



St Ives Town Council Twinned with Stadtallendorf

Town Clerk: Alison Benfield BA (Hons) FSLCC

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ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

6.00 pm on Saturday 7 March 2020 in the Burleigh Hill Centre, St Ives

Parish electors are hereby called to attend the **Annual Town Meeting of St Ives** to be held on Saturday 7 March 2020 in the Burleigh Hill Centre, Constable Road, St Ives at **6.00 pm**.

Councillor D Rowe
TOWN MAYOR

AGENDA

- 1.0 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION FROM THE TOWN MAYOR**
- 2.0 MINUTES**
To agree the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 2 March 2019 (attached).
- 3.0 COUNCIL REPORT**
To receive verbal report on the work of the Council and Committees during the 2019/2020 municipal year.
- 4.0 DISCUSSION: COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE**
- 5.0 QUESTION TIME**



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**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
HELD IN THE CORN EXCHANGE ST IVES
on Saturday 2 March 2019**

Present:

Chairman: Mr Martin Collier

Panel Members: Town Mayor (Councillor Dr Tim Drye)
Police & Crime Commissioner (Mr Jason Ablewhite)
District and County Councillor (Councillor Ryan Fuller)
County Councillor (Councillor Kevin Reynolds)
Managing Director HDC (Mrs Joanne Lancaster)
Police Representative (Sergeant Alice Draper)

In attendance: Members of St Ives Town Council
Members of the Public [62 signed in]
Administration Officer (Emma Egginton)
Committee Clerk (Sue Rawlinson)

Apologies: Town Clerk, Alison Benfield

1.0 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Mr Collier introduced himself to the Meeting which he would be chairing.

The Town Mayor welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. He expressed special thanks to Councillors J Pallant and D Rowe whose idea last year to make the Annual Town Meeting a community event had proven so popular it was agreed that the format be retained.

He thanked Emma Egginton, the new Council Apprentice for all her hard work in organising the Community Fair and the representatives from the County and District Councils and the Police for supporting the event as panel members.

The Town Mayor stated that he had enjoyed a wonderful year and was proud to represent St Ives. A series of unfortunate incidents recently had made him feel differently but he has contacted the communities at the Mosque and Prayer Centre who are reassured by messages from the police and local authorities and the support offered privately to them by residents.

The Mayor then briefly outlined the work of the Town Council and its committees over the preceding year:

Planning – the committee continues to work with HDC in responding to planning applications. The Council has recently decided to re-commence work on the Neighbourhood Plan. Anyone wishing to be involved with the group formulating the content of the Plan should get in touch with the Town Hall.

Amenities – there will be a lot of development in the play areas with new facilities and wetpour surfacing.

Property – work had been conducted and was ongoing on refurbishment to Council-owned properties, particularly Warner’s Park Pavilion. A working group had been set up and more volunteers would be appreciated. He advised anyone interested in working towards the refurbishment of the Pavilion to contact the Town Hall.

Promotion and Publicity – this Committee had decided that it was no longer required and would fold at the end of the municipal year. The way in which *The Bridge* magazine was produced had reduced the Committee’s workload. He expressed his gratitude for all the work former councillor, Ian Jackson, had carried out on the Council’s magazine in the past.

Personnel – most of the matters dealt with by the Personnel Committee were confidential but he was pleased to note the appointment of new Apprentice, Emma Egginton.

2.0 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 3 March 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Town Mayor.

3.0 QUESTION TIME

The Members of the Panel introduced themselves:

Sergeant Alice Draper stated she had only recently taken over from Sergeant Andy Street and while she was still learning about the town would be happy to answer any questions from residents.

Jason Ablewhite introduced himself as the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire.

Councillor Kevin Reynolds - was in attendance in his capacity as County Councillor for Needingworth and St Ives. He was also Chairman of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority.

Councillor Ryan Fuller – a Member of Cambridgeshire County and Huntingdonshire District Councils. Attending in his District Council capacity as a representative for St Ives and as Deputy Executive Leader of HDC.

Joanne Lancaster – Managing Director of Huntingdonshire District Council.

Mr Collier then called for questions from the audience:

Q: What has been done about the issue raised last year regarding the cutting down of hedging plants in Westwood Road Cemetery planted by St Ives in Bloom in order to deal with a storm damaged tree in a neighbouring garden

and the resulting debris left in the cemetery and access way? The Town Clerk had agreed to contact residents of Lammas Way on this matter.

A: Unable to answer the question in the absence of the Town Clerk, the Town Mayor agreed to contact her in this matter and respond to the enquiry within 14 days.

Q: Could the Town Council intervene to help residents of Crown Close? Luminus has informed residents that all standing charges are to be increased. Residents are being asked to pay for services they no longer receive and have not done so for a number of years. Repairs are taking twice as long as before and residents are classed as individuals living in separate bungalows, the pull cord system is for emergencies only and Crown Close is no longer regarded by them as sheltered housing. Tenants will struggle to pay the increase.

A: Mrs Lancaster agreed to take the concerns of residents forward on a personal basis, as housing was not part of her remit. She would speak with Councillor John Davies who had been assisting residents with their complaint and take their concerns forward to Luminus.

Q: What can be done about the trip hazard on the pavement outside the bank? Workers undertaking temporary repairs to the block paving had stated that the works would be finished in 6 months. The site is a mess.

A: County Councillor Reynolds stated the difficulty in replacing block paving immediately was that settling created a hazard so a temporary covering was installed to enable the ground to compact. He agreed to take a look at the site and contact contractors to request removal of the trip hazard.

Q: The pavements all over town are terrible, people constantly tripping and suffering injuries. What can the County Council do about it?

A: Councillor Reynolds declared he was not unsympathetic with the situation but, once again, repairs came down to funds. Due to financial constraints it was usually the Highways budget which was trimmed to support other front line services. It was unfortunate but that was the reality of the situation.

Q: Speeding in The Broadway was a great concern, together with the double parking in that area. Was it not possible to put some 'sleeping policemen' or similar there to help prevent this?

A: Sgt Draper indicated that this was the first time she had been made aware of speeding issues in The Broadway. She agreed to raise the concerns with Speedwatch and ask them to conduct an event there. The force was starting to do regular traffic enforcement events throughout Huntingdonshire and PCSO's would be deployed regularly to check on the situation. The Broadway would be added to a future traffic enforcement event. She was aware of

parking issues in The Broadway and had asked PCSO's to monitor and enforce the double yellow line restrictions.

The Town Mayor advised that the Council had been successful in its Local Highways Initiative bid, supported by the Police and Crime Commissioner, to have two Speed Indicator devices for the town. They would be sited initially in Marley Road and residents had been asked to indicate any other problem areas. The Council had also put forward bids for speed bumps at the corner of The Waits and a crossing in Needingworth Road. They would continue to pursue these two objectives. It was hoped that some feedback from the County Council would be forthcoming in early April.

It was noted that Speedwatch had been asked to look at The Broadway and that they were seeking a volunteer to assist them. The Police and Crime Commissioner stressed that these events were run by the affiliated Speedwatch group which worked closely with the Police. Sergeant Draper could provide advice on whether a group was the appropriate affiliated one.

Q: Would like an update on the anti social behaviour on The Quay mentioned in the last minutes and how the authorities were managing the situation.

A: Sgt Draper stated she had not noticed much anti social behaviour on The Quay coming through in reports. She invited residents to contact her if there were any specific incidents. The emphasis appeared to have shifted to the Bus Station and Waitrose car park and the Police were aware of the street drinkers who had taken up residence there. The Police were currently working with HDC to put in a dispersal order.

Police were working to put together a robust case for a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) and needed as much evidence as possible to support this.

Q: How many Orders were currently in place in St Ives?

A: The Police and Crime Commissioner stated that there were none at present. The PSPO had not been used in St Ives before and was a new approach.

Councillor Fuller stated that gathering of evidence was important to make the case for a PSPO. District Councillors John Davies and Angie Dickinson were both members of the HDC Licensing Committee and he requested that residents contact them with any information.

Q: Having Speedwatch on The Broadway might work for a short time but in the evenings the road was like a drag race site. How would Speedwatch assist with this?

A: The Police and Crime Commissioner responded that the purpose of Speedwatch was education not enforcement. Radar gun enforcement was not effective in the long term as word got around about where they were sited. Speedwatch had been successful and three warning letters were followed up by a visit from the Police. He was pleased at the level of support from the Town Council and the collaborative work going on in the background.

Q: What can be done about cyclists crossing the town bridge? They were not visible to residents driving onto Bridge Street from The Quay? Siting a 'Cyclists Dismount' sign had been mentioned. Also, what could be done about motorists driving over the bridge? The signage was difficult to understand.

A: The Town Mayor, himself a cyclist, responded that cyclists could see clearly down onto The Quay. The main issue appeared to be the poor signage which needed to be rationalised to make it easier to interpret.

Q: Can CCTV monitor the traffic travelling over the Bridge?

A: CCTV cannot be used as evidence for traffic offences. A road policing officer does monitor the bridge occasionally in an unmarked car. The Police could work with the County Council on the signage issue.

Q: Concern about how planning decisions impact on parking, especially where there is infilling. New developments bring more cars into narrow streets where parking is at a premium. Would like to be reassured that these issues are taken into account when considering planning applications.

A: Councillor Fuller responded that National Planning Policy had no national standard minimum for car parking spaces for a development. To refuse planning consent on the basis of inadequate parking would be grounds for an appeal.

Q: Councils were good at putting up rates, why do we need a Police and Crime Commissioner when we have a Chief Constable. Why is he not responsible for policing and is answerable to government?

A: The Police and Crime Commissioner responded that Commissioners had replaced the expensive former Police Authority, most members of which were councillors. Operational policing was the responsibility of the Chief Constable whereas he was conducted checks and balances and oversaw the budgetary process. He did not interfere with the work of the Chief Constable.

The PCC was much cheaper to run than the Police Authority had been. The benefit of his post was that time could be utilised effectively, he could lobby government, visit policing ministers and commission a whole host of services.

In terms of what we had in the past having a PCC was much more efficient and cost effective.

Q: Parking enforcement is a major issue why is it not decriminalised?

A: Councillor Fuller responded that, yet again, this came to money. This was why road markings were not adequately maintained. It would cost half a million pounds a year to decriminalise parking which was money the authority did not have. No additional funding would be available for this and cutbacks in other services might result.

Parking could not just be decriminalised in St Ives only, it would have to be the whole of Huntingdonshire district. Income from parking fines had been looked at but the business case does not support it becoming self funding.

The County Council is currently in discussion with the Mayor of the Combined Authority to see where the cost of parking improvements could come from but it was likely any initiative would come with a hefty price tag.

Q: Are costs looked at in isolation? Huntingdonshire is a tourist area and bad parking facilities are preventing extra tourism.

A: Councillor Reynolds reported that Bridge Street was going to have a facelift which would include improved signage and pavements being repaired. The County Council had to prioritise its budgets, the main priority being to look after elderly, frail and vulnerable residents – this accounted for two thirds of its budget. There were ever increasing pressures and forward planning was difficult because many services were demand-led. Pressures on children's services had increased greatly.

The Police and Crime Commissioner reported that parking enforcement was not a high priority area although PCSO's were on duty there whenever possible. Most of those parking during the day were Blue Badge Holders and decriminalisation would have no effect on that.

One solution would be to pedestrianise the whole town centre. This would provide a great piazza and freedom of movement with no risks. This was looked at but rejected at the time. If funds were available, this might an option for consideration.

The fines for fixed penalty notices go to the courts and not back into the policing budget. Even enforcement by a local authority would not result in gaining income from fines.

Q: Will it ever be possible for pedestrians to walk down Crown Street without being run over by cars crossing the pavement? Could bollards be placed

there?

- A:** Councillor Reynolds responded that the only solution would be to double yellow line the street. Again this, together with enforcement, could be costly.

The Town Mayor stated that some of these observations and suggestions would be good to put into a Neighbourhood Plan. He urged concerned residents to come forward and be a part of the team putting together the Plan which, once in place, would give the Council more leverage when seeking to obtain improvements.

- Q:** Since the last meeting what, in the role they represent, has been the Panel Members' greatest personal achievement which has had a positive impact on St Ives?

- A:** Councillor Fuller – One of the key things he had involvement with was securing land for a future St Ives Country Park. This had been a complex technical procedure and the future specification of the site had been discussed with developers. This had all been achieved in a 12 month period. Such a facility would be a significant achievement for St Ives.

He was portfolio holder for disabled facilities grants which enabled people to remain in their own homes and improve their lives.

Mrs Joanne Lancaster – Her work was to deliver policies by such means as convincing the Combined Authority Mayor to release funding for Market Town strategies, including St Ives and investigating how to get moving in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Plan for which she had acquired funding from the Mayor of the Combined Authority.

Councillor Reynolds – He was particularly proud of assisting to get Morrisons to come to the town. He worked with Planning and Highways to achieve this and considers it is a great benefit to the town.

Police and Crime Commissioner – ensuring that we got Speedwatch. He had persuaded volunteers to come forward, had provided some funding for one of the Speed Indicator Devices to be sited in Marley Road which will greatly help with speeding issues. Increasing Police numbers in the county for the first time since 2005 – Cambridgeshire will have 1496 officers, which is a record level.

He had worked on investigating modern day slavery issues and supported a county wide conference which gained national recognition.

Sgt Alice Draper – as a new officer to the area she could only give a projection of what she hoped to say at next year's meeting she had achieved. She was

working to gaining understand of the big issues in the town, putting in place an anti social behaviour initiative was one of her priorities. She hoped more funding would become available for more PCSO's who worked very hard and she was very proud of them.

Councillor Fuller commented that none of the panellists do their jobs in order to emphasise their personal achievements. More important is that everyone works together, this partnership approach was the best way forward.

The Town Mayor - stated that this was a fascinating way to end the meeting. He had been pleased to help instigate a plan to enable St Ives to be called the first CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) town The project was targeted at young men with suicidal tendencies. He really hoped this work would come to successful fruition.

The Town Mayor expressed his gratitude to the many volunteer groups in the town who made a huge contribution. He planned to thank them all at a Disco and Buffet event on 23 March.

The Town Mayor then thanked everyone for attending and personally thanked all the members of the Panel for their invaluable input to proceedings and to Mr Collier for chairing the Meeting.

The Meeting ended at 7:30 pm.