

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

At the Annual Meeting of the Town of Sprowston held at Sprowston Diamond Centre, School Lane, Sprowston on 26 April 2017, the following were present:-

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

5 Local Government Electors of the Town

17/01. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 27 April 2016, having been circulated to all residents present, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman of the Council.

17/02. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

17/03. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL

The Chairman of Sprowston Town Council, Mr I Moncur presented the Annual Report of the Council for the year ending 31 March 2017.

Whilst it gives me great pleasure to present the annual report of Sprowston Town Council for the year 2016-17 it is tinged with sadness as two of our serving Members, Mr John Bracey and Mr Christopher Noble both died in hospital following health complications.

Mr Bracey, the oldest serving member of the Council represented the residents of Sprowston on both the District and Town Council and was also a member of the Broadland Older People's Partnership, History Group and Senior Citizens Welfare Committee.

Mr Noble served on the Council for 18 years two as Chairman. Chris had a particular interest in the development of Sprowston Diamond Centre for community use, was an ardent supporter for additional youth facilities including a skate park, and was a keen member of the working group responsible for organising many parish fetes

Both will be greatly missed by all that knew them.

On a brighter note I am pleased to welcome Councillor Samantha England who was elected to represent Sprowston South East Ward.

As to the work of the Council a £1.5m loan has been secured from the Public Loans Board and Phase 4 development plans for Sprowston Diamond Centre submitted to the Planning Authority. Tenders are currently being sought for work to commence this summer. Business will continue to operate as usual with disruption to our users kept to a minimum. The Diamond Field opposite the building will be opened for additional parking during building works.

17/03. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL (CONTINUED)

Still with Sprowston Diamond Centre the construction of a £152,795 extension to the School Lane Pre-School was completed in time for the start of the summer term, doubling the amount of places available for 2 to 3 year olds. This scheme was supported by £6,000 in grants to the pre-school from The Geoffrey Watling Charity and Broadland District Council.

Continuing with buildings, following entry into Broadland District Council's 2016 Enhancement Awards I was pleased to accept a Certificate of Commendation on behalf of the Council in recognition of the work to extend Sprowston Pavilion to provide additional changing and shower facilities.

The Pavilion has since undergone further development with the removal of an internal wall to create a more spacious hall which has also had new flooring. As this building, with its enclosed outside play area, is ideally suited to children's parties the Council recently purchased appropriately sized tables and chairs for 3 - 7 years olds' and will be actively promoting hire of this facility.

Additional maintenance work on the windows and veranda is programmed for later this financial year.

To give further protection to our tenants and workforce additional safety call points and fire alarm have been installed at the Council's leased building and groundsmen's storage unit.

To identify efficiency and environmental savings a full engineering survey and assessment of the hot water heating and water supply services at Sprowston Recreation Ground and Sparhawk Park has been commissioned and work to implement the recommended improvements will be prioritised and carried out.

Moving on to our parks and open spaces, for safety reasons double yellow lines, speed humps, and a clear pedestrian walkway have been painted along the driveway into the Recreation Ground, and a large sign erected requesting motorists not to park in the driveway. Bays in the car park have also been relined to encourage more organised parking.

The Edwards Road car park has had the central island trees removed and the area levelled to provide additional parking, the drains cleared and car park resurfaced and lined at cost of £29,520.00 plus VAT.

Last summer we experienced an unprecedented amount of vandalism with damage to the Pavilion, Barkers Lane shelter, play equipment at various locations and the toilets at Sparhawk Park. Repair costs have been in excess of £9,500 and resulted in the installation of CCTV at the Pavilion which also monitors the groundsmen's storage unit and Bowls Pavilion.

Dog fouling continues to be a problem across the parish and the Council is trying to raise awareness by encouraging dog owners to clean up and keep public spaces foul free. It has already been agreed that if there is no significant improvement at Sprowston Recreation Ground the only option will be to introduce a control order requiring dogs to be kept on a lead.

On a more positive note the Council is consulting with residents regarding suitable play equipment for the refurbishment of the play area to the rear of Wilks Farm Drive.

17/03. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL (CONTINUED)

A number of suggestions have been received including a slide, roundabout, zip wire and fencing. It is hoped to have a scheme in place by late summer.

As part of our ongoing tree maintenance program arboreal work was carried out at the Millennium Loke and Wilks Farm Drive to remove unsafe and damaged boughs; over 100 whips planted to infill hedges on the splays at the Wroxham Road/Blue Boar Lane roundabout and damaged trees replaced with saplings at Sprowston Recreation Ground.

The waiting list for an allotment garden is the shortest it has been in many years with current tenants being offered additional plots, subject to satisfactory cultivation of their existing allotment. If there are any residents interested in becoming a tenant please contact the Council office.

The cemetery continues to be maintained to a high standard and improved signage has been erected at the gates to clarify opening/closing times for vehicular access. Work to refurbish the railings will resume as the weather improves. Whilst we rarely incur damage at the cemetery unfortunately four memorials were demolished earlier this year following a vehicular accident. Relatives have been informed and further details are awaited.

As to delegated functions the Council continues to cut the verges on behalf of Norfolk County Council and have expanded the area to include the Wroxham Road/Blue Boar Lane roundabout and the verge outside numbers 299 - 303.

With regards to street lighting the Council maintains 842 columns and has received 137 fault reports, which have generally been repaired within the target of ten working days, and had one knockdown at Roundtree Way.

Following concerns regarding inadequate street lighting on Falcon Road adjacent to the woodland area the Council has had the lamps changed to LED at a cost of £1,860 plus VAT.

On a more general theme the Dementia café, which runs every third Thursday of the month at Sprowston Diamond Centre, has proved so successful that there has been an opportunity for a smaller group to explore the possibilities of a dementia town. This would involve contacting businesses and local groups to help make their premises more dementia friendly. The Town Council is to become part of this Dementia Friendly Community and Councillors will undergo Dementia Friends training in June, which will also be rolled out to all staff.

Now to financial matters, the Town Council has set its budget for 2017/18 and to meet its funding requirements has increased cemetery, memorial and sports hire fees by 3% and set the precept at £590,000. The cost of the Town Council's services to a band D property is £112.51 per year, an increase of 2.8%.

The Council has given £500 in grant aid to various organisations which serve the community including: East Anglia's Children's Hospices (EACH), Norfolk Citizens Advice Bureau and The British Legion.

Just as a note of interest the names of roadways on the new housing developments adjacent to Blue Boar Lane were chosen as subjects synonymous with the City of Norwich and surrounding Broadland area. The three themes suggested were wild fowl birds, Bolton and Paul and the shoe industry. The History Group kindly

17/03. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL (CONTINUED)

researched the archives and submitted a list of names including Mallard, Shelduck, Atlantic, Bobolink, Ellis, Towler and Southall to name but a few.

Finally, I offer my sincere thanks to all my fellow Councillors and the Sprowston Town Council staff for all their advice, support and work on behalf of the town and the Council.

17/04. RESIDENTS, DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS

Mrs K Vincent spoke on behalf of a resident of Redmayne View requesting that brambles impinging on the bus shelter at White Woman Lane be cut.

Mrs Vincent was advised this was a Norfolk County Council issue as the land was part of the highway.

Mr W F Couzens asked if there had been any further complaints regarding inadequate street lighting on Falcon Road since the lamps had been changed to LED.

The Town Clerk replied that no further complaints had been received.

Mr W F Couzens requested clarification with regard to the allotment waiting list.

The Town Clerk reported that those people currently on the waiting list were not ready to take on tenancy of an allotment garden at this time and had requested a deferral. An article was being prepared for inclusion in the next edition of Sprowtson Matters advertising the short waiting list and requesting any interested residents to contact the Council office.

17/05 CLOSE

There being no other necessary business the Chairman concluded by thanking residents for attending and then declared the meeting closed.

17 May 2017

Chairman