



Midsomer Norton Town Council

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Mayor: Cllr Paul Myers BEM

Town Clerk: Donna Ford PSLCC

Minutes of the Midsomer Norton Annual Town Meeting held in the Assembly Room, Town Hall The Island, Midsomer Norton on Monday 23rd April 2018 commencing at 7.00pm

Present: Mayor: Councillor P Myers
Councillors: Councillor G Davis
Councillor M Evans
Councillor B Lawrence
Councillor G Mackay
Councillor L Robertson
Councillor R Robertson
Councillor A Slade

In Attendance: Donna Ford (Town Clerk)
Carole Sims (Assistant Clerk)

Eighteen (18) Members of the Local Electorate

Fire Safety – Evacuation Procedure

The Town Clerk explained the fire evacuation procedure as detailed in the Agenda.

Recording Protocol

The Town Clerk explained the Council's protocol for recording meetings.

1.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Stephen Plumley who was on holiday.
2.	<u>Minutes – Annual Town Meeting held on Monday 24th April 2017</u> Copies of the minutes had been made available in advance and were also available at the meeting. <i>Proposed and Seconded</i> that the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Monday 24 th April 2017 be signed and adopted as a correct record. The Mayor subsequently signed the minutes.
3.	<u>Annual Report of Midsomer Norton Town Council – Councillor Paul Myers</u> The Mayor of Midsomer Norton Town Council, Councillor Paul Myers welcomed everyone to the Annual Town Meeting The Mayor explained to the Meeting that the objective of the Annual Town

Meeting was to provide residents with a report on the Town Council's work and to offer them the opportunity to ask questions of the Town Council.

The Mayor summarised the Annual Report for the year 2017/2018 (copies had been available at and prior to the meeting) providing residents with some examples of what the Town Council had been working on and the progress made.

The Town Council continued to focus on its three strategic objectives:

A Strong Sense of Community

Encouraging Civic Pride in Our Town

Being a Well Run Council

The Mayor thanked the Town Council Officers for their help and support throughout the year and welcomed the new Town Clerk, Donna Ford to her first Annual Town Meeting.

Finally Councillor Myers gave thanks to the all Town Councillors and Volunteers who continued to work together as team to make all the above achievable.

4. Questions from the Public

The Mayor invited questions and comments from members of the public.

S Cooper from the Midsomer Norton & District Carnival Association thanked the Town Council for its support over the last 4 years making the Association 'stronger and bigger'.

The Mayor thanked S Cooper for his comment.

Peter Rutter asked where the money was coming from to fund the Town Park.

The Town Park land at Gullock Tying had been purchased by the Town Council in October 2015 which along with professional fees charges had been claimed back from Section 106 funds.

The Local Authority, Bath & North East Somerset Council work with Town and Parish Councils in the area to deliver community benefits and improvements within its towns and villages. The Local Authority charge developers a contribution which depends on the size and number of dwellings being built, this is known as CIL or there can be Section 106 Agreements for large developments.

A further £250,000.00 had been secured through Section 106/Green Space contributions and it will be used to fund the Phase 1 development of the Town Park.

Colin Tincknell thanked the Town Council for its excellent quarterly communication Midsomer Norton Life, he commented that "it was something to be proud of".

The Mayor thanked Mr Tincknell on behalf of all the Town Councillors who would appreciate his comments.

Jean Norman asked if Town Council held a map detailing all the Public Rights of Way/Footpaths in the Town.

The incompleteness of the legal record of public rights of way has been a contentious subject for many years. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 sought to address this. It provided a cut-off date in 2026 so that unrecorded pre-1949 public RoW would cease to exist if not specifically preserved by regulations.

Those campaigning to save footpaths are now warning that 'the clock is ticking.' The real worry is about RoW that people are using every day; suddenly they will stop having that right. Walkers, horse riders and even those taking regular shortcuts to the shops in towns have ten years to apply to save any ROW that existed before 1949 but does not appear on official maps.

Bath & North Somerset Council held a definitive Public Rights of Way/Footpaths map and that Bath & North Somerset Council Officers will look at any problems involving public rights of way.

It would be good to work with people who regularly use the footpaths and for them to give any feedback about the conditions to Bath & North East Somerset Council so that they can investigate.

It was suggested that the Operations Committee should discuss this and that Public Rights of Way/Footpaths be an article in a future issue of Midsomer Norton LIFE.

Mr T Towler asked if the Town Council was responsible for all the empty shops in the town centre.

People do not shop like they used to choosing to shop outside the town and this along with the convenience of internet shopping had resulted in a fall in footfall.

The Town was relatively lucky and it was good to see that the old Casswells building had now been filled with new businesses.

The landlord of Reflections had endeavoured to attract national retailers but without success and the landlord had had no choice but to lease the shop to the Cat Protection League Charity. Many properties in the Town are owned by private landlords and therefore, it was the landlord's decision who they leased their property to and the Town Council was unable to influence this.

It was better to see a charity shop rather than an empty unit and a lot of people used the charity shops.

A member of the public commented that Charity Shops were exempt from the business tax.

The decision for Charity shops to be exempt from business rates had been made by Central Government and was not the responsibility of the Town Council.

Midsomer Norton had a fair selection of independent shops and the town

had retained three (3) banks, Barclays, TSB and Nat West, the town also had a DIY shop that provided a helpful service, three (3) Opticians and new businesses such as the dog grooming shop, Pride and Groom.

Peter Rutter remarked that there had been a loss jobs in the area after the big employers like ALCAN (Mardons), Purnells had closed down and the relocation of Welton Bag, which had resulted in people travelling out of town for employment.

The Old Mills site near Paulton had been designated as part of the Somer Valley Enterprise Zone, an area to encourage business growth with Government support such as tax breaks it was hoped it would create in the region of 1,700 new jobs.

Chris Smith told the meeting that she had collected over 400 signatures against First Bus's plans to change the current route of the 173 bus to Wells. There had not been any consultation and she had only heard of the change by chance. The 173 was considered a 'lifeline' for residents who lived in the Chilcompton area.

First Bus do not have to consult on a change of a 'commercial route', which the 173 is. However following meetings with Chris Smith and other residents the Mayor could report that he had been in contact with the Chief Executive and Operations Director who had advised that Frist Bus would be reconsidering their initial planned route and would be making a statement this week.

Colin Tincknell commented on the volume of traffic on the A362 between Thicket Mead and Tesco and the chaos that it caused.

Funding had recently been awarded by the West of England Combined Authority to make improvements to the A362. Details would be available in due course.

Mrs Sage expressed her concerns about the speed of traffic travelling from the The Street (Chilcompton) onto Chilcompton Road.

The Mayor noted he had met with Bath & North East Somerset Council Traffic Officers previously following representations from Mrs Sage and other residents. The issue was that the Chilcompton Road entrance to the town is off a country lane.

Councillor Mackay commented that the road calming measures at Stratton on the Fosse and Peasedown St John had been successful. The Mayor suggested that Councillor Mackay and Mrs Sage discuss this further after the meeting and that Councillor Mackay bring any suggestions to the a future meeting of the Town Council for consideration.

Colin Tincknell took the opportunity to thank The Mayor and all the Town Councillors for all that they do.

As there were no further questions The Mayor invited all present to join the Councillors for refreshments, but first he handed over to the Bath North East Somerset Council Officers who gave a brief presentation on the Town Park

	and Wayfinding/Signage in the Town.
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Meeting closed at 7.59pm

Signed: **Dated:**
(Chairman & Mayor)