing remarks, the Town Mayor thanked everyone for coming, and invited them to stay after the meeting for refreshments. The Town Mayor also commented that elections for the Town Council would be taking place in May and urged members of the public to consider standing.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.30 pm followed by light refreshments

Town Mayor's Report

This is the last time you will see this particular group of councillors at the ATM. There is an election in May. Some of us are standing down and the rest will be hoping to be re-elected. I think my fellow councillors will agree that we have had a good four years and have enjoyed working together.

The Council has had a busy year. Lots of changes have been made. Some of them are obvious and you will have noticed. Some are behind the scenes and you will not know they have happened.

It was apparent on one visit from the internal auditor that there was no spare table or computer for her to use. Some changes had to be made and some of the space on the first floor that had been vacated by the previous tenant was brought into use. The Town Clerk and the Finance team are up there. It is a quieter environment for them but the move has also freed some space downstairs for a meeting room. This is an accessible space so there is no need for people to climb the stairs to meet either the Town Clerk or the Finance Team.

There is also a new telephone system in place. This has enabled us to expand the number of phones across the workforce. You might have heard the music, perhaps a minus, but the system is much more flexible than before and amongst other things it is possible to leave a voice message if the person is not at their desk. It also enables conference calls with members of the public and suppliers.

The new Town Guide will be out in May and an annual report will be distributed to all households this year as a summary of the Annual Town Meeting and any other related information.

We all owe a big thank you to our Town Clerk, Neil Hitch, and his team of officers. They are all very supportive of their councillors and we appreciate their help.

The committee chairmen have also written reports to let us know what has been happening in their committees.

Old Hampshire
or
Visit

Planning Committee Report

The planning committee of the Town Council meets roughly every three weeks throughout the year. Councillors consider all the applications before them using the documentation available on the EHDC planning site followed by discussion in committee.

We are also grateful to the Petersfield Society who provide supporting notes with their views on significant applications, which we often referred to as they bring to an additional perspective and expert knowledge to the process. Which is not to say that we always agree with each other but does ensure a healthy and well-informed debate.

I'm sure everyone appreciates that although the Town Council^{is} are consulted on planning applications we are not ourselves a planning authority. The planning authority for Petersfield is the south downs national park authority who delegate planning administration to the East Hampshire District council.

This year we formally agreed that the Town Development Committee would provide additional support on complex or contentious applications, particularly where we have the opportunity to present our arguments at EHDC or South Downs Planning, as we did several times this year. We have been quite successful in our presentations to committee but ultimately the application for work on a property in The Avenue was successfully appealed.

As with all our council meetings our deliberations are open to the public who may address the committee provided they give due notice to the town clerk.

I'm grateful to all councillors^{who} have attended meetings throughout the year and particularly to my deputy Cllr Mary Vincent who took the chair when I was unavailable.

Cllr Phillip Humphries

Grounds Committee Report

This has been a year of contrasts for our Grounds Team under the very capable Leadership of Dugg Budd. From the endless bin emptying on our Open Spaces to extending our services to take on extensive grass mowing in Liss and Greatham parishes they have met every challenge that faced them with sheer hard work and good humour.

Joe Allen, our senior apprentice has successfully passed his course in Amenity Horticulture Level 2. We have now taken on Joe as a full time member of staff and welcome Ethan McKenna our new apprentice who will also be attending Sparsholt College.

The beautiful summer which we enjoyed last year was marred for us by two dreadful fires on the Heath and we sincerely thank Hampshire Fire and Rescue for their speedy response in dealing with the fires and their aftermath. We must here also give our sincere thanks to the Friends of the Heath, who, as well as running their work parties, were able to plant a large number of saplings to replace the Heath Road East Hedge which had been badly damaged by fire. The National Park, in fact have just given 71 saplings to the Petersfield Society which were passed onto the Friends who were able to plant them the weekend before last.

The 3rd year of coppicing on the Heath has opened up the view on the Heath Road side.

The Woods Meadow play area has now been completed and we have just awarded the contract for the construction of a new play area at Borough Road..

Sadly we had to cut down 14 trees at Bell Hill Common to stop the spread of Ash Dieback and fortunately no other trees have been affected. The good news here is that we have an effective Management Plan in operation for this area.

Paddock way now has a new, much needed footpath. And the men have been coppicing at High Meadow for the last few weeks

We have been working with the Rugby Club and the Town Juniors on the plans for the new sports hub at Penns place and hope to be able to move that forward in the next year.

Dugg has been delighted with the purchase of the new ride on mower to cover the mowing at Liss and Greatham.

Together with Damian Hinds, the Town Mayor planted the first of the World War 1 memorial trees and a second tree to mark our start of the Queens Canopy. James Deane produced a large and varied programme of events for the World War 1 centenary and is the driving force behind our plans to create a Centenary Garden on part of the Bell Hill recreation ground.. The main feature of which will be the planting of 111 trees to represent the 111 souls from the town who lost their lives during this awful conflict.

Thanks to Jamie Matthews, we purchased the land at Causeway farm. This will form a welcome addition to the Council open spaces and be a new exciting area for townspeople to enjoy. Initially we will repair the fences and let the land dry out. In the long term this will be a natural area and it will not be built on.

Unfortunately, there have been a number of incidents of anti social behaviour on four of our sites. Sadly, most are drug related, with Dugg and his men finding nitrous oxide canister on the Heath, at the Skate Park and around the Avenue Pavlion and cannabis being smoked in all three as well as at Bell Hill. Because of this we intend to put in cctv in an attempt to be a deterrent as well as a means of catching the perpetrators. It isn't just people smoking cannabis or inhaling nitrous oxide that is the problem here. It is the associated damage and litter that appears to go hand in hand with these activities costing the Council money. Last year Jamie reported that it cost the Council around £10,000. This year there has been

increased activity and the cost to the taxpayer to clear up is much higher.

It has been our intention over the last few years to bring all of the Grounds work in house and we have succeeded in bringing down the costs as we have reduced our use of outside contractors. We now look to the future and the end of the last contract in 2020 as we end the present contract for the mowing of the playing fields and public open spaces. To this end we have been looking for suitable premises to house our machinery and intend to build a depot fit for this purpose.

We look forward to opening up the new nature park, the pond stabilisation work and with interest to what the people at the Museum will find out next about the history of the Heath...now one of the most important Bronze Age sites in the country!

See How Good

Public Halls Committee Report for 2018/19

The main purpose of the Public Halls Committee is to manage and maintain all public buildings in the Council's ownership, these are The Avenue Pavilion, The Town and Festival Hall and Love Lane Pavilion.

This year the focus of the Committee has been to progress the vision for The Town and Festival Hall.

The Town and Festival Hall Complex has been in need of investment for many years, and in particular, the 'temporary extension' that was built to the right hand side of the Town Hall & Festival Hall back in the early 1970s. It is also felt that the right investment in the Festival Hall can deliver wider and more diverse amenity value to the people of Petersfield as well as better lettable public space.

In 2018, the Council appointed Foster Wilson Architects who are highly regarded theatre and music hall specialists - They have recently completed the renovation of the Mayflower Theatre in Southampton. The Council and their architect advisors are following The Royal Institute of British Architects, known as "RIBA" Plan of Work. The RIBA Plan of Work organises the process of briefing, designing, constructing and operating building projects into eight stages and details the tasks and outputs required at each stage.

Following a detailed and interactive public consultation in July 2018, The RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design) was concluded in January 2019 and the Committee is planning a series of further public consultation events to share and gain feedback on the innovative concept design. The design can be viewed online at the Petersfield Town Council Website. Dates are still to be confirmed but it is likely the next public consultation will take place over several weeks, across multiple venues in the summer months. Following the public consultation, the Committee and Council will make decisions of how and when to proceed to RIBA Stage 3 (Developed Design).

The Committee has also employed the services of Consultants ACL. They have been commissioned to work with Foster Wilson Architects to develop a business plan and programming strategy for an upgraded and extended Festival Hall complex. This is an exciting piece of work which could act as a standalone strategy for attracting and hosting a wider variety of events in the Festival Hall.

Lastly, work has been completed to create a shared workspace on the 1st floor of the Town Hall which has been let to the Petersfield Museum (whilst they undergo their renovation) and ^{will} provide much needed additional office/meeting room space for the Town Council.

~~John Palmer~~ *Area Steering*
John Palmer

TDC Report for 2018/19

The Town Development Committee looks to shape the future development of the Town and ensures that our town develops in accordance with the vision set out in the Petersfield Neighbourhood Plan.

The development of the Town Centre into a pedestrian-friendly open and inviting shared space is one element of the Plan's vision and a formal steering group has now been established to bring this about. The steering group has membership from the South Downs National Park Authority, East Hampshire District Council, Hampshire County Council and the Town Council. It is an achievement in itself to get all these groups into one room!

To understand how we might manage traffic and parking in the revamped town centre, the TDC commissioned a Transport and Parking study which measured traffic flow and car park capacity. The detailed report will help us decide how best to reduce traffic flows around the area of the square whilst still ensuring that traffic can flow through the town and deliveries can be made.

The TDC has also been liaising with South Western Railways over parking at the station and discussions are progressing about the provision of an extra parking deck on the western side of the tracks.

Tourism was another key aspiration within the Neighbourhood Plan and during this year the Council made the decision to fund the Town Visitor Centre after funding from East Hampshire District Council was withdrawn. With the development of the Petersfield Museum encompassing the old Police Station in progress, the time is right for Petersfield to look at the opportunities to develop tourism and to enhance the experience for visitors to our town. A sub-group of the TDC has been working on this and will report later this year with a long-term strategy.

This year has also seen the publication of a short, easy to read planning guide specific to Petersfield. The guide will help people understand what they need to include with planning applications whilst also highlighting where design guidance and other reference publications can be found.

The TDC has a strong focus on walking and cycling within the town and has recently allocated funding for additional cycle parking, a cycle repair station and new finger-post signage throughout the town.

Annual Town Meeting – 6 March 2019

Finance & General Purposes Committee Report

Municipal Year 2018/2019

As a reminder the Finance & general Purposes Committee, apart from the responsibilities for the Petersfield Purse also addresses those matters of a general nature that fall outside the remit of other Committees. In addition the Committee acts as a conduit for the furtherance of recommendations from other Committees that require Full Council approval. This results in this Committee overseeing a broad area of subjects.

This Committee meets 11 times a year and all financial matters are subject to a Resolution or passed as a Recommendation to Full Council for approval. All such details are a matter of public record. This report thus aims to address only some of the key areas rather than read out a list of numbers.

All will be aware that inflation is continuing at modest levels and a continuing need for a period for restraint within the public sector.

Therefore it follows that this year has again seen some significant challenges; at times second guessing what is required and as an example the loss of some former funding such as the Community Support Grant which went from £35,000.00 to zero. In addition Council decided to support the continuance of a Town Visitor Centre in place of the hitherto Town Information Centre run under contract to EHDC by Tourism South East. This was required to be re-branded and re-organised at very short notice and has proved to be a popular move by our Community. However, it does represent as an illustration 4% of our Revenue Budget and 7.5% of our Precept requirement.

However, the ethos of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is that we as Community representatives cannot settle for standing still or reducing those services which mean so much to all. Indeed we must strive to think to the future pressing forwards, to improve, consolidate and enhance the values of the Town where we can and where we have power and authority to do so. This has been the rationale and basis of any decisions taken – decisions taken on your behalf in order to deliver a balanced and sensible service to the Town. Decisions taken by any Council can and do have lasting impacts on Communities and frame the legacy of such Councils way into the future.

On a final note I would wish to pay homage to the Town Clerk as the Responsible Finance Officer and the Accounts Team for a dedicated year to ensure our budgets land in the right area. Our Town enjoys a healthy financial position.