



**THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL REEPHAM TOWN MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5TH MAY 2019 AT
7.30PM VIA ZOOM**

The meeting was held under The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 via Zoom.

Present: P. Mitchell (Chair), M. Lester, S. Fisher, J. Harding and A. Hazelwood

Town Clerk Jo Boxall and 6 members of the public

1. CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

One of the many things of which I have become aware since becoming Chairman is the wide range of responsibilities that Reepham Town Council has and an apparent lack of awareness by many residents of the nature of the Town Council.

Firstly, the Town Council's responsibilities:

Reepham Town Council is responsible for a wide range of community provision within Reepham including:

- Town Hall
- Market Place
- Public Toilets
- Stimpson's Piece Recreation Ground and Pavilion
- Overton Way Children's Play Area
- The Churchyard and retaining Walls
- The Pound
- Ollands Road Wall
- Church Clock
- Allotments at Fiddler's Field, Stony Lane and Norwich Road
- Trees at various locations
- Cemeteries – care of the sites, administration, liaison with funeral directors etc.
- Grass cutting etc. of public areas
- Street lighting
- Grit bins
- Glass recycling bins
- The Town Council is also consulted on planning applications

Secondly, the nature of the Town Council:

All Councillors are volunteers who give their time without payment to oversee the above responsibilities. I would like to take this opportunity to thank councillors for their work and for their support to me as Chairman.

The precept is the Town Council's share of the Council Tax. Being mindful of the impact of Covid 19 on the economy and individuals, the Town Council agreed to keep the precept for 2021-22 at the same level as last year.

This has been a year of change and challenge for the Town Council:

- Covid 19 regulations have led to meetings being held via Zoom and many events, such as a planned antiques fair, the Food Festival, the Music Festival, the Car Show, which the Council support, having to be cancelled.

- The Chairman, who had been in post for the many years, and three Councillors resigned during the year. However, it was good to receive applications and be able to co-opt new Councillors so that the Council now has nine Councillors who have a wide range of skills and experience.
- The Clerk resigned with effect from the end of July and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her publicly for her service and commitment to the Council over the past 10 years.
- A Personnel sub-Committee was formally established under the Chairmanship of Councillor Lester and this sub-Committee has worked hard to put in place appropriate personnel systems and processes for the Council. It is now working hard to oversee the appointment of a new Clerk.

As mentioned earlier, the Town Council is the sole trustee of the Stimpson's Piece Charitable Trust, caring for Stimpson's Piece Recreation Ground and Pavilion. The pavilion is a particular focus at present as the Town Council is aware that it is in need of urgent repairs and refurbishment. To look into this matter the Town Council, in its role as sole trustee for Stimpson's Piece, has established a working group of councillors with a brief to identify the repairs and refurbishment, which are needed, and to report back to the Trustees on priorities for action and likely costs. To date a full survey has been carried out and quotations are being sought for repairs. The Children's Play area also required a considerable investment and I am pleased to be able to report that some equipment which was reaching the end of its life has been replaced.

The Town Council is committed to doing all that it can to ensure that Reepham continues to be a safe place to live and work. The latest Police Community Update report from the Reepham Safer Neighbourhood Team identifies that the monitoring and challenging of anti-social behaviour on recreation grounds and public spaces is a priority. The Council is doing all that it can to support the police in this work, especially in respect of Stimpson's Piece, where there has been some vandalism.

A number of local people expressed concerns to councillors about the safety of pedestrians crossing Station Road to visit the new Co-operative store. The original plans for the site, which were approved by Broadland District Council, included a pedestrian crossing but this has not been installed. The Town Council has lobbied Broadland District Council and Norfolk County Council about this without success. A similar lack of response and/or action is also evident from other requests, which the Council has made to Norfolk County Council Highways department, to improve road safety.

The Council is pleased to see so many residents showing an interest in having an allotment plot. Due to demand there is now an extensive waiting list for plots.

The Town Council is responsible for the trees in a number of areas of the town. Following a recent tree survey, maintenance work will commence shortly to remove any dead wood etc. that was identified in the survey. One of the Council's responsibilities is to comment and, if necessary, object to planning applications. A number of applications have been considered during the year. 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.

Looking to the future the Town Council is committed to continuing to serve the people of Reepham in an open and transparent way.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENTS TO RAISE CONCERNS ABOUT LOCAL ISSUES

A resident raised concern about suggestions that the proposed war memorial be placed in The Pound. They felt that the memorial should be erected at the Bircham Centre as it is understood that The Bircham Centre is registered as a war memorial. The Chairman explained the reasoning behind the council's initial offer to use The Pound and confirmed that the matter would be raised at the Annual Town Council Meeting.

A resident highlighted the re-consultation on the Broomhill Lane Development and confirmed that the date of consultation had been extended for residents to give their views.

The Chairman raised the idea of providing seating and a grit bin in the Market Place and sought resident's views on the matter.

A resident raised concern about the location of any seating as this may result in the loss of car parking spaces.

It was acknowledged that there are safety concerns for people waiting for the bus. When the planter was in front of the sign, it created a small space for people to wait without vehicle access. As this space is not really deep enough for a car, it was highlighted as a good location for a bench to provide the safe waiting area required. In principle it was agreed that it was a good idea but it is acknowledged that there is a conflict between wanting the Market Place to be more inviting for visitors and the need to preserve car parking spaces.

A resident asked if the Parish Council has noticed that the Spar is not as busy since the Co-op opened and suggested the lack of parking outside the Spar as a possible reason for this. Ways of improving the parking situation were discussed and whilst the Chairman acknowledged that it would be a matter for Norfolk County Council Highways to approve, he agreed that this could be considered by the Parish Council.

The Chairman mentioned the Council's recent decision to look at ways of promoting tourism.

As there was no further business the meeting was closed at 7.50pm