

## **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

At the Annual Meeting of the Town of Sprowston held at Sprowston Diamond Centre, School Lane, Sprowston on 23 April 2014, the following were present:-

Mr K Lashley - Chairman of the Council  
Mrs J Hunt - Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer  
Mrs E Elliot - Committee Officer

14 Local Government Electors of the Town

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### **14/01. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 24 April 2013, having been circulated to all residents present, were subject to the following amendment:

Minute 2, paragraph 14 delete 16,000 and insert 1,600

confirmed and signed by the Chairman of the Council.

### **14/02. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL**

As Chairman of Sprowston Town Council, I am pleased to welcome you to this Annual Town Meeting.

This has been another busy year for the Town Council with ongoing and new projects and preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan whilst continuing with the day to day maintenance and repairs around the parish.

Phase 1 redevelopment of Sprowston Diamond Centre to extend the east wing to create a dedicated, bespoke facility to accommodate the re-location of the Pre-school, was completed in August 2013 in time for the start of the new term. The new extension is well equipped with modern kitchen, covered veranda, secure outdoor play area and private access with car park.

Other works included a new entrance link and WC facilities which serves the St. Quintin Room and Council office.

Phase 2 involving the re-arrangement of internal walls, removal of chimney, provision of additional fire exits and new kitchen in the west wing to create a large hall, now called the School Room, was also completed on time in January this year.

Following this re-development Sprowston Diamond Centre now has four rooms available for hire suitable for a range of activities.

The School Room, a light spacious hall with mood lighting, sound system and sprung wooden floor can hold up to 140, dependent on use, and several fitness classes already hire this on a regular basis. Keen interest has been expressed by a number of other groups.

The St Quintin room, which incorporates an ante-chamber if required, can accommodate up to 50 people and is suitable for various events particularly parties and corporate.

The two smaller rooms holding up to 20 people are also in frequent use and hired for children's activities, band practice and meetings.

All accommodation is fitted with WiFi, projector, screen and hearing loop.

To ensure adequate parking is available when the building is fully operational, the Council recently purchased an area of the car park adjacent to Post Mill Close from Norfolk County Council, which had planning permission for the erection of two houses.

To encourage and increase usage of these new facilities a well-attended open day was held on 5 March 2014 giving residents and local businesses an opportunity to see what amenities were available.

The Council's vision to provide a vibrant community hub is well under way and the next phase is at the pre-planning stage with architects Bidwells. Once planning permission has been granted a business plan will be written and used to gain funding for the scheme.

Still with Sprowston Diamond Centre the monthly cinema continues to be regularly attended with some films proving so popular that we have equipped the School Room with blackout blinds to accommodate the increasing numbers. Listings for May to August are The Butler, Mandela: The Long Journey, The Invisible Woman and The Book Thief. Details can be found on our website, noticeboards and will be advertised in the next issue of Sprowston Matters.

This year the Council welcomed Mr Robert Fowkes who was elected in June to represent Sprowston West Ward. Mr Fowkes is an experienced Councillor having previously served on both Taverham and Hellesdon Parish Councils.

The Council handled 51 planning applications during last year, excluding major development proposals, 5.5 % down on the previous year and continuing the decrease following changes in permitted development rules.

As to outdoor leisure activities the enclosed field on the corner of Neville Road and School Lane is now being utilised and hired for football practice.

The bowls green has benefitted from a further grant from Broadland District Council, which has been used to purchase concrete ditch channels and continued improvements to the edging of the green.

The Town Council will be taking over responsibility for the play area and open space at Windsor Park Gardens from developers Wimpey Taylor. Work has already commenced with shrub protection fencing removed, additional planting, replacement of vandalised equipment and regular mowing. The two play areas at Blue Boar Lane, previously maintained by Norfolk Homes, will also become the responsibility of the Town Council however, the water course remains with Broadland District Council.

Following two years of hard work the Neighbourhood Plan went to referendum with residents being asked to vote on whether they wanted Broadland District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Sprowston to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?

On the 20 March 2014 the electorate of Sprowston voted a resounding yes with 88% of those voting in favour of the plan. The Plan will now be presented at a cabinet meeting of the District Council for full adoption.

Work to convert the Cemetery building into a visitor centre is almost complete. This new facility will incorporate seating and DDA compliant WC. This will provide mourners with a place to sit away from the elements, as well as a meeting place prior to services taking place.

A semi-circular memorial wall is being constructed to the north of the building where plaques can be placed in memory of loved ones not necessarily buried at the cemetery. This area will be accessed via a block paved path and planted with soft landscaping.

Continuing with the cemetery burial space in section 10 is almost at capacity which has led to section 12 being made available from 11 April 2014. This section is designed in a traditional lay out and flat stones and flush markers will be accommodated.

With regard to the Millennium Woodland the willows, originally planted to protect broadleaf saplings, have been removed and following arboriculture advice we are progressing towards the planting of specimen trees.

The Council has also initiated a tree survey across all land owned and under its responsibility and remedial work has been prioritised with safety in mind.

We thank the Plymouth Brethren Christian Fellowship for their donation of a bench which has been placed at Wilks Farm Drive open space.

The Council continues to participate in the Norfolk Youth Offending Team Community Payback Scheme and receive young offenders (aged 10 - 17)

at designated work areas to carry out structured activities working alongside grounds staff.

Once the criteria has been set, the Council will be embarking on Quality Status renewal however, the Council has adopted the Power of Competence which gives the Council an explicit freedom to act in the best interests of their voters unhindered by the absence of specific regulation.

As to financial matters:

- sports hire fees have increased by 2.7% with children's casual hire remaining unchanged
- facility hire fees have been decreased to attract more hirers
- allotment rents have increased by £1.00 and water charges by 50 pence
- a single cemetery and memorial fee has been applied to residents and non-residents with effect 1 April 2014

This Council has given £750.00 in grant aid to various organisations including Macmillan Cancer Care, Royal British Legion, Age UK Norfolk and East Anglia's Children's Hospices.

The council funds such donations from monies received from recycling.

Finally I should like to thank both Councillors and staff for their valuable contribution to the work of the Council.

#### **14/03. RESIDENT'S QUESTIONS**

There were no resident's questions.

**20 May 2015**

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**Chairman**