

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

At the Annual Meeting of the Town of Sprowston held at Sprowston Diamond Centre, School Lane, Sprowston on 27 April 2016, 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

14 Local Government Electors of the Town
1 Member of the Press
Mr K Leggett - Broadland District Council

16/01. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 20 May 2015, having been circulated to all residents present, were confirmed and signed by the Chairman of the Council.

16/02. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

16/03. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL

The Chairman of the Sprowston Town Council, Mr I Moncur presented the Annual Report of the Council for the year ending 31 March 2016.

Following parliamentary and local elections last year, the Council welcomed a number of new Councillors including myself, and I would like to pay tribute to the contribution made by those who did not stand again and those who stood and did not get re-elected. They were valued members of a council which worked well as a team, and which focused on what is best for Sprowston, and I expect the new council to continue in the same non-adversarial vein. At the first meeting of this new Council I was honored to be elected as Chairman and I am now pleased to present the Annual report for the year ending 31 March 2016.

It has been a busy year with a number of projects completed or in progress including Sprowston Pavilion, to which I am delighted to say that the Council was successful in obtaining £105,000 in grants from the Premier League and The FA Facilities Fund and The Veolia Environmental Trust which has enabled the Council to refurbish the two existing changing rooms and provide three additional ones. The Council also contributed £32,000 towards this development. A grand opening event attended by the Chairman of Broadland District Council and Norfolk FA, representatives from Veolia, Sprowston Wanderers, Gils and District and Town Councillors on 12 February 2016. Continuing with buildings at a recent Council meeting it was agreed to apply for loan funding of £1.5 million to further develop Sprowston Diamond Centre

and provide a much needed community sports hall with associated changing facilities. This will fulfil a long held ambition of residents for a Council run community sports facility, as was demonstrated in the consultation for the Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan. It is hoped that work will commence this financial year and take approximately 12 months to complete.

Currently construction of a large extension to the School Lane Pre-School continues which will double their capacity and be open for a new intake of children at the start of the summer term.

Moving on to parks and open spaces the Council has been working in conjunction with Broadland District Council and a landowner consortium to open up Harrison's woodland on Blue Boar Lane to the public. Work has been carried out by volunteers from the Norwich Fringe Project in co-operation with Broadland District Council to create secure entrances, install dog/litter bins and waymarking, undertake tree and path works and erect noticeboards. With this in mind I am pleased to announce that the woodland has been made accessible to walkers wishing to use this new facility. Whilst dogs are welcome owners must ensure that they are kept on a lead.

Following concerns from residents the small open space at Post Mill Close has been resurfaced and the wall replaced to prevent it being used as a car park. There is also an allocation in the 2016/17 budget to purchase 2 seats for the benefit of residents.

The Council has not yet taken responsibility for the open space off Blue Boar Lane where it is hoped to provide a long awaited skate park with a £100,000 contribution from Norfolk Homes.

As to Sprowston cemetery our grounds staff have worked hard this year to complete the landscaping on the extension. 50% of the 5.93 acre site is being prepared for burials and interments the other half of the site will be planted with 500 Hazel whips per annum for the next three years to coppice and chip to create a sustainable natural surfacing material for the Council's woodland pathways.

In the wider community parking issues outside schools and dog fouling continue to be of concern and the Council has liaised with the Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel who have regularly prioritised this issue and tasked their teams to address inappropriate and dangerous parking by parents and carers and raise awareness. The Council also supported Broadland District Council's Top Dog Campaign which asks residents to lead by example by signing a pledge stating they will be a Top Dog owner and clean up after their pets, and that they will report those who do not. Dog and litter bins are located around the parish and on all open spaces and parks owned by the Council. Stencils have been repainted at the Recreation Ground and dog glove bags continue to be provided for those residents who forget to bring their own.

The Council has been pleased to support the Grow Your Community Network, a group of residents and organisations, including Broadland District Council, who work together to improve health and social care of residents aged 60 plus. We have held various events including a slipper exchange, distributed articles of clothing to help residents to keep well and warm and have a dedicated page on our website informing of activities in the area.

As to Administration, Councillors have undergone relevant training and attended various workshops, seminars and meetings. A new appraisal process has been introduced and all staff appraisements have been completed with development plans in place for the forthcoming year. To keep up with constant changes in legislation and the need for Council's to become more transparent in their activities a raft of new policies have been implemented and available on our website.

Moving on to financial matters, the Town Council set its budget for 2016/2017 at the Council Meeting held on 18 November 2015 where it was agreed that to meet the Council's funding requirements cemetery and memorials fees relating to adults would increase by 3%, sports hire fees by 3% and allotment rent increased by £2.00 per annum. Room hire fees at Sprowston Diamond Centre and the Pavilion were maintained at 2015/16 rates and the precept was set at £547,332. The cost of the Town Council's services to the average band D property is £109.47 per year an increase of 2.7%.

The Town Council continues to use its powers to help local voluntary organisations which serve our community, providing activities for all ages. I wish to express thanks on behalf of this Council to the dedicated people who run our many organisations. Grants awarded in 2015/16 included:

Age UK Norfolk - £250
Magpas Helimedix - £250
Norfolk Citizens Advice Bureau - £250
Sprowston Youth Engagement Project - £250
Royal British Legion - £250
Norwich Door to Door - £250
Cruse Bereavement Care - £150
East Anglia's Children's Hospices (EACH) - £100

It is always good to end a report on a high note and it gives me great pleasure to announce that following a submission to the National Association of Local Council Quality Award Scheme, Sprowston Town Council has been awarded Quality Gold, the first in Norfolk. This recognises that this Council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development. Whilst we have always valued our staff this achievement only confirms their hard work and commitment to this Council.

Finally I would like to thank all Town Councillors for their unstinting commitment to Sprowston and the Town Clerk and her team for being an ever-present frontline face for the public.

16/04. RESIDENTS QUESTIONS

A resident expressed concern regarding a proposed skate park to be located outside her property, commenting that she was opposed to a skate park on this site.

Mr Moncur explained the various hoops a planning application has to go through and the opportunities the resident would have to express her objection. As to the details of the application this would be discussed at the council meeting following the Annual Town meeting.

16/05 CLOSE

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

26 April 2017

Chairman