

DURSLEY TOWN MEETING

26th April 2022

MINUTES of the PROCEEDINGS at the ANNUAL ASSEMBLY of the DURSLEY TOWN MEETING held at Kingshill House, Kingshill Lane, Dursley, at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, the 26th day of April 2022.

PRESENT

Councillor S Ackroyd, Town Mayor in the Chair

38 people were present and the names of 24 Local Government Electors are recorded on the attendance sheet.

Apologies were received from County Councillor W Thomas.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the Town Meeting held on 27th April 2021 were confirmed and signed by the Town Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings at that meeting.

2. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the Minutes.

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 2021/22), including the forthcoming Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations and planned 'Picnic in the Park' event on 3rd June in the War Memorial Recreation Ground.

The Town Mayor highlighted the improvements undertaken in the town during 2021/22. This included the launch of the Visitor Information Centre trial at the Library, the installation of new play equipment at Highfields Play Area, accessing covid related government funding to help high street recovery, awarding a substantial sum in grant funding to a wide variety of community organisations and the appointment of a part-time Dursley Town Council Street Cleaner.

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, alongside fellow councillors.

Those present were encouraged to pick up a copy of Dursley Town Council's Annual Report at the meeting, which would also be posted online at Dursley Town Council's website: <https://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 FROM GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLOR

It was noted that County Councillor W Thomas had given her apologies.

A written report was included in the 2021/22 'Councillor & Community Group Reports' document (page 3), to be introduced under agenda item 8.

6. REPORTS FROM DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

The Town Mayor welcomed District Councillors Cornell, Patrick and Hall to the meeting.

It was noted that District Councillors Cornell, Patrick and Hall had provided full written reports that were available in the 2021/22 'Councillor & Community Group Reports' document (pages 4-5), to be introduced under agenda item 8.

There were no further reports and no questions raised.

7. TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM MR IAN PROCTOR REPRESENTING DIGITAL DURSLEY

The Town Mayor welcomed Ian Proctor from Digital Edge, representing 'Digital Dursley'.

Mr Proctor outlined his background and that of Digital Edge, a digital marketing company based above the Post Office in Dursley, as well as in Durham.

Mr Proctor explained that the company had been very keen to get involved in the business community when they arrived in the town, with a desire to create a similar business support network to the one up in Durham.

The presentation covered the following points:

- Digital Dursley is a free business and community support group for the town of Dursley.
- The website, <https://www.digitaldursley.co.uk/>, was purpose built and designed to support the town. It includes free access to business listings, job vacancies, business support resources, blogs, a business forum with chat function, a map function, latest news, and events listing.
- The group hold free breakfast business networking events on the 2nd Friday of the month in the Chantry Centre on Long Street. These events normally involve meeting new people and sharing information. The upcoming May meeting includes a visit from a Cornish business lecturer and entrepreneur.
- There is a Digital Dursley Facebook page.
- Other town groups, such as Dursley Welcomes Walkers, could use the events listing on the website to share information.

8. TO RECEIVE WRITTEN PRESENTATIONS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

The Mayor introduced the 'Councillor and Community Group Reports' 2021/22 document available at the meeting, which would also be posted online at Dursley

Town Council's website: <https://www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk/> .

Included in the pack: **Cam, Dursley & Uley Joint Woodlands Management Committee, The Chantry Centre, Churches Together in Cam, Dursley & District, Citizens Advice Stroud & Cotswold Districts Ltd, Cotswold Vale Talking Newspaper, Dursley & District Community Association, Dursley in Bloom, Dursley United Charity, Dursley Welcomes Walkers, Festive Dursley, GL11 Community Hub, Great Western Air Ambulance Charity, Kingshill House, Stroud District Council Neighbourhood Warden Service, The Door and Vale Vision.**

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

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 A BRIEF UPDATE FROM LOCAL COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS NOT INCLUDED WITHIN ITEM 8

i) **The Engine Cam and Dursley**

Charlie Marwood, a founding director of The Engine Hub CIC, was present and introduced people to this new business. Charlie explained that the Engine is about 'propelling new businesses with social purpose', helping to support local entrepreneurs and people launch the businesses needed to help the area thrive.

The following points were noted:

- The Engine set up its very own social enterprise pop-up business on the High Street 'The Heist' Escape Room.
- The Escape Room was a new entertainment venue for the town launched in December 2021 and had been very well received since, with 200 games booked and 850 people visiting from within a 10 mile radius.
- In May, the Engine and Escape Room would move to a permanent home on the high street with new premises above the Intersound music shop at 52 Parsonage Street, Dursley.
- The Heist would shortly be replaced by new game 'The Conspiracy', which would run out of the new premises.

ii) **Dursley After Hours**

Danae Savvidou and Doina Cornell, as representatives of Dursley After Hours, outlined information on the following upcoming free events organised by the group:

- Witchcraft in England 1500-1700 – All you ever wanted to know about witchcraft but were too afraid to ask – with Dr Peter Elmer, Friday 29th April 2022 7:30pm at the King's Head, Dursley.
- Much Ado About Dursley – Theatre Festival under the Market place Saturday 30th April. The programme runs from 11:30am until 3pm with acts covering – Mikael Pedersen, Shakespeare in Dursley, Life at Listers and Ghost Pub. The event makes use of work undertaken as part of GL11's Oral History project.

10. TO DISCUSS TOWN MATTERS GENERALLY

The Town Mayor invited those present to raise any town matters to discuss.

The following issues were raised by the audience:

i) Bus services

A resident and member of the Cam and Dursley Transportation Group informed the meeting that the new Stagecoach Bus Timetable for Stroud and Dursley, effective from 24th April 2022, had been published. The service routes covered are the 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69 and 165.

It was raised as a concern that the new services do not use the Bus Station.

A resident added that people are using the bus services and are being left stranded in Gloucester for example, 2 hours in one case. It was felt that Stagecoach were using Covid as a excuse for missing services.

Following a question from the audience it was confirmed that the timetable does not include school buses.

A resident shared their experience of a late bus cancellation related to service 65 which had resulted in their child being stranded after school in Stroud.

The Town Clerk explained that the Council would continue to work alongside County Councillor Thomas and to support the Cam and Dursley Transportation Group to lobby Gloucestershire County Council and Stagecoach on the ongoing issues with bus services and links to the Cam and Dursley Rail Station.

The Mayor highlighted that Stagecoach had said that the company would cover the taxi fares related to stranded passengers, everyone was encouraged to continue to report issues and complain directly to Stagecoach.

No further town matters were raised.

The Town Mayor reminded everyone that members of the public can raise matters with the Council at any time.

11. LESLIE D GALE AWARD 2022

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 2022 awards were announced by the Town Mayor.

The Leslie D Gale award for **Outstanding Service to the Community of Dursley was awarded to Vijay & Tika Patel**, following a nomination by local resident, H Atkinson in recognition of their hard work running the Newscentre store in Silver Street since 1988. Vijay and Tika Patel had recently retired, after more than three decades of 6am starts and trading in the heart of our town centre, handing over the reins to new owners. During lockdown, the couple showcased the true meaning of community spirit by offering home delivery services to those in need of essential items, serving as a lifeline to vulnerable regulars. They provided a valuable service to the residents of Dursley, seven days a week over many years. The town would miss Tika’s famous vegetable samosas on a Friday.

The Leslie D Gale award for **Outstanding Service to the Community of Dursley was awarded to Eric Torrington**, following nominations by local residents Steve Woodward and Sue Angus, in recognition of his voluntary work around tackling the litter problem. Eric had collected tens of thousands of items of litter during his regular litter walks, with some dating back to the 1980’s and also “adopted” a number of lay-bys to highlight the problem of vehicle thrown litter. Eric continues to campaign for companies such as supermarkets, to clean up in and around their premises and encourages local schools to “do their bit” by educating young people about litter and clearing litter generated by students.

The Leslie D Gale award for **Outstanding Service to the Community of Dursley was awarded to Jude Groves**, following a nomination by the Mayor (Cllr Symon Ackroyd), in recognition of her work setting up the Pop-up Garden Café at the Chantry Centre 18 months ago. The Café at the Chantry Centre continues to open on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, 10 till 12 and is run and staffed by volunteers, who are rostered by Jude on serving and baking duties. Jude attends extra mornings to ensure stocks are ready for the following day and without her time the Café venture would not have been the success it is today.

The Leslie D Gale award for **Outstanding Service to the Community of Dursley was awarded to Helen Judge**, following a nomination by the Mayor (Cllr Symon Ackroyd), in recognition of her work during Lock Down. Helen helped with the Covid vaccinations at the Vale Hospital and became involved with the Dursley Food Bank, attending three times a week, being available for delivers and also dispensing to those in need. Helen also managed the administration of the annual “Flower and Produce Show” held at the Chantry Centre each year and continues to do so, persuading Judges and marshals to help in the successful running of the event. This was one of the very few community events that took place during the Covid crisis and allowed people to get back to socialising in a safe environment for the first time in six months. Helen’s husband accepted the award on her behalf as she was unable to attend the meeting.

The Town Mayor closed the Assembly at 7:33pm.

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Town Mayor

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Date