**Minutes of the Haslemere Annual Town Meeting**

**Thursday 27th April 2022 – Haslemere Education Museum**

1. The Mayor of Haslemere, Cllr Simon Dear, introduced the meeting and spoke about the recent loss of Cllr Peter Isherwood who has served the Council for 22 years and asked for a moment of remembrance for him. The Mayor introduced the Town Clerk who will give an update of what’s been happening over the last year.

2. The Town Clerk gave an update which included the following key points:

**Lion Green**

2021 saw events coming back to the Town, we held the inaugural car boot sale on Lion Green, followed by the Unlocked Event (which was a collaboration between several local organisations). In December the Town Christmas Carols were moved back to its old venue in the Town Centre and was a great success.

We do have a full calendar of events for Lion Green for this year. A flyer with further details can be found at the back of the room.

Please also come and support the Charter Fair - being held in the town centre on Friday 3rd June, after having had to be postponed from 2021.

**Governments Welcome Back Fund**

We secured funding from the Government’s Welcome Back Fund and Household support fund which allowed us to implement several improvements around the town, including:

• Picnic benches at Town Meadow

• Self-watering planters in Wey Hill

• Vegetation clearance, and sign cleaning across the Town

• Recyclable cups for local retailers

**Household Support Fund**

The Household support fund was designed to help local residents in financial difficulties, and between the end of December and the end of March we managed to distribute £27,500 to 87 households to help with food, bills and other essential items.

**Ongoing Projects**

We had a staff change and welcomed Martin Wellen to the team, so project work has continued with little disruption. The following projects have been completed:

• Installation of the heating cooling system at the Town Hall is completed

• The community orchard at Lion Green has been planted

• Solar Panels on the public toilets in Town Car Park have been installed

Improvements have also been made to our outdoor spaces, including:

• Installation Collards Lane shed

• New cargo net at Town meadow

• Replacement signage at Council’s open spaces

• Street furniture and bins repainted

• Work has started on Deer fencing at Clammer Hill allotments.

**CiL Funds**

the Council is holding a significant amount of CiL funds – Community Infrastructure Levy - (payments we receive from developers).

The Council has a CiL working party and would welcome community ideas as to how the funds could be spent. For example this year we have awarded £5,000 to the pavilion renovation at Beacon Hill football club. Please contact Deputy Town Clerk, Pippa Auger to find out more.

**Neighbourhood Plan**

The Haslemere’s Neighbourhood Plan was adopted on 21 November 2021 and is now used by Waverley Borough Council to help determine planning applications. Neighbourhood Plan Policies have already been cited as reasons to refuse some planning applications.

**Pathways Community Centre**

The Council has renewed its licence on the Pathways Community Centre in George Denyer Close. Although the space hasn't been used as intended by the Job Centre, it has been used by a range of other organisations.

This includes Surrey Community Action who are running monthly Energy Clubs offering free impartial advice to residents to help them manage energy costs.

We are also about to rebook the National Careers Service who offer free careers, CV writing and job search skills.

In addition to this we hope that the premises may be used to support Ukrainian refugees, perhaps as a social centre or space to provide English lessons.

**Ukraine Refugees**

we are aware that a number of families are now with their hosts in the Town. We are having regular meetings with Waverley, Surrey and other town councils to discuss how we can best support our Ukrainian guests.

We are also having meetings locally with support organisations to share offers of help and assistance and generally see what can be done to make the transition as painless as possible.

**Grants**

The Grants committee has continued to meet during the past year and has awarded small grants to other projects across the area, these include:

• Haslewey’s ‘Talk to me’ project providing counselling services

• Two community defibrillators – one at High Lane and one outside the Comrades Club.

• Haslemere Fringe Festival which the Council is very happy to support

In addition to this some ‘Green’ grants were awarded to support:

• Surrey Hills Enterprises ‘Sustainable Business Project’

• Haslemere repair café set up

• Bike racks installations across the town

Details of how to apply for a Council grant can be found on our website.

**Budget 2022-23**

Although the Council’s actual spending this coming year may be as much as 42% more than the last financial year, the town council precept – the portion of council tax which the Town Council asks for, has only risen by around 1%.

In monetary terms the precept increase represents less than 20p per year per Band D property. The annual cost of £47.90 per Band D property remains well below the national average.

The Council was very mindful of the financial pressures that Covid and increased energy bills have brought to many residents and was keen to keep any increases to a minimum. Therefore, much of the cost of upcoming projects stated below will be financed by a mixture of Council reserves and loans.

• Public toilets on Lion Green,

• Trees for the Queen’s green canopy,

• Improvement works to Town Meadow

Please note that the full budget and Budget report are available on the Council’s website.

**Resident Representations:**

**Increased break-ins in the area:**

Cllr Dear had received a question prior to the meeting from Gudrun Wiedemann who asked ‘Haslemere being located at county borders seems to translate into a lack of police presence and long response times. Clearly, we all pay council tax and pay towards the police force, and I feel we can expect the same level of service as other parts of the county. I think this issue needs to be addressed urgently. If criminals know there is a very small chance of being caught, it is like giving them a thumbs up to go ahead.

Cllr Dear forwarded the question to the Waverley Borough Commander Sam Adcock who replied

'Haslemere has a dedicated neighbourhood team consisting of 2 police officers and 3 police community support officers. These officers conduct regular patrols in the area and are supported by our response team who work out of Godalming. We cover a large area and only have a small amount of resources so we have to prioritise those resources and sadly this means that we can’t attend every incidents and we can’t be everywhere. My team, along with partner agencies work hard to understand the issues in their area and try and tackle those issues by putting long-term problem-solving plans in place.

There has been an increase in Shed and garage breaks in Haslemere and we are working hard to try and detect and prevent these crimes. We are encouraging all residents to check their shed and garage security and see if any improvements can be made. We are also appealing to any residents who may have any information about who is committing these crimes to call Surrey Police and report anonymously through Crime Stoppers'

Melissa King confirmed that the Chamber are in talks with the Waverley Borough Commander regarding policing and a public meeting will be taking place.

**Structure outside Town Hall**

Fay Foster asked what the new structure (attached to the Town Hall is used for).

Cllr Simon Dear confirmed that this has been added to the Town Hall as a requirement of the listed building officer to house the heating and cooling system.

**Citizens Advice Bureau**

Rev. Chris Bessant asked if there are any updates regarding the issues surrounding the Citizens Advice Bureau (venue and funding).

The Mayor gave a brief overview of the issues and confirmed that the Council currently award grants to the CAB and are currently looking into other resources to assist them.

Councillor Robini confirmed that Surrey County Council have awarded the CAB £60,000.

The Annual Town Meeting was closed, the Mayor thanked all of those who had attended.

Signed……………………………………..

Date………………………………………..