

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at the Birchwood Leisure Centre, Longmead, Hatfield at 8 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Jack Nelson – Town Mayor

Plus 27 Members of the electorate

1. **WELCOME**

The Town Mayor, Cllr. Jack Nelson, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **REPORT OF THE TOWN MAYOR**

It has been an honour and a privilege to represent Hatfield as Town Mayor. I have had very warm welcomes to all engagements I have attended and have enjoyed meeting so many people. Some high lights that will live long in my memory are John Conteh the boxer who was a super bloke, Poppy who celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and attending the Chancellor's, and Vice Chancellor's Lectures which were very interesting.

I would like to thank Jane Anderson for keeping my diary.

3. **REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – CLLR LENNY BRANDON**

In the last four years your Council has done and is doing a lot to make Hatfield the place it once was, and can be again. This is just the start of what I hope will be an ongoing programme of improvement to our key facilities while also increasing what we can provide for our residents.

Some aspects of this programme will and have taken longer than others, and I share the frustrations of those who would like to see things happen quicker. I am pleased though, that unlike other local authorities, this Council has been able to provide residents with more, without costing a penny more in Council Tax.

I am proud to be the Leader of Hatfield Town Council and during my time carrying out this role I have become even more aware of not only the fantastic community we have here but what it can achieve when it comes together. But that doesn't mean I've become blind to problems that remain unresolved, such as the rubbish, litter and general disrepair - often as a result of unacceptable services outside of the control of this Council.

There will always be those who look down their noses at our Town. I know the truth is that while there is still much more to be done, Hatfield, with its history its people and that unquestionable community spirit, it really is the hidden gem of Hertfordshire.

Hatfield is on a journey back to where it should be, and I look forward to that continuing.

4. **REPORT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN – CLLR JAMES BROACH**

The Chairman advised that the Town Council continued to raise objection or give comments when considered necessary, only using the power of call-in sparingly. The Chairman attended Borough Development Management Committee meetings

to explain and defend the Town Council's decisions, usually to no avail, but the Town's voice was considered important.

Other Members and the public were encouraged to send in their views on planning applications to the Council.

**5. REPORT OF THE SPORT & LEISURE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN – CLLR PHIL KNOTT**

We have employed 3 apprentices in our grounds team for the first time

We have now obtained planning permission for an extension to Lemsford Village Hall to create new changing rooms.

We have purchased new tractor & stealth mower with s.106 Planning Obligation Funding and a new ride on mower.

We will be installing a new multiplay at St Albans Rd East with s.106 Planning Obligation funding and an order has been placed for a disability swing for Ellenbrook Play Area with grant funding from True Colours Trust

We have placed order for a flight of fantasy climbing unit, basketball hoop and half court for Ellenbrook Play Area with grant funding from the Pocket Parks Plus grant.

This year we bought new gym equipment for Birchwood gym and put on 6 new exercise classes.

We have started Walking Basketball with a grant from the National Lottery to complement our very successful Walking football.

And finally we held the Music Festival and Fireworks display (again) and intend to do so again this year along with the World Hatfield Festival.

**6. REPORT OF THE RESOURCES AND POLICY COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN – CLLR JOHN FITZPATRICK**

"I have been Chair of the Resources and Policy committee on and off for the last four years. It has been an honour to serve on this Council and to have been chosen to chair the committee.

The last four years have seen great financial pressures for this council, which has required a great deal of effort from both members and officers in order to keep our existing services and to also introduce others.

R&P is not the most exciting looking committee on the surface. The committee is responsible for overseeing written policy, financial matters and staffing structures etc. All of it is vital though.

This committee ensures legal obligations are met and that resources are available for events such as fireworks, the music festival and also for our ongoing services.

In the last year, we have seen the blue plaque scheme that we introduced put into practice. I am particularly proud that the next plaque to be unveiled is for

Donovan, the highly influential singer/songwriter, who spent his formative years living in Bishops Rise.

Why are such things important? Because our town has a heritage. That heritage should not be forgotten. We are about to celebrate a significant anniversary of the DeHavilland Comet, the world's first passenger jet aircraft. Developed here in Hatfield, its introduction changed the face of air travel.

To commemorate the wide array of cultural and technical contributions made by this town is important. It also reminds us all of Hatfield's most important aspect: the people who live here.

The town can be criticised by some but it has been important to put on events that bring people together. This is a town that people can and should be proud of.

I have enjoyed my time serving as a representative of Hatfield people...mostly. There have been a number of challenges, but I am proud to have been selected to serve since 2013 and I am proud to say I did my bit.

I may even miss it after May. We'll see....

## 7. **QUESTIONS**

Mrs O'Boy requested that the Town Council remove their unsightly banners from the roadside.

Dave Jones requested that something be done about the subways in Hatfield.

Closure 20.35

Town Mayor