

Report to the Annual Assembly of the Town Meeting Tuesday April 16th 2019

The year began with a two minute silence in memory of former Councillor Peter Davies, on whom the council had bestowed the Freedom of Epworth.

Membership:

Cllr Mitchell was elected Chairman and Cllr Janney, Vice Chairman and the council remained at full membership until the resignation of Cllr Durning in September, a position that was not filled.

Finance: the Epworth Town council precept (the local element of the rates from North Lincolnshire Council) was £57618.35 in 2018/19 rising to £57861.73 for 2019/20; a small inflation increase.

Grants awarded:

Under powers enshrined in the Local Government Act 1972 (section 137 General Power and other more specific powers) the Council grant funded various “not for profit” organisations including:

May 2018 The Old Rectory £1100.00 for a community event

May 2018 The Isle Community Choir £250.00 towards event costs

August 2018 Isle of Axholme Physically Handicapped Society £250.00 towards room hire and travelling costs

August 2018 Purchase of 52 poppies to represent those lost from Epworth during WW1 and 2 “silent soldier” silhouettes and in October 80 event poppies purchased for display in the High Street.

November 2018 Mechanics Institute £1000.00 towards the restoration of the clock

Epworth Business Forum £200.00 for the provision of entertainment (South Axholme School Band – money used for the purchase of sheet music)

January 2019 Epworth Music Day £1235.00 towards the costs of putting on this increasingly popular event

April 2019 The Old Rectory £1000.00 for a floral tribute to Suzanna Wesley which will be match funded by The Old Rectory.

The Town Council also organised and funded summer holiday sports activities for local children.

Including the purchases of poppies and other items marking the Cessation of WW1, total grant funding of £6945.64 was awarded to good causes and local groups throughout the parish. The council encourages local “not for profit” groups to apply for grants with each application being judged individually, on merit.

Public Participation: during the year a number of issues were raised including an explanation of “the great dig” an exploration of the archaeology of Vinegarth and the “Burgage” plots; followed by a presentation by representatives of the Isle of Axholme and Hatfield Chase Landscape project who were given permission for a dig on Kings Head Croft.

A request was received for the council to recognise the “Cessation of Hostilities” with the purchase of 52 poppies representing the number of men from Epworth who died, and silent soldiers. Many council members led by the Chairman, attended events marking the cessation including the laying of wreaths and the lighting of the beacon.

Members of the Safer Neighbourhoods team attended the September meeting for discussion on the anti-social behaviour issues occurring at Kings Head Croft.

Following the bus route changes residents attended meetings to complain about the amended services especially the extended distance to bus stops for the people from West End; following this, the council wrote to North Lincolnshire Council on behalf of residents but were informed that as a private company

the bus company had the right to change the route with no notification. The call-connect service was championed as an option.

Once again, the council received complaints about the Turbary Road surface, Epworth Town Council spends significant sums to help maintain the surface but does not pay for additional stone.

Further complaints were received following the re-location of the Co-Operative store as additional deliveries, parked vehicles and speeding traffic made the area unsafe for pedestrians. The council sent a request to North Lincolnshire Council for them to survey and assess the problem.

The Police and Crime Commissioner spoke to the council in February with an update on the force improvements and the local Police Constable addressed the council in March on local issues.

Trade Watch and Neighbourhood Watch schemes were championed by the Safer Neighbourhoods team from North Lincolnshire Council with the emphasis on "Tradewatch", leaflets were distributed by councillors to try to protect the vulnerable from rogue traders.

Active Lifestyles were promoted by the area sports facilities manager, fitness in the community such as litter picking and use of the "green gym"

Community Champions: Epworth Town Council nominated three people for the North Lincolnshire Community Champions awards; Mary Fish and Mavis Smith came first in their categories and Bob Fish a "runner up" in his category.

Community issues: the council held three community events in September; two at the Epworth Imperial Hall and a stand at the Epworth Show; issues of concern were parking in Epworth, and, issues surrounding the Ivy Andrew Hall site. These led to the formation of a "Heritage Project Committee" to discuss potential use of the site. The Town Council received a petition from residents about parking which has been passed to North Lincolnshire Council as the responsibility for parking lies with them. A local firm of Estate Agents has been employed to obtain information on contamination and to try and ascertain a value for the site.

Anti-social behaviour problems at Kings Head Croft have been a reoccurring problem; discussions with the police and North Lincolnshire Council have led to an agreement for improved lighting and the provision of additional "state of the art" CCTV coverage; this should all be installed within the next few months.

Administration: In addition to maintaining 6 committees, the council held many extra-ordinary meetings during the year; concerns were raised by existing councillors about the enforced reduction in number of councillors from 15 to 9 and the effect it will have on the work-load of councillors and staff. The council has resolved to employ an assistant clerk to help with the work, a post that the council hopes to fill soon.

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