**BRADLEY STOKE**

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

**10 May 2017**

Minutes of the TWENTY FIFTH Town Meeting of Bradley Stoke held at Bradley Stoke Jubilee Centre, Savages Wood Road, Bradley Stoke, at 7.00pm on Wednesday 10 May 2017.

A total of twenty two people were present at the meeting.

Councillors attending: Tom Aditya, John Ashe, Roger Avenin, Keith Cranney, Elaine Hardwick, Paul Hardwick, Brian Hopkinson, Tony Griffiths, Gurmit Gupta, Franklin Owusu-Antwi, Ben Randles, Andy Ward and Marion Ward.

Staff attending: Graham Baker, Pat Louca, Sharon Petela, Rachel Pullen and John Rendell.

The Mayor of Bradley Stoke, Councillor Elaine Hardwick welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1 Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Daniel Hardwick and Arthur Lau

**2 Appointment of Chairman of the Town Meeting.**

Councillor Elaine Hardwick, as Mayor and Chair of the Town Council, was proposed by Councillor Andy Ward to chair the meeting, seconded by Councillor John Ashe, carried unanimously and duly took the chair.

1. **Minutes of the Previous Town Meeting 11 May 2016**

The Minutes of the last Town Meeting were taken as read and their adoption was proposed by Councillor Ben Randles, seconded by Councillor Franklin Owusu-Antwi, proposal carried.

**4 Reports from Committees**

The Annual Report was received *en bloc*. and the full Report is attached to these Minutes.

**4.1 Chairman’s Overview**

Councillor Elaine Hardwick, Chair of the Council gave the following report:

It has been a pleasure to chair the council for the past year. I have been involved with many groups and organisations and have attended a variety of events and activities (including Manavata celebration, the refurbishment of the Leisure Centre, the Chinese New Year and the Bradley Stoke Community School Celebration evening).

It has been a fantastic year with lots going on – the Christmas Fair at the MS Therapy Centre was an eye opener. This is such a valuable facility carrying out amazing work. There was no Carnival last year as the organisers took a break – this year the Carnvial will be back in full swing once again.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for their support over the past year, especially Councillor John Ashe for all his helpful advice in ways of the council.

**4.2 Finance Committee**

Councillor Franklin Owusu-Antwi gave the following Finance Committee report:

Madam Mayor, Chairs of Committees, fellow councillors, members of the public and the Press.

It has been an honour to serve as chair of the Finance Committee this year and to work with some fantastic committee members. The Finance Committee has engaged in a series of meetings during the year and made decisions and recommendations to Council on all financial and policy matters under the discretion of the Town Council.

The Committee were faced with other challenges this year, but managed to overcome them through the relentless work of our fantastic finance staff and committee members. Among the key areas were the setting of charges for the Council’s three main facilities at the Jubilee, Baileys Court and Brook Way Activity Centres for 2017/2018.

Probably the most significant was the setting of the 2017/18 Precept as council has always endeavoured to keep this as low as possible to maintain or improve the current level of services through careful forward planning. The council works for the interests of the community and in January 2017, following much discussion which included amending some budgets, agreed a minimal 0.5% Precept increase for 2017/2018.

Finally, we have a tremendous financial system in place and the progress, outcomes and expenditures of all committees are open for public scrutiny via our published minutes on the Town Council website. This is reinforced by the independent Internal and External auditors who have again given us a clean “bill of health” which wouldn’t have been achieved without the hard work of committee members and council staff and my sincere thanks and congratulations goes to them all. I hopefully look forward to a smooth and stable financial position ahead.

I am happy to have had the opportunity to chair the committee for the past year.

 **4.3 Leisure, Youth and Amenities Committee**

Councillor Marion Ward gave the following Leisure Youth and Amenities Committee report:

It’s been a great honour for me to chair the Leisure Youth and Environment Committee this past year, never having chaired anything before it has certainly been a very interesting twelve months.

One of the greatest pleasures chairing the LYA committee is that we are able to offer financial support to many of our towns community groups, through our grant funding programmes. We have seen a wide range of groups and not for profit organisations springing up, offering support, companionship and perhaps to share an interest or to promote a sport, many of these groups have approached the committee for grant funding.

The Committee looks after the community buildings within the town and ensures they are maintained and updated, recently the committee has approved the upgrading of some of the centres rooms by fitting acoustic ceiling tiles, enabling everyone to enjoy the use of the facilities.

Following on from a public survey, the committee has been looking at ways to improve the Brook Way site. The committee took in to account the opinions of those residents who responded to the survey and has now proposed a combination of the most popular options that were received. Combined usage of the site involves removing the existing unused hard courts, adding more parking and extending the existing green area to create a new grassed space.

Hopefully this combination of additional parking spaces along with the creation of the new green area will offer a solution to some if not all of the site parking issues, as well as offering a new grassed communal space within the town.

I would like to thank all my fellow committee members for their help during my first term as a committee chair, also the professional team of council officers and staff who have supported the committee and its members during the past year.

**4.4 Planning and Environment Committee**

Councillor Gurmit Gupta gave the following Planning and Environment Committee report:

It’s been an immense experience to chair the Planning & Environment committee over the past 12 months. Lots of things have been happening in the town in respect of development (including the Metrobus and the Frome Valley Relief Sewer works).

There is a growing theme amongst home owners to extend their homes rather than moving and this forms the bulk of the planning applications received during the year. I have noticed this myself having lived in the town for 15 years.

**5 General Discussion**

None

Councillor Elaine Hardwick thanked all for attending and, there being no other business, the meeting closed at 7.20pm. Those present were then invited to assist in cutting Bradley Stoke Town Council’s 25th Anniversary cake.