



# **Sprowston Annual Town Meeting**

at

**Sprowston Diamond Centre (School Room), School Lane  
Sprowston, Norwich NR7 8TR**

**On Wednesday 27 April 2022 at 7.00pm**

**All Parishioners on the Electoral Roll are invited to attend the  
Annual Town Meeting**

**Any matters affecting the Town maybe discussed  
and the following business has been placed on the**

## **AGENDA**

**(Meeting to be called to order by the Mayor of the Council)**

- 1. Adoption of the previous Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 26 May 2021 (No Annual Town Meeting held in 2020)**
- 2. Matters Arising**
- 3. Annual Report of Sprowston Town Council from the Town Mayor, Councillor John Ward**
- 4. Residents' questions**
- 5. Close**

**J M Ward  
Chairman of the Council**

**Guy Ranaweera  
Town Clerk**

## **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

At the Annual Meeting of the Town of Sprowston held at Sprowston Diamond Centre, School Lane, Sprowston on 26 May 2021, the following were present:-

Mr J M Ward - Town Mayor  
Mr G Ranaweera - Town Clerk  
Mrs E Elliot - Committee Officer

8 Local Government Electors of the Town

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### **21/01. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 15 May 2019, having been circulated to all residents' present, were confirmed and subject to the following amendment

Minute 19/003, **delete** "£5,000 to Sprowston Youth Engagement" and **insert** "£2,500 to Sprowston Youth Engagement Project"

signed by the Chairman of the Council.

### **21/02. MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

### **21/03. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL**

"The Town Council's municipal year has once more drawn to a close and it gives me great pleasure in presenting my annual report.

This has been an extraordinary year such as I have never encountered in my political or personal life and very challenging for the Council in a number of ways, primarily because of the successive lockdowns.

During these unprecedented times everyone has had to adapt and the Council is no exception. Since April 2020 all meetings have been held on-line via Zoom with an opportunity for public participation by remote attendance.

Our grounds staff changed their shift patterns and worked throughout the pandemic maintaining the parks and open spaces, which received unprecedented usage. They continued to facilitate burials at our Church Lane cemetery albeit with limits on mourners in attendance.

Whilst the office was closed to visiting customers staff were still available via telephone and email to assist with residents' enquiries.

Throughout the pandemic the Council has supported Sprowston Coronavirus Help Group, now known as Sprowston Supporting Our Community Together.

## **21/03. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL (CONTNUED)**

acting as a financial go between for shopping purchases, facilitating 643 transactions totaling £21,049.45, printing leaflets, sourcing exercise kits, hand sanitisers and face masks, and advertising contact details.

Individual Councillors assisted with manning the helpline, shopping and prescription collections.

With regard to our community building this was set to be Sprowston Diamond Centre's busiest year with increased interest from a range of hirers. However, the building closed in March as a result of the pandemic followed by limited opening during varying degrees of restrictions.

On a more positive note, since March this year we have been slowly welcoming back our regular customers in line with the Government Road map and hope to resume our monthly cinema, which has been running for 12 years screening recent or award-winning full-length movies.

As to financial matters this Council has always tried to provide the best services whilst keeping expenditure at realistic levels. In December, Council approved the 2021/22 budget and precept.

The total agreed expenditure budget was £886.402 (which included £20,000 transfer from play equipment reserves for a new play tower and slide at Sparhawk Park) and the precept was agreed as £708,544 a 2.98% increase on 2020/21.

To meet the Councils funding requirement, sports, venue, cemetery and memorial fees were increased by 3%.

Allotment rents and water charges remained unchanged.

Due to the uncertain financial outlook caused by the coronavirus pandemic most discretionary spending in financial year 20/2021 was paused. With the pandemic now receding and the financial outlook becoming more stable, those projects previously put on hold will be restarted in this financial year.

To make remote payments easier during lockdown and to give our customers more choice the Council introduced a PDQ payment machine and now have the facility to receive credit and debit card payments.

The Town Council has continued to support local community groups and good causes which much needed funding and given £16,190 in grants. Beneficiaries include:

Broadland Tree Warden Network - £30.00

Dementia UK - £60.00

Sprowston Foodbank - £100.00

## **21/03. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL (CONTNUED)**

National Accidents Rescue Services - £100.00

Norfolk Citizens Advice Bureau - £200.00

The Royal British Legion - £300.00

Norwich 45<sup>th</sup> Scout Group - £400.00

Sprowston Youth Engagement Project - £5,000

Sprowston Youth Engagement Project (Outreach Worker) - £10,000

One of the most significant decisions of the Council this year has been to progress with the acquisition of the former Viking Public House / Bengal Restaurant on Tills Road.

Whilst Council was looking at recreational provision in Sprowston it became noticeable that whereas other areas of Sprowston had cafes, church halls, public houses, members' clubs and a community centre the west of the Town lacked these amenities.

Feedback from a survey of local community groups, and changes in society resulting from the Coronavirus Pandemic suggested a need for a building that could act as a community hub and facilitate community groups which support vulnerable members of society.

Following satisfactory surveys for structural defects, land contamination and asbestos the Council agreed to purchase the property and completion took place on 21 May 2021.

With regard to streetlighting we have received over 270 street lighting fault reports in the last 12 months a visible sign of an ageing stock, some being close to 30 years old.

Postponed work to replace over 400 street lights with energy efficient LED's is hoped to be re-instigated later this year at an approximate cost of £520,000.

Moving on to the cemetery in September a socially distanced Consecration was conducted by the Bishop of Norwich, the Right Reverend Graham Usher in preparation for opening of the extension.

As to other matters of interest in the parish, the Town Council has submitted observations on 98 planning applications in accordance with policies in the Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan.

Additional wooden posts have been installed on the grass verge opposite Falcon Road school following requests from the head teacher and concerned parents. Whilst this was funded from my County Councillor Highways budget the Town Council was instrumental in liaising with all parties and progressing this project to address dangerous parking issues outside the school.

### **21/03. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SPROWSTON TOWN COUNCIL (CONTNUED)**

With ongoing major housing expansion at Home Farm and Salhouse Road the Council has been consulting with developers on the provision of street lighting, potential play areas, open space and sports facilities.

We have requested the open spaces be seeded and accessible to residents whilst waiting for developers to order and install equipment.

Work has started on upgrading our website to improve clarity, incorporate new accessibility regulations and be more user friendly. Together with telephone, email, Facebook, noticeboards and the return of counter enquiries we aim to ensure as much information as possible is available to our residents on the administration of the Council.

I would like to conclude my report by thanking Councillors and staff for their hard work and support in a particularly difficult and unpredictable year.”

### **21/04. RESIDENTS', DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS**

No questions were received.

### **21/05. CLOSE**

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

**27 April 2022**

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**Chairman**