

BRAUNSTONE TOWN

MINUTES of the ANNUAL TOWNS MEETING

Held on THURSDAY 10TH MAY 2018 at 7.30pm

In the Chair, Councillor Bill Wright, Town Mayor.
There were 20 persons present at the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roger Berrington, Alex Dewinter, Sam Fox-Kennedy Berneta Layne and Tracey Shepherd and from John Dodd (Heritage Warden).

2. Minutes of the Annual Towns Meeting – 11th May 2017

The Minutes of the Annual Towns Meeting held on 11th May 2017 were circulated with the agenda, which was made available to all persons present, and were taken as read.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Towns Meeting held on 11th May 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairperson as a correct record.

3. Town Mayor's Report 2017/2018

A report had been circulated with the agenda summarising the following:

- Community Activities;
- Community Achievement;
- Thorpe Astley;
- Programme of Events;
- Summer Fete;
- Anniversaries/Civic Events;
- Curry Night; and
- Town Mayor's Charity – Rainbows Hospice for Children and Young People.

Councillor Bill Wright, Town Mayor for 2017/2018, reported on activities during his Mayoral year:

“Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our Annual Towns Meeting. This meeting gives residents of the Town an opportunity to reflect on the activities in our Town over the past year and look ahead to the forthcoming year. Later this evening, the Full Council will consider the Annual Report of the Town Council which details our achievements over the past 12 months and sets out our proposed activities for the next 12 months and the Leader of the Council will highlight some of these in his report”.

“For myself as Town Mayor it has been a very memorable year. It is a privilege and an honour to be chosen to serve for the third time as Town Mayor, a role which has served the people of the Town for 40 years”.

“It has been a privilege during my year to experience first-hand the hard work and dedication of many in our community who serve and support the needs of others and are committed to making our Town a vibrant place in which to live”.

“I was invited to attend many events to celebrate, honour and recognise achievements of our residents and these are detailed in the report, which you have as part of your agenda for this meeting”.

“The 22nd Town Mayor’s Annual Awards of merit on Friday 20th April was an opportunity for me to thank the groups who had joined me in putting on the programme events which this year raised funds of £1,867 for local groups and good causes”.

“The event was also an opportunity to recognise the deserving unsung heroes of our community, whose efforts and service has made a real difference to people’s lives and the life of our community. Through the Town Mayor’s Award of Merit I recognised the work of five individuals and a community group:

- Jack Haselgrove – In recognition of his work on the authorship of the commemorative history book on Braunstone in the 1920s & 30s, providing a fascinating account into how life changed when the small manor village quickly grew into a sub-urban community.
- Pat & Eddie Bates – In recognition of their work on the display cabinet here at Braunstone Civic Centre.
- Braunstone Town Heritage Archive Group – In recognition of the group’s work in the community, preserving and making available, archive history of Braunstone Town.
- Jackie Stamp – In recognition of her service to the Braunstone Life and Braunstone West Social Centre.
- Lisa Scroby – In recognition of her volunteer work delivering the Braunstone Life for over 14 years”.

“I hope that the Town Council will continue to play a central role for many years to come in helping to bring people together and promoting the strong sense of community spirit that I have encountered”.

“Earlier on the same day as my Awards Night, I undertook the official ribbon cutting for the opening of the Kingsway GP Branch Surgery at Thorpe Astley Community Centre. The new branch surgery received its first patients on Monday 30th April and will initially be open on Mondays and Thursdays. The Leader, I’m sure, will talk more about this in his report, but I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to everyone involved in making this happen and to wish the partners and staff at Kingsway Surgery the very best with making this new and welcome service a success”.

“On a personal note, I am grateful that my year as Town Mayor has given me the opportunity to raise the profile of my charity, Rainbows, which provides care and support to life-limited children and their families. I toured the hospice in June witnessing first-hand the dignity and courage of the children, family and staff”.

“Fundraising for my charity has included my charity abseil and my charity Curry Night as well as proceeds from the Programme of Events. At these event and the

others in the programme of events throughout the year, the generous people of Braunstone Town have helped me in raising £3,003 for Rainbows. I wish to thank everyone for supporting these events, especially the Fire & Rescue Service and Chef & Spice who helped me organise two memorable and successful charity fundraisers. It truly is a remarkable amount which has been raised for a very worthy cause”.

“I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to everyone for their support over the year, in particular to my consort Sharon who has been there supporting me in this important role every step of the way”.

“I would also like to take this opportunity to wish the next Town Mayor a most enjoyable and successful year”.

4. Town Council Accounts and Budgets

Councillor Nick Brown, Leader of the Council, reported on the Town Council's financial position. The Town Council's Accounts and Budget Report was circulated with the agenda, which was made available to all persons present, and were taken as read.

5. Leader's Report – Achievements 2017/18 and Priorities for 2018/19

A report had been circulated with the agenda, which was made available to all persons present. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Nick Brown, reported on the Town Council's achievements during 2017/2018 and looked ahead to the Town Council's priorities for 2018/2019. A copy of the draft Annual Report for 2017/2018, due for consideration and adoption at Annual Council, was also circulated.

Shakespeare Park – Improvement & Development

“Following last year's public consultation for our ambitious proposals to improve the pavilion, recreation and play facilities at Shakespeare Park, we finalised the site layout and the plans for the new sports pavilion and in the autumn we received planning approval. We have received and are assessing tenders for the construction works of the pavilion and redesign of the site and in the forthcoming months we anticipate that we will be in a position to appoint a contractor”.

“In addition to our own funds, we are seeking Sport England funding and external sponsorship towards this project which will greatly improve the sporting provision as well as the playground and tennis courts provision”.

“In the current financial climate, it is proving difficult to access external sources of funding as quickly as we would have liked and this has resulted in delays to the timescales for delivery of the project. However, the Town Council continues to work hard with its partners to move the project forward to the delivery stage and we remain confident that work will commence on the site in the late summer”.

“With an anticipated construction of around 12 months, once complete, the site will host improved play facilities, including provision of sensory play equipment,

improved tennis courts, extended car parking and a new sports pavilion facility including modern changing facilities and a multi-function, multi-purpose club room, meeting room and social facility”.

Access to NHS General Practice Services

“Since the autumn of 2016, the Town Council has been working on behalf of concerned local residents representing their concerns to the NHS about issues of access and availability of General Practitioners at local GP surgeries. Given the concern, I was delighted that Stephen Sampson, Practice Manager of Kingsway Surgery agreed to speak to Town Councillors about his plans for the surgery at Policy & Resources Committee in August. I would like to thank Stephen for taking the time to talk to us about the issues the surgery has faced and their plans to resolve these, which include a new bookings system, more appointments and clinics, participating in recruitment initiatives and provision of information to patients”.

“Following that meeting, Kingsway Surgery presented ambitious proposals to the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group, ourselves and Blaby District Council to address many of the problems residents have identified when accessing GP services by utilising the unused NHS facility at Thorpe Astley Community Centre from spring of this year”.

“Residents have consistently told us about the difficulties they face in accessing GP services and the Thorpe Astley Community Appraisal identified that provision of a Doctors Surgery and Health Facilities was the top priority, supported by 93.3% of respondents. Since Thorpe Astley Community Centre opened in 2010, the Town Council has put considerable effort in terms of time and resources working with the NHS to achieve the delivery of health services from the Community Centre”.

“Therefore, I am delighted that during the year we made significant progress with the NHS to ensure that the unused medical rooms at Thorpe Astley Community Centre would be utilised for much needed GP services from April 2018. The new Kingsway branch surgery received its first patients on Monday 30th April and will initially be open on Mondays and Thursdays. However, the practice is hoping to offer more appointments as patient demand grows. The Thorpe Astley service offers patients registered at Kingsway Surgery GP appointments, practice nurse clinics and a minor surgery clinic”.

“The Town Council is grateful to Kingsway Surgery for their positive and sensible approach in expanding their provision to meet increasing demand and we look forward to working with them to ensure that this service is both successful and sustainable”.

Braunstone Town Library

“Residents will be aware of the work that had been undertaken to transfer Braunstone Town Library to a local group, “Braunstone Town Community library”. The group was set up by Fabula, a social enterprise who had been developing

plans for the future management of the library. During the latter part of 2017, for a number of reasons, Braunstone Town Community Library Group came to the conclusion that pursuing the management of the library was no longer feasible”.

“Therefore, at the end of 2017, the Town Council was approached by Leicestershire County Council to ascertain whether it remained interested in running the Library, which was confirmed by Policy & Resources Committee in February 2018. The County Council’s Cabinet on 9th March approved the Town Council’s outline proposals to take over management of the Library service, while the County Council continues to meet its long-term lease obligations. Since then, both Councils have been in transfer discussions based on proposals submitted by the Town Council in September 2015”.

“This is good news for the Town since this decision at last secures the future of our library after years of uncertainty. Transfer however will not take place until later in the year as the legal agreements and detailed arrangements needed to ensure that the transfer is successful take time to be prepared”.

“I know the future of our Library is important to many residents and I will keep you updated with progress”.

Community Centres

“We have invested this year in improvements to the fabric of both our community centres with the installation of dado rails and by undertaking internal and external decorating. Due to financial pressures (see below), many of the capital projects were put on hold, however, in the forthcoming year we plan to refurbish the toilet facilities at the Civic Centre, while making improvements to the kitchen and storage facilities at the Civic Centre bar to enable it to also operate as a café providing a social and meeting place for the community on weekdays”.

Thorpe Astley Open Spaces

“During the year we completed the legal transfer and took possession of public open space at Thorpe Astley from Persimmon Homes. We have completed transfer arrangements with Barrett Homes. Therefore, we are in a position during 2018/19 to complete the legal transfer of open spaces at Thorpe Astley to the Town Council in order to enable future investment and improvement to the facilities, including ensuring improvements are implemented to the Culvert at Thorpe Astley Park”.

Highway Safety at Thorpe Astley

“On Thursday 22nd June 2017, the Planning & Environment Committee considered issues of parking and speeding on streets of Thorpe Astley and the impact upon air pollution from congestion on Lubbesthorpe Way. 25 members of the public attended and contributed to the meeting”.

“As a result the Town Council is working hard through its membership of the Lubbesthorpe Strategic Consultative Board to ensure that measures to improve the

crossing points on Meridian Way are brought forward now that the bridge over the M1 to Lubbethorpe has opened”.

“Additionally, local Town Councillors and residents collected over 220 signatures, for submission to Leicestershire County Council to request a Community Speedwatch scheme in Thorpe Astley, which was approved and will operate during September 2018. A community group is being established and the Town Council will work with them to identify locations for our speed sign in order to assist the scheme”.

100th Anniversary of the end of World War 1

“During the year the Community Life Group brought members of the community together to plan and organise community events to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of World War 1 in November 2018”.

“To date, the group have already achieved a considerable amount, having already made some 3,000 poppies for a poppy cascade at Braunstone Civic Centre. The group’s proposals include a parade from St. Crispin’s Church to the Civic Centre on Remembrance Sunday and ideas to improve the Memorial Garden”.

“The group is made up of various sections of the community and are bringing people together with ideas for the whole community to commemorate the anniversary. The Town Council is delighted to be working with the community to commemorate the anniversary and have identified funding to support community groups organise events”.

Financial Risks and Pressures

“In my report last year I highlighted that Blaby District Council had voted to end the payment to parish and town councils of the parish share of Council Tax Support Grant and New Homes Bonus from April 2018, in order to plug a gap in their own finances. The loss of this income, along with existing financial pressures faced by the Town Council equated to an approximate increase of 17% on the Town Council’s share of Council Tax bills. For a typical Band B household, the equivalent of paying around £15 per year extra”.

“During the year we worked hard to identify ways to protect the services which many in the Town value, while finding ways to deliver these services and run our operations more efficiently, an approach supported by the Town’s Citizens’ Advisory Panel at its December meeting”.

“In January the Council set its budget and was able to protect all of its front line services while identifying slightly over £10,000 per annum of ongoing savings, and £55,000 of our reserves over the next two years, in order to minimise the impact of Blaby’s decision on local tax payers, which has enabled us to reduce the increase in Council Tax for 2018/2019 to 9.7%, the equivalent of around £8.15 on a typical band B property for the year”.

“I would like to thank residents for their understanding and support for our approach which strikes a balance between protecting services, making savings and

increasing Council Tax. Nonetheless, the use of our reserves to spread the impact on residents following Blaby's decision will impact upon the Council's finances and ability to deliver capital investment over the next 3 to 5 years".

Update Reports

"Updates on the above matters are published in a regular Leader's report in the Braunstone Life and on the Council's website".

6. Braunstone Town Heritage Warden's Report 2017/2018

The Heritage Warden's Report for 2017/2018 was circulated with the agenda:

Natural Environment

"The only certain thing is the uncertainty of our weather! Again this year has been totally opposite to last year, plenty of cold weather and snow delaying the start of spring".

"Despite some vandalism to the pond, several primary school classes have enjoyed a mixture of events in the orchard area of Franklin Park, orienteering, pond dipping and nature hunts. Fortunately, the weather was sunny. The school children showed their appreciation by sending in drawings and notes of their experiences particularly the discovery of a fish, a first for our pond".

"During February 2018 we carried out some much-needed pruning to the apple trees, we will wait and see how successful that will be next Apple Day".

"It is rewarding to see that the Wildlife Watch Group that I help start in 2010 is still going strong. A lot of the original youngsters are still attending passing on their nature skills to a new set of children. They still use the Franklin and Mossdale Meadow parks for their main activities, a superb asset provided by our Town Council".

Built Environment

"The New Lubbethorpe development has started to expand and the new bridge over the M1 and new spine road have opened. So far, no further archaeological discoveries have come to light. I have raised concerns over the future of the Abbey Farm and Hopyard Farm buildings, but I have been assured that when they are vacated they will be preserved and used for community use".

"As you are all aware I'm still the Chairman of Braunstone Heritage Archive Group (BHAG) and this compliments most of my Heritage Warden Duties. Our small dedicated team have attracted a few more members during the last twelve months and several others have promised to attend our Wednesday afternoon meeting when they can".

"We have now settled into our workroom at Paul Pender's Shakespeare. Each week we have/are holding three-day sessions which have allowed us to prepare various visuals for the various projects we are involved with. Although we had

intended to use the Shakespeare for our meetings the growing numbers of members have made it impractical to hold our weekly meetings there, so we are now back at the Civic Centre for our Wednesday afternoon meetings”.

“The publication by the Town Council of BHAG member Jack Haselgrove’s book entitled “When Life was Transformed In Braunstone” to mark the 90th anniversary of the formation of Braunstone Civil Parish. The book follows research by BHAG members into the old Parish Minute Books held at the Civic Centre”.

“This project has inspired our group to embark on a project to provide displays of local and national events for the years 1927 to 1939 to be mounted in the large notice boards at the Civic Centre. We hope to produce a further book covering the years 1940 to 1950”.

“This project has been nominated for an award from the national “Community Archives & Heritage Group” under the “Gathering Heritage” category, winners will be announced at their annual conference in Birmingham on 10th July”.

“Another heritage project we are undertaking is an exhibition to mark the 850th anniversary of the creation of St Peter’s Church due on 23rd 24th June”.

“This is a joint project with Braunstone History Group based at the Brite Centre”.

“We are covering the events happening in the 12, 13,14,15,16 and 17 centuries”.

“Another project we are involved with is the commemorations for the 100th anniversary of the First World War. This theme is used in our display cabinet at the Civic Centre and will form the basis of our exhibition stand at the summer fete and during the week leading up to the 11th November. As Heritage Warden I have been asked to support a separate project to provide a “Waterfall” of handmade poppies to hang from the outside wall of the Council Chamber. This hopefully will be a joint project with the Town Council and “Community Life” group”.

“Like last year my Heritage Report would not be complete without a reference to Braunstone Town Library, this year is no exception. After two years of little or no progress Fabula have decided to drop out of their arrangement with the County Council. Eventually the County Council have given the running of our library to our Braunstone Town Council, phew! We can now look forward to cooperating with the Town Council in providing a superb community library and community hub, hopefully with a section devoted to Braunstone’s history”.

“Finally, can I extend my and BHAG’s thanks to the Town Council for their continued support of the Heritage Warden facility and to BHAG”.

7. Termination of Meeting

The Town Mayor thanked those present for attending and with no further business the meeting closed at 7.55pm.

SIGNED: _____

DATE: _____