

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

At the Annual Meeting of the Town of Sprowston held at Sprowston Diamond Centre, School Lane, Sprowston on 25 April 2012, 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

17 Local Government Electors of the Town

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 27 April 2011, having been circulated to all residents present, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman of the Council.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

3. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL

This is my first year as Chairman and what an eventful year it has been but also one of sadness. Dalmain Dewgarde passed away in January after battling against illness. He joined this Council in 1990 and also served on both the district and county councils, working extremely hard on behalf of the residents of Sprowston.

On a happier note we welcome Mrs Antonia Harper who was elected in January to serve Sprowston South East Ward following the resignation of Mrs Nicola Dalzell due to increasing work commitments.

Moving on to the activities of the Council, Sprowston is now a Town. With over 15,000 residents and likely to increase with further development, it was felt that town status better reflected the urban and diverse community Sprowston has become. It also gives Sprowston a very separate and distinct identity from Norwich. A new logo has been designed by Cog Media to reflect this change and our updated web site will be launched later in the year.

The Town Council has continued to make improvements in the cemetery and develop the extension. Drainage has been laid, additional car parking provided, the road way extended and a new opening made to access the extension. The container has been moved and the area where it was located will be reinstated and made available for burials. The Council has agreed a new burial design in section 9 where only memorials consisting of headstone and base can be erected. The advantage of this system being that a memorial stone can be placed on a grave immediately after burial.

Whilst speaking of the cemetery I would like to remind residents of the opportunity to donate, through payment, for a tree, shrub or wooden seat with the addition of placing your own memorial plaque.

The allotment site has also benefitted from roadway improvements and a new dedicated access point off Church Lane. The previous entrance via the car park has been re-fenced, Leylandi removed and the area will be hedged with native species.

At the other end of Sprowston the Council is continuing with its purchase of the former youth centre building on School Lane, which has been named Sprowston Diamond Centre in commemoration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The Council office has moved into these premises and the existing building rented out to the CfTB Foundation. All meetings of the Council are now held at Sprowston Diamond Centre to which residents are welcome to attend.

It is the Council's intention to develop Sprowston Diamond Centre into a community facility and proposals are being prepared by architects for consideration.

Last year's Summer Fete attracted a record number of stallholders with a wide range of activities and products on offer ranging from archery to fudge. This year's fete will be held on Saturday 2 June 2012 as part of the jubilee celebrations and preparations are well under way. We do hope you will join us for this event.

Turning to the Council's parks and open spaces the Recreation Ground has benefitted from new cycle racks and despite some initial difficulties the BMX track has been completed and is proving very popular, as is the pod swing and zip wire. Four more tennis courts have been rejuvenated and seating, which was deteriorating, has also been replaced together with additional ones being placed around the park. To improve security new gates have been erected at the main entrance matching those at the Edwards Road access. The old gates will be refurbished and used at the cemetery extension. In support of our young people the Council gave permission for the Matthew Project caravan, acting as a drop in advice centre, to park at the Recreation Ground throughout the summer and we have been advised this was well attended.

Our schedule of planting and maintenance is ongoing at the Millennium woodland and Willows used for protecting young saplings are now being cut out.

The Council continues to act as consultee on planning applications in Sprowston and successfully campaigned against the erection of a telecoms monopole at Sparhawk Park and Sparhawk Avenue.

A majority of the street lights in Sprowston belong to the Council and in order to reduce costs we have changed supplier of this unmetered power supply. We encourage residents to report any faults to the office as soon as possible so that our maintenance contractor can be deployed.

Following a change in planning law, under the Government's localism bill, the Town Council is preparing a neighbourhood plan with policies which will influence all future development in Sprowston. Having sought comments from residents last summer a planning event, facilitated by The Prince's Foundation and attended by residents, councillors and stakeholders was held in January where further ideas and suggestions were explored. Work continues to finalise the plan before being presented to residents for their decision as to its implementation.

As to future developments in Sprowston, the Council continues to consult with developers. This includes Beyond Green who has held a number of public events regarding proposals to build in excess of 3,000 residential properties on the northern boundary of the Town, together with a new high street, business premises and amenity areas. This work will be on going as planning applications are received for developments including those at Blue Boar Lane.

Moving on to financial matters, to cover the Council's revenue and capital expenditure for 2012/13 the cemetery and memorial fees have increased by 5% for non-residents and 2.5% for residents, cricket, football fees and block bookings of tennis and bowls by 4% rounded, whilst allotment rents will increase to £30.00. Water charges for the allotments are based on the previous year's actual usage. There is no increase in existing fees for casual tennis and bowls. The precept levied on Broadland District Council was £500,108.

This Council has given £1,350 in grants to various organisations including 30th Norwich Scouts, Royal British Legion, Norfolk Accident Rescue, Macmillan Cancer Care, Citizens Advice Bureau, Sprowston Heritage, Prostate Cancer and Victim Support.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Councillors for their hard work throughout the year and express my appreciation of the support and excellent work of the Town Clerk and her staff.

4. RESIDENTS QUESTION'S

Mrs M Howes commented that the worst area for speeding in Sprowston was Wroxham Road. The Chairman advised that despite requests, Norfolk County Council would not extend the bus lane to a 24 hour restriction. However, speed boards indicating the speed of vehicles had been installed in order to educate and encourage drivers to slow down. It was suggested that the Church Lane/Wroxham Road junction should be turn left only.

Mr B Cullingham advised that the green in Foxburrow Road was being used by local residents as a parking area for cars and commercial vehicles. Mr Cullingham was advised that the Town Council had no powers to prevent parking but could raise this issue with the Safer Neighbourhood Team. However, if a parked vehicle was restricting wheelchair or pushchair access then it should be reported to the Police who do had the relevant powers in these circumstances.

24 April 2013

CHAIRMAN