



**THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL REEPHAM TOWN MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2022 AT  
7.30PM IN THE TOWN HALL**

**Present: P. Mitchell (Chair), M. Lester, S. Fisher, J. Harding, M. Steel and S. Morgan**

**Town Clerk Kirsty Cotgrove and 4 members of the public**

**1. CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT**

Last year I began my report by outlining the many responsibilities of the Town Council. I did so because I was concerned that there was a lack of awareness in the community of the many responsibilities of the Town Council. However, I feel that it is true to say that, over the past year, there has been an increasing awareness in the community of the wide-ranging responsibilities of the Town Council and a greater recognition of the impact of the Council's work. This has been particularly exemplified by the willingness of a wide range of organisations to work closely with the Council in preparing for the Jubilee Celebrations and the willingness of individuals to support the Town Council in matters such as identifying those responsible for damage to the public toilets.

It was also good to see new people join the council. During the year Councillors were delighted to co-opt Binks Neate-Evans and Sian Dilley to the Town Council as new councillors. These bring the membership of the Town Council to ten.

Following a rigorous recruitment process, at its meeting on 4th August 2021, the Town Council ratified the appointment of Kirsty Cotgrove as Town Clerk. Kirsty, who is an experienced Parish Clerk with many years' experience, took up the post on 13th September 2021 and, since then, she has impressed us with her knowledge, enthusiasm and the quality of her work. Much that has happened since her arrival is due to Kirsty's enthusiasm and commitment to the Town. For example, it is particularly worth mentioning, that due to Kirsty making an application, the Town Council has received a grant from The National Lottery Community Fund towards the cost of the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations.

For the benefit of those who are less familiar with the work of the Town Council it is worth reminding ourselves that Reepham Town Council is responsible for a wide range of community provision within Reepham including:

Town Hall and Town Council Office  
Market Place – owned by Town Council but Broadland District Council has certain Powers over it.  
Public Toilets  
The Churchyard and retaining Walls  
Ollands Road Wall  
The Pound  
Church Clock  
Allotments on three sites at Fiddler's Field, Stony Lane and Norwich Road  
Trees at various locations  
Cemeteries – care of the disused site at Norwich Road, and administration of the School Road cemetery, which includes maintenance of the site, liaison with funeral directors etc.  
Grass cutting etc. of public areas  
Street lighting  
Grit bins  
Glass recycling bins  
Overton Way Children's Play Area

The Town Council is also consulted on planning applications. Although it is not the final decision maker, one of the Council's responsibilities is to comment and, if necessary, object to planning applications. The most significant being the planning application to build 141 houses at Broomhill Lane, to which the Council has objected on a number of grounds, particularly in

respect of its impact on traffic and road safety in the Town. A number of applications have been considered during the year and it is evident that the Town Council's views have featured in the decision-making process.

In the past the Town Council has used the income from recycling banks to award grants to local organisations. Now that bottles etc. are accepted in household waste bins the funds available for this purpose have declined. However, although the Town Council has limited funds for grants it was able to award grants to Reepham Food Festival, the Festival of Light and the forthcoming Music Festival

The Town Council is responsible for the trees in a number of areas of the town. Following a tree survey, maintenance work was carried out to remove any dead wood etc. that was identified in the survey as being a risk to the public.

A number of residents asked if a salt bin and more seating could be provided in the Market Place. In response, the Town Council has purchased a salt bin and provided two extra benches.

The Town Council is currently co-ordinating arrangements for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. A number of Reepham organisations attended an initial meeting on 6th October, which established working groups to look at various aspects of the celebrations. These organisations have met on a number of occasions since then. Reepham Town Council is working with The Bircham Centre, Reepham Rotary Club, Reepham Lions, Reepham WI, Reepham Scouts, the Festival of Light organisers and other Reepham organisations to plan a number of events on the Jubilee weekend. Current provisional plans include a Street Party for up to 250 people in the Market Place during the afternoon of Sunday 5th June, overnight camping and entertainment for families on Stimpson's Piece on the evening and night of Saturday 4th June followed by a 'Picnic in the Park' on the afternoon of Sunday 5th June. On the morning of 5<sup>th</sup> June, a Pageant Parade organised by the Church, symbolising the 70 years of Her Majesty's Reign, will progress from Stimpson's Piece to the Market Place, where a Jubilee Thanksgiving Service will take place.

Looking to the future, there are currently some serious challenges facing the Town. Two in particular, namely road safety and the impact of wind farm developments on the town, are of particular concern.

Firstly - With regard to road safety, members of the Town Council, supported by our County Councillor, have met with officers from Norfolk Highways on two occasions to look at the problem areas at first hand. This has led to two positive outcomes:

A handrail has been installed on the steep slope at the Bircham Road end of the path which runs from Bircham Road to Ollands Road.

Some action has been taken to protect the Churchyard wall on the sharp bend in Norwich Road at the junction with Church Street and Church Hill to prevent further damage to the wall. – Chevrons were fixed to the wall which fell off the next day but are due to be replaced and a white line carriageway edge marker has been painted on to the road.

Highways have also been asked to take action to clear the ditches and drains to stop water flowing on to Norwich Road between the junction with The Moor and the bridge at Booton.

The police have been very helpful in monitoring speeds around Reepham and this indicates that most vehicles travel within the speed limits. However, during the second meeting it was explained to the Engineer that both the size of vehicles and speed limits are matters of concern. It was agreed that 'Pedestrians in Road' signs and 'SLOW' road markings will be installed on Norwich Road between the access to the foot path to New Road and the junction with The Moor. The Town Council is also lobbying for the 20mph limit to be extended as far as the junction with the Moor. Additional bollards have been erected outside Victoria House, and it is hoped that these will protect the property. The Engineer was also asked if a prohibition of heavy goods and other large vehicles through the Market Place, Church Hill and Norwich Road, as far as the junction with Bircham Road, (except for access) would be possible, as the road close to the Church is obviously not suitable for large vehicles. A Councillor from Bawdeswell Parish Council attended the recent Reepham Town Council meeting as Bawdeswell Parish Council also has concerns about the use of the B1145 by heavy vehicles. There is already an advisory sign in Bawdeswell to state that the B1145 in Reepham is not suitable for large vehicles

The Town Council has also been contacted by residents expressing their concerns about road safety in Nowhere Lane and Whitwell Road. These roads are narrow in places, such that large vehicles have difficulty in passing, and have no footpaths for pedestrians. The speed limit is also too high. The Town Council has written to Norfolk Highways expressing its concern and asking if these roads could be seen as a local priority for the improvement of road safety by measures such as extending the speed limit from its current ending point near the High School to the Railway Bridge.

Secondly, whilst the Town Council is fully supportive of renewable energy, it is continuing to monitor closely the impact of the proposed on-shore cable routes on Reepham. The Vattenfall and Ørsted wind farms, situated off the north Norfolk coast, plan to have their service centres at Oulton Airfield. They plan to construct a cable corridor that will connect the wind farms to two National Grid substations, one at Mulbarton and one at Necton. These cable routes run close to Reepham.

The Town Council has been informed that the construction of these corridors would mean numerous vehicle movements every working day through Cawston, from 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday and for 10 hours on Saturdays. We have been assured by Vattenfall that construction traffic will not come through Reepham but there will almost certainly be road closures around Reepham, which will affect vehicles coming to and from the town. It is also likely that many workers' transport and delivery vehicles will be coming through the town.

Following a consultation letter, the Town Clerk wrote to Ørsted regarding the impact of their work on Reepham. Ørsted confirmed that, under their current plans, some of their traffic will travel down Station Road then turn right into the B1145 towards Dereham, which is currently signposted as being unsuitable for heavy vehicles.

The Town Council is the sole trustee of the Stimpson's Piece Charitable Trust, caring for Stimpson's Piece Recreation Ground and Pavilion. The Trust has carried out urgent repairs to the Pavilion. The gutters have been re-lined and the building has been redecorated. Tenders for improvements to the drainage and replacement of the fire door have been agreed but have not yet been carried out. Work is also awaited to tidy the area, which was previously occupied by the Tennis Courts. Older benches and picnic tables have been replaced during the year.

It has been good to see so many people making use of Stimpson's Piece recently, both as a place to meet friends, have a picnic and as a place for children to play safely. However, the lack of respect for Stimpson's Piece, particularly by some dog owners and a small number of young people in the 14-22 age range remains a cause for concern.

In conclusion, Reepham Town Council would like to thank the many community-minded residents who go out of their way to keep Reepham tidy and help the Town Council in its work. In particular, our thanks go to those people who voluntarily pick up litter and keep the Council informed of matters that need attention, such as recycling bins needing to be emptied.

I would also like to record the Town Council's appreciation of the excellent support that it, and the people of Reepham, receive from P.C. Colin Bailey, who has been very effective in dealing with some anti-social behaviour.

The Town Council's responsibilities are wide ranging and it is clear that without the work of councillors, all of whom are unpaid volunteers, Reepham would not be cared for in the way that it is. On a personal note, I would like to thank the Clerk and colleague councillors for their support during the year.

## 2. OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES

The Broomhill Lane housing development application was discussed, and how it may be affected by Natural England's Nutrient Surveys requirement. It was noted that the traffic survey requested by Highways for Townsend Corner is still to be conducted.

A footpath from the School to Whitwell Station was suggested. It was agreed that the Clerk will approach the landowner to discuss the possibility of a permissive path.

Recent vandalism of the public toilets was discussed, along with traffic issues close to the school.

As there was no further business the meeting was closed at 8pm.