

Minutes of the Annual Community Assembly Meeting
(otherwise known as the Annual Town Meeting)

The Meeting House, Ilminster Arts Centre
35 East Street, Ilminster, TA19 0AN
on Tuesday 18th April 2023 at 6pm

Attendance:

24 Members of the public from Ilminster were in attendance as well as 9 people from outside of the town boundary.

18.30 The Town Crier, formally opened the meeting with a cry.

The Mayor, Cllr Leanne Taylor, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. The Minutes of the Annual Community Assembly meeting held on 10th May 2022

The Minutes of the Annual Community Assembly meeting held on 10th May 2022 were agreed to be a true record.

2. Mayor's report

Cllr Taylor delivered the Mayor's Report in which she introduced herself.

The Mayor updated residents on the main aims of the Council at this time,

To establish resilience in the town to cope with the challenges of climate change

To support green initiatives

To grow community engagement

To continue to look after our open spaces, cemetery and keep by laws up to date.

Cllr Taylor spoke about some of the events that she has attended this year.

Moving forward Cllr Taylor will be representing Ilminster at the meetings of the Local Community Network (LCN) and will be reporting back to full council after each meeting and the details will be available via the Town Council website.

On a local level, community engagement is more important than ever. The recent community survey received a pleasing response and will enable the council to make more evidence-based decisions. The monthly surgeries are a way of continuing this process so please pop along and talk to us about projects you are excited to see happen and to get involved with.

Cllr Taylor ended with a heartfelt thank you to everyone in our community who make this a wonderful place to live and work and go to school.

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3a. Committee Chairs summary reports.

Each of the Chairs of the three main council committees provided reports on the work that had been conducted over the past year.

Cllr Gunn as Chair of the Open Spaces committee thanked the open spaces team for all their hard work during the year. The Open Spaces team have been coppicing and hedge laying along Canal Way. Cllr Gunn thanked Green Ilminster for their superb litter picking efforts around the town. The Rec Users Group has been reintroduced. There are plans for a fitness track at the Wharf Lane recreation ground. Nature lovers can join the volunteer program and assist with jobs on Herne Hill and other open spaces in Ilminster. There is a new Herne Hill users group that has been set up. New benches are being placed around the town and maintenance work is being carried out on the existing benches. The wildflower meadow at West Crescent is progressing. The Open Spaces Team are now looking forward to warmer sunny days and the next exciting new projects.

Cllr Jenner-Hurford as Chair of the Resources Committee talked about the move to the new Council Office at the Old Magistrates Court, the Ilminster Tourist Information, the appointment of a new Recreation manager, the Civility and Respect pledge and the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Jenner-Hurford thanked all the Councillors and volunteers for all their hard work working on the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr Shearman provided a written report highlighting some of the requests that the Planning, Highways and Transport committee had carried out this year and how the committee are looking forward to another busy year ahead.

The Town Clerk's report highlighted the office move to the Old Magistrates Court and showing over 400 visitors around the ground floor and the cells during the Christmas Light Festival in November. The Countryside Manager is working hard to be able to apply for Green Flag status for Herne Hill. The Recreation Manager is looking after West Crescent and Winterhay playparks. There have been many improvements to the town over the last year through external grant funding. We are looking forward to the new challenges of moving to a Unitary Authority.

3b Local Policing report

A representative from Avon and Somerset Police introduced herself and gave an update on Policing in Ilminster. The local officers and PCSO's are happy to attend any meetings or speak to any community groups. The Police are looking to play an active role in LCNs. The community policing teams main role is engagement and problem solving. There are local beat pages online with latest news and updates on events they will be attending. They have moved out of their base in Ilminster due to issues with technology and lack of welfare facilities.



3c Grant organisations reports

A representative from Green Ilminster thanked the Town Council for the grant of £150 towards local tree planting. The trees were planted in the Blackdown/Orchard Vale areas. They are looking forward to continuing their good work over the coming year.

A representative from Ilminster Christmas Lights said that they are very grateful to the Council for the £500 grant and to the towns people for all their support. They used the grant towards replacing lights along Strawberry Bank and Ditton Street. They have more improvements planned for 2023. The Christmas lights team consist of approximately 20 volunteers and they also put up all the Christmas trees in the town as well as the lights. It takes 300 man hours to prepare and put up the lights/trees and the same to take them down again. New volunteers are always welcome.

A representative from The Quakers spoke about Warm Spaces. The Quakers joined with the Minister to offer a warm space in January and February in the Minster Rooms. The Minster offered soup for the first 2 hours and the Quakers offers tea and biscuits for the last 2 hours. The Quakers were very grateful to the Town Council for their support and the £160 grant. Whilst the events were being held the weather wasn't sub zero temperatures, the weather had been colder in November, but what was very apparent was that people were coming for the company and enjoying meeting up the other people. They are considering holding more events this coming winter.

A representative from the Food Bank and Food Share talked about the differences between the foodbank and food share. Everyone is welcome to visit the food share, which is food near its best before date, and is donated by Co Op and Tesco. It has been set up together to help the people using the foodbank feel more comfortable. The numbers of people using the food bank are increasing and the trolley collections are decreasing. There are also vouchers available for fruit, vegetables, and eggs. They thanked the Town Council for the monthly donation of cleaning products.

A representative from The Arts Centre introduced herself and The Arts Centre. She explained about the venue, the services they offer and some of the things they are involved with for example IMEX, the Christmas lights switch on and the Town Crier competition. They have a café and gift shop, offer discount tickets for students, online booking and children under 12 go free with a full paying adult to some events. They thanked the Town Council for the £500 grant towards upgrading the telephone and IT systems. They are always looking for new volunteers. They believe that art should be accessible to as many people as possible.

A representative from the Ilminster Entertainments Society introduced themselves and talked about the history of the Warehouse Theatre and their plans for the future. They hope to have the Old Bakery site ready to use before the end of 2023. The youth theatre run summer workshops.

A representative from Ilminster Chamber of Commerce spoke about the Christmas lights switch on evening. The Christmas lights are funded by the businesses in the town along with donations. He thanked the Town Council for the grant towards last year's event, which was really appreciated, and the event wouldn't have been able to go ahead without it.

4. Public Question Time

The Police representative was asked as there was no drop in office in Ilminster have they considered using a mobile police station, like they use in Taunton, on Thursdays and Saturdays.

Residents were advised that there was no drop in facility at their previous office and visibility in Ilminster has not changed.

They also hold drop-in centres at various locations in the area.

Local officers are happy to attend community events and give talks to local groups.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending.

The Town Crier closed the meeting.

Meeting Closed at 18.59

