

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

HELD AT HOCKLIFFE STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

MONDAY 18 MARCH 2019 AT 1930 HOURS

Present: Councillors C Palmer - Town Mayor and Chair
A Brandham
C Chambers
S Cotter
K Cursons
J M Freeman
S Jones
T Morris
C Perham
G Perham
E Wallace
R Berry
S Cursons
A Dodwell

Officers M Saccoccio (Town Clerk)
S Sandiford (Head of Democratic & Central Services)
I Haynes (Head of Grounds & Environmental Services)
V Cannon (Head of Cultural & Economic Services)
M Jahn (Committee Officer)

Members of the Public 25

1. WELCOME

The Town Mayor, Councillor C Palmer, explained the format of the meeting and welcomed all those present and thanked everyone for attending.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillor F Kharawala and Councillor D Bowater.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19 March 2018 were approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

AGREED that the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 19 March 2018 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

4. YOUTH PROMISE GRANT

Representatives from two organisations spoke regarding the funding they had received in 2018-19 through the Youth Promise Grant. Two Fire Cadets spoke to thank the Town Council for their funding and how being part of the group gave them a sense of pride and confidence as well as learning new skills and meeting socially.

The grant enabled the purchase of uniforms, training and breathing apparatus. Each cadet would have their own uniform which instilled a sense of pride and confidence and made them more identifiable within the community. The breathing apparatus would allow the group to have their own equipment for training purposes instead of sharing with other groups.

A representative from the Hockey Club spoke and thanked the Council for the funding they received which had enabled them to recruit an ex international player to provide coaching in 6 local schools and offer two competitive tournaments which were well attended. Many young people were unaware hockey was available within the area and this had enabled the club to reach a larger audience and retain young people to continue within the club.

Thanks were given to both groups for their presentation and it was noted that the Council was very pleased with the success of the Youth Promise Grant with so many young people and organisations benefitting from the scheme.

5. TOWN COUNCIL

A presentation was given by Town Clerk Mark Saccoccio and Leader of the Council, Councillor Ewan Wallace, on recent projects undertaken by the Town Council, a summary of services and funding and an indication of future objectives.

Residents were advised that the Town Councillors were unpaid volunteers who wanted to make a difference to their community, often dealing with difficult issues and decisions. The 5 Year Plan would give objectives and direction for the new Council and these objectives were derived from engagement with the public. One of the key areas would be Youth Engagement and it was hoped to consult with young people in the community to ascertain what they actually wanted and how to realistically accommodate and deliver their ideas.

Thanks were given to the Hockey Club and Fire Cadets and the meeting was advised an evaluation of the Youth Promise Grant would take place to ascertain how to move forward in the future.

With the town growing it was felt that the Events Programme in Leighton-Linslade added to the feeling of community with a programme including the Big Lunch, Canal Festival, Living History Day, Summer Band concerts and the Christmas Festival. Also the Market created a vibrancy in the town and although challenges had been faced with the relaunch, the Members felt it was a community asset and worth investing in.

Thanks were given to officers, councillors and volunteer groups who worked together to keep Leighton-Linslade an attractive town to live in.

6 QUESTIONS

The Chair invited attendees to ask questions or make comments.

Q. *What are the Council doing to promote plastic and climate awareness and how could voluntary groups and the Council work together in this. How will the Council demonstrate publically willingness to go plastic free and make a declaration for this?*

A. The Council is supportive of the work being done by Friends of the Earth and would work with them to understand best practice. The Council's refuse collection and recycling was being reviewed at present and the new Café in the Park had aspirations to be plastic free.

Q. *Is the Town Council concerned about the Oxford – Cambridge Expressway and the number of houses planned to be built?*

A. The Council is concerned and aware of the pressure caused by growth and limited increase in infrastructure. The issues are taken up and relayed to CBC but the Planning & Transport Committee does not have responsibility for planning decisions and can only raise their concerns.

Q. *Is the Council taking part in the Great British Spring Clean, for example promoting organised litter picks?*

A. In previous years activity had been organised by the Friends of Leighton-Linslade in Bloom but due to low interest resulting in very few volunteers to participate, no activity had been planned for 2019.

Q. *How is the council planning to increase burial capacity and would it consider a natural burial ground?*

A. The Council would be having a consultation on ways to use the existing cemetery, the remaining capacity at Vandyke cemetery being approximately 8 years. With regard to a natural burial ground if there was demand it could be considered.

Q. *Could exercise equipment aimed at older people be installed at Parson's Close? This would give an opportunity for older people to meet up and be active.*

A. All suggestions would be gratefully received and considered.

Q. *Why have the closed bus shelters been removed from the High Street?*

A. It is unknown why the shelters have been removed but will take the query back to Arriva.

- Q. *Could there be accessible areas for less able young people in Parson's Close so they can use the beach and play area with wheelchairs. Also an accessible changing room for these young people either in the town or in the park.*
- A. The accessibility of the play areas and the condition of the paths would be discussed at a future Grounds and Environmental Committee meeting.
- Q. *Could council meetings such as this meeting be held during the day to make more accessible and inclusive for members of the public?*
- A. The majority of those in full time employment could only attend evening meetings, but the viability of alternative options could be looked into for the future.
- Q. *When will the bus shelter be installed at Grovebury Road surgery?*
- A. This process is still on-going, the pavement was widened but still waiting for shelter.
- C. *Thanks were given to the Council for the work they do but a question raised regarding the "diabolical health service structure within the town". The Council should take the lead to discuss this infrastructure and the public need to know the Council are behind the community and representing Leighton-Linslade to Central Bedfordshire Council.*
- C. *Thanks were also given to the Council for the cemetery and how well it is kept.*
- Q. *Is anything being done about the amount of rubbish in the River and on the River Banks?*
- A. Friends of the Earth cleared rubbish recently from the banks in Parson's Close.
- Q. *The rubbish bins in the High Street are an eyesore – could they be relocated?*
- A. This has been reported to Central Bedfordshire Council and we would do our best to sort the problem.

The Mayor ended the meeting by thanking all present for their attendance and for participating. Any further questions could be raised by contacting the Town Council by phone or email.

The meeting closed at 2100 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND
ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 MARCH 2019.

Chair

16 MARCH 2020