

## **At the Annual Trowbridge Town Meeting held at The Civic, St Stephen's Place, Trowbridge on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 18.30hrs**

**PRESENT:** The Mayor, Councillor Denise Bates  
Councillors; Bates, Bridges, Cave, Cavill, Cooper, Hoar, Edward Kirk, Palmen, Piazza and Vigar (Cllrs Kirk and Vigar are non-electors).  
Officers: The Town Clerk, Lance Allan, J Weimar (Head of Resources), P Weimar (Civic Manager), H Bell (Head of Leisure & Information) Mrs A Quick (Minutes)  
Approx. 30 members of the Public.

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were recorded from Councillors Allsworth, Beaver, Bryant (non-electors), Hill, Emily Kirk (non-electors) & Lincoln.

### **2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- a) **RESOLVED to approve** as a correct record the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2019.
- b) There were no matters arising there from.

### **3. ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22**

The meeting received the annual report of the Council from the Leader, Councillor Stewart Palmen. Copies of the Annual Report are available from the Town Council.

Cllr Palmen reflected on the previous year;

*Last April we were just starting to emerge from lockdown. We now all feel safer with vaccinations but we know that Covid-19 has not gone away. Then two months ago Vladimir Putin invaded Ukraine. It's a long way from Trowbridge, but it doesn't feel that far away when we have Ukrainian people here as well as a large Polish community. And it has been inspiring to see how people have responded.*

*Meanwhile here in the town council, we have been getting on with implementing our strategy to serve the people of Trowbridge.*

*That strategy is to build:*

- a more active town,
- a greener town
- and a more vibrant town.

*So let's have a look at each of those three themes.*

*In terms of making Trowbridge more active, we have the ideal organisation. They are called .... Active Trowbridge. They have been busy helping to keep people healthy with coaching, school activities and holiday clubs. Sports facilities are also key to getting the town active. Progress has been made towards the 3G football pitch that local teams are so keen on. Wiltshire Council have finally made a commitment to fund a new Leisure Centre.*

*In terms of being greener, the Neighbourhood Services team have been focused on maintaining streets and green spaces that are worthy of Wiltshire's County Town. The road sweeper and weed ripper have been out across town carrying out routine cleaning and responding to residents' requests. The play areas are now well kept and the park looked lovely over the summer with new planting ideas tried out in several of the borders. The pond has also been brought back into action after issues with the pump and the Bandstand was used over the Summer by the "Starry Eyes" foundation and others.*

*Less visible but very important have been the negotiations with Wiltshire Council to transfer services to the town council. That means taking over green spaces that we do not already manage plus litter bins and cleaning, including graffiti removal.*

*Last but not least, we are making Trowbridge a more vibrant town. There are two statements you often hear in Trowbridge. One is that things aren't what they used to be ... back in the days of Bowyers and Ushers. The other is that lots of new things are happening: new shops, new cafes, new bars. And they're both true. The fact is that we can't turn back the clock. Over time, industries come and go. It happens everywhere. But what we can do is to build a great future for Trowbridge. Even better than the past. I firmly believe the best is yet to come. More people are coming to live in Trowbridge. More businesses are opening. More events are happening.*

*The Civic has been back in action, hosting many successful events. It has recently been used by Wiltshire Donations to help store and sort aid for Ukraine. It is so great to have such a useful venue in the heart of Trowbridge. And it's also great to have such a range of charities and voluntary organisations. So a big thank you to all of Trowbridge's wonderful volunteers. This town runs on community spirit.*

*The Museum has been reopened for nearly a year with large numbers of people passing through its doors. Schools have also been visiting and taking part in workshops in the new teaching area.*

*In the town centre, the Town Council has worked with Wiltshire Council on the Future High Streets Fund Projects which are giving Trowbridge a sixteen-million-pound boost. We'll see more pedestrian friendly streets, a new river walk along the Biss and a fantastic turnaround for the Town Hall. The ballroom is being restored to its former glory and the new director, Alan Wright, is leading the team as they plan to install studios for art and music and make the hall a real community asset.*

*The Christmas lights have been revamped and there are further plans for enhancements this year. The Town Council has also supported eight successful Weavers Markets. These are attracting more customers and businesses every time, supporting local independent traders and bringing more life back to the town centre.*

*This year will also see our big annual events return to the Park with our Active Festival in July and a Uniformed Services Day in September. Next year we will see more change as many of the plans I've just mentioned come to life.*

*This is a great town with great people. And over the next few years, we will transform Trowbridge into a county town that we, and all of Wiltshire, can be proud of."*

The Mayor also provided a summary of her year;

*"It has been an honour and privilege to serve as the Mayor of our County Town for this past year. Without a doubt, one of the highlights of the year is this evening, as it underlines the immense community spirit and charitable contribution of our town's groups and individuals. Activity that occurs year-round, often without recognition.*

*At my welcoming Civic Service held last July, I spoke about how our town responded admirably to the difficulties wrought by the Covid pandemic, and acknowledged the numerous ways in which members of our community rallied to offer support and comfort to others. My Mayoral year has deepened my appreciation of the wealth of community spirit within our town. I have had the rare and privileged opportunity to visit so many charities, voluntary groups and organisations. I thank all of them for the warmth of their welcome. I have been truly humbled by the immense commitment they have shown, and how individuals give selflessly and tirelessly of their time to support our local community. I wish to extend my thanks to them for everything they have done and continue to do.*

*Over the past few weeks, we have seen our town come together to support the people of Ukraine. A significant number of our townsfolk have contributed to charities supplying humanitarian aid and have volunteered their time. Once again, our caring and compassionate community spirit has come to the fore.*

*I have been proud to represent our County Town at civic events throughout the year, including the Battle of Britain Memorial Service, the Armistice Day Commemoration and the Remembrance Sunday Service. A substantial focus of my year has been to raise funds for two important local charities and I thank everyone who has supported these so generously.*

*I owe a great debt of gratitude to so many people for all the kindness, warmth, enthusiasm and support I have received over my term of office. It truly has been a wonderful year, meeting and getting to know so many compassionate and dedicated people who live in our County Town."*

## **4. OPEN FORUM**

Mr Mitchell posed two questions;

- 1) Conversion of the sweet shop to public conveniences is a problem if the multi storey car park is demolished in a few years' time. Any money spent could be lost in 4 years time. Cllr Palmen responded that there are no plans to destroy the multi storey in the next few years but you will need to pose this to Wiltshire Council. Town Clerk said that 2 years ago it had been suggested by WC as a Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) project but this is not being progressed and there has been a change of leadership at WC. It has been verbally confirmed by WC that they are not planning to demolish the multi storey.
- 2) The council will be going to the town for a vote regarding Doric Park. Will this be a serious vote addressing the spend over a 50 year period? This should be an official vote for the whole town using poll cards. Cllr Palmen responded that there will be more than just an online vote.

It was stated that before the election back in May I put out a motion for a FHSF working group, it would be great to get this going and to develop this further.

The FHSF is a Wiltshire Council project and they would need to address this.

Mr Fuller stated he is annoyed with the Council Tax demand this year. TTC must ask for grass and footpaths to be addressed before taking these services over. TTC is not spending enough on Football. Interest rates are increasing but you need to pursue Doric Park as soon as possible. Cllr Palmen stated that for Public Works loans we will need to do another consultation. Mr Fuller added that Trowbridge Town Football Club (TTFC) needs help to progress. As they have no lights or any stands with seats they need encouraging in terms of applying for planning to gain such facilities. WC were happy for there to be a housing estate behind the club with lights so it would be unfair to prevent the Football Club having floodlights. Cllr Vigar stated there is an application for football lights. The Football Club is looking for coaches so please get in touch with TTFC if anyone is interested.

Cllr Piazza asked about the issue of the TTC Strategy potentially reflecting more on the town centre, getting the working group up and running to look at supporting businesses.

Cllr Edward Kirk stated that if we go to public consultation for Doric Park there will be no difference in terms of the public loan. There is the possibility that this will be passed on to future generations. I would like public works loan board to look at this in terms of what the loan term should be. For a proper consultation we would need an external consulting company. Why is there a 99 year lease? It will have a depreciating value. The rugby club could potentially make TTC reinstate this land once this term is over.

The meeting closed at 19.06 hrs.

Councillor Denise Bates  
Mayor of Trowbridge

This meeting was followed at 19.15 hrs in Lansdown Hall, by the Annual Town Gathering at which the Mayor presented awards to nominated members of the public and organisations in recognition of their outstanding commitment to community activities throughout 2022/23.