**BRADLEY STOKE**

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

**8 May 2019**

Minutes of the TWENTY SEVENTH Town Meeting of Bradley Stoke held at Bradley Stoke Jubilee Centre, Savages Wood Road, Bradley Stoke, at 7.00pm on Wednesday 8 May 2019.

A total of nineteen people were present at the meeting.

Councillors attending: Tom Aditya, Keith Cranney, Fabrizio Fazzino, Tony Griffiths, Elaine Hardwick, Paul Hardwick (outgoing councillor), Nikki Hallur, Michael Hill, Franklin Owusu-Antwi, Ben Randles and Andy Ward.

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

The Mayor of Bradley Stoke, Councillor Ben Randles welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**1 Appointment of Chair of the Town Meeting.**

Councillor Ben Randles, as Mayor and Chair of the Town Council, was proposed by Councillor Elaine Hardwick to chair the meeting, seconded by Councillor Franklin Owusu-Antwi, proposal carried. Councillor Ben Randles duly took the chair.

**2 Apologies for Absence**

Councillors John Ashe, Roger Avenin, Brian Hopkinson and Ed Rose

1. **Minutes of the Previous Town Meeting 9 May 2018**

The Minutes of the last Town Meeting were taken as read and their adoption was proposed by Councillor Elaine Hardwick, 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 Ben Randles, Chair of the Council gave the following report:

Hopefully some of you will recognise and know me as the Chair and Mayor of Bradley Stoke. While I sit down to write this final message to you as the current Chair, it is an opportune time to reflect on what has been a wonderful privilege and an immense year. Becoming Chair of the Council and as such, Mayor of Bradley Stoke, is likely one of the best privileges that could be bestowed upon anyone in our town and I have not forgotten that, at any point during my time in office.

I moved to Bradley Stoke back in 1997 and in that short time I have experienced our town through many different snapshots in my own life, schooling, university and job hunting; which has ultimately driven me to get involved as best I could. Through meeting many of you, it has become ever more apparent as to~~,~~ the numbers of you who get involved in your own way, be that running a Football team, running a Nursery, running ‘Friends of’ groups or raising funds for charity and much more. Bradley Stoke is only the Town it is today, because of the people we have here, who are continually striving for better and keeping me, my colleagues and others honest in our roles.

As Chair, you are essentially the face of Bradley Stoke and I hope that is something I have done well and that people deem to be tasteful and respectful of our Town. I have also been mindful that this is my home town, it has been for over 20 years and likely for many of you even longer.

Bradley Stoke is a Town filled with dynamism and I firmly believe that its best years are yet to come. The opportunity this Town holds for you to make your mark, however big or small, should not be underestimated or taken for granted. Still being a ‘new’ town in some respects, I’m of the belief that we should concentrate our efforts on what we want to become, how we can make our own lives and that of others better.

One of the biggest lessons I have learnt from holding the position of Chair, is that most problems can be overcome when people want to work together, adopting an ethos that champions togetherness, helpfulness and mindfulness. I am very proud to have held this office on behalf of all our residents and especially those who embody and champion these values in their own way.

I hope that all of you have had an enjoyable but interesting year like myself and I wish you all the very best for the future. Bradley Stoke is your town, it is your opportunity, it is your home, and I look forward to seeing how you all build the Bradley Stoke of tomorrow, where we are a beacon of opportunity.

**4.2 Finance Committee**

Councillor Tony Griffiths gave the following Finance Committee report on behalf of Councillor John Ashe (the Chair of Finance Committee) who was unable to attend this evening’s meeting:

John Ashe has had the honour to serve as chair of the Finance committee this year. He wishes to express his thanks to the Town Council officers, employees and fellow committee members for helping to ensure that once again Bradley Stoke has been managed efficiently and within budget.

The Finance Committee meets 6 times a year and they make decisions and recommendations to Council on all financial and policy matters under the discretion of the Town Council. One of our main tasks is ensuring that Town Council spending is properly regulated and stays within our budget targets, and this has been substantiated by clear audits for a number of years.

John Ashe also has the very great honour of being the longest serving Town Councillor having been elected in 2004. He first moved to Bradley Stoke with his wife and young twin sons in 1992 and there is nowhere else that he would prefer to call home. There have been many changes over that time including building the new town centre and leisure centre expansion.

During this time, the Town Council also recently partly funded the new skate park which has been a huge success and councillors decided to own our town council offices rather than pay out rent on a lease, and with the help of a public works loan, we built new offices at the Jubilee Centre in 2012. This will have a long term positive financial impact on the community as, instead of paying for an ever increasing rent which was £28,927 p/a in 2011/12,  we now pay £26,111 p/a for a 2.05% fixed rate Public Works Loan which is not only less than the rent, but when fully repaid in November 2021, the building will belong to the people of Bradley Stoke rent and mortgage free.

One thing that John Ashe is very proud of that hasn't changed that much over the years is the Town Council precept, which is our portion of your South Gloucestershire council tax bill. In 2008/9 the cost was £111.50 p/a for the average band D property and this has only risen to £115.78 p/a in the current 2018/19 year. This is a total increase of 3.8% over the whole 10 year period and when you take annual inflation into account, your bill has actually fallen in real terms.

John also proudly reports that there will be NO increase for 2019/20 which we have achieved by continually looking to get the best value for our money and always getting three quotes for any required expenditures in excess of £1000. To this end, we have trained our own staff to carry out maintenance/repair work and we have also increased our services to the town over the years including a mobile cleansing operative who empties all 74 litter bins which are owned by our council, so greatly reducing the charge we would otherwise have to pay South Gloucestershire for this service. In addition, the operative also makes sure that any bins that are overflowing in between normal emptying periods, are dealt with and these may include those which belong to South Gloucestershire Council and which would not normally be our responsibility. If you see litter anywhere in the Town on public land, please phone our office and we will have it removed. More recently, we have also trained our staff to use a graffiti removing machine which is a new service we now provide to residents to remove graffiti from garden walls etc. It is completely free of charge but the house owner will need to sign a disclaimer.

As you may also know, we have three activity centres located at Baileys Court, Brook Way and the Jubilee Centre and council has tried very hard to keep them affordable over the years, especially for local community groups and clubs, when compared with other local providers. Although this does mean the facilities are partly funded by the local community though the precept, our aim is to further support the development of the local community and its activities.

John Ashe has no doubt that Bradley Stoke will have another successful financial year ahead.

**4.3 Leisure, Youth and Amenities Committee**

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

It has been a great privilege to chair the Leisure Youth and Amenities committee (LYA) this last twelve months, I have been a member of this committee for the last six years and have witnessed the great work that the committee does both as a member and later as the chair of the group.

The LYA committee is perhaps due to its remit the committee that works closest with local organisations and community groups, something that has always been of great interest to me.

We are indeed fortunate to be well represented by organisations covering many areas of interest and a vast range of activities in our town, such as groups from diverse cultures, conservation and the environment, senior groups and of course the youth within our town.

Changes have also been taking place this year as I’m sure you will have noticed on the Jubilee Green, sadly the Beacon play scheme has not stood the test of time well and needs replacing and updating, this is a work in progress. So far, the bridge has been replaced and a new set of wooden play equipment installed and a new community shelter will be installed in the near future. The skate park has continued to be popular and has evolved to include a larger youth building allowing more activities to take place that are not necessarily related to the skate park itself, It has become a real asset to the town attracting a wide range of ages both young and the not so young!

The LYA committee’s remit also covers the youth work in the town Our youth participation worker Graham Baker has been instrumental in taking youth work in our town forward via projects both large and small, as well as targeted youth work both on and offsite and for this I am very grateful, its been a pleasure working with him.

Our Town benefits from a wide range of community buildings and these have continued to provide valuable community spaces that are well used both privately as well as by community groups, uniformed groups and various sports organisations.

I would like to say thank you to all those groups, organisations and people who attended our committee meetings, applied for grants and to those that have done great voluntary work in our community.

A massive thank you also to the officers and staff at the Town Council who work tirelessly behind the scenes supporting not only the committee but the town and its residents.

A resident from Bluebell Gardens asked about the cost of the skatepark saying that it was a well-used asset for the community and the wider area. The resident was informed that the skatepark initially cost in the region of £250,000 to build and since then the site has been developed further with new container/buildings being added. South Gloucestershire Council contributed grant funding to the tune of £200,000 towards the cost of the initial build. The resident then asked how much the Precept was. Their attention was drawn to the financial graphs in the Annual Report.

The resident also asked about the role of the Bradley Stoke Town Council, Youth Development & Participation Worker. Their attention was drawn to the comprehensive youth work report in the Annual Report.

**4.4 Planning and Environment Committee**

Out-going Councillor Paul Hardwick gave the following Planning and Environment Committee report:

It has been an honour to Chair this committee over the past year.

The Metrobus has now been completed and appears to be a great success. The next stage is the Cribbs Patchway Metrobus Extension which involves the railway bridge in Gipsy Patch Lane. This will cause some disruption to the surrounding area over the coming year.

The planning application for the drive-throughs at the Willow Brook Centre has been turned down by the planning authority.

Work on the Filton Airfield development site has just commenced.

Thanks to everyone for their support and assistance over the past year.

A resident from Bluebell Gardens commented that they always encourage people to use the Metrobus and they were pleased to hear that it is successful.

**5 General Discussion**

5.1 A resident from Bluebell Gardens thanked the Town Council for making use of sound equipment to ensure that the meeting was audible to all those attending. The resident suggested that the Town Council use this equipment for all meetings.

5.2 A resident from Bluebell Gardens commented that they were pleased to see that a noticeboard had been installed at the Willow Brook Centre (WBC) but it was a shame that it took so many years to achieve this. The resident asked why the noticeboard was not inside the building. The Deputy Town Clerk explained that the Town Council had been liaising with the WBC Management team and this was the site that they agreed to. Another resident commented that they had been promised a community noticeboard by the WBC many years ago. Councillor Tom Aditya commented that back in 2012, he had raised the need for a noticeboard at the WBC and he was pleased that this had finally happened. The Chair, Councillor Ben Randles commented that Town Councillors and local South Gloucestershire Councillors actively engage with the WBC on a range of matters, one being the recent letter sent by the Town Council regarding the new speed bumps that the WBC have recently installed and the ongoing problems that they are causing on surrounding public roads. Councillor Michael Hill commented that the recently installed speed bumps are actually acting as a dis-incentive to visit the Willow Brook Centre site as people are reluctant to negotiate the speed bumps.

5.3 Councillor Tom Aditya asked the Town Council to consider the installation of new bus shelters on Webbs Wood Road. This was noted and will be discussed at the Town Council Strategic Planning meeting in September.

5.4 Councillor Nikki Hallur asked about the petition raised by parents of Wheatfield Primary School regarding the installation of a pedestrian crossing on Brook Way. Councillor Michael Hill commented that this was also raised by residents during the recent election campaign. The Town Clerk explained that this matter was raised at the Bradley Stoke Town Council Planning & Environment Committee meeting in March 2019 and the Town Council has submitted a Highways Investigation Scheme Request Form to South Gloucestershire Council.

5.5 A resident from Snowberry Close asked the Town Council to consider the installation of new bus shelters at various locations in the town and not just on Webbs Wood Road. This was noted and will be discussed at the Town Council Strategic Planning meeting in September.

5.6 A resident from Bluebell Gardens commented that it was a long walk from where they live to get to the Metrobus stop and it would be easier if the bus stop could be moved closer to the traffic light crossing. The Chair, Councillor Ben Randles commented that councillors raised the long walk that residents would have, to get to the Metrobus stops, when the original planning application was submitted. Councillor Keith Cranney commented that buses are supposed to be for all, but older members of the community seem to be discriminated against with regard to access to public transport.

5.7 A resident from Juniper Way raised concerns about the level of graffiti in the town and whether the Town Council graffiti removal equipment has been used. The Town Clerk commented that the equipment has now been used on several areas of graffiti around the town. The Town Council pass on incidents of graffiti on utility boxes etc. to the owners of the equipment that has been graffitied but sometimes there is a significant delay in the companies arranging for the removal of the graffiti.

5.8 A resident from Bluebell Gardens commented on the lack of policing in the town and the delay by the police in responding to enquiries. Councillor Tony Griffiths commented that there is a very low crime rate in Bradley Stoke and there has been a delay in recruitment of a new PCSO for the town. The Town Council do part-fund a PC for the town. The Chair, Councillor Ben Randles commented that the Town Council engage positively with the local police beat team and suggested that the resident raise concerns at the South Gloucestershire Council, Community Engagement Forum where the police are present or raise concerns with the local police beat team. Councillor Keith Cranney commented that the resident should raise their specific concerns with Avon & Somerset Constabulary Chief Constable or the Police and Crime Commissioner.

5.9 A resident from Snowberry Close commented that the Town Council graffiti removal service could be publicised on Bradley Stoke Journal to get the message out to the residents. The resident also commented that they reported graffiti on a wall on Webbs Wood Road a long time ago, but it has never been removed and they suggested that councillors try to ascertain who owns the wall and then approach them to ask if the Town Council can remove it.

5.10 Councillor Nikki Hallur asked how residents can raise concerns about overhanging trees and hedgerows. Councillor Keith Cranney suggested that the first point of contact should be the South Gloucestershire Council Tree Officers.

5.11 A resident from Juniper Way asked the Town Council to consider installing electric car charging points on their sites. This was noted and will be discussed at the Town Council Strategic Planning meeting in September.

5.12 Councillor Elaine Hardwick suggested that the Town Council consider the installation of solar panels on their sites. This was noted and will be discussed at the Town Council Strategic Planning meeting in September.

5.13 A resident from Snowberry Close commented that the report by the Avon & Somerset Constabulary Local Police Beat Team on the back of the Town Council Annual Report was misleading as the PCSO mentioned was not on active police duty at the time. The Town Clerk commented that, as far as she was aware, the officer was still part of the local beat team at the time. She also commented that a new PCSO has now been recruited for the area.

Councillor Ben Randles thanked all for attending and, there being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.30pm.