

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF DRONFIELD
HELD ON MONDAY 14 MAY 2018
IN GOSFORTH LODGE, CLIFFE PARK**

Present:

Councillors G. Baxter, T. Collins, A. Dale, L. Deighton, M. Emmens, A. Foster, M. Foster, S. Green, R. Hall, A. Hutchinson, G. Hopkinson, C. Smith, R. Smith, K. Tait, R. Welton and P. Wright (Chairman)

In Attendance:

4 members of press and public, Joanne Mitchell (DTC Town Clerk Assistant) and Andrew Tristram (Town Clerk)

1. Welcome by the Mayor

The Town Mayor opened the meeting by welcoming all those present.

2. Apologies

There were apologies from Councillors A. Powell, L. Blanshard and E. Pasley.

3. Minutes of The Annual Town Meeting held on 15 May 2017

The Meeting considered the minutes of The Annual Town Meeting held on 15 May 2017.

01/17-18 RESOLVED

That the minutes be received, and approved as a true record of events.

4. Report from the Town Mayor

The following report was given by Cllr Philip Wright.

"Item 4 on this evening's Agenda for the Annual Town Meeting is to give my report as Dronfield's Town Mayor for this last year 2017-18. I hope that you are all sitting comfortably but not too comfortable as to fall asleep as there may be questions asked afterwards.

It has most certainly been a honour and a privilege to represent Dronfield and the Town Council as the 44th Town Mayor since 1974 when the position as Mayor was re-established following what had previously been the Dronfield Urban District Council when the position was then known as the Chairman of the UDC who represented the Town.

My role as Mayor and that of Pauline as Mayoress, or Consort, as she is sometimes known, has been extremely active in what is to be considered a relatively small to medium size of Town. It is only in our position that we very quickly learnt as to how active the town is and one that is really envied by even many larger towns than Dronfield. There is a huge community spirit and one only has to stand for 30 minutes in the early evening, either in Dronfield Bottom, or the top of High Street, or on Eckington Road at Coal Aston, to appreciate how active the town really is, as at that time of the day, it appears that the whole town is out on manoeuvres going to this meeting or that meeting, there being so many churches, clubs, scouts, associations, and various other organisations, etc. etc. to get to, not to mention the 100's of Mums & Dads taxi services delivering and collecting all the younger members of our local population.

Dronfield was voted to be 9th best town to live in during 2017 and I cannot think that that will have altered 12 months on. Also one of the safest towns in which to live in the whole of the East Midlands, despite the repeated monthly reports from our local Constabulary to the contrary, but fortunately for us, all are relatively minor offences.

My Mayor's diarised list details 246 items, out of which 110 were meetings about meetings, that I have chosen to attend. Many of these were in preparation for some forthcoming events, many months hence, such as the Civic Service held annually in the Parish Church (we have just concluded our third and final committee meeting for this year's Civic Service to be held on Sunday, 17th June at 10.00 am), and a further example is Remembrance Sunday 2018 which this year will mark the Centenary of the end of World War One in 1918, exactly to the day. To mark the occasion the Government has requested all cities and towns with a beacon, to light them in recognition and Dronfield will be doing just that on the evening of the 11th November in Sindelfingen Park. There are far more meetings that, as the Town Mayor, I could have attended if I had so wished, but the numerous appointed committees within the Council are more than capable of handling these, and which are reported on at the monthly Town Council meetings to which any member of the public is able to attend whenever they wish.

There have been so many events that I would have liked to have mentioned but time does not allow as Phil, our caretaker really needs to lock up, ideally before midnight! However it would be remiss of me not to mention just a few of the highlights throughout this last year, the first being the SSAFA AGM at Cavendish Hall on the Chatsworth Estate where all the newly elected Mayors of Derbyshire are all invited to what has become known as the Chain Gang meeting, where all the Mayors present admire one another's chains of office, every single one being different. SSAFA of course runs the charity for the Soldiers, Sailors, Army & Families Association, which raises money for those killed or maimed during active service.

2) Representing Dronfield at our twin town of Sindelfingen's Strassenfest (Street Festival) last June, where I had to give a four page presentation on how prepared Dronfield is in the event of a major disaster, for example, a terrorist attack or serious flooding, and, as happened in the UK only two days previously, the disastrous fire in the Grenfell Tower block in London.

Sindelfingen's Council Chamber is likened to a smaller version of the United Nations Council Chamber HQ in Vienna and it was good to have six other Dronfield Councillors there to support me and anyone from Dronfield is made extremely welcome by their Oberbürgermeister, Dr. Bernd Vohringer, who has recently been re-elected for a further eight years term of office.

3) Attending the Vicky Durning School of Dance bi-annual production in Dronfield's Civic Hall and witnessing the sheer logistics of putting on a show of this calibre is totally beyond comprehension with around 350 costumes to be changed throughout the evening and so many talented girls and young ladies between the ages of four to eighteen all taking part. Can you imagine the months and months of practice that takes place beforehand and the organisation that goes into it on top of which are all the helpers behind the scenes? Absolutely brilliant!

4) One word, "DronFest". Need I say more? John Aspinall pulled out some good warm sunny weather for the actual day out of the dark grey rain clouds that we had suffered from all week, but the eleven months of organising such an event really paid off. It was lovely to see so many young families attending, many with small children, all having a really good time with picnics in Cliffe Park, followed during the evening with the best bands that John always seems to muster together annually.

5) The black tie job at Chatsworth organised by the Soldiers Charity unfortunately wasn't as lucky with the weather as the DronFest, with the rain bucketing down, and the "Beating Retreat", which is performed annually by the military, had to be cancelled and instead all the full marching band of guardsmen were hauled inside the marquee to play for all the celebrities and guests there, plus the many members of the "Chain Gang", as

previously mentioned above made for a very cosy atmosphere. However the three course dinner which followed in the Old Coach House did proceed successfully.

6) Pam Barker's retirement from the Dronfield Town Council Office after 20 years of active service was marked by a warm send-off in Dronfield's Hall Barn. Pam had not only seen off six Town Clerks in her time but also twenty Town Mayors, and that didn't even include myself, but to be fair to the Mayors, three of them had done the job twice during Pam's term. The event was a good opportunity to welcome Joanne Mitchell, Jo being the new girl on the block, who since, we have all got to know and love.

7) The organisation we know as Dronfield in Bloom held their Annual Awards Ceremony in the Civic Hall and I was amazed at how many participants there were there to receive awards, especially from the various schools, which is really good that so many children get involved in these types of projects. The Sun Flower Award, sponsored by Mike & Helen Firth from Dronfield Eye, with the winner's Sun Flower being over 11 feet tall that it could have been used by Jack instead of the Bean Stalk in the Christmas Panto. !

8) Pauline and I were invited by Cllr. Rosie Smith to attend an event in Unstone to mark World Peace Day on 21st September, again a lovely event attended by two classes of local school children and it was interesting to learn how much the children knew about the events of World Wars 1 & 2 which were never ever mentioned in history lessons to children of my era...."Old" is the word I was looking for!

9) Dronfield Rotary Club gave Pauline and I the opportunity of meeting with President Laxmy of the Rotary Club in Nepal and raised their Nepalese flag next to the Union Jack on the lawn of the Peel Centre. This was done in the pouring rain which didn't appear to be a problem with Laxmy as their country receives about four times more annual rainfall than we do here. This was followed by lunch in the Hall Barn after which it was interesting to see pictures of their town and mountains, and in particular one of their schools for which Dronfield Rotary had raised sufficient funds to have a new roof put on it

10) The Remembrance Sunday march from School Lane was once again so well supported with St. John's Band leading the procession past the Parish Church up to the War Memorial in the Library Gardens. There were over 40 different organisations that took part in fine sunny weather, but with a very cold chilly wind. It was very moving with the two minutes silence followed by all the names being read out individually of all those Dronfield men who lost their lives during the wars and never to return. As Town Mayor, my duty was to place the wreath on our cenotaph on behalf of the Town Council.

11) One of the happiest events we attended was the wine tasting in Coal Aston Village Hall where Dronfield's Wine World Shop had arranged for 101 different wines from around the World to be individually tasted by all the 100 plus people present. Sadly after two hours or so we had only tasted about 75% of them but did not dare drive home in fear of PC Sally Horner waiting to nab me for drinking whilst in charge, even though I had eaten a few crisps and peanuts but I would have had the plausible excuse of being on Mayoral duty. I am sure that would have made the front cover of the "Dronnie Eye"!

12) Switching on the Christmas Lights in the Library Gardens following the verbal countdown was indeed a very special occasion, made even more so due, yet once again, to the involvement of all the local Dronfield school children. Their shouting "Hello, Mr. Mayor" could probably have been heard by the Lord Mayor of Sheffield seven miles away. It certainly cleared the wax out of my ears ! According to plans currently being put in place, the heart of old Dronfield will be even better next December.

13) Helping to prepare and serve Christmas Day Lunch on 25th December at St. Andrew's Church was a lovely opportunity to bring people in Dronfield together to celebrate this special day and who would otherwise have been on their own. All the

churches throughout Dronfield work together so well one way or another that the theme chosen for this year's Civic Service in the Parish Church is just that....."Working Together"which in principle is what Dronfield Council does for the local population.

14) Last but not least was all the considerable hard work and effort put in by last year's Town Mayor, Cllr. Alan Powell and his brilliant team in pulling off the very first Dronfield Arts Festival. With over 50 events taking place over the four days of the May Bank Holiday Weekend. Blessed with absolutely glorious weather, it is obviously the fore-runner of what hopefully will be the commencement of a future annual event for everyone in Dronfield to look forward to. With over 50 separate different events all going off almost simultaneously in the heart of old Dronfield, it proved difficult for Pauline and I to achieve every single one, but eventually we did make an appearance to around 40 of them. "Must try harder" as my teachers used to write on my annual school reports!

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to thank numerous people and organisations within Dronfield. Firstly all my fellow Town Councillors who work tirelessly and for all the hours they put in voluntarily into making what Dronfield is.....a lovely town to both work and play in. A special thanks to our Town Leader who kicks us up the proverbial if and when things do not appear to be going the way they should and to my Deputy for standing in at occasions when I have been unable to. Also a huge thanks to all those other employees who work tirelessly in the Council Office, and by name, Carole Dick, who everyone has known forever, Amanda Hunt who looks after all our cash and balances the books to the exact penny every single month, and our Town Clerk, Andrew Tristram and his relatively new assistant, Jo Mitchell. Where would we all be without them? Ronnie Dick who heads up the Outside Services who continuously work against all the odds to try and keep our Town looking in shape and attractive wherever possible which does include the Cemetery, for visitors and those that reside there in peace.

To Mike & Helen Firth and their team at Dronfield Eye a huge thanks and appreciation for their excellent magazine "Dronfield Eye" which everyone looks forward to reading on a regular basis. However they manage to keep up with the schedule, which includes the Annual Directory, I just don't know, but Mike's always there, just like the paparazzi and pantomime's old favourite message, "He's behind you" !!

But to conclude I must of course not forget to mention my thanks to my dear Wife, Pauline, who, as Mayoress has whole-heartedly supported me in my duties as your Town Mayor, in spite of the tragic death of our Son, Nick, in February, which naturally has caused both of us immeasurable sadness and we do thank everyone for their sympathy, concern and offers of help during this period.

Thank you, Cllr. Philip Wright."

02/17-18 RESOLVED

That this report be received and noted.

5. Report on the Activities of the Town Council

The following report was given by Leader of the Council, Angelique Foster.

"It is an honour to have served another year as Dronfield Town Council Leader. I and my fellow councillors have the responsibility to make sure the council runs efficiently and provides services that are effective and good value for money. Once more, I believe we have done this.

The good work done by the Town Council is the result of councillors, staff and residents working together for the benefit of Dronfield.

My thanks go to the Town Councillors, who yet again have put a lot of their time and energy in helping run the council this year. I would also like to thank the council staff for their continued hard work and also Councillor Philip Wright for the hard work, commitment and many hours he has served in his role as Town Mayor.

The civic year 2017/2018 started last May with Dronfield gaining two new County Councillors, Councillor Alex Dale representing Dronfield East and myself, Councillor Angelique Foster, representing Dronfield West.

We also welcomed a new MP, Lee Rowley. I would like to personally thank Lee for the excellent support he has given Dronfield and its community over the past year.

In August 2018, we recruited our newest member of staff, Joanne Mitchell, our new Town Clerk's Assistant. Following the retirement of Pam Barker, our office supervisor for some 20 years, Joanne was appointed to this new position and she has already made a valuable contribution to our organisation.

Our priority remains making sure that residents receive the services they deserve from the Town Council, but also value for money. We were able to offer our residents another tax freeze for the fifth year running. I believe the combination of low council tax and excellent services is what residents expect from a well-run council.

This year, the Town Council has focused its efforts on introducing new projects such as the purchase of Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras, in conjunction with the police, to help with crime reduction and the development of a programme of CCTV to help with residents' security around the town.

We have continued to improve gritting provision this winter by investing in further grit storage and a number of grit bins. This is something that made a real difference to residents last winter.

We have been proactive in tackling some of the very challenging issues that still threaten our town. In January, a delegation of the Town Council attended the planning meeting at Derbyshire County Hall to voice residents' concerns and opposition to the INEOS exploratory drilling application (pre-fracking application).

Following the planning meeting, Derbyshire County Council agreed to oppose the application. This will now be considered at an Appeals Inquiry starting on 19th June in Chesterfield.

Dronfield Town Council will again present its objections and I would like to commend the continued work of residents' group, Dronfield Against Fracking, on this issue.

Dronfield Town Council has also opposed North East Derbyshire District Council's Local Plan which proposes overdevelopment on our Dronfield Greenbelt.

Thank you to the Dronfield Greenbelt Residents' Group for their work in opposing the local plan and collecting a petition of 4,000-plus signatures.

Late last year, we successfully opposed the proposed split of Dronfield by the Boundary Commission.

It was an honour to be asked to open the Coal Aston Gala last July and to recognise the work and effort that the volunteers of the Coal Aston Village Hall Management committee put towards the event each year. They also show an incredible commitment to our community by putting on fantastic events throughout the year.

The 2017 Dronfield Gala was a great success and I am certain that this year's event will surpass previous years with new ideas for stalls and entertainment.

The Christmas Fest was another wonderful event and shows how much people enjoy coming together and celebrating as part of the Dronfield community.

The Dronfield Town Road Safety Committee has been actively pursuing projects and working in partnership with the police to help tackle issues of speeding and parking throughout the town.

Our Neighbourhood Plan is progressing well. Further successful public consultations were organised throughout the year where councillors, residents, businesses and community groups were able to meet and discuss issues such as the threat to our Greenbelt and the loss of valued businesses in the Civic Centre.

Putting together our Town Plan will continue to be a priority over the next few months. I would like to thank the Civic Society for their work and support on the Neighbourhood Plan.

Last, but not least, it has been a pleasure to work with councillors and staff on the Cliffe Park refurbishment. The park was finished on time for the May Bank Holiday and on budget.

It was a real honour to welcome entries to our sign designing competition from Dronfield schoolchildren. The winners were awarded vouchers and their designs are now incorporated into the new Cliffe Park sign. We hope the park continues to be one of Dronfield's favourites and children enjoy it for years to come.

This year will no doubt bring new challenges, some expected some unexpected, but we will continue to work hard for our residents and our beloved town."

Councillor Angelique Foster, Leader of Dronfield Town Council

03/17-18 RESOLVED

That this report be received and noted.

6. Concerns and Comments from Local Electors

No concerns or comments were raised.

7. Town Mayor's Closing remarks and thanks

The Town Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

The Town Mayor closed the meeting at 7:25pm.