

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting for Desborough, held on 24th. May 2018 in Desborough Library, High Street, Desborough

Present:

Councillors:

Gil Holmes (Chairman), Claire Archer, Linda Burnham, Irene James, Bill Keys, Bill McElhinney, Phil Sawford and Jo Taylor

Also in attendance:

Cllr. Allan Matthews, Northamptonshire County Councillor, Cllr. June Derbyshire and Cllr. David Soans, Kettering Borough Councillors, and members of the public.

(Please note: All written reports presented at the meeting are available as separate documents)

1. Chairman's Announcements

Cllr. Gil Holmes welcomed everyone to the Annual Town Meeting and ran through the health and safety requirements for the building. He then explained that as the Clerk was not able to attend because of sickness and the Interim Clerk was on holiday, it had been agreed by the Councillors before the meeting that Paula Holmes would take the minutes for this meeting.

Cllr. Holmes read out a report from Cllr. Mike Tebbutt who was unable to attend the meeting in person. Cllr. Tebbutt had acted as Chair for one meeting in the previous year.

Cllr Holmes presented his report on the previous year and his recent election to the role of Chairman.

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr. Steve Draycott, Cllr. Jean Read, Cllr. Simon Stroud.

The apologies were accepted.

3. Declarations of Interest (for this meeting)

None

4. Annual Report of the Town Council

The Chairman gave a report for 2017/18.

5. Accounts for the Year Ending 31st. March 2018

The Chairman reported that the accounts for the year ending 31st. March 2018 had been approved by the Town Council at the meeting on 17th. May 2018 and these were now with the External Auditor, having been through the Internal Audit process.

6. County Councillor Report

Cllr. Allan Matthews presented a report. He mentioned a meeting to be held at Kettering Borough Council Offices on 4th. June 2018 about the weight restriction being temporarily lifted as it has been done in previous years (in the Summer months) so that tipper lorries going to and from the Trout Fisheries at the Birchfield Springs site on

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Rushton Road can travel through the villages of Rushton and Pipewell, to relieve some of the pressure on Desborough. This has to be negotiated each year.

A member of the public asked what business was allowed on the Birchfield Springs site. Cllr. Matthews replied that the site was solely for the development of trout lakes and any other business being undertaken there should be reported to Andrew Smith and/or Rob Harbour at Kettering Borough Council.

Another question was asked by a member of the public regarding the bridge repairs on the A6 bypass, who was paying for these? Cllr. Matthews responded that negotiations were still taking place.

7. Borough Councillor Reports

Cllr. David Soans gave a verbal report and explained that he was the Deputy Chair of the Planning Committee at Kettering Borough Council. This involves attending Planning Meetings and liaising with the Planning Department. The volume of paperwork associated with any planning application and meeting can be immense (often 100 pages) and every page needs to be carefully studied. Cllr. Soans spoke about specific planning problems which may affect Desborough, either directly or indirectly. The first of these was the Kettering East development - 5500 houses. If this development is not kept on schedule, then more pressure will be placed on other towns in the area to fulfil the housing obligations and therefore Desborough could be subject to further planning applications. The application to build at the land next to Watermill Close was refused and no appeal was lodged, the Gladman application for land off Rushton Road (South of Desborough) was refused, and the appeal made failed. The Ise Valley application was refused by KBC, but an appeal was made and the decision overturned at the Public Inquiry held. Cllr. Soans said he thinks this was the wrong decision. Cllr. Soans explained he is also on the Licensing Committee and the A6 Towns Forum. Cllr. Soans informed the meeting that he had used his Ward Initiative funding for the year on the Pocket Park, £200 for a Ranger Training Day and £800+ to Marlow House for some new equipment.

Cllr. Mike Tebbutt provided a written report which the Chairman read out, as Cllr. Tebbutt was unable to attend the meeting in person.

8. Reports from Local Charities

John Hodder gave a report on Desborough Community Development Trust (DCDT) and provided a written copy.

Helen Woods, Chair of Sunshine Preschool, gave a verbal report on the nursery which is based in the Recreation Ground on Dunkirk Avenue. Sunshine went through a radical change of management two years ago and has been rebuilt since then. It is now moving forward and provides a wonderful service for the town and Helen concluded by asking for support for Sunshine and its work.

John Kemp, Chair of Desborough in Bloom (DiB) gave a verbal report on DiB. He introduced it by saying DiB's aim is to provide more floral colour to the town through planting up tubs and hanging baskets around the town centre. John explained that DiB currently has 26 barrel planters, 4 half-barrel planters and 28 hanging baskets to look after which have all been replaced over the last three years. There are other planters which have been donated to DiB - the tyre planters near the Old Dairy site, and there is a herb tub outside the High Street Co-op. DiB also maintains the raised bed outside the

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Old Dairy site and has taken on the maintenance of the raised bed at the Fire Station in the last year.

DiB entered the East Midlands in Bloom competition for the first time in 2017 and was awarded a bronze plus two special awards for litter and weed control. It has entered again this year and is hoping to achieve a silver.

Since 2012, 35000 daffodil and other bulbs have been planted with another 6000 planned for this Autumn.

The new bed outside Hazeland House was a joint KBC/DiB venture with KBC planting it up and DiB taking over its maintenance. A bird bath has been put in place by DiB, with the help of 'The Shed' (Desborough Men's Shed).

As part of DiB's commitment to the town, it has taken over the maintenance and rejuvenation of the small garden in Gladstone Street. This is a project which will take two or three years to complete. Alongside this, DiB is working with KBC to brighten up the grassy area in New Street.

John concluded by giving thanks to every organisation which has supported DiB and its volunteers, because DiB couldn't survive without them.

Mark Goff, Chair of Desborough Men's Shed Association, now known as 'The Shed', gave a verbal report on the work 'The Shed' does in the community. He explained it is a registered charity, but more than that it is a community asset.

It opens three days a week at the moment - Monday, Wednesday and Friday, but is looking to extend its hours.

There is a well-fitted workshop and skilled people who are always willing to pass on their experience and help. There is also the clean area which is used for artwork and chatting.

There are 32 members currently, which is quite a number considering it has only been open for 18 months. More would be welcomed of course.

People can (and have) drop-in to have tools sharpened and small repairs undertaken. A chair was fixed very quickly there recently.

'The Shed' has to raise around £8000 per year to keep it running so there is always a need for grant funding.

Linda Burnham presented a report on behalf of the Desborough Royal British Legion Women's Section.

Jo Taylor (on behalf of Ben Murphy-Ryan) presented two reports, one on behalf Desborough & District Twinning Association and the second on behalf of The Charter of European Rural Communities.

Geoff Crowther gave a verbal report on Marlow House (Vine Community Trust). Geoff thanked everyone in the town who supports Marlow House. He explained it is always a difficult task to raise funds to run Marlow House and with Northamptonshire County Council's current financial problems the Meals-on-Wheels service support will be withdrawn at the end of the year. This service is very important to many people and Marlow House will continue to provide fresh meals which are hot and nutritious rather than microwave meals of which it is rightly proud. The meals cost £5-6 and can be delivered to anyone who would like them as many times a week they would like. It is not just about the meals, but the contact with people who may not have many other visitors, or none at all.

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9. Reports from Local Organisations

Shelagh Hodder presented a report on behalf of Friends of Desborough Library.

10. Representations from Members of the Public

A resident asked about the state of Dunkirk Avenue and whether anything was going to be done about this. Cllr. Matthews responded as County Councillor, stating that any improvement to the road wasn't likely to happen until after the Trout Fisheries development was complete. He went on to say that with the County Council in financial turmoil it is almost impossible to say what will happen in the future. He did add that he would like to see Princes Avenue resurfaced as it is in a very poor state.

Kevin O'Brien introduced the Rothwell North Working Party (RNWP) and why this development would have an enormous impact on Desborough. RNWP is trying to get 2500 signatures on a petition by the end of June 2018 to force a debate at Kettering Borough Council (full council) to discuss the need for the 'haul road' (this is a basic track which is put in place to cope with construction traffic while the site is developed) to be built before any development takes place. If this is not done, then construction traffic is very likely to come through Desborough to access the site. He urged everyone to sign the petition which will be available in shops and businesses in the town. Cllr. Linda Burnham commented on the safety of the children attending Montsaye Academy and her grave concerns if construction traffic went through Rothwell, especially if it used Greening Road. Rick Hill spoke about the 'strategic link road' and pointed out there were already 12000 vehicles a day using the road.

Kevin O'Brien then went on to speak about the Desborough Speed Watch needing volunteers. The next campaign will start on 21st. July, for six weeks. The way this usually works, is there is one-week on then one-week off so Desborough would have the camera for three weeks out of the six. There is a training day on 14th. July at Wootton Hall in Northampton. If a lot of people expressed an interest, this could possibly be moved to Desborough.

Mark Goff spoke about the need for more litter bins around the town and asked who funds these and who empties them. The Chairman spoke about Bentley Marshall, who is a street cleaner employed by Kettering Borough Council to cover Desborough and surrounding villages. Many residents have commented on her work and how the town looks so much better because she does a good job. A discussion took place about Desborough having its own street cleaner who could be trained in weed spraying as not enough of this takes place. It was established that Kettering Borough Council maintain the playing fields but Northamptonshire County Council sprays the weeds. Joan Taylor pointed out how high the weeds were on Pipewell Road and how difficult it can be for children to walk along the footpaths because of this.

A discussion about potholes came about and Cllr. Matthews took the opportunity to explain the process for claiming for damage caused by these. The process can be lengthy but needs to be followed with a report being made as soon as possible with full details of where the pothole is. This can be done via Street Doctor. It is important to note that a claim form has to be requested as there is no automatic process which sends one out when a damage report is made. Refunds can take three months to process.

John Hodder asked about the current situation regarding the one-way system. Cllr. Gil Holmes reported that he been in discussion with the project manager from Kier who now

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wants to engage with the Town Council now that it is quorate. There needs to be a lot more discussion on this and the Town Council will be setting up meetings to start this process. The cost would be down to Desborough Town Council and this would need to be discussed with the residents once there was a clear plan of what was needed and how much it would cost.

Paula Holmes asked if everyone who had spoken and for whom she had a name would mind if their names were recorded. This was acceptable.

Cllr. Gil Holmes thanked everyone who had attended the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

..... **Chairman**

..... **Date**