

FARINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

The Pump House, 5 Market Place FARINGDON, Oxfordshire, SN7 7HL

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www.faringdowntowncouncil.gov.uk

Clerk: Sally Thurston



Minutes of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING held on MONDAY 20th May 2019 at 7.30pm in the Corn Exchange, Faringdon

In attendance :

Town Councillors:
Mike Wise (Town Mayor)
Kiera Bentley
Jane Boulton
Rosalind Burns
Peter Castle
James Famakin
Lucy Martin
Kimberly Morgan
Stephen Smith
Liz Swallow
Bethia Thomas

District Councillors:
David Grant
Bethia Thomas

48 Members of the public

Staff Present:
Sally Thurston – Town Clerk
Liz Billson – Assistant Town Clerk
Adele Vincent - Information Centre Manager

1.

Mayor's Opening Address

Cllr. welcomed everyone to the meeting. Cllr Wise gave an address which included:

- Councillors who stood down last year: Pauline Beesley, Anne-Marie Wright, Richard Marsh, Al Cane and David Barron were acknowledged. Cllr. Wise thanked them for their services to the Council and for their contribution to the town.
- Six new members were welcomed: Cllrs. Rosalind Burns, Lucy Martin, Kim Morgan, Liz Swallow, Stephen Smith and Peter Castle.
- Three members who stood but who weren't re-elected were also thanked: Andrew Marsden, Mark Greenwood and Beverley Capewell.
- A list of achievements made by the previous Council over the past four years were highlighted in this year's annual report.
- Faringdon works through the efforts of its volunteers; our job as a council is to help and facilitate. For example - The Place Family Centre which has been a true partnership effort involving several organisations in the town.
- Many future events were planned.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor's Discos for fund raising for the Place would continue. • Hoping to organise an event to raise awareness on climate change; to educate us on what we, as individuals, can do and what energy use and lifestyle changes may be needed to offset its consequences. <p>Cllr. Kiera Bentley informed the meeting about a Volunteer Fair to take place on 8th June</p> |
| 2. | <p>Apologies for Absence John Tabor – Be Free Young Carers T/ Cllr. Julie Farmer T/Cllr. Angela Finn T/Cllr. Steve Leniec C/Cllr. Judith Heathcoat Susan Linnett – Enrych Fire Service Thames Valley Police</p> |
| 3. | <p>Minutes of the Town Meeting held on MONDAY 26th November 2018 The minutes were signed as a correct record.</p> |
| 4. | <p>Matters Arising None</p> |
| 5. | <p>Reports The following reports were received and NOTED. (Available in appendix 1)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reports from Town Council Committees <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning and Highways <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Members of the public were concerned about the poor state of pavements and roads in Faringdon. Cllr. Wise encouraged everyone to report issues on the 'FixMyStreet' website.</i> • <i>The Folly Park car park was raised as being in a poor state of repair. D/Cllrs. Thomas and Grant NOTED this.</i> 2. Finance and Audit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No questions</i> 3. Community and Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>FTC were asked what support they were offering young people. The youth grant programme was explained.</i> • <i>It was raised that young people need a forum and be allowed to have a voice in the community. Groups were encouraged to apply for grants and come forward with ideas. D/Cllr. Thomas explained that VWHDC could also offer support from the Communities Team and felt that the Town Council and District Council could work together.</i> <i>The Pump House Project informed the meeting that they were now offering a disco on the first Friday of the month for 14 to 16-year old's.</i> <i>The football club also offers a youth group on a Friday evening.</i> <i>A query was raised about the old FAZE site. This is a County Council site and FTC are unsure of the future use.</i> <i>One member of the public was hoping to bring more life to the Town by providing outdoor music on Saturdays, to include</i> |

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| | <p><i>buskers and live music. He would be liaising with like minded people.</i></p> <p>4. Facilities <i>Cllr. Bentley explained that an app was being investigated to allow easy fault-reporting</i></p> <p>2. Reports from</p> <p>(a) Tucker’s Recreation Ground Trust</p> <p>(b) Faringdon War Memorial Trust</p> <p>3. County Councillor’s Report</p> <p>4. District Councillors’ Report</p> <p>5. Reports from Local Organisations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sjoerd Vogt Farcycles and the OVO Energy Bike Race • Fire Service • Faringdon United Charities • Folly Fest • Rotary • Enrych • Beer Festival • Wantage Independent Advice • Pop-up Business School <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A member of the public queried follow up – there would be an event in Shrivenham in October</i> • <i>It was asked if a skills fayre could be organised for young people. The PHP are working on an initiative with the Community College to fill this gap.</i> • The Place • Farcycles – Cycle Park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The cycle park is now open and is a wonderful facility for the Town. The group were congratulated on their achievement.</i> • Animation Station • Be Free Young Carers • Young Farmers • Play Day <p>Other organisations were invited to speak or give a report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pump House Project explained that they were holding a Big Lunch on 2nd June 2019, everyone welcome. • Cllr. Wise gave an update on the YoCo project. |
| 7. | <p>Town Centre Businesses. Open Discussion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgens –. A presentation had been made several weeks ago proposing two smaller shops and residential – no further update. • Sadler’s – Feel car parking is a problem for visitors – need free long-stay parking |

- McColls – Will close 10th to 17th June for refurbishment to improve food offer. Post Office will be moved to the front of the store.
- Bank – Residents felt the mobile service needs to be in the centre. Lloyds have informed the Town that they are waiting for security clearance from G4.
- Parking – Is an Issue. District Council are exploring civil enforcement. Cllr. Burns suggested park and ride be investigated. People park in town and get the bus to Oxford and Swindon.
- Cycling – Residents felt better cycle routes were needed. Farcycles are working on cycle routes with FTC. Waiting for clearance from OCC.
- It was suggested that change-of-use from retail to service businesses could be considered to fill empty shops. The Neighbourhood Plan protects pubs, unless lack of need is proven
- Park Rd Shopping – People are using this and not coming into Town. FTC employed a Business Coordinator for two years in an attempt to combat this. A sign will be installed at the Faringdon Park advertising the town centre. A free bus into town was offered but not used.

Mel Smans – Economic Development Manager from VWHDC gave an overview of initiatives to support the Town centre and economic development in Faringdon:

- Investigating support for businesses affected by the closure of Honda
- Pop-up Business School held in Faringdon is planned for Shrivenham
- VWHDC acknowledge the importance of Market Towns. Now employ a Market Towns Officer – Karen Roberts (previously Business development Officer for FTC)
- New brochure promoting the Vale towns had been launched after requests from Information Centres.
- Working with Experience Oxfordshire to promote Faringdon (building on work initiated by FTC).
- Working on improving Southampton Street car park (building on work initiated by FTC)

A member of the public asked if anything could be done about high rents to encourage businesses. MS acknowledged that some landlords raise rents so retail isn't financially viable and shop units could be changed into residential lets. This was being investigated.

A member of the public enquired about the pubs. The Volunteer was closed but it is understood that the Red Lion will be refurbished and reopened.