



STONEHOUSE
TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF

THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING held on Monday 25th April 2016 in the Town Hall, High Street, Stonehouse

The Report of the Annual Town Meeting held on 27th April 2015 was circulated together with the written Annual Reports received from Stonehouse Community Organisations and recipients of Grant funding.

Present:

33 members of the public, 11 Town Councillors, County Councillor Lesley Williams, District Councillors Mattie Ross, Chris Brine, Gary Powell (also Town Councillor), plus representation from Young Gloucestershire and Psalms.

- **Welcome from the Chair of Council**

Councillor Theresa Watt, Chair/Town Mayor, opened the meeting by welcoming all those in attendance and pointed out that various reports had been made available for information - the reports included last year's Annual Town Meeting, the Town Council's Annual Report for 2015/16 plus those received from the Community Organisations and grant recipients.

- **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Vicky Redding and Robin Waite.

- **Annual Town Council Report**

Whilst the Public Questions item on the Agenda was to be taken at a later part of the meeting Councillor Watt offered the opportunity to raise any questions relating to the Annual Report at this stage. There were no questions raised.

- **Presentation of the Local Council Award (Quality Status)**

Councillor Theresa Watt accepted, on behalf of the Town Council, the Local Council Quality Status Award presented by Alison Robinson, Gloucestershire Association of Parish & Town Councils.

Alison congratulated the Town Council on achieving the Award. This had been as a result of completing difficult processes to demonstrate the Council's good practice in governance, community engagement and Council improvement. Stonehouse was one of a very small number of Council's within the County to achieve Quality Status and Members of the Council, and the staff, should be very proud of their hard work.

- **Presentation of the Civic Awards 2016**

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 Pam Swain reading the citations:

- **Community Group of the Year: Hazelwood Day Centre**

This group of volunteers have been involved in helping to bring joy to other local residents every Wednesday, one volunteer having done so for 8 years. They organising transport to bring people to and from their homes, provide lunch, teas/coffees, and also arrange special trips for shopping or a trip on the canal in the Willow Boat. The Day Centre gives people the social opportunity to come together to chat.

The volunteers involved are Linda Bundy, Janet McCormick, Annette Gabb, Jean Jones, Liz Kennedy, Vera Clarkson and Val Wright.

Community Group of the Year: Highly Commended - Stonehouse Community Partnership

This group was recognised for their significant efforts to provide the community with many things including classes ranging from music to art to relaxation to meditation, the Arts Festival and a valuable involvement in the Goodwill Fest. All of has made the Stonehouse Community Partnership a very vital cog in bringing Stonehouse together as a community.

- **Business of the Year: Stonehouse Holistic Centre (Chris Handbury)**

This business was judged to be a worthy winner in the category. Chris Handbury is a specialist in Traditional Chinese Medicine and Energetic Health and as such his unique business not only supports the local community but also brings people into Stonehouse from a wide area. With the provision of effective, natural and holistic treatment a whole range of physical and emotional health issues are covered. Chris is passionate about helping people and as part of that mission he provides very affordable weekly Qu Gong lessons in the Community Centre.

Business of the Year - Highly Commended - Wynn's Café (Caroline Wynn)

This attractive High Street venue has, from the start, supported local events and become very much involved. Stonehouse In Bloom Committee is just one of the local projects that has benefitted from the café's support through the free of charge use of the upstairs meeting room and the provision of regular drinks to help workers in the Rest Garden maintain their energy levels.

- **Person Making an Outstanding Contribution to Stonehouse - Jacky Edwards**

Since All Pulling Together was set up Jacky's commitment to the project has been immeasurable, and despite attempting to retire in 2013 she is now Treasurer, Secretary and runs the Wednesday sewing group. Jacky is also involved Stonehouse Community Partnership, the Horticultural Show and for 40 years has played a big part in the Scout movement. Last year Jacky was the driving force behind bringing the Paint the Town Pink campaign to Stonehouse to raise awareness of breast cancer.

Person Making an Outstanding Contribution to Stonehouse - Highly Commended - Sheila Brown

This Highly Commended Award has been awarded to Sheila Brown in recognition of her daily efforts, for a number of years, single-handedly going around litter picking in her immediate area and beyond. Sheila also joins in all of the community litter picks and has recently become involved with the Stonehouse In Bloom Committee.

- **Young Person of the Year - Vicky-Wakefield Heath Youth Award - Jaz Smith, Levi Painter, Chloe Sergeant, Bailey Crowther, Liam Crother and Charlie Webb**

The decision was taken this year to give this Award to a group of young people who together have worked to help out at a number of community events including the Summer Jolly, the Goodwill Fest, community litter pick and other local activities. They also led a project to involve other young people in fund raising and raised £140 for Breast Cancer UK.

The most remarkable achievement this year has been their involvement with an art project the amazing results of which were filmed by the BBC and displayed in Gloucester Cathedral.

The Vicky-Wakefield Heath Cup was presented to two members of the group.

- **Young Person of the Year - Highly Commended - Greg Jennings**

Greg was judged to be an excellent role model for young people. He is wonderful example of someone who has contributed to, and benefitted from the Stonehouse Community Art Project. Through his involvement he developed a flair for designing and making clothes, many of his designs featured in last year's Fashion Show which he helped to organise.

Greg has also completed a Prince's Trust programme and a "We Do Print Enterprise" programme which led him to securing full time employment and within 6 months gained promotion.

6. Presentation by Neighbourhood Development Plan Group

John Jeynes, a member of the NDP Group, outlined the progress during the past year and also gave details of the work that is still being undertaken. A draft Plan is to be presented during May, followed by more public consultations and then a final Plan will have to be prepared and submitted to Stroud District Council. Once this has been finalised a Referendum will take place in June 2017 when residents will be given an opportunity to vote on the Plan and its content.

7. Public Question Time

A question was raised by Pippa Coombs regarding ownership of the Verney Fields. Councillor Theresa Watt explained that the Town Council had submitted a bid to have the land registered as a Community Asset but at present this was still being considered by Stroud District Council. It is thought a local farmer has an interest in some of the land.

Mrs Mattie Ross wished to express her concerns about recent comments on social media and stressed that the Town Council should be thanked for all they endeavour to achieve for the benefit of the residents and businesses in the town.

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