

Parish Of Uppingham

Annual Town Meeting 2023.

The Annual Town Meeting was held in the Town Hall on 3rd May 2023 with Cllr Liz Clarke, Town Mayor in the Chair. Town Cllrs David Ainslie, Christine Edwards, Sam Findlay, Tom Johnson, Mike Fish, Pete Rees, and newly elected Godfrey Jennings (uncontested election) were present, also 22 other electors including RCCllr Stephen Lambert and members of Root and Branch and Uppingham In Bloom.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Hobbs, Casewell, Pallett and Simpson.

The Mayor welcomed all to the meeting and confirmed that this is not a council meeting, but rather a meeting of local government electors registered in the area in which it is held. The Mayor indicated the format for the evening.

The minutes of the 2022 Town meeting were accepted as a true record.

A presentation was then given by Claire Crowley of **Root and Branch**.

This included how the vision had materialised in 2015 when Claire and Alex had set up a Community Interest Company. Their vision was to stop food waste, initially starting in Schools where they served 50 – 60 breakfasts in two hours.

Specifically to Uppingham and Oakham they started a Community Fridge. In Uppingham this runs from the rear of the TH and opens on a Friday between 12.30 – 3pm. There is a small army of volunteers that collect surplus food from supermarkets. The community can benefit from this surplus which otherwise would have been wasted. A donation is accepted if people feel they are able to do so. They have managed to save over 20 tons of good food in this way.

There was a realisation that vegetables and bread were being left over, and another idea was born of a Souper Space, using surplus food with the aid of a slow cooker, delicious soup was dispensed to those who wished it. This was an instant hit and created a warm space to come and have a bowl of soup and a bread roll and chat to friends. Now the winter is over this will be turned into a coffee and cake space, again using surplus food. 450 bowls of soup had been given away over the initial 20-week project.

Root and Branch have an ethos of connecting people to nature and food and have an orchard on Growers Row. More plans are in the pipeline to try and save the footprint of the planet. Claire also thanked the Council for the use of the Town Hall on a Friday and its continuing support.

The Mayor thanked Claire for her presentation and the wonderful work that they and the volunteers were doing in the community.

The Mayor then invited Deborah from **Uppingham In Bloom** to give her presentation.

Uppingham in Bloom will be celebrating its 40-year anniversary, this year. It was founded in 1983 when three leaders of the town's Chamber of Trade decided to have floral displays at their premises. These early pioneers soon approached other traders and businesses in the Town and the response was fantastic. Year upon year more colour was seen in the Town.

The current Bloom team have continued to build on this, they have enjoyed great success in recent years winning several Gold medals in the East Midlands in Bloom annual competitions culminating in winning Britain in Bloom in 2017. This could not have been achieved without the unwavering support of Bloom members, volunteers, and the Uppingham School Gardeners. Uppingham Town Council pays a grant each year to help towards the spiralling costs, but it would not be possible to create such vibrant displays without support from sponsors, donations and fund raising. Weeds are the biggest problem, and it was noted that RCC are supposed to carry out a twice-yearly spraying, but this had not been evident.

To commemorate the 40-year anniversary the Bloom have embarked upon making a mosaic of the famous town square. A stone for mounting this has been donated by Finnemores and when the mosaic is completed it will be placed on Baines Corner. The Bloom is committed to raising funds for more tree planting helping fight climate change and the related losses to biodiversity. In partnership with RCC a scheme has been devised and they will plant trees on the open space north of Willow Close. A further scheme will be unveiled in Oct/November of this year.

The Mayor thanked Deborah for her presentation, and we will all enjoy the unveiling of the mosaic later this year. Questions were again asked and answered.

Following these excellent presentations the Mayor then gave an overview of the work completed by the Town Council in this council year which included:

- a. Honour and privilege to be the Mayor and Chair of the Council. She noted that every meeting had an active audience, which is a really good sign of active democracy.
- b. The Clerk was thanked for getting the office on a professional basis, and the wealth of experience that she showed. Cynthia had joined us in September to complete the team.
- c. Cemetery Audit had been completed with some outstanding queries being followed up.
- d. Allotments are now fully audited, 2 people are now on the waiting list.
- e. Police office had been relocated and was now fully functional within the TH.
- f. Council had started negotiations for the land behind the Elms, Leicester Road, and had 4 expressions of interest.
- g. Market Place toilets had reopened and were now a credit to the Town.
- h. Vandalism was occurring regularly on the Tod's Piece toilets.
- i. Town Hall bookings were up, showing what a true community facility this was.
- j. Community grants had been given out. This all demonstrates community cohesions.
- k. Youth Space was a popular new venture operating out of the TH. Volunteers always welcome.
- l. Mile Track at C of E primary had been supported by the Council.
- m. Jubilee celebrations on Tod's Piece, including lighting of the beacon.
- n. Observed the death of Her Majesty – opened a book of condolences.
- o. Participation of annual Remembrance events.
- p. Installation of the long-awaited Outdoor Gym – which was a brilliant success.
- q. Refreshment of the Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan. A huge amount of work had gone into this,
Dave Ainslie gave a brief overview:
 - The old volume consisted of 55 pages whereas volume II has a total of 104 pages.
 - A lot of changes in legislation have happened since this exercise had begun.
 - An extraordinary meeting was held to discuss the next steps for the NP.

- We aim to start Reg 18 by July considering the feedback obtained and then come back to consultation.
- Once our proposal is passed by RCC, it will go to a public referendum hopefully to be achieved by January 2024.

The Mayor ended her overview of the year by confirming that the next town council had been elected in an uncontested election. This would allow the council to retain its general power of competence following a vote at the next meeting on the 17th of May at its Annual meeting.

Questions/Ideas were invited from the audience, these **could** form part of future agendas.

1. Would the Town Council provide a map of the cemetery? The Clerk replied that this indeed was something being worked on proactively, together with replacement/repair of the notice boards with both cemeteries.
2. What was the position of the Skatepark, was it being replaced? There had been some verbal discussions, but the new benefactor needed to sit down with the Clerk formally.
3. Consideration of a screening wall (Toilets) or additional lighting around TP to deter vandalism.
4. Consider arranging film nights at the TH on the big screen, the Clerk advised that we do have a license for such events.
5. Investigate the “school passageway” behind the Elms – investigate instigating path behind the Elms to Stockerston Road. This would depend on the landowners.
6. Had the Town Council advertised the “Bloors Land”? Yes, through the Culshaw partnership, and Rightmove, Ospreys Estate agents.

The Mayor thanked everyone for their thoughts and the meeting closed at 7.20pm.