

025/19 1 – Chairman’s opening remarks:

Miranda Jones reminded everyone present that this meeting will be recorded and that the recording will be subsequently available for public listening.

026/19 2 – Attendance register:

Present: Miranda Jones (Chair), David Casewell, Alec Crombie, Lindsay Cooper, David Ainslie, Christine Edwards, Sam Findlay, Peter Rees, Ron Simpson, Steve Rozak, Mark Shaw, and Cornelius Vincent-Enright.

027/19 3 – Apologies for absence from members of the Town Council:

Apologies were received from Ian Salt and Mark Shaw has informed the Clerk he would be late for the meeting. These were noted.

028/19 4 - To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4th May 2018.

Proposed by Richard Reeve proposed that these be approved, seconded by David Casewell and unanimously agreed.

029/19 5 - The presentation of the Annual Report 2018/19 by Miranda Jones:

There is a school of thought that believes a healthy community is held together not just by shared values but by shared spaces; physical locations where people across all strata bump into each other and form connections. This social infrastructure can mitigate and even solve some of society’s most pressing challenges like isolation, polarisation and crime.

The argument goes that communities that invest in social infrastructure such as parks, libraries, community venues and activities are more resilient, cohesive and have a higher quality of life for residents than those that do not.

Uppingham is a prime example of a community with strong social infrastructure and to see evidence of it, one only has to visit the Friday market and observe the number of people, everywhere you look, engaged in conversations with each other; or visit the town hall when the dance classes or indoor bowls events are on. Community connections are vital. The maintenance, protection and improvements to the places and support for events where they can occur is paramount. This council strengthens considerably the social infrastructure and resilience of our community, being the primary investor and proponent.

Looking back over this last year, this is demonstrated by our commitment to awarding grants to community projects, maintaining and improving our physical assets and connecting with our residents through surveys, newsletters, councillor surgeries, social media and our clerk’s open-door policy. The invaluable feedback from all these engagements has helped shaped our thinking and decision-making. We thank all those who have engaged with us as a council.

Over the course of this last year, your council has taken significant steps to improve our community assets. In October, as part of an on-going programme of maintenance, the Town Hall was redecorated and the sprung dance floor refurbished. This was long overdue and I think you can agree it’s much easier to have some civic pride in the appearance of our Town Hall now.

Over the course of the last couple of years the town hall bookings have increased exponentially, providing an important revenue stream for us, which is in turn ploughed back in to the community.

Work continues on plans to remodel the front of the Town Hall in order to provide permanent access for disabled visitors and those with pushchairs or buggies whom currently have to take a 250m detour. This work should be completed in the coming months.

Following an overwhelming public response to our survey about the children's play area on Tod's Piece, we put the contract for a significant re-development out to tender and have now received a number of designs and associated costs – we will now put this back out to public consultation for community feedback imminently. The designs are great, the play area will be significantly enlarged, with an all-weather surface and many different activities for young children. The funding for this will come from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income and grants.

In preparation for the centenary of Armistice Day, with support from the Leicester City, County & Rutland At Risk War Memorials Project; Council not only chose to have the war memorial cleaned, but also to improve the access paths and steps, and provide hard-standing around the memorial using York stone. This seemingly straightforward task developed into an eight-month, very time-sensitive challenge as we wrestled with challenging external stakeholders. Our greatest thanks must go to our Town Clerk who persevered over the course of months of set-backs and frustrations to ensure that the work was completed in time for the 11th November deadline. In addition to the work at the war memorial, the council commissioned a beacon to be made and installed on Tod's Piece. These key activities were all delivered with local project management and Uppingham based businesses.

One other lasting memory of November 2018 and featured on the front cover of our report was the 'Weeping Window' installation at the Town Hall. Co-ordinated by Sue and Tony Streeter, this drew admiring gazes from all that stopped to see it.

The town council is pleased to report that it has now completed negotiations with Bloor Homes to take ownership of 3.86 hectares of land to the south of the new housing development on Leicester Road. We will now offer this on a long-term lease for use as a recreation or sporting facility which will produce annual income for the Council.

Community Support

In May the council awarded £12,000 of grant aid in response to bids from Curtain Upp, the Uppingham Partnership for town events, Feast Day and Christmas in Uppingham; to Uppingham First in support of the Hopper Bus, the Bowls Club, the Flower & Produce Show and Uppingham in Bloom.

I'd like to congratulate the members of Uppingham in Bloom for bringing back another gold medal to the town this year and re-gaining their status as category winners in the highly competitive small market town arena. I know this gets more difficult to achieve with every passing year and they are to be applauded for their hard work, commitment and innovation year on year. Notably one of their projects last year was to create and launch the Mary Lloyd Tree Trail, named for one of the ladies who founded Uppingham in Bloom in 1985 and who sadly passed away last year. It really is a fitting tribute.

Communication and Consultation

Over the course of my time on this council (I was elected in 2015) I have seen us go from strength to strength in developing existing and adopting new ways to communicate with Uppingham residents.

Feedback we have received from residents has informed our decision-making, leading to recommendations for the alterations to parking restrictions on Spring Back Way and enabling us to provide a precise brief to contractors tendering for the improvements to the children's play area on Tod's Piece. Currently underway are consultations regarding Gainsborough Road which will be followed by gathering views on Stockerston Road.

An important part of our role as the Town Council is our communication and partnership with Rutland County Council, which includes a fair amount of lobbying on Uppingham's behalf. Negotiations over the refurbishment and ownership of the Market Place toilets are on-going and frustratingly slow as are discussions over the library. I would hope to see some positive movement on these over the course of the next year.

A significant success however, prompted by a discussion in Council, is the County Council's concession for 30 minutes of free parking in the town's car parks which came into effect at the beginning of this month.

Transport

Another duty of the council is to respond to draft plans put forward by our district council and to have representation on consultation groups such as the St George's Barracks advisory group. Your town council deserves its reputation for providing well-thought-out, pertinent and relevant feedback – this year on Rutland County Council's draft Local Plan and the Transport Policy including Public Rights of Way.

Last year in his annual report Alec Crombie reported on the reprieve of the 747 bus service from Uppingham to Leicester. A year on and the bus is still running, but its future fate is uncertain and I echo Cllr Crombie's call from last year of "Use it or Lose it". Council remains committed to publicising the issue and will continue to be an integral member of the local bus users' group in the coming year to keep your views known.

Looking Forward

As mentioned earlier, over the course of this last year the council began to receive CIL payments collected from housing developers by Rutland County Council and intended to be used by parishes to strengthen and develop local services, facilities and infrastructure.

The receipt of this money, the recommendation by an independent governance report and agreement amongst members; prompted Council to start work on a five-year plan aiming to create a strategic framework setting out the vision, ethos and aims of Uppingham Town Council for the period 2019- 2024.

The strategy provides a framework for the preparation of annual work plans, embraces a collaborative approach to realising objectives involving stakeholders, and allows for the introduction of new ideas into identified strategic themes.

Five key strategic themes are proposed:

- Civic Leadership
- Sound Financial Management
- People Management
- Physical Resource Management
- Social Cohesion, Identity and Wellbeing

It is hoped that this plan will be completed and approved by the new council following the elections in May.

Hello and Goodbye

Last year the council was delighted to welcome Kellie Sabin to the newly-created role of Assistant Clerk. Kellie started work with us in September and has swiftly proven herself to be an asset to this council and in her role supporting the clerk.

Which brings me sadly to the fact that Neil Wedge, our Town Clerk, will soon be leaving us. I won't dwell too much on this as I know he'll hate it, but I have to offer you, Neil, on behalf of the Council and the town, our heartfelt thanks for all you have achieved during the last four years. You have been an enormous support to me in my time as Mayor and I thank you.

Elections are again upon us and May will potentially bring new people onto the Council. I'd like to pay tribute to the existing Council, elected or re-elected in 2015. Uppingham has been well-served by them, dedicated as they are to this town, ably managing to work to retain its heritage and yet managing to be innovative and forward-thinking at the same time. I'd particularly like to mention Ian Salt who has stepped down from the council after more than 20 years – his straight-talking, straight-forward input in to our debates will be much missed.

And finally...

Being Chair of this council for the last year has been a real honour, a challenge at times, but undeniably an honour. My proudest moment was to have been elected as Mayor in the year of the 100th anniversary of female suffrage and to have had the honour to stand alongside three inspirational women; Sarah Furness, Lord Lieutenant of Rutland, Sue Jarron, the then High Sheriff, and Canon Rachel Watts as we marked the centenary of Armistice Day on 11th November 2018. So many people and organisations worked together for many months in order to achieve a commemoration worthy of such an occasion and to me it defined the best of Uppingham. We are stronger when we work together.

Miranda Jones, Mayor Of Uppingham

The Clerk the summarised the current financial situation and pointed out that expenditure exceeded income this year which has resulted in a small deficit; however, the Council is now receiving Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and will continue to do so over the next year and these amounts are significant. Another challenge the Council faces is maintaining an appropriate level of reserves, which for a council of Uppingham's level of precept should be around £80,000. In terms of other expenditure, new Christmas tree lights have been purchased for the Market Place. Our neighbouring town, Oakham, have very kindly donated their old Christmas lights. The

Council wishes to thank Adam Lowe for this thoughtful gesture.

We can also confirm the recreation land to the South of the new Bloor Homes development on Leicester Road has been transferred to Uppingham Town Council. We are now marketing the land in order to secure a long-term lease agreement. We are also seeking a small Public Loans Board sum in order to fund refurbishment of the Town Hall cellar. In terms of grant aid, the available sum for the year 2019/20 will be £10,000, as Uppingham In Bloom will receive £2,000 funding.

Clerk to write to Adam to thank him – unanimous.

030/19 6 - Statements and updates from organisations and community groups in Uppingham some of which have received grant aid support.

Limes, Firs and Spurs – Sheena Ainslie would like to thank UTC for £100 towards a new marquee, which was used by the resident's association for the Big Lunch last summer.

Marc Oxley on behalf of the Uppingham Town Partnership thanked UTC for £2,000 towards the cost of Christmas in Uppingham and Uppingham Feast. The money was used to help fund the attractions and the publicity for both events. Both events drew huge crowds and provide a fun day out for residents and visitors.

Alan Riddle from Uppingham Bowls Club thanked UTC for grant aid and reported that the funding was used to upgrade the lighting in the playing area and though out the club with LED lighting. It has improved the quality of light and the cost of lighting the club. The club has recently introduced family membership to encourage younger players.

Nicola Jervis, Chair of the Uppingham Fete, Flower and Produce Show thanked the Council for helping to fund the purchase of a marquee. The event attracts all ages, is a growing show and offers a fun day out for residents and visitors.

(Cllr. Geoff Thompson arrived 7.25pm)

Simon Mutzaars from Citizens Advice Rutland (CAR) thanked the Council for supporting the organization this year. Simon shared the results of their annual performance quality framework which showed that in the areas of customer satisfaction, leadership, quality of advice, people management and financial management, CAR is performing well. He also shared some positive comments from clients about their experience of using the service and commented that the satisfaction levels of people using the service is measured at 100%.

Janet Thompson spoke on behalf of Uppingham First and thanked the Council for supporting the Uppingham Hopper bus. The grant funding has been vital to support the Hopper service to the town. A number of people have said that they rely on the Hopper and it has given some residents a new lease of life and helped take residents to the surgery. The funding has been used for fuel, which is the Hopper's highest cost. The grant is much appreciated, and thanks are also due to the volunteer drivers.

The Clerk read an email response from Curtain Upp as Helen Becque was unavailable. Helen thanked the Council for the grant, which was used to purchase ballet barres and mirrors for use during dance classes in the Town Hall. The mirrors allow the children to see themselves and make corrections and improvements to their performance. Some children have received gold, silver or bronze in recent competitions. Dancers will be undertaking exams in July and the school

is hoping for a 100% pass rate. The Support and recognition of Uppingham Town Council means so much to Curtain Upp and the school feels its presence in the town makes a positive contribution to the community.

Adrian Haigh from the Uppingham Smiling art project showed a short film about the project and thanked the Council for its support.

031/19 7 – Opportunity for the electorate to speak on any issues relating to the town including presentation of any correspondence received by Council.

Val Booth asked if there are any plans to do something about the outer walls and graffiti on the skate park.

The Clerk responded that the skate park is not supervised, and it is therefore unsurprising that some graffiti is on the structure. The structure will be cleaned however it is likely that more graffiti will appear, and the Council needs to make a decision about allowing graffiti on the structure or continuing to fund cleaning when this occurs.

Val Booth also thanked the Council for 30 minutes free parking and hopes that people will not park in residents permit spaces.

Meeting closed at 07:55 pm.