



AYLESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN (parish) MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 10th MAY 2018, IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, 5 CHURCH ST, AYLESBURY, AT 6.30 pm

The Meeting was chaired by the Town Mayor with the Town Clerk officiating.
Five members of the public were in attendance along with the following listed councillors.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6.30pm.

Present: B. Adams, C. Adams, M. Bateman, Mrs S. Chapple, B. Chapple CBE, A. Christensen, Mrs A. Harrison, T. Hunter-Watts, T. Hussain, A. Huxley, S. Jarvis (from 6.33 p.m.), R. Lloyd, G. Moore, Mrs S. Morgan, Mrs J. Puddefoot, W. Raja, Mrs B. Russel, M. Smith, Mrs D Summers, Mrs R Takodra MBE, M. White, M. Willis and M Winn.

Keith Gray (Town Clerk)
Mark Broughton (Deputy Town Clerk)
Judith Priest (Senior Communities Officer)
Sue Carpenter (Mayor's PA)
Maurice Cousins (Official Photographer)

Five members of the public

- 1. WELCOME BY THE TOWN MAYOR**
The Town Mayor, Cllr Tom Hunter-Watts, welcomed everyone present to the meeting.
- 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs J Bloom (prior commitment), T. Dixon (ill health) and apologies for late arrival were received from Cllr S Jarvis.
- 3. TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON 11th MAY 2017.**
RESOLVED: To accept the Annual Minutes of the Town Meeting held on 11th May, 2017.

[Cllr S Jarvis joined the meeting at 6.33 p.m.]

4. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN MAYOR Cllr T Hunter-Watts

I look back over the past year with much happiness and gratitude. I believe that as a Council we have worked and debated very well together, and that our residents can take satisfaction in the co-operative and constructive way in which their interests are considered. As Mayor, my life has been made easy by a superb group of people. My immediate line manager is of course Sue Carpenter, and I am grateful for all that she has done to support me, but the whole team back of House led by our Town Clerk have been unfailingly kind and helpful.

I say back of House, because there is a showbiz element to being Mayor. But the skills are more those of a straightman, whose role is to make the person they stand with shine the more brightly.

As you doubtless know, I am a nurse in my day job, and the skills are also those of a nurse - at least that's how I do it, the only way I know really after 20 years in the profession: making "each contact count" and aiming to infuse a bit of kindness into what might otherwise be a rather formal situation.

Of course, a mayor does need to make the right sort of entrance, and any deficiencies in my own person have been more than compensated for by my mace bearer Mr Tom Spurrier who has done the Council long and valuable service. And as anyone in politics will understand, nothing happens, at least not fully and completely, unless it has been photographed, and a mayor is the part creation of his or her photographers. For that reason I have reason to be very grateful to Mr Maurice Cousins and Mr Derek Pelling, whose excellent website is a great resource for those who want accessible local news.

Members may recall some of my year's events themselves, but there are some I do want to mention:

Talking of nursing, I attended a training day at Avondale Care Home, where I was put into spiked shoes, dark glasses and placed in a darkened room, where I was shouted at to make a cup of tea. It was a learning activity to allow carers and others to gain a lived understanding of the reality of dementia and delirium. In those circumstances, I found myself retreating into myself and standing very still, trying to get things right. Think of it, if you see someone with dementia taking things slowly or seeming just to stand there - perhaps they are simply trying to balance, and to maintain a sense of control. Aylesbury has taken a notable lead with the Town Dementia Action Alliance, which Bee Lasoye has so brilliantly promoted. I was proud to launch it at the County Library early on in my term. Bee has also been wonderful in enthusing and empowering our Youth Councillors, who have so enjoyed meeting and working alongside. They have been at most if not all of our big town events and they are so willing and cheerful. I often go to events held by other councils, and the conversation sometimes turns to how hard it is to get people interested in their Council or their local community, particularly if they are under 70. We have no such problems here in Aylesbury, and we should all take a lot of satisfaction and draw a lot of hope from that.

Because civic involvement is the life blood of the town, and at times of pain or crisis the presence of it is transformative. It was not long after taking office, that I was asked to write an official statement following the attacks in Manchester and in London. The response from a gentleman called Sirtaj Rahman was noble and telling, in that he organised two open community discussions in order to diffuse any potential tensions and answer questions in the aftermath. I was delighted to

attend both. I also attended a Community Iftar at Aylesbury Mosque, which members may note is being held again on the 25th, where the openness and hospitality shown was both touching and much needed.

Taken as a whole, what a year it has been for creativity. I have attended Parklife and Proms in the Park, an open-mic gig with wonderful talent, and an amazing number of great local bands, I have attended performances by Aylesbury Choral Society, Aylesbury Concert Band and a superb variety show celebrating the life of Aylesbury Dramatic and Operatic Society stalwart and theatrical legend Gordon Bishop. I hosted an International Evening with talking drums and singing bowls and Indian dancing and Scottish dancing too. There is a huge amount of collective talent here in this town. We should celebrate it unashamedly.

Young people in general have impressed me very much, although I worry about them somewhat. Whether they are practicing the guitar or the sithar, helping the old or volunteering for charity, whether like my excellent and very kind-hearted Mayoral cadet Chloe Keeping they are pushing their limits and discovering their potential as part of the Bucks Army Cadet Force, whether they are with church groups or acting in shows, they are so many of them dedicated, disciplined and deeply thoughtful. Not like kids in my day, as I remember, certainly not like me. Our future is secure, at least if we always remember that the pursuit of excellence should never overwhelm the need for space and occasionally healing. I will take this opportunity to highlight the work of Inspire-All, say how proud I have been to be on their side this past Mayoral year, and thank them for their support and for the work they do.

Finally, I would like to mention my Deputy Cllr Mark Willis, who has already run the London Marathon, and that's just for starters. He has been a superb deputy and deserves my especial thanks.

5. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE Cllr M Smith

The financial figures for the year, although yet to be audited, show that actual spending was within our budgeted amounts by around £27,000.

Earmarked reserves continue to be held to make sure we are ready to meet any large costs that might only come up once every few years (such as election costs, updating our buildings and building new mausolea in the cemetery). General reserves are also held to ensure we can deal with unexpected events.

The year ended with general reserves at around £482,000, representing about 30% of annual operating expenditure. This amount is quite a bit lower in percentage terms than it was a year ago, but still just above the minimum limit of 25% given by guidance on good financial management for Town and Parish Councils.

It is particularly pleasing to report that our income generation was around 30% higher than budgeted.

The Finance Committee met four times during the year. As Chair I also had several additional meetings with officers during the budget setting period to work on the finer details of the budget. As a result of the diligent and hard work of the officer team, we were able to finalise our budget and present it for approval to Full Council during December, a month earlier than in previous years.

The budget for 2018/19 includes a 7% increase compared to the previous year, enabling an expansion of our very popular environmental work all around the Town.

Finance Committee and Full Council meetings are always provided with fully detailed financial figures for the year to date giving an opportunity to all members for examining, questioning and challenging of any item of income or expenditure. Even when questions are not received, as Chair I will try to point members towards all the key figures and movements at each meeting.

Our internal and external audit reports for the previous were once again highly satisfactory, confirming the professionalism and dedication of those of our staff responsible for the Council's financial records and controls.

6. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GRANTS COMMITTEE Cllr Mrs J Puddefoot

The Committee met 4 times this year and gave detailed consideration to 29 applications from local charities and community organisations. £49,999.41 of the £50,000 budget has been awarded to 27 applications. These all met the Town Councils Grants criteria, which requires the applicant to either; be based within the area administered by Aylesbury Town Council, and/or the activity or service must benefit a significant number of residents of the Parish.

General Grant Funding has been allocated to a wide range of activities and projects from a local mother and toddler group that gives opportunities to socialise and play, a young people's drama club and the lunch clubs and interest groups for our more senior residents. In the wider community grants have supported a town-based Diwali celebration, a Shakespeare festival and an exhibition of Nigerian culture. Grants have been awarded to charities that give support to young members of the community with special needs that will increase their experience of sensory theatre, play and leisure activities. The general grants also supported the winter emergency provision for the homeless, the training of street pastors and equipment for the rapid response ambulance.

The Social & Emotional Well-being needs grants enable organisations to fund salaries and this year's successful applicants were:- CHAT to offer more short-term respite care for families when it is most needed, Youth Concern to increase free person-centred counselling for disadvantaged young people, Aylesbury Vale Rape Crisis for the recruitment of an information and advice Co-Ordinator, Bucks Play Association for additional spaces with support for out of school play and holiday opportunities. Citizen Advice Aylesbury Vale for recruitment and training opportunities for young people. All offer help and support when needed, particularly important at a time when many statutory services are increasingly over stretched.

Southcourt Community Project 'The fabulous Me' Project, running during the school holidays.

This year Sports grants have been awarded to Joseph Walker, Tyanna Dale, Max Perry, Megan Riley and Lilli Clo Thorp-Richens toward equipment, training and associated travel costs. They have all demonstrated a high level of achievement in representing their sport at National or International events. We wish them every success in their chosen fields.

We continue to promote the grants scheme and encourage new applicants through the Aylesbury Town Matters magazine, the Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts and the website which is reviewed and updated as necessary. This year the Clerk, along with the Committee chair attended the AVDC Funding Fair. Feedback forms and letters of thanks from successful applicants have kept the committee well informed as to how effective the grants have been. None of this would be possible without the many residents who give their time so freely and make such a hugely positive difference within our community. We thank the new Committee Clerk Jane Eden who is always ready to answer queries and give advice to prospective applicants.

7. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE
Cllr M Willis

This has been another very busy year for the Aylesbury Town Council Planning and Licensing committee, the dedication of the committee meeting every two weeks remains high and I'm ever grateful to the committee members and my clerk Jane Eden for your support in this busy role.

The lack of a local plan is still having a negative effect on developments in the parish, it is extremely difficult to stop poor developments and ensure that they are brought back better, not just for the developers but for residents who will live in these homes throughout the lifetime of the building and current residents, homes are being built that are not up to good design standards including the "Garden Town" design ideals, some developments are below the national minimum space standards, which are unenforceable until VALP is implemented, it is my hope that VALP will enable the town council along with whatever organisation is the planning authority going forward to ensure that our residents are living in good conditions and with access to the services they need.

I have attended many of the Development Control meetings at AVDC to put the planning committees opinion forward to the committee, some of these applications have been for big developments around the town, Woodlands and Hampden Fields being the biggest in this year, these can be deeply frustrating meetings but I have to thank the members of those committees for their attentiveness and examination of our arguments, ultimately it is their committee who make the decision on these developments for good or ill, they also have to make those decisions based solely upon planning law.

I remain dedicated to the task of representing residents views on developments in their neighbourhoods, on several occasions residents have attended the planning committee meetings, on these occasions the committee listens and discusses concerns and does its best to help, I'm proud of the fact that we are a friendly and welcoming place for residents to come and talk to their representatives about planning issues that affect them.

Another busy council year ends, one thing remains certain, the Aylesbury Town Council Planning and Licensing committee will be equally busy in the coming year 2018/19.

**8. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE
Cllr Mrs S Morgan**

It has been an honour to represent the Town Council as Communities chairlady for the last year. Working with Denise Summers as my Vice-Chair and with officers Ruth & Judith and the Communities Committee it has been an absolute pleasure and I would like to thank all of you for your help and support because we all achieved such a lot this year and we should all be immensely proud of ourselves!

We frequently get praised by our residents for the beautiful flowers that the Town Council plant and maintain, and this year's hanging baskets were no exception. They make such a difference to our community and we often receive letters and emails to thank us for the beautiful floral displays, and it inspires many in our community to turn their fingers green. Each year we hold the Aylesbury in Bloom Competition and it was heart-warming to see the efforts made by our local school children last year, and how proud they were of their achievements.

We have put on so many events in the last year, I would be here all day talking about them all and how highly recommended and appreciated they are by our residents. The most recent event was St Georges Day which many councillors attended and walked proudly with the local Scouts and St George on horseback.

Our next event this year will be Soapbox Derby on Father's Day, and if last year's event was anything to go by, it will be an amazing family event where families and friends have spent the last year working together on their vehicles, some of which are incredibly imaginative and is always well attended with families enjoying their picnics in the sunshine.

Parklife and Proms in the Park will be held again this August Bank Holiday and is one of the top events in our resident's calendars. Last year we were awarded by BUDS for our disabled friendly events, and many impressed residents who commented on our Mayors rubbish collection skills! This year, we have a double headline act, Skamungas and Busting Loose, and lots of local bands and musicians to entertain thousands of local residents, their friends and their families. With plenty of children's rides, selling our own fluorescent merchandise, Market Stalls selling handmade local produce, Bucks TV, The Mix 96 Street Team and the fireworks display, we hope this will be a spectacular event!

We held an Open Mic Competition to offer local bands and individuals the opportunity to showcase their talent in front of a panel of judges at a local venue which was kindly donated for free by Aylesbury Shoot Pool and owner Sue Latham. It was amazing to see how many talented residents we have in Aylesbury and we look forward to seeing the winners this year. Sadly though, the event will not be pictured by Russ Naylor this year and he will be sadly missed by us all. We have suggested to his family that we would like to make a tribute to him to show

how much we appreciated all the years of hard work and dedication that he gave to the Town Council.

Aylesbury on Sea, Bucks County Show, Tudor Fayre, Community Networking Events, Halloween, Carolfest and Festive Family Fun were also held over the last year and later this year will see the comeback of our popular Walking Play event. The Communities Committee has also supported other events in the Town such as Whiz fizzing Festival, Christmas Lights Switch On, Santa's Parade, Aylesbury Live and Music in Kingsbury through financial contributions.

Our Aylesbury Town Dementia Action Alliance was set up in 2017. With Communities Officer Benedicta, we aimed to transform Aylesbury into a Dementia Friendly Town and we have had so much support from so many local business and residents. With Aylesbury Waterside Theatre being one of those, we teamed together with Vamos Theatre Production to put on a play 'Finding Joy' this November at the Waterside Theatre. We have travelled to many Care Homes in the community alongside the Community Unity Project. This was an intergenerational project to speak to people living with Dementia. This May as part of the Dementia Action week there will be a visual display in Friars Square showing what they have learned about each person and have made floral arrangements with pictures and stories.

Our Youth Town Council led by Councillor Sinclair as Chairlady and Cllr Koleth as her Vice Chair have had a very successful year fundraising for their chosen charity in 2017 Bucks Mind, and this year so far for Youth Concern. Between Packing Bags in Tesco to holding Mufti-Days at their schools, they have already raised a lot of money. They recently held an evening to meet with the Councillors to share their thoughts and ideas for the coming year and we look forward to seeing them achieve their goals.

9. REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE, AND LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
Cllr M Smith

After some years of rapid growth in the work of the Council, this year has been a more 'steady' one in terms of our functions, but that doesn't mean it hasn't been a busy one!

Policy Committee has a big role in reviewing and ensuring our Council's internal policies, support systems and contracts with external organisations, in all areas of our work are up to date and fit for purpose. Although less visible to the general public than much of our work, this is a vital role - to ensure security of our assets, efficient and cost-effective delivery of all our services, a safe and satisfying working environment for our staff and the best possible experience for the public when accessing our services. This has become an even more vital component of our work now we manage the Jonathan Page Play Centre and have responsibility for the safety and enjoyment of a growing number of local children.

Regulations imposed on us by central government are also a source of additional workloads. This year we have been particularly involved with the new "GDPR" rules on data protection, which has required a lot of work by officers, as well as

Members needing to gain an understanding of these rules, which affect our own roles as representatives of our communities and citizens.

We have continued to engage as much as possible with both other levels of Local Government to influence the debate on the future move to a Unitary higher tier Council. These discussions will continue and, we hope, increase in scope when the Minister's final decision on the future structure is announced soon. A particular aim of the Town Council will be that many more services and assets are devolved to us, particularly those commonly dealt with at Town/Parish level in other places, and any others we can show we have the capability and confidence to deliver to our citizens.

It has once again been a great pleasure and privilege to lead this Council and Chair the Policy Committee, with the support of the Mayor, Committee Chairs and all other members. Once again, at most times our party political allegiances have been largely put aside, and many members have helpfully shared their experiences from outside the Council and their highly professional expertise gained elsewhere, to our great benefit.

This has always ensured lively but positive debate and mainly collaborative decisions that always look to the best interests of the Town and its residents. Thanks also to the Clerk and all the staff, for continuing to deliver enthusiastically and professionally every day the good name and growing reputation of this Council.

10. **REPORT FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DIRECT SERVICES COMMITTEE** **Cllr Mrs A Harrison**

Allotments:

Our allotments are enjoyed by local residents and provide both exercise, healthy produce and friendships for many of our allotment holders. Most of our sites have a high level of capacity although we do have vacant plots in Bedgrove which we continue to discuss and try different ways of promotion. Thank you to Linda for her support and administration.

Cemetery :

The cemetery continues to be maintained to a high standard cosmetically by the outdoor team and administratively by Anthony Motyka the Bereavement Services Officer.

The Council have faced a number of challenges with the Cemetery over the last year regarding records from when the cemetery was previously managed by AVDC, however, having contracted a records expert we and the addition of Anthony to the team are confident moving forward with the cemetery management. We have continued to work well with local residents in the streets overlooking the cemetery and I am pleased that they have been able to come forward with their thoughts and suggestions. This was evident when a local resident asked that we consider the opening times of the cemetery, which we discussed at length at a recent meeting.

Devolved Services :

Grass cutting - the outdoor team continue to do an outstanding job on the grass cutting not only in the Town Council boundaries but for neighbouring parishes, who are very appreciative of our efforts.

Cuts are still performed more regularly than they previously were, although at times the team are hindered by the weather.

Responses from the public have on the whole been very positive and we appreciate the input from Councillors

New machinery has been purchased that can now be seen in action on our streets across the town clearing the debris and weeds from the kerbs and gulleys

Thanks to the Outdoor team for their dedication and hard work.

Jonathan Page Place Centre:

A great example of what this Town Council can do with devolved services.

A fantastic year where we have seen an increase in the number of children attending sessions, especially children with special educational needs. We have also been working directly with Bucks County Council who make referrals where attendance at JPPC is part of a protection or care plan.

The team continue to work well together and under the management of Judith Priest the centre continues to grow.

Quote from a parent - *“ An absolute lifeline for me as I have been able to return to work knowing that my daughter enjoys her time at the centre and is well looked after, in fact she never wants to leave when I arrive to pick her up in the evening “*

Thank you to all staff that contribute to the smooth running of all our services and the betterment of Aylesbury Town.

The forthcoming year will be an interesting one for the Town Council as Buckinghamshire awaits a decision on the unitary proposal. What is clear, is that whatever the outcome Aylesbury Town Council will take on further devolved services but more importantly we have a track record in being able to build and provide these services.

11. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM ELECTORS

A representative from the local organisation Men in Sheds indicated that they had been served with a notice to quit their present premises in the very near future and this represented a sad loss to the community. The Mayor indicated that he would try to support Men in Sheds as they had proved to be a valuable community asset and their continuation should be welcomed.

A member of the public asked i) whether weed-spraying was being undertaken. In response the Town Clerk advised that some spraying may be undertaken but that the law banned the use of effective weed spraying products, thus limiting the efficiency and effect of weed spraying; ii) whether the Council had commented on the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP). The Chairman of the Planning & Licensing Committee answered that no comments were submitted due to there being no substantive objections in the draft Plan and the Committee didn't wish to unduly delay the VALP.

A member of the public asked why the Council had not made a comment on its preferred form of unitary local government structure in Bucks. In response, the Chairman of the Policy Committee/Leader of the Council stated that whilst in corporate terms the Council was in favour of a unitary outcome in principle it had been felt appropriate that members comment as individuals but not as a corporate

body.

A member queried whether a meeting had yet taken place between representatives of the Town and District Councils in relation to the possible transfer of assets between the two authorities. The Town Clerk indicated that an email had been received from the District Council requesting certain financial information however it was likely that due to the on-going unitary consideration that all discussions had ceased.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO DISCUSS, THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 7.07 p.m.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Town Mayor (Chairman)

DRAFT