

WADEBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting
held remotely via Zoom on
Thursday 22 April 2021 at 6pm

Present : Wadebridge Mayor, Cllr Philip Mitchell (Chair), 2 members of the public (parishioners and representatives of local groups), Inspector Regie Butler-Card (Sector Inspector Bodmin and Wadebridge) and 8 Members from Wadebridge Town Council attending as parishioners (Louise Mitchell, Heather Cooper-Waite, Ian Welch, Trevor Wiltshire, John Leach, Eric Gill, Mark Hollamby & Amanda Pennington)

In attendance : Anne Minnis (Town Clerk) & Beverley Collins (Minutes).

The Mayor, Cllr Philip Mitchell opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

ATM/21.1 Apologies had been received from Wadebridge Town Councillor Alison Batchelor due to a family commitment and Cornwall Councillor Robin Moorcroft (Wadebridge West) due to purdah.

- It was **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies as presented.

ATM/21.2 Minutes – It was **RESOLVED** to agree the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held 25 April 2019. Signing of the Minutes by the Mayor was deferred. There were no matters arising.

ATM/21.3 Mayor's Annual Report – Cllr Mitchell gave a report outlining the past year which has proved very quiet but also difficult due to the Covid-19 pandemic which has dominated 2020 onwards.

Covid related work undertaken by outside groups and organisations was detailed especially the importance of caring for the community through the lockdown periods. The Mayor praised everyone involved in that for their efforts and continued support to the town.

The effect of Covid on the town and the town council were referred to and the Mayor thanked town council for their hard work and support to ensure that the town council continues to run effectively through the pandemic period.

Other matters raised in brief included :

- The difficulties and issues related to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Planning which has also proved difficult over the past several years due to the nature of some of the larger proposed developments.
- Wadebridge Town Council's decision to support social housing for parishioners of Wadebridge – this decision had been taken in order to support those parishioners coming onto the housing ladder including the younger generation of the town.
- Negative social media attacks which have damaged the town council's reputation and caused concerns for both councillors and staff.

The Mayor thanked outgoing councillors; Leah Gliddon, Trevor Wiltshire and Mark Hollamby for their work and efforts over the years and gave special thanks to Eric Gill who has decided after many many years on the Town Council to now stand down. Eric's hard work and input to the town is very much appreciated by everyone.

Cllr Gill took this opportunity to thank his fellow councillors who he believes work well together as a team and also staff members for their work and support. He thanked the Mayor for his hard work and noted his disappointment in leaving the council but said he felt this was the right time to stand down due to other commitments.

The Mayor thanked Deputy Mayor, Cllr John Leach for his support over the past few years and for stepping in when he has been unable to attend events.

ATM/21.4 Reports from organisations who have received grant funding for Covid-19 purposes – The Clerk advised that none of the groups who had received Covid-19 grants from the Council had responded to the invitation to submit a report to the meeting. Representatives from the following groups gave short presentations on grants awarded.

Copies of presentations (where available) are filed with the Minutes and are available from the Town Clerk's office for information.

- a. **AA** – A representative from the AA group gave a brief report outlining the groups meeting regime through the Covid-19 pandemic period and financial issues that the group have faced.

The town council were thanked for the grant awarded and there was additional thanks to town council staff for their help and support to ensure that the group are able to continue to use town council facilities.

A copy of the report is attached.

Representative left the meeting.

- b. **Wadebridge Cricket Club** – The Mayor read the following statement submitted by Mark Williams, Treasurer of the club.

The award made to Wadebridge Cricket Club enabled essential equipment to be purchased for the Clubs large youth section. Last year the Club was one of the few in Cornwall that managed to do youth training and matches in a Covid secure way, and the new stumps and balls were used during these sessions and matches. This year we are pleased to be able to train and play earlier in the summer, so youth training for boys and girls from 5 to 15 years of age will start in early May and the equipment the grant helped towards will be used again then. We thank you very much for the award and if you'd like to visit on a Friday night to see all the boys and girls training you are most welcome, it is great to see the sport being taken up so widely in Wadebridge with the numbers at youth evenings the highest in the county.

ATM/21.5 Reports from Wadebridge Town Council –

- a. **Finance & General Purposes Committee (report filed with Minutes)** – Cllr Philip Mitchell, Chair of Committee, advised details of the committee's work including through the Covid-19 pandemic. (copy attached and available from the Town Clerk's office for information).
- b. **Planning Committee** – Cllr Amanda Pennington, Chair of Committee gave a detailed report outlining planning work since the last Annual Town Meeting in 2019 (report attached and available from the Town Clerk's office for information).

ATM/21.6 Report from Police – Inspector Regie Butler-Card presented a report noting that the past year has been strange and difficult with crime being shown as down on previous years. However, this is mainly due to the lockdown periods.

Inspector Butler-Card advised that he has now been in role for the past twelve months and learning about the area has been interesting due to the difficult situations faced recently. However, partly due to the excellent partnership working with various groups such as town and parish councils and the communities themselves, this has been one of the best jobs in the past twenty five years.

Resources and the difficulties with managing sickness and temporary promotions does prove challenging. Currently have Sue Honeywill, Neighbourhood Team Leader, two Neighbourhood Beat Managers and three PCSOs but unfortunately, only 3 response officers for Wadebridge.

The G7 Summit is proving challenging and will also take an officer from Bodmin, however it is hoped that normality will return after G7.

Whilst hi-viz policing is preferable it is also affected by resources. However, some recent significant incidents, including the betting shop robbery and the Spar burglary, were tackled by local patrols. The offenders of the betting shop robbery are now under investigation. Local policing is effective.

For the year ahead the mission is for the team to protect and look after victims, sue offenders and to also be proud to be a police officer. Inspector Butler-Card outlined the importance of each of these goals.

Expecting a busy summer especially with G7.

The refurbishment of Wadebridge police is going ahead this year. Officers will continue to work from the station through the upgrade.

Once out of lockdown, town councillors will be invited to join the teams on in-sight patrols to see how policing works, what it is about and have a better understanding of how policing works.

A new operating model is expected early next year and this will deal with how staff are deployed. Some changes are expected but there are no details available as yet.

Cllr Welch asked what the town council could do moving forwards to assist more.

Inspector Butler-Card noted the importance of listening to the community and establishing their concerns and feeding any intelligence received back to the Police. Noted that the best point of contact for this is via Crime Stoppers or the 101 email route.

The Mayor agreed with points raised in the report including :

- The positives of joining officers on patrol.
- The need to continue to be aware of drug related issues in town.
- For the town council to be more involved including engaging with the community which does sometimes prove difficult.

The Mayor thanked Inspector Butler-Card and his colleagues for their continued hard work which is very much appreciated.

6.35pm, Inspector Butler-Card left the meeting.

ATM/21.7 Parishioner's Questions (questions and written responses filed with Minutes)

– None.

The Mayor reiterated the difficulties with engaging with the public and his disappointment with parishioner attendance at the meeting.

Richard Curnow who represents several town initiatives including the Food Bank voiced his concerns with the negative and damaging Facebook comments which he believes have been rude and unappreciative of the town council. He thanked the town council for their support of the Food Bank and for putting up with the negative issues of late.

There was discussion around the Food Bank including :

- The positives of the new premises.
- The importance of not shying away from the issues around food poverty which is a very real problem within Wadebridge.
- The commendable service by all of those involved in the Food Bank.

The Mayor referred to housing which is also a problem within Wadebridge and noted that the town council have felt unsupported when looking to address housing issues in the past.

Social media issues have also caused problems for the town council and individual councillors.

Cllr Welch and Leachd voiced their thanks and gratitude to the Mayor and Mayoress for their continued hard work over the pasts few years which have included some very difficult and trying periods.

The Mayor, Cllr Philip Mitchell thanked his wife Louise for her continued support and her commitment as Mayoress.

As outgoing Mayor, Cllr Philip Mitchell said he would miss the role but would continue to support the town council as a councillor. He thanked the Town Clerk and staff for their support.

The Mayor thanked the representatives for their attendance and closed the meeting at 6.47pm.

Signed as a True and Accurate Account :

Chair :

Date :