

Harworth & Bircotes Annual Parish Meeting

The Minutes of the Harworth & Bircotes Annual Parish Meeting held on Monday 8th April 2019 at 6.45pm at the Town Hall, Scrooby Road, Bircotes

Present: Cllr J Evans (Chair of the Town Council) Mrs Davies (taking minutes) plus residents

APM19/1 Apologies for absence

No apologies received.

APM19/2 To approve the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 21st May 2018

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held 21st May 2018 were approved and signed.

APM19/3 Town Council Chair's Report for 2018/19

Cllr Evans gave the following report:

2018/19 has proved an interesting year, and as ever, it presented both challenges and opportunities.

Let's start with the achievements: in year we have seen building start on Simpson Park. For the Town Council, maintenance of our relationship leading to ongoing discussion with house builders and developers is vital if we want:

- a) Their support in community development e.g. removal of the second bund
- b) Their compliance in agreeing to future connecting roads/paths between the site and the Town Centre – this will be an ongoing discussion as developments roll out.

I also consider Town Council involvement in the future development of Common Lane a definite achievement, in that bungalows as well as houses are soon to be built – I just wish other developers would follow suit.

It is important to remember that often it is the smaller, every-day and highly visible changes/additions/improvements that matter most to people, such as

- A new play area for smaller children on Thompson Avenue – something that this Council negotiated hard for
- New equipment for older children on the Snipe Park Play Area
- A raised level crossing outside All Saints School
- The completion of the Civic Square, which will come into its own as more houses appear on Simpson Park

- Events, such as a pantomime, Christmas Lighting, fashion shows – and I find that people do comment on plants, hanging baskets, and even new litter bins – these highly visible items are what people notice
- And then there is the less-noticeable work, such as Snipe Park Wood, and at Avondale – these are projects that are about social values

Turning to the challenges, the biggest has been addressing the threat of an incinerator, involving many individuals and groups from this community.

The second biggest challenge has been the work on the Town Hall, which hopefully will be completed by May, bringing Sure Start back into this central location, to the benefit of the local community. This brought with it another challenge – that of managing our finances for the expenditure needed for the Town Hall, not helped by the costs of investigations Council had to undertake.

2018/19 also brought with it some challenges – and opportunities – in the form of emerging potential major projects that, if achieved, will have a huge impact on both future services and the plans for an improved Town Centre:

- New accommodation for over 55's on the site of the North Notts. Board School. Thanks to work done by Natalie and Karen, Homes England will fund a £50k feasibility study to determine if this is possible
- The possibility of a Community Hub on the same site is being considered
- Gaining interest from other organisations in developing new retail units on Scrooby Road; even a possible Children's Activity Centre – and councillors are well aware of the complications this site presents
- Successful discussions with Sheffield City Region to fund a Master Plan, pulling all these projects together as a key document for the future development of Harworth & Bircotes
- Placing pressure on other authorities to implement the plans for improvement to the road infrastructure is a major priority

Ambitious? Certainly, but there's nothing wrong with that. **Scary?** Absolutely!

The public are not aware of the amount of work that goes into meeting, discussing, and attracting other authorities/organisations to invest in this Town; they are blissfully unaware of the hours spent in writing, clarifying and delivering funding bids to tight deadlines – this for both the small and large projects – that is done by Natalie and Karen. In 2017, £147,622 was raised, and in 2018 the amount was £98,643; for 2019, so far, the figure is £151,345. This gives a grand total of **£397,610**; some of which has to be earmarked.

It is a fact that all this work has raised the profile of Harworth & Bircotes; it has also created an even larger agenda than ever before... this means, that we find ourselves playing with the Big Boys, at times, and we will get a few bruises.

And in the meantime, whilst all this happening, we have a Town Clerk who quietly works on our compliance with Health & Safety, Audit and Governance.

Many thanks go to Wendy – she is the one who keeps this Council ‘safe’ because of her vigour and insistence for ‘good practice’ on a daily basis.

Finally, I thank the councillors for their support and input – there have been times when it was very much needed, and it is appreciated.

APM19/4 Open session

No questions raised.