

**HUNTINGDON TOWN**  
**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

The Annual Town Meeting of Huntingdon Town was held in the Town Hall, Market Hill, Huntingdon, on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 at 7.00pm

*In attendance; Councillors A Blackwell; K Brockett; D Landon-Cole (Mayor); P Kennington; M Kadewere; B Luckham; A McAdam; A Norton; G Sheils; P Pearce; K Webb, Inspector Colin Norden from Neighbourhood Policing at Cambridgeshire Constabulary and 21 members of the public representing residents, businesses and organisations.*

*Absent: Councillors M Baker and T Sanderson*

*Clerk's Note: The Annual Town Meeting was live streamed to Huntingdon Town Council's Facebook Page (<https://fb.watch/j8ioZ9VI7r/>)*

1. **MAYOR'S WELCOME**

The Town Mayor, Councillor David Landon Cole, welcomed and thanked everyone present to the 2023 Annual Town Meeting. The Mayor advised those in attendance that the meeting would be live streamed and encouraged anyone who wished to be off screen to seat themselves outside of the camera's view.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies tendered to the Town Clerk were received from Councillors J Cole; S Gifford; M Kadewere; P Kadewere; S McAdam and S Sweek.

3. **MINUTES**

Members had before them copies of the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 (M1). It was proposed, seconded and

**RESOLVED** to approve these minutes as a proper record of the 2022 Annual Town Meeting and they would be duly signed by the Mayor following the meeting.

4. **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MAYOR 2022-23**

The Mayor's report on the Council's activities during the year was presented by the Town Clerk, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

## 5. **COMMITTEE REPORTS 2022-23**

- i) The Mayor invited the Chairman of the Finance Committee to give his report. Councillor Phil Pearce gave a brief overview of financial activities of the last 12 months. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes.
- ii) In the absence of the Leisure & Community Services Committee Chairman, the Mayor advised that there wouldn't be a report from this Committee.
- iii) In the absence of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Planning Committee, the Mayor then invited the Town Clerk to read the planning report. The Town Clerk delivered a brief overview of planning activities of the last 12 months. A copy of this report is attached to these minutes.
- iv) In the absence of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Strategy & Corporate Plan Committee, the Mayor then invited the Town Clerk to read the Strategy report. The Town Clerk delivered a brief overview of the strategic activities of the last 12 months. A copy of this report is attached to these minutes.
- v) In the absence of the Environment Sub Committee Chairman, the Mayor advised that there wouldn't be a report from this Committee.

The Mayor thanked the Chairs of the Committees for their reports and all committees for their valuable work over the last 12 months.

## 6. **NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING HUNTINGDONSHIRE PRESENTATION**

The Mayor welcomed and gave thanks to Inspector Colin Norden for attending the Annual Town Meeting and invited him to give his presentation.

Inspector Norden thanked the Mayor for the invitation to the meeting, which he had been keen to attend. Those at the meeting were informed that Inspector Norden's Neighbourhood Policing team was made up of 11 Officers, but that none of them were ringfenced for set localities. Inspector Norden explained that all incidences reported via 999 or 101 were scored against their level of threat and harm and were allocated accordingly. This was why sometimes incidences called in for antisocial behaviour may not receive police attendance if incidences with greater threat and/or harm were called through at the same time.

The meeting was advised that the main concern for Inspector Norden at present was knife crime and county line drug dealing in young people. Inspector Norden reassured the meeting that Huntingdon and Huntingdonshire were statistically safe areas, but that the carrying of weapons in young people, and the prevalence of county line drug dealing was a concern for his team. It was noted that the Neighbourhood Policing Team had a presence and a good working relationship with local Secondary Schools to try and tackle some of the issues relating to young people still attending school.

Inspector Norden moved onto issues within Huntingdon town centre relating to street drinking and anti-social behaviour, explaining that a lot of 'behind the scenes' work was being undertaken as part of a multi-agency approach.

Inspector Norden gave his thanks to Rob Mitchell of Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and Hannah Hancock of Huntingdonshire Businesses Against Crime (HBAC) for their ongoing efforts in tackling the ongoing issues relating to the street drinkers. The meeting was told that injunctions had been taken out against some individuals, removing them from the town centre. This method of intervention was far quicker than issuing individuals with Criminal Behaviour Notices, which were taking up to a year to implement.

Inspector Norden added that the group of 'youths' in the town centre were being dealt with in the same way as the street drinkers, with the use of injunctions to ban them from the town centre. A discussion took place about the need for early intervention in primary and secondary schools and Inspector Norden said that he accepted the team needed to react in a more timely and proactive way. Concern was also raised that the groups would just move out into residential areas of the town, but Inspector Norden was hopeful that by breaking the groups up with the injunctions, the problems would gradually reduce.

All in attendance at the meeting were urged to continue to report any town centre incidences to highlight the ongoing problems, as statistically, calls for these problems were low. Inspector Norden explained that all 101 reports were filtered to his Neighbourhood Policing team, so he would be picking up all future incidences. Residents explained that they felt disheartened at making calls due to previous experiences and lack of response/action, but Inspector Norden explained that it was imperative to helping his team build a case.

Finally, Inspector Norden advised the meeting that as of 6<sup>th</sup> March 2023, two PCSOs would be located within the Ring Road of Huntingdon for 40 hours per week. Although the PCSOs didn't have the powers to carry out arrests, they would act as the eyes and ears on the ground for the Neighbourhood Policing team to speed up the paperwork and evidence gathering processes for incidences taking place.

Members raised the issue of cycling and the riding of e-scooters on the High Street, highlighting the danger these modes of transport caused for pedestrians in a pedestrianised zone. Inspector Norden explained that the PCSOs would be able to gather and collate evidence relating to these problems, and the meeting was told that without a driving licence and insurance, it was illegal to ride an e-scooter. With this being the case, Members were advised that anyone caught riding an e-scooter without both a licence and insurance would have their scooters seized and would receive 6 points and a fine.

Residents and town centre business owners raised individual concerns about street drinking and youth group incidences affecting them and Inspector Norden spoke to them after the meeting to discuss the issues they had raised. Finally, Paul Sweeney of BID Huntingdon requested a meeting with Inspector Norden and the PCSOs to make introductions and highlight areas of concern so that the teams could work collectively to tackle current issues.

The Mayor thanked Inspector Norden for his time, efforts and answers to questions, and Inspector Norden reminded the meeting of the monthly

Neighbourhood Policing drop-in sessions for residents to attend and raise current concerns and/or questions.

## 7. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

The Mayor invited questions and comments from those electors of the town of Huntingdon on any matter in relation to which the Council had powers or duties or which affected the town.

A question had been submitted from a resident in advance of the meeting regarding the bins on the Market Square. The resident expressed concern about the bins overflowing at weekends and asked what could be done to combat the problem. The Town Clerk advised the meeting that during the winter months, the bins on the Square were emptied by the Town Council's Estates Services Team on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and that during the summer months (from April to October), they were emptied on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays, with the Town Hall Caretaker doing an additional empty on either Friday evenings or Saturday mornings. A resident explained that a further problem was cigarette ends on the floors due to lack of cigarette bins in the area.

Another resident queried tree planting in the town, questioning what the Town Council's tree planting programme was, what was planned for future tree planting and how she, and others as residents could help with planting and sourcing of more trees. The Town Clerk explained that in February, 42 new trees had been planted in the town and that as it was getting to the end of the tree planting season, plans would be looked at for future planting towards the end of the year and early 2024. The meeting was told that following the public consultation for the replacement of the recently felled tree at All Saints' Church, it was planned to plant a yew tree and two flowering cherry trees.

*Clerk's Note: following the meeting, the resident was contacted to confirm that the 42 trees planted during February consisted of Birch, Cherry, Hornbeam, Lime, Maple, Oak & White Beam and that they were planted on Town Council land at Bloomfield Park, Castle Hills, Claytons Way, Coneygear Park, K.G.V Park Sapley and at the New Crematorium.*

With no further questions, the Mayor thanked everyone for attending the Annual Town Meeting and invited all attendees to enjoy a cup of tea or coffee in the Council Chamber.

**MAYOR**