

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting – 16th May 2018 (Meeting commenced at 7:00 pm)

068/18 1 – Chairman’s opening remarks:

Alec Crombie reminded everyone present that this meeting will be recorded and that the recording will be subsequently available for public listening.

Alec Crombie welcomed fellow citizens and reminded those attending that this meeting is much yours as ours, please feel free to speak on any matter as we get to item 7 on the agenda.

069/18 2 – Attendance register:

Present: Alec Crombie (Chair), David Casewell, Lindsay Cooper, David Ainslie, Christine Edwards, Sam Findlay, Peter Rees, Mark Shaw, Ian Salt and Cornelius Vincent-Enright.

In addition present were Marc Oxley, Rachel Burkitt, Keren Edwards, Annie Tappenden, Caroline Crombie, Loreley Casewell, Daphne Harris and Shafiq Harris.

070/18 3 – Apologies for absence from members of the Town Council:

Apologies were received from Ron Simpson, Richard Reeve, Stephen Rozak and Miranda Jones. These were noted.

071/18 4 - To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24th May 2018.

Proposed by Peter Rees that these be approved, seconded by Cornelius Vincent-Enright and unanimously agreed.

Claire Crowley joined the meeting at 7:02

072/18 5 - The presentation of the Annual Report 2017/18 by Alec Crombie:

This time last year the theme of my Annual Report was evolution. Twelve months of hard work and of building on the benefits of evolution have thrown up opportunities, of which more later. First, what has been happening?

If you live in Uppingham you have to be proud of our heritage; but even heritage needs a helping hand, and this has arrived in the shape of our new heritage-style lighting throughout the centre of our Town. To public acclaim this noticeable enhancement has come about thanks to money from developer premiums so has not affected Uppingham's rates, i.e. the annual precept.

Heritage is fine, but in order to shine it has to be cared for and embellished. Supported by our Council, our enterprising Bloom Committee of volunteers has again scooped Gold with the pinnacle of their success being crowned joint National Champions in the Small Towns category, despite judging taking place on the wettest day of the year! Meantime we wish Uppingham in Bloom well for a Queen's Community Award on the strength of my nomination.

But what about the litter, one may ask. Throughout my time as Mayor I have been making noises about this problem; yet it has taken a woman - well quite a few women - to grasp the nettle, so to speak, and to do something about it. With support from our Council, Jane Raybould and her merry gang of Ping Pickers now have a movement going to MAKE-A-DIFFERENCE with their pick-sticks.

Tods Piece deserves to be the centre piece of our Town in terms of the variety of facilities it can

offer. Our recent efforts have now been augmented in the form of a seating area adjacent to the skate park, thanks to a generous donation from the Lions Club of Rutland, which your Council was happy to top up.

Added to this and worthy of mention are the contributions we have made to the Uppingham Food bank as well as the vital Breakfast Club run by one of our primary schools. I feel it is no coincidence that Council is soon to consider a record number of 11 applications for Grant Aid and we are confident that this will conclude with our budget being spent up.

Voting with our feet. 12 months ago we were staring down the barrel of losing the 747 bus service from Uppingham to Leicester. The fact that this important service has now been reprieved (at least for the moment) is thanks to local authority subsidy, but also thanks to the committed work of my Deputy, Councillor Steve Rozak, who did his research on-board and then publicised the issue. I have to underline however that the availability of subsidy in the future will depend not least on passenger numbers, so it could yet be a case of "Use it or lose it!"

Without the benefit of wheels, public or private, I will be repeating my Mayor's Walk, a 5 kilometer ramble / march around our lovely town. The difference this time is that I will be raising money for the much anticipated return of the Uppingham Hopper Bus, courtesy of Uppingham First. I do hope my efforts will be well supported in aid of this being a permanent facility helping people to get to our shops, our doctors surgery, and much more.

And talking of our doctors surgery, a personal ambition of mine has come to fruition in the form of an audible crossing for pedestrians navigating the busy A6003 en-route for the Surgery. I am sure that the elderly among us as well as folk with disability and Mums with prams will experience the benefit of crossing in safety.

Also in the spirit of our Neighbourhood Plan, and in an attempt to tame the built environment, we now have planning permission for a disabled access to the front of our Town Hall. Subject to getting grant aid, I just hope and pray we can afford to install this feature.

Communication. Meanwhile we continue to place a high premium of communicating effectively with our Town. Apart from our Clerk's open-door policy plus our monthly surgeries, we have launched our Love Uppingham website to provide our Town with a voice, a resource and a showcase. Our associated Instagram account has just passed 500 followers and reactions include "Engaging, attractive and easy to navigate."

Opportunities. Nationally speaking, parishes are spreading their wings, and this tendency bodes well for us on the back of our Governance Review and our efforts to extend the franchise of non-Councillor members on our prestigious Neighbourhood Plan Committee. Add to this the initiative of our Clerk in establishing regular quarterly meetings and weekly engagement with officers of Rutland County Council.

So, what can we look forward to? Our initial Neighbourhood Plan, one of the first in the country and achieved on the back of notable hard work, has already shown us the way ahead. Now work is beginning to refresh the Plan and this process will not only strengthen our domestic status but will also and necessarily have regard to plans for the wider county and how these may be expected to impact on Uppingham.

To march in tandem with our Neighbourhood Plan our Council is now embarking on a five year strategic plan. Pointed up by the Governance Review this will be the first such strategy to be formulated by this Council. It demands a deal of forward looking work, but hopefully my successor will be featuring its arrival this time next year.

Community Infrastructure Levy. For the first time Councils are beginning to benefit from the payments which flow from this charge on development. We expect that our first credit of £19,862 will be followed by supplements at regular intervals, and the challenge will be to utilise these monies to the best advantage of our Town. Indeed this was influential in the process of holding our precept without any rise in our input to the Council Tax charge.

About CIL. In 2016 Rutland County Council adopted the CIL as a method of obtaining funds for services and infrastructure in our parishes. It requires developers to pay towards the costs of new services which will help to support the needs of the new residents or businesses that flow from development of land.

We can choose what is to benefit. Facilities such as schools, transport, health and social care can be funded by CIL. The levy can also be spent on parks, play areas, sports and cultural facilities.

As Uppingham has the benefit of a Neighbourhood Plan this means that 25 % of the CIL funding from relevant development in our parish will come to us.

So, much work completed and much work in the pipeline for the Council whom you elected at the polls in 2015. However there is one individual missing in that statement and that is our Town Clerk, Mr Neil Wedge. From Day One of his coming into post Neil has worked his socks off for the people of Uppingham and has helped us to detect the dawn of a golden era in our affairs. I thank Neil as indeed I thank all of my fellow Councillors.

My proudest moment. This for sure was the privilege of laying our wreath to the Fallen at our War Memorial on November 11th. I am also proud to note the work being invested in our commemorations of the end of World War One in which, God willing, I will participate to the full.

Alec Crombie, Mayor Of Uppingham

The Clerk then summarised the key activities of Council and the funding to help support those initiatives which are set out in the earmarked reserves. The initiatives involve improvements to council assets including the Town Hall and Tod's Piece along with a new of projects in support of the commemoration of 100 years of WW1. Additionally that we are in the process of recruiting an additional resource to support the Town Clerk and to ensure we continue to keep income streams from the Market and Town Hall at the levels now enjoyed.

073/18 6 - Statements and updates from organisations and community groups in Uppingham some of which have received grant aid support.

David Ainslie wanted to speak on behalf of the Hopper Bus, put on record thanks for the financial support of £2,000 and to also say thanks to Alec for using his Mayor's Walk for raising money towards the Hopper.

Claire Crowley, Root and Branch Out CIC would also like to thank the Council for funding to help establish a café at Uppingham C of E to feed children who were coming to school without any breakfast. Claire reported that between January and the end of march 400 meals were served at the café. It has been received very positively and further funds have been sought to see if it can continue to run. The member of staff used for the project has also just been offered a role at the school on a temporary basis as a cook.

074/18 7 – Opportunity for the electorate to speak on any issues relating to the town including presentation of any correspondence received by Council.

The Clerk updated the meeting on correspondence received relating to St. George's Barracks and the fact that a drop in session is being held on 17th May 2018 at Uppingham Town Hall.

Mr S Harris of Spring Back Way. Wanted to raise two issues, one the flow of traffic and two the parking arrangements. Regrettably the new Headmaster changed parking arrangements in school and this resulted in extra vehicles using Spring Back Way. Alec Crombie responded by updating the meeting that Uppingham School have plans to create staff parking but that wouldn't be materialised quickly.

The Clerk summarised the process with the current consultation and indicated that respondents will be shown the responses and thoughts of residents on Spring Back Way.

Marc Oxley, I would like to commend Council and particularly yourself Alec for the year just gone. I would like to highlight Stephen Rozak's contribution on the work to keep the 747 bus service. At the moment the feedback is that the use of the service is improved. We have also had a problem with the Rutland Flyer (RF1) with one of the funders pulling out. Mr Oxley said he would be working with his fellow Councillors to protect this vital service.

PC Joshua Ace addressed the meeting and introduced himself to those attending and gave a brief update on behalf of the Local Beat Team.

Annie Tappenden referred to Blue Planet 2 on the BBC and it prompted her to think about the plastic we use in Uppingham. She had an idea to fill baby grows with single use plastic containers to raise awareness of this issue and I would like to give one to the Mayor. Annie indicated she had written to Rutland County Council and had received an acknowledgement from the portfolio holder that had been most encouraging. David Casewell added that the Neighbourhood Plan Committee will look at this issue in the refresh of the plan.

Meeting closed at 07:47 pm.