



MINUTES OF

THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING held on Monday 24th April 2017 in the Town Hall, High Street, Stonehouse

The Report of the Annual Town Meeting held on 25th April 2016 was circulated together with the written Annual Reports received from Stonehouse Community Organisations and recipients of Grant funding.

Present:

29 members of the public, 11 Town Councillors, District Councillors, Chris Brine, Gary Powell (also Town Councillor) and Mattie Ross.

- **Welcome from the Chair of Council**

Councillor Theresa Watt, Chair/Town Mayor, opened the meeting by welcoming all those in attendance and inviting Town and District Councillors to stand up so residents present were aware of who they were.

- **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from County Councillor Lesley Williams, Councillor Paul Stephens and Gill Jennings, Town Clerk.

- **Annual Town Council Report**

Cllr. Watt pointed out that various reports had been made available for information including the minutes of last year's Annual Town Meeting, the Town Council's Annual Report for 2016/17 plus those received from community organisations and grant recipients.

Cllr. Watt summarised the contents of the Town Council's Annual Report for 2016/17. She encouraged residents to use the new facilities at Laburnum Recreation Ground: a table tennis table and resurfaced boules court. She advised that a full financial report was not currently available as, because of revised audit requirements, the financial reports need to be ready for the end of June and were in draft format. She introduced the Chairs of each of the Town Council's Committee. Ray and Ralph, the Town Council's Grounds staff were thanked for their hard work.

Cllr. Watt thanked all those who contribute to Stonehouse through their voluntary work. She advised that Stonehouse News needs deliverers for some roads. She highlighted the following town events:

- Sports Event, Laburnum Recreation Ground, 27th May
- Stonehouse in Bloom judging day, 26th July
- Summer Jolly and Horticultural Show, 13th August

- Gatehouse, Bonds Mill, (exhibition by Stonehouse History Group) weekend opening 2-4pm.
- **Presentation of the Civic Awards 2017**
The nominations received for the four categories were judged by an independent panel and Councillor Theresa Watt, Town Mayor, presented the following Awards with Councillor Neil Gibbs reading the citations:

- **Community Group of the Year: Stonehouse Lunch Club**

This group has existed for many years providing a monthly meeting place and three course meal for older residents in the Stonehouse area. It is run by volunteers described as wonderful, friendly and helpful: “Nothing is too much for them”. Special dietary needs are catered for, but more than this, the group provides warmth and companionship and a chance to contribute to the local community. Members of the group work on gardens which contribute to the success of Stonehouse in Bloom. The group’s helpers were described as “some of Stonehouse’s most unsung heroes” who “hugely deserve an award”.

Marie Archbold and District Councillor Mattie Ross collected the award on behalf of Stonehouse Lunch Club.

- **Business of the Year: Regent Street Garage (Darrell Long)**

This business is tucked away from the main High Street but nevertheless has built up a loyal customer base and excellent reputation over the last 17 years. Darrell offers an efficient, professional service and has been described as hardworking, reliable and knowledgeable. Vehicle owners in and around Stonehouse are grateful for this business.

Business of the Year - Highly Commended - The Bay Tree Café (Heather and Steve Philpott and staff).

Heather and Steve Phillpot’s business is a fixture on the High Street, providing good, freshly cooked food and a friendly welcome to residents and visitors alike. The helpful approach of staff is much appreciated; some of their regular customers have been visiting for 20 years.

- **Person Making an Outstanding Contribution to Stonehouse - Marie Archbold.**

Marie Archbold has been making a contribution to Stonehouse life for over three decades as leader of the 4th Stonehouse Brownies. She was nominated for her hard work, commitment and dedication to others. She has encouraged local girls to take part in many town events and projects such as Remembrance Day parades, Goodwill Fest and the Queen’s 90th birthday. Under her leadership Brownies have raised funds for local projects including the restoration of the War Memorial and Stonehouse food bank. She deserves recognition for both her own service to Stonehouse and for encouraging countless girls to take pride and interest in their community.

Person Making an Outstanding Contribution to Stonehouse - Highly Commended - June Hennell, MBE

June Hennell has worked tirelessly, as a volunteer, to help individuals, and their families, living with dementia. She set up Stonehouse Memory Link and gives up time on a weekly basis to work with families and give practical advice and tips. She ensures this issue remains in the public view, through public speaking and media appearances.

- **Young Person of the Year - Vicky-Wakefield Heath Youth Award - Charlie Webb**

Charlie Webb organised all aspects of a live music event to showcase local talent from designing adverts, booking acts to DJing himself on the night. He has been working with Stonehouse Youth Club and The Big Music Project, doing stage management work experience at the Ministry of Sound, London and University of Manchester Student Union. Because of the quality of his work and commitment he was selected as one of the Big Music Project's Lead Champions and attended a weekend residential in London. He is currently studying Music Production and Technology at SGS College in Stroud and planning the next music venture. He has shown great motivation, commitment and team leadership skills.

Charlie thanked Young Gloucestershire for broadening his volunteering opportunities.

6. Presentation by Neighbourhood Plan Group

Cllr. Carol Kambites outlined the development of the Neighbourhood Plan from designation of the Neighbourhood Plan area in 2013 up to submission of a draft Plan to Stroud District Council in March 2017. The submission draft Plan is out to a consultation organised by Stroud District Council until 17th May; hard copies are available at the Town Hall, library and APT and Cllr Kambites invited residents to send comments to the District Council. The next steps, of examination, referendum and the Plan being "made" were outlined. Cllr. Kambites then invited questions.

Jim Dickson asked if the District Council had to abide by the Neighbourhood Plan; he was Chair of the steering group that developed the Stonehouse Design Statement which was overruled by the District Council in relation to various planning decisions. Cllr. Kambites advised that a Neighbourhood Plan has a different legal status to a Design Statement and the District Council should use it as part of their Local Plan. The Committee Clerk advised that the Town Council would need to monitor the District Council's use of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Penny Sweet asked why a referendum was needed when the Plan was developed based on public consultation. Cllr. Kambites advised that the referendum was a legal requirement.

Cllr. Kambites advised that the Plan can only deal with land use planning issues; any comments received during public consultation about other matters had been passed to the Town Council.

7. Public Question Time

Cllr. Watt thanked John Jeynes and Pam Swain who were stepping down from the Events Committee of Stonehouse Community Partnership having organised Goodwill Fest for a number of years. Stonehouse Town Council would be taking over the organisation of this event and are looking for volunteers.

Cllr. Watt advised of the following staff arrangements from May 2017: Liz Lawrence working 2 days a week as Customer Services Administrator, job sharing with Caroline Field, Rachel Russell, 4 days a week, part time, as Committee Clerk and one new member of Grounds staff.

District Cllr. Mattie Ross thanked Liz Lawrence for her continuing service to the Town Council and for being an invaluable source of local knowledge. She also thanked the Town Council for their support of Bloomers Café which raises funds for Stonehouse in Bloom using the former Post Office building and Stonehouse Community Centre who lend tables for the café.

Penny Sweet suggested that the problem identified with funding Christmas lights identified in the Annual Report could be helped by asking residents as well as businesses to sponsor the lights. Cllr. Watt agreed that this suggestion could be considered at the next Amenities, Recreation and Tourism Committee meeting.

Cllr. Gary Powell thanked all those who supported Bloomers Café and the table top sales in the Town Hall as all proceeds went to Stonehouse in Bloom. He reported that some plants had been stolen and asked residents to question anyone they saw removing plants in public areas.

Jim Dickson asked for latest information on the route of the electric cable to the Javelin Park incinerator. Cllr. Kambites advised that the Town Council were fighting hard, with the support of County Councillor Lesley Williams, for the route to avoid Stonehouse High Street. There is no news of a decision, which was expected by the end of March. There is a need to keep the issue in the public eye. The three routes which have been proposed are a) along the High Street, up B4008 to Javelin Park, b) along Regent Street, through Stonehouse avoiding High Street, joining B4008 near allotments and c) by A419, Grove Lane, next to railway line to rear of Javelin Park.

Cllr. Watt gave a brief update on progress towards the re-opening of Bristol Road Station. A recent study has shown that re-opening could be viable, particularly if Charfield Station was also re-opened. A timetabling study by Network Rail is currently underway.

Cllr. Powell explained that the installation of a new bus shelter on the High Street outside Lobby's Tackle shop had been delayed as the contractors had arrived with the wrong colour shelter. Penny Sweet reported that the changes to the tarmac where new shelters had been installed made the pavement bumpy for those with mobility issues. Cllr. Kambites agreed this issue would be followed up.

There were no further questions raised so Councillor Theresa Watt closed the meeting. Those in attendance were invited to stay for refreshments.
