



**Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting
held on Wednesday 11th May 2022 at 6:30pm
at The Town Hall, Quayside House, Navigation Yard, Sleaford, Lincs, NG34 7TW**

Present: Councillor R Oates, Chairman of the Council
Officers: Deputy Town Clerk, Administration Officer
Members of Staff: 3 Members
Press: 0

The meeting was attended by approximately 20 members of the public including Sleaford Town Councillors and officers.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

ATM.1 Apologies

Apologies of absence were received and noted from Cllrs D Darmon and L Lowndes.

ATM.2 Minutes

It was proposed, seconded and **RESOLVED** that the notes from the meeting held on 5th May 2021 be accepted as Minutes of that Meeting. The majority of those in attendance agreed. The Resolution was carried.

ATM.3 Deputy Clerk's report

The Deputy Clerk gave a report in the absence of a Town Clerk, due to the on-going vacancy of the Town Clerk post.

“Council has held thirteen ordinary full council meetings since the last AGM in May 2021 and one extraordinary meeting. Since July 2021 meetings have been held in person, prior to these they were held remotely as permitted by Local Government legislation during the covid pandemic. All Council meetings are recorded and uploaded to the Town Council's website. The minutes, showing all decisions made, are saved to the Town Council's website.

The Clerk post has been vacant since early February. The Council Chairman has taken on the role of temporary Proper Officer (unpaid) as permitted by the Council's standing orders.

Due to the vacancy of the Town Clerk and the consequent work pressures on staff, Council agreed in March to suspend Panel meetings (with a review in June). Consequently, some projects and areas of work are paused. However, the Deputy Clerk is confident that the Council's day-to-day business is being carried out to the correct standards. We continue to respond to residents' enquiries and to deliver all aspects of the Council's responsibilities.

The Services Team is now at full complement and two members of staff have been made permanent after being seconded to temporary posts for several months.

The Deputy Clerk is grateful to the Council staff for their hard work and support.”

ATM.4 Mayor's Report

The Chairman read his report:

“Good evening everyone and welcome to the Sleaford Town meeting of 2022.

It has been my privilege to represent the town as your mayor over the past twelve months.

In that role I have been supported by many helpers. In particular, I must name my wife Ann for her support as the Lady Mayoress. But I must also mention the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Linda Edwards-Shea and her Consort, Councillor Paul Edwards-Shea, as well as the staff at the Town Hall for their help and advice. They all assisted me in different ways with a wide range of Mayoral events, of which I can only mention a few here,

My mayoral year has been challenging due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The lifting of the lockdown last summer enabled some normality to return to our lives. But the arrival of the Omicron variant of the virus last autumn again sadly caused problems and uncertainties for people and for businesses.

Those problems and uncertainties affected plans for fundraising for my Mayoral charity of the Year, the Rainbow Stars. In the event I was able to hold only one fundraising event, which was two nights of special dinners at the Gurkha 19 restaurant last November, which raised £550 for the Rainbow Stars. Once again, I would like to thank local businessman Mr Nadim Aziz for organising the event, Mr Kandal Prasad the owner of the Gurkha 19 for hosting the event and all of the staff at Gurkha 19 who helped on both evenings.

But I am sure that the people of Sleaford and beyond will continue to support the Rainbow Stars in other ways, so that they can continue their good work in the town and beyond.

On that theme, one of the highlights of my year was in June to officially open a new multi-sensory room at the Rainbow Stars premises in Kesteven Street. This facility was generously funded by a £25,000 grant from the Moy Park company – an excellent example of a local company supporting the community.

Companies showing their support for the community were also on display at the Sleaford Town Awards in October, which once again showed the huge amount of good work being done in Sleaford in so many different ways. All of the award winners deserve praise, but space here allows me to only mention the recipient of the Mayor's Special Award for 2021, who was Jade Hope for her work for the safety of women in the town.

Unfortunately, Covid-19 risks prevented me visiting armed forces establishments around the town. However, I was able to represent the town at the outdoor flag raising for Armed Forces Day in June here in Sleaford. While in August, during the lifting of lockdown, I attended the official commemorative service and dinner to mark one hundred years since the founding of the Sleaford Branch of the Royal British Legion. And on November 11th

representing the town at the Remembrance Day event and taking the salute as the parade marched past was personally very moving as it reminded me of my late father and his war time service.

And war is of course very much on our minds at present due to the illegal invasion of Ukraine by the government of Russia. In March I was pleased to join all town councillors in passing a Motion to express horror at the invasion and the suffering caused to the people of Ukraine. We stand by Ukraine in its defence of democracy and are thoughts are with all those affected by the conflict.

But I must return to the subject of Covid-19 as it prevented so much from happening over the past twelve months, including the usual large Christmas market. But a successful '12 Days of Christmas Market' went ahead within social distancing rules, and the switching on of the Christmas lights as Mayor was an enjoyable event.

The mayor is also traditionally a member of the Sleaford and District town Twinning Association. No town twinning has taken place over the past twelve months due to Covid-19. But a visit by our French and German twin towns is planned for July this year. Looking further forward, I hope that many of you will become involved in developing the Sleaford Neighbourhood Plan over the rest of this year; a plan that will help to shape the town for years to come. After more than two years of working with people in the town a 'Vision and Objectives' for the Neighbourhood Plan have been developed. And that 'Vision and objectives' will be widely publicised in June for further comments and input. That will be another opportunity for all town residents, visitors, businesses, and organisations to have their say on what kind of town you want Sleaford to be in the future.

And on that positive note I end my report."

ATM.5 Questions from the Public

Q1 – Sleaford Neighbourhood Plan: How does Sleaford Town Council see it developing and is it being linked with the Sleaford Masterplan of NKDC?

The Chairman, Cllr R Oates explained the process of a Neighbourhood Plan and confirmed that the Working Group had gathered evidence and views from the public. It is hoped that all stages of the plan will be completed by May 2023. The Neighbourhood Plan would conform with the joint Local Plan, of which NKDC was a partner.

Q2 – Request for a formal timetable and conclusion of the Sleaford Neighbourhood Plan

The Chairman explained that there is no formal timetable in the legislation. It was further explained that the Working Group is separate from Sleaford Town Council, although some STC Cllrs are on the Working Group.

Q3 – Query about S106 funding and Handley Chase development

A member of the public asked about the maintenance of the green space and the S106 funding. Details of STC's responsibilities within the development agreement were not known at this meeting.

Q4 – St George's Playing Field

Concerns were raised about noise levels from the backboard and the concrete surface of the basketball area. It was suggested that NKDC Environmental Health could be approached to discuss a noise survey.

ATM.6 Ideas and Suggestions for future Council consideration.

- STC to purchase 6 grass verges from LCC in order to maintain these – Formal request to be submitted from LCC Cllr M Allan
- Request for adult trim trail, toilets and café kiosk to be sited on Woodside Play Area

There were no more questions and the meeting closed at 7.10 pm.