

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STOCKSBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, THE ARC, STOCKSBRIDGE  
ON TUESDAY, 14<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2019**

**PRESENT:** Cllr. J A Grocutt (Chair), Cllrs. A S Law, C Ward, J Staniforth, M Milton, S Abrahams and M Whittaker

37 members of the public

\*\*\*\*\*

1. Minutes of the Last Annual Assembly

Minutes of the last Annual Assembly held on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018 were read.

Proposed by Cllr. A S Law, seconded by Cllr. C Ward and

**RESOLVED:-** That the minutes be agreed and signed by the Chairman.

2. Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

3. Chairman's Report

Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr. R J Crowther.

Cllr. JAG opened the meeting and welcomed everyone to the Town Hall on this special and happy occasion and requested that all members of the Town Council introduce themselves.

Cllr. JAG stated that it had been her great privilege to be the Stocksbridge Town Mayor for the past 12 months working alongside a group of dedicated Town Councillors noting it would be remiss of her not to say a special thank you to Catherine her Deputy and our professional and hard working staff Teresa and Karen. You have all been a great support to me and the Town, thank you all so much.

Stocksbridge is a great place to work, live or visit. At the start of my tenure we reinstated the Civic Service. St Matthias Church packed with so many local residents of all ages, many of whom volunteer at a wide range of community and charitable groups across the Town. At that service, I set out how I would like to support our local groups and spread the word of the hard work and opportunities that are available for the whole community to enjoy. Be that though attending and engaging in the activities on offer, or as a volunteer. Sadly, this was one of the last services to be held in the Church as in July it was deconsecrated. St Matthias has a special place in the life of many local people and I know I speak for everyone when I say that I hope the Church will continue to play a special part in our community life once it's future is resolved.

I am especially pleased that tonight we are also hosting our Annual Citizens Award and that we are joined by our four worthy recipients, their families and friends, thank you all for coming this evening.

Looking back, the Summer months were particularly busy, attending the many local Summer Fayres and festivals that took place in the Town. As the Town Councillor for Bolsterstone I was delighted to open their Summer Fayre, which saw the village packed with people enjoying a wonderful Summer day. The Valley Music Festival which took place in venues across the Town saw, a wide range of musical talents from our community and beyond, including the world renowned Bolsterstone Male Voice Choir and local School choirs and musicians.

Throughout the year our Town has looked blooming marvellous thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Valley in Bloom volunteers. I had the pleasure of volunteering with them in the Summer on a glorious day, I can't say the same about the weather when I volunteered with the Steel Valley Project, it was cold and icy but very rewarding work. Both groups were welcoming and are always on the lookout for more volunteers.

As we moved towards the Autumn our energy turned towards the memorial to mark the centenary of the end of World War 1. It was humbling to see the Town come together to produce a hand-made poppy garden on the Clock Tower Gardens. From school children to senior citizens everyone got behind the call and made their own poppy tribute which was displayed on the garden. The Remembrance Day Service was held in Christchurch and the extended parade marched proudly through the Town to the Clock Tower for the minutes silence and naming of the fallen. Autumn also saw the 21<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Stocksbridge Navel Association, I had the pleasure of joining the group as they celebrated with veterans from across the region.

I was delighted to be invited to present the awards to students at Stocksbridge High School on their presentation evening. It was reassuring to see so many young people achieving so much. Throughout the year I have also enjoyed working with all our local primary schools overseeing visits by their School Councils to the Town Council Chamber to hold their meeting and discuss local democracy.

I spent the Christmas festive season attending the Christmas fayres across the Town. I enjoyed switching on the Christmas lights at Fox Valley and the Carols around the Tree on the Town Centre Precinct. Sadly, this event was not well attended but it was none the less special. The highlight was as always the Senior Citizens Christmas lunch at The Venue, which as in previous years was fully booked and a great Christmas time was had by all who attended.

The New Year saw the establishment of the Participatory Budgeting Task Group. Our first Event took place last week when £28k was up for distribution to community projects that fitted the local criteria. It was great to see approximately 130 people attend The Venue to vote. I was especially pleased to see so many young people involved. I would like to thank all who attended the event, in whatever capacity. This is real community action and I look forward to watching this project grow and our community become more involved with it. Congratulations to Early STEPS Nursery, Garden Village Community Association and Stocksbridge Cricket Club who have been awarded the funding.

Having been approached by local people who want to develop the outdoor activities on Oxley Park, I have been delighted to help and support the formation of the Friends of Oxley Park Group. This group is still in its infancy but has lots of energy and ideas to transform the park into a great open space that will compliment and work well alongside the Leisure Centre.

I have enjoyed working with the Parish Chair from Bradfield and together our two parishes have commissioned a piece of work to look at the feasibility of opening up the Trans-Pennine Trail to provide safe cycling onto the Sheffield Lakelands. As a rural community we need to look for safer cycling routes, to encourage healthier lifestyles, appreciation of our beautiful countryside, to protect our environment and to boost our local economy.

Along with Ecclesfield Parish, the 3 Parishes are also working to put together a 3 Parishes Event in the Autumn focusing on local woodlands. In Stocksbridge the theme will be Woodlands for Health. I very much hope this event will work alongside the local health Forums Healthy Valley initiative which is scheduled to also take place in the Autumn and which I have enjoyed working on.

More recently funding has been made available for local High Streets to help with regeneration. I was delighted that Sheffield City Council agreed to submit a bid working in partnership with the Town Council and Dransfields Properties Ltd to the Future High Street Fund to redevelop our High Street. The bids are to be considered nationally by Government and we will have to wait to see if we have been successful with our expression of interest.

As I pass over the chain of office, I look back at how fortunate I have been over the last 12 months attending 207 meetings or events in my Year as Mayor. I have been made welcome and enjoyed the company of all I have met, learning so much about our Town and what goes on as a result. I shall continue to support this wonderful Town and its community as I start my second term on the Town Council. Thank you to everyone who contributes to this Towns community spirit. I thank our two retiring Councillors for their contribution and welcome our two new members Susie and Mark. This is a great Town to be involved with and support, enjoy your new role. Our new Mayor is in for a treat; enjoy your term in office.

#### 4. Open Session

B Horsman gave a big thank you to all Town Councillors, noting that she was beginning to see the time put into the role and that all party banners were dropped with Councillors working together for the benefit of the Town, which was much appreciated.

A staff member from Royd Nursery and Infant School wished to thank the Mayor for inviting the children to use the Council Chamber for their School Council for the first time, which they had thoroughly enjoyed and had proved inspirational and thanked the Town Council for facilitating the event.

5. Annual Citizens Award Presentations

The Chairman welcomed recipients of the Town Council's Annual Citizens Award and their families and friends to the meeting and was pleased to present certificates and gift vouchers to Tom Todner, Richard Hayes, Jacqueline Higginbottom and Hope Café members . The awards being presented as recognition for their community spirit.

The meeting then closed.

Chairman