

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting for Desborough, held on 30 May 2019 in Desborough Library, High Street, Desborough

Present:

Councillors:

Jean Read (Chair), Steve Draycott (Vice-chair), Linda Burnham, Irene James, Phil Sawford and Gil Holmes

Also in attendance:

Cllr. Allan Matthews, Northamptonshire County Councillor, and members of the public.

Chair's Announcements

Cllr. Read welcomed everyone to the Annual Town Meeting and ran through the health and safety requirements for the building. She explained that as the Town Clerk was not able to attend, it had been agreed by the Councillors before the meeting that Paula Holmes would take the minutes for this meeting.

Apologies for Absence

Cllr. Claire Archer, Cllr. Jo Taylor, Cllr. Jo Watson, Cllr. Bill McElhinney, Cllr. Bill Keys and Cllr. Simon Stroud.

1. Minutes of the last Annual Meeting held on 24 May 2018

Cllr. Read asked the other Councillors attending to agree on the accuracy of these minutes as she was not at the meeting last year. The minutes were agreed.

2. Report of the Chair covering the activities of the Town Council

Cllr. Read asked Cllr Holmes to present a report on the previous year when he was Chair.
(Appendix 1)

3. Report from the County Councillor

Cllr. Allan Matthews gave a verbal report on what had been happening at Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) over the last year. He began by stating that NCC had been described as the worst Council in the Country, having had two s114 notices issued on it. He went on to say that things are now changing and it is a different situation with a budget overspend in 2017/18 being turned into a budget underspend at the end of the 2018/19 financial year. This has come about by a change in approach and the appointment of two commissioners, new leadership and a new cabinet plus the sale of One Angel Square. The Council is now much more heavily scrutinised and its spending monitored more closely.

Cllr. Matthews went on to say that he would not cover the library situation in his report as it is well known by many in the town.

He pointed out that there are around 20 more Councils in a difficult financial position, Somerset for example, and that one problem is that they are cash poor but asset rich although these cannot be sold off.

Cllr. Matthews then turned to the future and talked about the situation with the Unitary Authorities which are now planned to come into being in 2021. There is a potential issue as NCC should have elections next year as the five year term will have been completed so a decision about what to do - whether to call County elections alongside the District and Parish ones happening next year or to extend the term to six years (which would require a change in the election rules). He explained that the number of Councillors on the Unitary Authority would drastically reduce although the actual number has not yet been decided. He also pointed out that the areas represented by each Councillor would be much larger because of this reduction in number which could prove problematic for Councillors.

Cllr. Matthews went on to say that on a personal level, he is concerned about meeting scheduling as most County meetings are held during the day but at a District and Parish level, meetings are often in the evenings, to enable those who work to attend. If Unitary decides to have daytime meetings it could impact heavily on Councillors as those who work would not be able to get to these.

He mentioned that there could be an attempt to offer 'services' to Districts and Parishes to run, but when this would happen is unknown at this time.

Cllr. Matthews concluded with letting everyone know that the latest Library Bulletin had been issued ten days ago.

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4. Reports from Kettering Borough Councillors

Cllr. Read stated that as of 6.30pm the only report received from our four Borough Councillors was from Cllr. Mark Dearing (Appendix 2).

5. Reports from groups and organisations in the town

Linda Burnham presented a report on behalf of **Desborough in Bloom** (Appendix 3).

John Terry presented a report from **Desborough Town Juniors Football Club** (Appendix 4).

Edward Short, President of **Desborough Town Bowls Club** gave a verbal report on the club, to introduce and clarify what the club is about.

This year it is the 50th. anniversary of the club which is open to everyone to use. Kettering Borough Council own the site with the club managing it and also maintaining the green which is one of the best in the county. The green is open to use from Monday to Friday from 2.00pm to 4.30pm and then again from 6.00pm till dusk. The club's aim is to help people develop their interest in bowls and to socialise.

There are currently 132 members - full adult membership is £52 per year, £10 for social membership. The membership has been declining - there were 300 members at one time - and this year there has been a membership drive during May where anyone could come along to try it for free. (Equipment is provided and all anyone needs to bring with them is a pair of flat shoes.) This has led to 10 new members signing up which is a good result. Normal green fees are £2.50

The club is well respected in the County and has a very good youth policy in place which has led to three Juniors going on to play for England. In May of this year, Rebecca Wigfield played for England at the Atlantic Championships in Wales where she and her partner in the Women's Pairs won a bronze medal. Well done Rebecca, well done to the club - it's a great game.

Rick Hill gave a verbal report on behalf of the **Rothwell North Working Party** (RNWP) which was formed two years ago to put pressure on Kettering Borough Council (KBC) and Persimmon, the developer, about the problems with this planned development of 700 houses. There are two main concerns:

1. The Strategic Link Road (SLR) which is intended to be a bypass for through traffic wishing to get to the A6. This road is through the middle of the development, with all the problems this would cause the traffic such as a 30 MPH speed limit, pedestrian crossings and so on - which would dissuade traffic from using it and so the traffic would go through the towns.

The SLR is planned to join the B576 near the medical centre where the junction would be controlled by traffic lights - these would lead to traffic jams, not improve traffic flow.

RNWP has suggested that the SLR run along the edge to the north of the development where there would be no need to have a 30 MPH speed limit.

2. RNWP has asked for the SLR to be built first, or at the very least a 'haul' road put in place to take the construction traffic however Persimmon is adamant that the SLR will only be built once 250 houses have been built. Everyone moving into a new home before then will be affected by the noise, dirt etc.

The most sensible way forward is for the SLR and roundabout to be built first.

A petition of 3553 signatures (23% of the electoral population of Desborough and Rothwell) was presented to KBC but every attempt to engage with the Borough Council and/or Persimmon and offer suggestions is being ignored.

There are more than 12000 vehicles a day on the road with all the associated pollution yet KBC has refused to take this into account, despite new Central Government guidance on environmental issues.

Mr. Hill was asked by a resident why RNWP were not getting much joy from KBC and Persimmon and the answer is that KBC state the application is 9 years into its process so there has been too much work been done to change it now. He went on to say that this is a lesson for KBC Planning Committee members to closely review such applications and consider every point before approving them. He did say that Martin Hammond of KBC seemed sympathetic to the problems but as an Officer he has an advisory role to the Council.

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Mr. Hill concluded by saying that he had contacted the four Borough Councillors and only received one response, from Cllr. Dearing, and that was only after two months and a chase-up email, and the reply did not hold out much hope. Rothwell Town Councillors were originally on RNWP but had withdrawn from the group, but Desborough Town Councillors are still very much involved as is Cllr. Jim Hakewill who as an independent Councillor has remained on the working party and is heavily involved. Mr. Hill clearly stated his disappointment with the lack of support from Desborough's Borough Councillors.

Linda Burnham presented a report on behalf of the **Desborough Royal British Legion Women's Section** (Appendix 5).

Cllr. Read presented a report from the **Community Shed** (formerly known as Desborough Men's Shed) as Gary Berridge was unable to attend the meeting (Appendix 6).

At the end of the presentations Cllr. Read said what a brilliant job our community groups are doing and there was a round of applause given.

Cllr. Phil Sawford agreed that these groups do so well but equally how sad it is that so few people know about them - he himself was unaware that it was the 50th. anniversary of Desborough Town Bowls Club. He went on to say that with the local newspaper being weekly not daily, leaflets often thrown away without being read and the less than helpful side of social media at times, he wondered in the Desborough Town Council website could have links to these groups. Cllr. Read agreed and Cllr. Holmes asked the groups present to send in their details to the Town Clerk.

A resident asked why no Borough Councillors had turned up to this meeting as what was happening with the s106 money.

Cllr. Matthews commented on the development of 304 houses on the Ise Valley where the current plan for where the estate came out onto Rothwell Road (B576) was for a T-junction - his view is this is ludicrous. He said he had asked about a roundabout being built instead but he felt this is very unlikely.

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. Read thanked everyone who had attended the meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

..... **Chair**

..... **Date**

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Appendix 1

Chairman's Year 2018/19 - Gil Holmes

This year started with me on my own with a sick and absent Clerk and a part time Admin Assistant.

Achievements over the year

Personnel

Appointment of Graham Thomson as the new Clerk from Sept 2018

Finance

Setting of a proper budget which took the precept from down from £280k to £75k

The banking has moved now from Barclays to Unity Bank and we have invested into the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund so that we are earning interest on our accounts.

The budget also allocated funding in support of the Library being retained and a community hub established.

Policies

Totally rewritten the

Standing Orders

Code of Conduct

Finance regulations

Most of the policies that a town council should have are now in place and are in plain English.

Community

The council now actively encourages the inclusion of volunteer residents onto the councils working parties and groups where their skills and experience add to the mix for the work involved.

Meetings are now conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect and in a civilised manner with everyone having their say.

The Pocket Park - has seen its pond refurbished and now has a sound footing established for its continuance.

The Neighbourhood Plan - is moving ahead and will have more work completed to reach its adoption.

Citizen Awards - 3 have been given out so far and the council looks forward to many more in the future.

Grants - Scouts have had an award towards their outdoor storage building, Parkrun has had an award for various equipment including a defibrillator, but more applications from community groups are needed.

Rothwell North continues to be strongly represented by Councillors from Desborough and the fight continues.

The Fish Farm and The Lorries - a court date is finally set for the end of September/start of October on the breach of the CPN. This council and councillors have been unrelenting in their pressure on KBC to get something done.

Personally I have been in contact with officers and officials at KBC virtually every month since I was elected back in November 2017 and have been providing evidence to KBC and advice to residents throughout.

The Future

Finally I'd like to thank all of my fellow councillors, family and friends for their encouragement, advice and support over the past year.

And I congratulate Jean Read and Steve Draycott the newly voted in Chair and Vice-Chair and wish them well for this year to come.

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Appendix 2

Cllr. Mark Dearing
Loatland Ward KBC

I have been approached by Mr. R. Hill regarding the planning application for Rothwell North and his concerns over the environmental issues.

I am liaising with officers at planning to find out more and understand the implications stated by Mr. Hill. Whilst this is not my ward there are many students and pupils who attend Montsaye Academy School from Desborough.

I have also dealt with a fly tipping issue in Desborough on behalf of a member of the public who raised his concerns over possible asbestos within the rubbish dumped.

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Appendix 3

DESBOROUGH IN BLOOM (DiB) REPORT 2019

When Desborough in Bloom started in 2012 the then Committee little thought that 7 years later its projects would have expanded so greatly from the 15 large tubs that we bought with a grant from the George and Arnold Yeomans Feakin Charitable Trust and the Maud Elkington Trust. Today we have about 29 self-watering tubs, 4 half size tubs 2 planters and 28 hanging baskets, plus troughs in various locations. The tubs are planted twice a year – with bulbs and appropriate spring plants for winter/spring and annuals and perennials for summer/autumn. Over the past 2 years we have tried to divide the town into areas and introduce colour themes to the various areas. The 2 tubs on Dunkirk Avenue were introduced to commemorate the Armistice and the tulips planted in them were called Armistice. The tubs are now planted with 2 roses (our metal poppies were removed twice) called Loving Memory. We hope that these 2 tubs will continue to commemorate all those who fought – and died – in all wars.

Another early project was the planting of 5,000 daffodil bulbs in the grass verges of the approach roads to the town. This has continued each November with a total of 51,000 having been planted so far and another 6,000 on order for this November.

Several years ago, with permission from the owner, we took over the overgrown raised bed next to the former dairy in High Street, cleared it and replanted with various perennial flowering plants, bulbs and small shrubs. Two years ago, we assumed responsibility for planting and maintaining the large brick planter in front of the Fire Station in King Street.

About 18 months ago, with KBC's help, a bed was cut out in front of Hazeland House in the High Street and planted to give all-year-round colour and interest. A fine bird bath completed the project.

The latest ongoing project is in Gladstone Street where we have taken over the former Memorial Garden from KBC and are developing it as a Sensory Garden. Much work has been undertaken by volunteers but, in particular, by one of our committee members and one stalwart volunteer who have met early on Monday mornings for many weeks. Two large wooden planters and three benches have been installed, unwanted shrubs and ivy cleared in preparation for appropriate replanting, and a small bed has been created and planted with lavender and a gigantic grass.

We have organised several "DIG" Competitions (Desborough's Inspirational Gardens) to find the town's most interesting and colourful front gardens and we have presented winners with prizes to acknowledge their efforts. For the last 2 years, we have celebrated this event and our AGM by meeting together in the town – in 2017 at the Ritz and in 2018 at the Indoor Bowls Club.

Two years ago, and with 6 weeks to prepare, we were awarded a Bronze Certificate for our entry in the EMIB (East Midlands in Bloom) Competition, and last year gained a Silver. We applied to take part again this year, but, because of Committee changes and other reasons, reluctantly we have decided to withdraw and concentrate on making the town as beautiful as possible. However, we hope to take part again next year.

On Tuesday 28 May 2019, a large pagoda should have been sited at the top of Havelock Square and will shortly be planted to give, we hope, a cascade of colour.

We often say that DiB is a Community organisation that relies on the Community for its practical and financial support. As we have extended our operations, this is even more relevant. We are very grateful to Desborough Town Council for its grants, to the hard-working DiB Committee and to the (very small) band of active Volunteers who turn up to enable us to continue fulfilling our original aim, namely, to bring more floral colour and hence to brighten up Desborough.

Thank you to all who continue to help us in any way.

We apologise that we are unable to be present at the Town Council meeting on 30 May 2019. One of our Committee members, Linda Burnham, will read out our report for us.

John Kemp – Chairman/Secretary Mary Payne – Chair of Tubs and Baskets Committee

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Appendix 4

Report on DTJFC for Desborough Town Meeting 30/05/19

Hi everyone. My name is John and I am the Secretary of Desborough Town Juniors Football Club.

This is Craig who is our Vice Chairman and also Manager of our U13 Lions Team.

We are based at Desborough Leisure Centre and currently run 5 teams at U11, 2 at U13, U 14 and U15 age groups. We have over 90 players registered with us and we are always looking for new players.

We are hoping to add 2 new teams for next season at U8 and U9 and we are working hard to find new players to fill those squads. Our teams all play in the Weetabix Youth League and complete against teams from Kettering, Corby and the surrounding area.

Desborough Town Juniors Football Club became a Charter Standard Club in 2009 and we have upheld this status since then. What this means is that we abide by the F.A. rules and regulations, all of our Coaches and Managers are qualified to at least FA Level 1 and all have up to date Criminal Record Checks, Safeguarding qualifications and Emergency First Aid certification. We also have a very efficient Child Welfare Officer who makes sure all our certifications are up to date and that all players are treated equally and fairly.

Our 'motto' is 'Football for All' and we aim to offer the chance to participate to players of all ability at as low as cost as possible. This presents its own challenges as costs for league fees, referees, hiring the all-weather pitch at the Leisure Centre for training through the winter and providing match kit for each team are all considerable and always seem to be increasing.

We are therefore always looking for sponsorship and to obtain grants wherever possible and we always aim to participate in events like the Carnival and the Gala Night to raise funds but also to let people know about our Club and to raise our profile in the local community.

Overall, our Club is lucky to have some very committed people involved and we feel that we are moving in the right direction, although there is obviously no room for complacency and we will always look to improve what we offer wherever possible.

Finally I would just like to thank the Town Council for this opportunity to let you know a bit about our Club.

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Appendix 5

Desborough Royal British Legion Women's Section

The Women's Section has seen a revival over the last 12 months with 6 new members joining us.

Following the re-structuring forced upon us by the Royal British Legion Headquarters we lost about 20 members, but we have weathered the storm and our membership is 83 to date. We said farewell to Sue Panter, one of our long term committee members, who had decided to move to the coast to be nearer her family.

We have also changed our meeting venue, from the Community Centre to the Heritage Centre.

Our members seem to like the new venue, it being more friendly, and with softer seats.

We have activities and varied speakers each month, and of particular interest was a talk and slide show by one of our members of her holiday in Cambodia. The talk by Betty West on Nance Wake the WW1 Agent was extremely interesting and very well received, as was the talk given by an Air Ambulance Volunteer.

We also have quiz evenings, Coffee Mornings, Harvest Supper, and of course our Christmas Party, and this year members were entertained by a group consisting of Members and Committee Members. A good time was had by all!!

Once again we held a fashion show, but moved venue to The Ritz in Desborough. By the evening of the show all seats were sold out, and it was standing room only. It was an excellent fundraising night, and we intend to make this an annual event.

Our members always help with the Poppy Appeal Door to Door Collection, but with the town growing so much it is now becoming impossible to fill all the vacancies. This coming November we will probably cease the House to House collection and focus on the shops, clubs etc.

Our Standard Bearer Sonia Beale has won The County Competition for the last 10 years, and has also had success at Regional and National level and we are very proud of her. Sonia and Linda Burnham always looks extremely smart when parading our Standard at Remembrance tide.

Some of our members attended a Drumhead Service and 12 hour Vigil at St Giles church on 8 August to commemorate the start of the final 100 days of WW1. Branch members participated in the service and the Vigil. Sonia paraded the Branch Standard at the Drumhead Service and again at the end of the Vigil the following morning. It was a very moving service and was very well attended.

We always support the Christmas Tree Festival, and have had some success in the competition over the years – with a special mention this year.

Our Committee members work very hard throughout the year and enjoyed a thoroughly deserved, very pleasant evening out at our local Indian restaurant in February. They also help with the catering for our events and donate many items for our Raffles and Coffee mornings. They are a brilliant team and we are very grateful to them all for their continued help and dedication to our Branch.

We try to keep in touch with all our members each month, and any member who is sick is visited with a gift of flowers.

It is pleasing to report the Desborough Royal British Legion Women's Section is the largest branch in the County and is still thriving after 72 years.

All in all it has been a busy but enjoyable year and we look forward to the next year, whatever that may bring!!

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Appendix 6

Desborough Men's Shed – as now known as The Community Shed

The Shed continues to grow from strength to strength, and has adopted the name of 'The Community Shed' as a way of encouraging female membership, although the Charity Commission title remains the same.

In the past year membership has grown to approximately 50, and now includes several females. The Shed is now open 4 days a week 10 -4 on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. There was a trial run of opening Saturday mornings, but this was sadly discontinued due to lack of take-up. However, this could be looked at again if further interest is demonstrated.

There is the possibility of The Shed being used by a sewing group on Thursdays, although this is still in the discussion stage. Some folding tables, purchased using a grant, would also be useful for this purpose.

The Shed moved premises at the beginning of 2019 – to a single unit the other side of Tailby's Yard. This new unit is larger, and has the added bonus of better natural lighting which is far preferable to working under fluorescent lighting. This was needed throughout the year in the previous units.

The artists now have a platform gallery under the roof windows, which is also better than relying on artificial light.

The Shed offers a place to complete personal projects using the numerous tools and machines available, many of which have been very kindly donated. As new members join, they frequently bring new skills which can be shared with other members.

The Shed was contacted by Social Services within the few months to ask whether an adult client with mental health problems who was also very isolated, could attend The Shed to carry out some practical woodwork, with assistance where necessary. The Shed advised that they would need to meet the client in advance, but that if suitable and with the proviso that a carer could remain on site during visits, he would be very welcome.

Additionally, another young man regularly attends with a family member to gain further experience in woodworking skills, which he hopes will help him gain the apprenticeship he is applying for. The Shed undertook various community projects during the year, the most recent being to install the pagoda for DIB in Havelock Square this week, and they will soon be re-creating the float for the Carnival Queen.

The Shed participates in regular Desborough events such as Gala Night, when they offered freshly roasted chestnuts, cooked on a barbecue they had restored; The Forties Day when they offered several games to entertain children at no cost to parents; and they had a stall on the Rec for Carnival Day to promote the Shed and offer for sale some products they had made.

Gary Berridge
Treasurer & Trustee
Desborough Men's Shed