

Haslemere Town Council

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting

Wednesday 22nd April 2009

Venue Woolmer Hill School

The meeting was opened by the Mayor of Haslemere, Councillor William King, who welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Present: The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, HTC Councillors C Burns, B Douglas, M Dover, F Foster, M Foster, B Hewett, B Howard, P Isherwood, R Knowles, C Lancaster, J Mackie, S Mulliner, SCC Councillor D Harmer, SCC Councillor C Stevens, The Mayor and Consort of Waverley, Councillors Pat & Bob Frost, the Deputy Mayor of WBC, Councillor Carole Cockburn, Colonel Nicolas Davies, members of Sport Haslemere and the public.

Apologies were received from Councillors P Blades, J Edwards, J Stevens and the Town Clerk, Mike O'Neil.

1. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd April 2008 were agreed and approved.

2. **ANNUAL REPORT OF TOWN COUNCIL**

The annual report of the Town Council was introduced by Town Mayor William King. Copy attached to these Minutes. **Appendix 1**

3. **MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK AT HASLEMERE RAILWAY STATION**

Councillor Mulliner reported on the progress of the long awaited multi-storey car park at Haslemere Railway Station. He thanked Councillor Michael Dover for instigating the project during his time as Mayor. Currently there were two South West Train projects in the pipeline, one at Southampton Airport and the other at Haslemere Station. It was expected that a planning permission application for Haslemere Station car park would be submitted to Waverley Borough Council in May and, if approved, the project could be started as early as June this year. Obviously there would be a certain amount of inconvenience but, once started, work could be completed within six months. However, Councillor Mulliner pointed out that there were no guarantees as to when the multi-storey car park would be built.

4. **BUSINESS REPORT**

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Odell, reported on the business prospective in Haslemere. Copy attached to these Minutes. **Appendix 2**

5. **OPEN FORUM**

There were no questions from the public.

6. **PRESENTATION OF THE AWARDS**

The Mayor closed the Annual Town Meeting and handed over to the President of Sport Haslemere, Mrs Melanie Odell, and the Chairman, Mr Chris Grimes, for the presentation of the Sports Awards.

7. **PRESENTATION TO COUNCILLOR MRS CHRSTINE STEVENS**

On the occasion of her retirement, Mr Nick Chilton, Honorary Life Member of Sport Haslemere thanked SCC Councillor Mrs Christine Stevens for all she had done for sport in Haslemere over many years, initially as Mayor of Haslemere Town Council then as a Surrey County Councillor. She had worked tirelessly to promote all aspects of sport in the area and as a token of appreciation she was presented with a gift.

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Town Mayor

The evening concluded with drinks and light refreshments.

ANNUAL REPORT OF TOWN COUNCIL GIVEN BY THE MAYOR OF HASLEMERE, COUNCILLOR WILLIAM KING

Introduction

Good evening everyone and may I welcome you to the Annual Town Meeting. First of all I realise that this isn't the reason that most of you are here and therefore I will keep this part of the proceedings as brief as is reasonably possible. Secondly I must just explain this part of the evening. The Town Council has a Statutory Duty to hold an Annual Town Meeting. Our Town Council area covers Grayswood, Haslemere, Shottermill, Critchmere, Hindhead and Beacon Hill. The Town Council has 18 Councillors representing five different Wards and each one of them has an elected responsibility to make sure that their Ward and the interests of those residents who live in that ward as well as those who may work there are properly represented.

Prudence

In the current financial climate your Council and its officers are very well aware of the need to exercise due diligence with all public money that we spend on your behalf for the good of everyone in Haslemere.

This year the Town Council set the Precept at £200,200 which represents an increase of 4% on the previous year and is less than the retail price index of 5% as at December 2008. Haslemere Town Council has a policy of keeping taxes down whilst giving value for money.

Good Governance

Haslemere Town Council manages its work on your behalf through 12 member working groups with 3 or 4 Councillors on each group. These groups cover key issues for us all such as Beacon Hill and Hindhead, Business, Haslemere Hall and the Museum, Heath, Housing, Parking, Planning, Policing and Neighbourhood Safety, Traffic, The Voluntary Sector, Waste and Youth. Later in this meeting I shall ask two of your Councillors to talk on one of these issues.

The Haslemere Initiative 2008

The Haslemere Initiative is a unique partnership of individuals, community organisations and statutory authorities assembled for the benefit of Haslemere. The aim of the Initiative is to improve the vitality and viability of Haslemere and the surrounding area, embracing the aims of the many local organisations and statutory organisations that are our partners. Five years ago we embarked on a "Town Healthcheck" with a view to deciding what we needed to do to ensure Haslemere would survive as a thriving market town and surrounding area. The result was an action plan from which over 30 projects have been completed to date.

In 2008 we refreshed the “Town Healthcheck” and we are all looking forward to implementation and delivery of projects which will make a real difference to the community and the town. By way of example may I draw your attention to one of these projects because it involved two essential elements to make its outcome successful and these essential elements were:-

Community Planning and Partnership Working

Under the auspices of the Haslemere Initiative the “Town Healthcheck” had identified certain areas in need of regeneration and concern was expressed about the infrastructure in the Beacon Hill area. Businesses, local people and local organisations came together to develop a project bid for finances which was submitted to the South East England Development Agency Small Rural Town Programme. As a result of this matched funding was made by our partners in Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council and Local Businesses. What you may ask was the result? Ladies and gentlemen this **partnership working** secured over £180,000 and as a result Beacon Hill has had a new make over and been really positively smartened up for the good of everyone who lives and works there. As part of this make over there is now a new crossing outside the school in Beacon Hill, new heritage street lighting, new bins and a new information board. This is a good example of the various tiers of Local Government working together for the long term benefit of one of our communities in Haslemere.

The Hindhead Tunnel and the improvements to local communities

Construction of the United Kingdom’s longest road tunnel under land is now one step closer to completion because on 26th February this year the tunnel excavations from the north and south portals met deep under the Surrey Hills. The next step for the scheme is for the construction engineers to complete the tunnel and the approach roads. When completed in 2011 it will bring faster and safer journeys on the only Trunk Road between London and Portsmouth. The tunnel will also improve the amenities available to local communities with several underpasses being created to allow horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians to cross the A3 in safety. A9km cycle route will also be created. I must also mention the valuable work of the **Hindhead Together Group** in influencing future planning policy for Hindhead when the tunnel is completed.

Haslemere Station Car Park

I will now call upon Councillor Stephen Mulliner, who was the Mayor of Haslemere in the year before me, who will talk to you about the progress of the long awaited new multi-storey car park at Haslemere Station.

Business Report

It will then be my pleasure to call upon the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Melanie Odell, to talk to you about the present business perspective of Haslemere and how the Town Council and the Chamber of Trade is endeavouring to attract more business and more visitors to our town.

William King
Town Mayor of Haslemere

APPENDIX 2

BUSINESS REPORT GIVEN BY COUNCILLOR MELANIE ODELL

Ladies and gentlemen

I am delighted to have been asked to report on the links the Town Council has with the business community. In these more difficult economic times, Haslemere continues to promote itself to residents and alike and unlike some towns can be proud that it continues to retain good footfall and a very small number of empty retail outlets.

The Town Council has sought to improve the Christmas lights again and feedback has been excellent from all areas, the town, Wey Hill and Beacon Hill. We are working with these communities to continue the Haslemere in Bloom project and both these schemes ensure that our town is looking its best throughout the year.

One of the best ways to ensure that businesses continue to thrive is to keep people in the town. The events which occur throughout the year including the Charter Fair, the forthcoming Haslemere Festival, the Food Festival, Farmers' Markets, Haunted Haslemere and the Christmas Market ensure that there is always something happening for all the family.

The Town Council is pleased to have supported these projects through finance and support in partnership with the Initiative, Chamber of Trade and the Visitor Information Centre. Since the employment of a second member of staff at the VIC funded by the Town Council, more time has been available for support of projects to ensure success.

Tomorrow is St George's Day and we can assure you that Haslemere will be celebrating in style. With the Chamber of Trade & Commerce and the Royal Society of St George we will welcome St George, his white charger, the dragon and the damsel to Wey Hill and the town centre.

A positive attitude and busy calendar will ensure that Haslemere will be at the top of a list of places to do business and spend money and with all these events, Haslemere is regarded as a town where great things happen.

Melanie Odell
Deputy Mayor