

DURSLEY TOWN MEETING

21st May 2019

MINUTES of the PROCEEDINGS at the ANNUAL ASSEMBLY of the DURSLEY TOWN MEETING held at Kingshill House, Dursley at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, the 21st day of May 2019.

PRESENT

Councillor N Grecian, Town Mayor in the Chair

68 people were present and the names of 37 Local Government Electors are recorded on the attendance sheet.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Town Meeting held on 22nd May 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Town Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings at that meeting.

2. MATTERS ARISING

In relation to the minutes dated 22nd May 2018 the following points were noted:

Item 10. i) (page 5), the request regarding a safe footpath at the bottom of Whiteway from the woods was made by the Town Council to Gloucestershire County Council, there had been no further news on this.

Item 10. ii) (page 5/6), Gloucestershire County Council have funding for a real time travel board at the May Lane bus station, it is anticipated that this would be installed this year.

Item 10. iii) (page 6), the Council installed a new CCTV in the town; there is now greater coverage of the town centre, the War Memorial Recreation Ground is included and arrangements are in place to cover the new Long Street Car Park when it opens. The system is helping the Police to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour incidents.

Item 10 iv) (page 6), the Kingshill Pub was sold and is now operating as 'The Ranchers Steakhouse' and pub, alongside 'Mobility Disabled', a business selling wheelchair accessible vehicles.

3. REPORT OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The Town Mayor reported upon the activities of the Town Council during the past year (outlined in the Annual Report 2018/19), including the engagements that he had attended as Mayor, working alongside Councillor Mandy Woodward, the Deputy Town Mayor; the many community events that had taken place over the year, including Festive Dursley, the Walking Festival, Dursley in Bloom winning Gold and taking part in the Cotswold Hare Trail; developing the new Long Street Car Park, a major project for the town; the successful referendum for the Dursley Neighbourhood Development Plan, resulting in it becoming a statutory planning document; the continued improvements in our play areas and in the town centre, including installing a new CCTV system, as well as the new decorative railings on Castle Street; awarding grants

to local community groups/organisations and partnership working, including working with Stroud District Council to train our staff to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for dog fouling incidents .

The Town Mayor thanked everyone involved for all their hard work over the year and expressed what an honour and a privilege it had been to serve as Town Mayor.

It was noted that Councillor Neil Grecian had been re-elected to serve as Town Mayor and Councillor Mandy Woodward had been re-elected to serve as Deputy Town Mayor for the 2019/20 period. Both were very much looking forward to continuing to serve the community of Dursley; the Council would be continuing to invest in a range of projects to benefit Dursley, over the forthcoming year the Council would be monitoring use of the new car park closely and working to develop a new Visitor Information Centre for the town.

Those present were encouraged to visit the Council's website to find out more www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk.

4. RESIDENTS FROM OUTSIDE DURSLEY

It was resolved to allow residents from outside Dursley to speak at the meeting.

5. REPORTS OF COUNTY COUNCILLORS

The Town Mayor welcomed County Councillor Patrick to the meeting.

It was noted that Councillor Patrick had provided a full written report for the meeting which was available in the 2019 'Councillor & Community Group Reports' document (page 1/2).

6. REPORTS OF DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

The Town Mayor welcomed District Councillors Cornell and Fryer to the meeting.

It was noted that District Councillors Cornell, Fryer and Hall had all provided full written reports that were available in the 2019 'Councillor & Community Group Reports' document (pages 3-5).

In addition to the reports, Councillor Cornell spoke about the Market Town Initiative fund and what more could be done, they are keen to work with the Town Council to investigate and talk to people to find out what the local issues are in terms of the local economy and how businesses can be supported e.g. mixed retail/residential, private rental sector, how we can keep jobs in the town.

Councillor Cornell also spoke about the GFirst LEP climate change conference she had attended and whether there was enough interest locally to hold a public meeting/workshops in Cam/Dursley? If there was enough interest, the area could set up an Action Network and/or a Carbon Neutral Group.

It was noted that in some areas Town and Parish Councils had declared their own Climate Emergency.

Councillor Fryer reported on Stroud District Council's Housing Committee and that the delivery of the repairs and maintenance function had been taken back in house, a move that is expected to improve customer service, save money and ensure quality.

Councillor Fryer also reported that there are now 9 housing tenant Neighbourhood Ambassadors across the district; if you or someone you know, is interested in becoming a Neighbourhood Ambassador please contact Michelle Elliot at Tenant Services, Stroud District Council.

7. PRESENTATION FROM MR ROBIN SMITH, TECHNICAL DIRECTOR FOR ST MODWEN HOMES

The Town Mayor welcomed Mr Robin Smith, Technical Director for St Modwen Homes.

Mr Smith outlined his background and that of St Modwen, explaining that the company is very proud of the Littlecombe scheme; it is close to his heart, as he had been involved in it since 2010 and is the Chairman of the Littlecombe Community Company.

Mr Smith explained that he works closely with the landowner, Stroud District Council and their Principal Surveyor, Nick Stewart.

Mr Smith's presentation covered the following points:

- St Modwen's values as a company. It was noted that the company are experienced in redeveloping contaminated land sites, such as Littlecombe was.
- The history of Littlecombe and the various planning applications. It was noted that Phase 1 of the scheme was undertaken by Bloor Homes (S.05/0498/OUT), St Modwen's 1st plan was developed in 2013 and planning permission approved May 2016 (S.15/0476/OUT).
- Progress on the site, including recent footage filmed by a drone fly over. It was noted that currently Phase 2 of the scheme is complete and the build for Phase 3 is progressing (S.18/0050/REM).
- Buyer Profile. It was noted that 43% of purchasers were aged 26-35, 45% bought for location, 52% used Help to Buy and 37% bought for design.
- The next Phase. It was noted that Zone F is the next Phase to be built, it is the part of the site located behind the new Long Street Car Park, a planning application is just about to be submitted (10 private homes, 1 social/affordable home), they hope to have a connection to the new Car Park. There is a Zone E which is in the early stages of the development discussion process, planning permission has not been sought yet but is expected to be submitted later in 2019. Zone E is located on land that runs adjacent to Windsor Road/the Knapp properties (plan in presentation shows location).
- Connections/Timescales for Completion. It was noted that the first affordable homes on this Phase are being handed over this month; the footpath linking Phase 2 and 3 across the new bridge is opening at the end of June 2019; the road through the scheme, which is complete, is not opening to the public until late 2020, this is due to site safety as building work is ongoing; there will be a footpath from the site that comes out on the Knapp between properties (currently gated off), there will not be a connection to Windsor Road due to the slope of the land; the last homes are expected

to be completed 2022-2023, depending on the market.

- Section 106 Contributions. It was noted that obligations regarding education, highways improvements and public open space contributions have been met and released, 10% affordable housing to due to be handed over this month and a footpath link contribution is due now; the community facilities contribution (£355,000) is due by completion of the 194th home; to date only 28 homes are in occupation and, based on current market projections, the contribution would not be made until 2022, when released it will benefit the Chantry Centre, Dursley Tabernacle, GL11 Community Hub and Dursley Community Centre.

Following the presentation, the following questions/issues were raised.

The pavements/curbs at Long Street are very high making it difficult to manoeuvre with pushchairs/wheelchairs this needs to be checked.

Mr Smith agreed to investigate this concern and get the levels checked.

Drake House is almost empty, what is being done to market this site to businesses, it has space and a car park? The tenancies are too restrictive and they are not encouraging tenants.

Mr Smith confirmed that he is not involved in this side of St Modwen's business, although it is not in any current plan, in the future they would consider demolishing the building.

In relation to the Section 106 community facilities contribution (£355,000), concerns were raised about the agreement and the trigger point of 194 homes; there are significantly more than 28 homes occupied within the agreement area, it is around 180. There were concerns with the boundary/red lines being used for the trigger point, that they were not correct.

Mr Smith explained that only 28 of the homes that are in the boundary 'red lines' falling under the Section 106 legal agreement are occupied, the Bloor Homes built in 2016 were not included, that Phase had different contributions that were all paid e.g. Library, Bowls Club.

In relation to the Section 106 agreement, the contributions and when they are due, Mr Smith confirmed that St Modwen report to Gloucestershire County Council and Stroud District Council and are working within the wording and boundary lines of the legal documents; the developer is delivering and both the District and County Councils have confirmed the position.

Mr Smith explained that when the trigger is reached, St Modwen release the community facilities contribution to the Stroud District Council Planning Department, it is Stroud who pay the money out, liaising with Cam Parish Council and Dursley Town Council. The Town Clerk confirmed that information is listed on the Councils website – www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk .

District Councillor Cornell confirmed that the decision about where to allocate the community facilities contribution was made by Committee last July, following a long process and consultation with the communities.

In relation to the main existing footpath which had been closed for some time due to the building work, it was pointed out that there used to be notices at each end outlining the timescale for the closure and diversion, the notices are missing.

Mr Smith confirmed that the footpath would be reopening at the end of June, notices should be present at each end; any future schemes/closures would include all the necessary notices.

Concerns were raised about the capacity of local schools and Doctors to cope with greater demand from families and a growing population, given 43% of purchasers were aged between 26-35 (as explained earlier).

It was noted that this is an issue for Gloucestershire County Council, they make decisions about how Section 106 education contributions are allocated and to which schools. In relation to St Modwen and Littlecombe, it was noted that an education contribution was included within the Section 106 agreement. Mr Smith did not have any more information on this.

The Mayor, Councillor Grecian, informed the meeting that as Chair of Governors at the Dursley C of E Primary Academy, he was aware that the school had been making improvements and changes as a result of this, changing from a 1.5 form entry to 2 form entry school.

Mr Smith was asked to clarify which route on the Current Phase Plan (shown during presentation) was the cycleway/greenway? A further question was asked about whether the cycleway would be suitable for prams, wheelchairs to get to the Vale Hospital Allotments?

Mr Smith confirmed that the blue dotted line on the Current Phase Plan was showing the cycleway, the red one shows footpaths; the cycleway is set to open when the road through opens (late 2020), it would be suitable for prams, wheelchairs travelling through the Littlecombe site, Mr Smith could not comment about the cycleway's suitability/connections elsewhere/offsite.

Mr Smith could not remember what the red line at the top of the plan was and would need to confirm whether this was indeed a footpath.

The Mayor thanked Mr Smith for his presentation, Mr Smith stayed on to the end of the meeting and was available to answer any further questions on an individual basis.

8. TO RECEIVE PRESENTATIONS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

The Mayor introduced the Annual Assembly of Dursley Town Meeting 2019 'Councillor and Community Group Reports' document, distributed at the meeting.

Included in the pack: **Cam & Dursley Youth Forum, Chantry Centre, Cotswold Vale Talking Newspaper, Dursley in Bloom, Dursley & District Community Association, Dursley & District Good Neighbours, Dursley Neighbourhood Police, Dursley Town Trust, Dursley United Charity, Dursley Welcomes Walkers,**

Festive Dursley, Friday Lunch Club, Great Western Air Ambulance, Henlow Court, Kingshill House, SDC Neighbourhood Warden, Stepping Stones Pre-School, Teens in Crisis, The Door Youth Project, Tyndale Arts, Vale Community Allotments, Vale Vision.

Those groups present were invited to add any key points not already included in the published document. No further reports were given.

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for contributing, highlighting the great amount of positive work in the town that is down to hardworking, committed volunteers.

9. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE CAR PARK COMMITTEE

Councillor Ackroyd gave an update report relating to the new Long Street Car Park at the old Reliance House site.

It was noted that the project had unfortunately suffered several delays, these relate to an issue with a retaining wall and the need to set up a party wall agreement, which has since been resolved, and the ongoing wait for lighting columns, the car park can't open without them. The car park is expected to open by the end of June.

It was reported that, following feedback, the flow of traffic in the car park had been altered; the Council recently appointed the company District Enforcement to monitor the ANPR cameras, to prevent misuse; the car park is a long stay (23hr), free to use with no permit scheme; Council received a £40,000 grant from Stroud District Council towards the Car Park, as part of the Market Town Initiative Fund as well as a £10,000 rebate for business rates.

A question was raised about the parking permit scheme operating at Sainsburys and whether this would continue when the car park opens?

The Town Clerk confirmed that the scheme is operated by Sainsbury's and is a matter for them, there is no link with the new car park.

Concerns were raised about parking on Lister Road and plans to paint double yellow lines, 47 cars routinely park along the road. The new car park may be used heavily by residents who can no longer park there and decide to park in the car park. If this happens it would limit the availability of parking for people attending evening events at the Chantry Centre.

It was noted that the double yellow lines are not definite yet and would not span the entire length of the road, they would only be at key places to improve safety e.g. junctions.

In response to a question from a member of the Cam and Dursley Youth Forum, it was confirmed that a bicycle shelter had already been installed at the new car park.

10. TO DISCUSS TOWN MATTERS GENERALLY

The following issues were raised by the audience:

- i) *Henlow residents like to participate in town events but it is very difficult to push wheelchairs into town, the pavement at Silver Street is a particular problem as there is a pinch point by the Oxfam shop, wheelchairs could end up in the road.*

The Town Clerk explained that this issue had been investigated with Gloucestershire County Council Highways in the past; it is not an easy engineering issue to solve unfortunately. The latest meeting was between the Town Clerk, County Councillor Patrick and the Highways Area Manager 3 weeks ago.

- ii) *Small local businesses require office space but it is difficult to find. Recently a local business attempted to buy the office space above TSB and had money to invest in improvements but was 'mucked around', enquiries were also made regarding the units at Littlecombe, but they heard nothing back – What can be done? They are now looking outside of Dursley for co-working premises and this happens a lot, this is a great shame, businesses are being ignored. The tenancies at Drake House are short term rents so are no good.*

The Town Mayor highlighted that the old Barclays Bank building, which was currently empty, may have some office space to rent above.

District Councillor Cornell recognised that there is a growing appetite for conversation about co-working space, it needs everyone working together to come up with a solution.

- iii) *The wi-fi speeds in the middle of Dursley need to be increased to help everyone including businesses, they are so slow and we are right next to the exchange!*

The Town Clerk had some knowledge of this and a small area in the town is particularly impacted. County Councillor Patrick offered to speak to those concerned after the meeting as Gloucestershire County Council are working on broadband issues in hard to reach places.

- iv) *The Cam and Dursley Transportation Group are having a meeting with Mr O'Neil the Operations Manager of Stagecoach, to discuss buses on Saturday 1st June 2pm at Cam Parish Council offices, everyone is invited.*

Everyone was encouraged to attend.

- v) *A Trustee from the Dursley Day Centre at 15 May Lane spoke about the dangerous corner by the Bus Station and The Old Spot, vehicles go too fast and the hedge is getting high. Elderly people cross from the Bus Station to the Day Centre and it is very dangerous, there should be an elderly people crossing sign.*

The Town Clerk had raised the issue with the Area Highways Manager, the sign was agreed and the Council office would chase the matter up.

- vi) *Could a one-way system be investigated for Dursley? It would also be beneficial for Highfields to have a one-way system, it is really dangerous, especially for those cycling to school.*

The Town Clerk confirmed that a one-way system for the town had not been consulted on and there were no plans in place to do so at this time; it would be better to wait and see what happens when the new road opens through Littlecombe first.

In relation to Highfields the Town Clerk confirmed that the issue could be raised with the Highways team at Gloucestershire County Council – a one-way system could work but there would need to be consultation with residents and the school.

vii) Concerns were raised about speeding vehicles in the town, cars travelling in and out of the town were going too fast, we want Dursley to be a safe place. Everyone needs to check their speed when driving.

The Town Mayor encouraged people to get involved with the Local Community Speed Watch Group, the group is always looking for volunteers, contact the Council office for more information.

The Town Mayor encouraged people to contact their local councillors if they had any issues or questions regarding the town at any time; everyone is welcome to attend monthly Council and Committee meetings which are open to the public. Full Council meetings are held at the Fire Station and Committee meetings at the Methodist Church meeting room, check the Council website for dates www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk.

11. LESLIE D GALE AWARD

The Town Mayor explained that the Leslie D Gale Award was instituted in 1994, as a tribute to the late Mr. Gale, who was the last Chairman of Dursley Parish Council and the first Mayor of Dursley, and who served the community in so many ways. The Leslie D Gale Award not only recognises longevity of service to the community but also impact.

The 2019 awards were announced as following:

The Leslie D Gale award for **Outstanding Service to the Community of Dursley** is awarded to **Mr Michael Doughty** in recognition of his long service and commitment to the town, for the vital part he has played over the years working with many charities and organisations including the Dursley Rotary Club, the Festive Dursley Committee, Dursley Town Trust, Dursley Welcomes Walkers, Vale Vision and his 12 years serving as a Town Councillor in the past. The award was accepted at the meeting.

The Town Mayor announced that the Leslie D Gale award for **Outstanding Service to the Community of Dursley** is awarded to **Mr David Durden** in recognition of his commitment and contribution to the Dursley Running Club, which he has helped grow to over 300 members, as well as the Dursley Rugby Club. The award was accepted at the meeting.

The Town Mayor announced that the Leslie D Gale '**Unsung Hero**' award for **Outstanding Service to the Community of Dursley** is awarded to **Mrs Pauline Darby** in recognition of her continued volunteering efforts with the Friday Lunch Club

which she has played a key role in for over 30 years. The award was accepted at the meeting.

The Town Mayor announced that the Leslie D Gale '**Unsung Hero**' award for **Outstanding Service to the Community of Dursley** is awarded jointly to **Doris Holbrook** and **Gwyneth Peglar** in recognition of their continued volunteering efforts with the Friendship Club and in the town. Arrangements would be made to present the award at the next club meeting.

The Town Mayor announced that the Leslie D Gale '**Unsung Hero**' award for **Outstanding Service to the Community of Dursley** is awarded to **Christine Barker** in recognition of the help and support she has given to children, young people and their families over the years, as well as elderly and vulnerable people through local clubs and the food bank. The award was accepted at the meeting.

The Town Mayor closed the Assembly at 8:26pm and invited those present to join him in some light refreshment

.....
Town Mayor

.....
Date

DRAFT