



Midsomer Norton Town Council

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Mayor: Cllr Paul Myers BEM

Town Clerk: Clive Stilwell MILCM

**Minutes of the Midsomer Norton Annual Town Meeting held in the Assembly Room,
Town Hall The Island, Midsomer Norton on Monday 24th April 2017
commencing at 7.00pm**

Present: Mayor: Councillor P Myers
Councillors: Councillor S Plumley (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor G Davis
Councillor M Evans
Councillor B Lawrence
Councillor J Lewis
Councillor L Robertson
Councillor R Robertson
Councillor A Slade

In Attendance: Clive Stilwell (Town Clerk)
Carole Sims (Administrative Officer)

Twenty Three (23) 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 were received from Councillor Luke Barnes who had a work commitment.
2.	<u>Minutes – Annual Town Meeting held on Monday 25th April 2016</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 25 th April 2016 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 for the people of Midsomer Norton.

The Mayor summarised the Annual Report for the year 2016/2017 (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.

As in previous years the Town Council continued to focus on the three strategic objectives:

A Strong Sense of Community

Encouraging Civic Pride in Our Town

Being a Well Run Council

The Mayor thanked the Town Clerk and Assistant Clerk for their continued help and support.

The Mayor also thanked Patricia Flag a volunteer from the Midsomer Norton Community Trust who had prepared refreshments for the Town Meeting.

The Mayor informed the meeting that as from today Councillor Jane Lewis would be standing down from the Town Council. Councillor Myers thanked her for her dedication and contributions to the Council overall in particular the planning process.

4. Questions from the Public

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

A resident asked what effect the new West of England Mayor would have on the Town Council.

Technically it would not directly have an effect on the Town Council.

Further to a question put forward by Jim Edwards at last year's Annual Town Meeting (Agenda Item 7) Lucy Edwards enquired if the footpath that ran between the back of the houses of Park Way and the Silver Street Nature Reserve and if it would be developed into a cycle path.

The footpath was considered too narrow to be developed into a cycle path and funds were not available to carry out works to widen the footpath. Councillor Myers suggested that the footpath be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Jim Edwards asked who was responsible for the maintenance of the Park Way footpath he reported that the top end of the footpath (Silver Street) needed attention as two (2) individuals had already tripped over.

As the footpath was considered a 'Public Rights of Way' Bath & North East Somerset Council (BANES) would be responsible. The Town Clerk would contact BANES and report the condition of the footpath.

Brian Snellgrove enquired if and when Wetherspoons would be moving into the

Town.

Due to commercial confidentiality there were no details, however it was believed that the developer was in negotiations with the landowner.

Jim Edwards raised concerns over the amount of shops closing in the town and asked if there were any plans to attract other retailers apart from Charity and Coffee Shops.

It was a challenge faced by many towns and not just Midsomer Norton, people do not shop like they used to choosing the convenience of internet shopping rather than visiting the butcher or grocer in person.

Many properties in the town were privately owned and therefore it was the landlord's decision who they leased their property to and the Town Council were unable to influence this.

The Somer Valley Chamber of Commerce had been looking at ways to draw people into the town other than by free events like the Christmas Fayre. Fashion and food shows were possibilities.

A future issue of the Midsomer Norton, Radstock & District Journal would be including a survey asking people what they wish to see in the town.

The internet and social media are potential ways of promoting the town.

Jim Edwards asked who had made the decision to allow Charity shops to be exempt from paying rates.

The decision would have been made by the Central Government. This exemption of charities from business rates also allowed places like the Town Hall and Somer Centre to survive.

A recent survey showed that there were currently 8 Charity shops out of 62 shops in the town.

Jenny Hillman (Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan) wished to comment that the Landlord of Reflections had endeavoured to attract national retailers but without success, therefore he had let the shop to a Charity Shop. Jenny remarked that it was better to see a charity shop rather than an empty unit, and a lot of people used the Charity Shops.

A resident asked when landlords would start taking responsibility for the high rates as it was difficult to start up new businesses.

As above it was not the responsibility of the landlord it was a decision passed on from Central Government.

David Moreton suggested that the introduction of a 'microbrewery' could give people a reason to come into the town.

It is not easy to get hold of a property with the impetus on empty units becoming housing; the challenge is that a developer would possibly

make a lot more money from housing than a 'microbrewery'.

Lynn Plumley asked if the glass in the take away shop ***Norton Fried Chicken*** could be replaced as it looked unattractive.

The take away was now closed and the issue would be fed back to the Somer Valley Chamber of Commerce.

As there were no further questions The Mayor invited all present to join the Councillors for refreshments.

Meeting closed at 7.43pm

A signed copy of the minutes can be viewed at the Town Council Offices

23rd April 2018

Signed: Dated:
(Chairman & Mayor)