

DRAFT MINUTES

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF DRONFIELD
HELD ON MONDAY 13th MAY 2024 at 7:00pm
IN GOSFORTH LODGE, CLIFFE PARK**

Present:

Councillors S. Burkitt (Chair), L. Deighton, A. Dale, P. Jones, M. Emmens, A. Foster, M. Foster, M. Ireland, G. Hopkinson, R. Welton, P. Wright, G. Baxter, D. Cheetham, Christine Smith, Caroline Smith, J. Yates and L. Coles.

In Attendance:

Joanne Mitchell (Town Clerk), Michael Keys (Assistant Clerk) plus three members of press and public.

1. To appoint a clerk for the meeting

Joanne Mitchell was nominated and seconded to be appointed clerk of the meeting.

01/24-25 RESOLVED

That Joanne Mitchell is appointed clerk for the meeting.

2. Welcome by the Mayor

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

3. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr A. Hutchinson. Cllr K. Tait sent notification that he would be arriving late.

4. Minutes of The Annual Town Meeting held on 15th May 2023

Members received and reviewed the minutes of The Annual Town Meeting held on 15th May 2023.

02/24-25 RESOLVED

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

5. To receive a report from the Town Mayor

Cllr Susan Burkitt, gave the following report.

“Before I pass over the baton, or should I say chain of office, to our new Mayor I understand that I have one last duty to perform and that is to give my report as Dronfield Town Mayor for the last 12 months.

May I say that it has been both an honour and a privilege to serve both the people of Dronfield and the Town Council. I can honestly say that it has been a wonderful experience and although it has been a busy year it is one that I have really enjoyed. It has also made me realise how many kind and caring people there are in our small town whose aim is to help and care for those within the community, the majority of whom are volunteers. There are also the Groups of volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure that our Town looks nice and tidy.

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During my time as Mayor, I have met and chatted to so many lovely and interesting people both adults and children alike. Keith and I have attended many events, sometimes 2 in one day, all of which I have written about in my monthly column in the Dronfield Eye and it is at this point I would like to say many thanks to Mike & Helen Firth together with their team for doing such a wonderful job in keeping our Residents up to date with all our local news and events.

Regarding the events attended it would be wrong of me to say that one was any better than the other but laying a Wreath on behalf of the Town Council on Remembrance Sunday was a very proud and moving moment for me. It is something that I will remember for a very long time.

The other thing that I take pride in was organising the Annual Civic Service along with Churches Together. My theme was the children and young people of Dronfield and to my delight Natasha who runs The Studio Dance & Theatre Academy together with Megan's Miniver's Academy put on fantastic individual performances and they were excellent. Keith and I had previously attended evening performances, so we knew that them taking part in the Civic Service was ideal and they didn't disappoint. The event was extremely well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

Also, as part of my duties I have had to Chair our Full Council Meetings. I admit at times that it has been quite challenging but nevertheless enlightening so thank you all for your patience.

Now I would like to say thank you to Cllr Pam Jones, our Deputy Mayor, who has really supported me and stepped in when I was unable to attend an event. Also, many thanks to my fellow Councillors, especially our Group Leader and Group Secretary who have supported and helped me through my time as Mayor both from the onset to now. I could not have done this without you.

Finally, I cannot let things pass without saying a very big thank you to Jo our Town Clerk and Michael our Assistant Clerk for their endless help and advice and especially to Loran for looking after my diary and keeping me on the straight and narrow when it was needed. She was a godsend. Lastly but not least thank you also to the rest of our Town Council staff who work so hard all year round and do an amazing job for Dronfield.

Just before I finish my report, I have one last thing to say, because I don't want him to think that I have forgotten him, and that is a huge thank you to my husband Keith for all his support over the last 12 months. You and our family gave me the courage to do this job, so thank you very much."

03/24-25 RESOLVED

That this report be received and noted.

6. To receive a report on the activities of the Town Council from the Leader of the Council

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

“During the year 2023/2024 we have remained focused on running the Town Council efficiently and providing residents with value for money. We provided a well-balanced and carefully managed budget with healthy reserves. We kept council tax low over the years, with a small 5% increase in 2023/24 to reflect the rise in costs seen by the Council and we will continue to deliver the things that matter most to residents.

Following the local elections in May, the new council year got off to a busy start with Cllr Susan Burkitt being elected Chair and Town Mayor.

Celebrations for the Coronation of King Charles III also took place with the Town Council planting a commemorative oak tree in Jubilee Park on the day of the Coronation and flying the Coronation flag at the Peel Centre. At the May council meeting approval was given to resurface the footpath in the small garden area at the top of Dyche Lane in Coal Aston. The end of May also saw Extreme Wheels begin free sports sessions in Sindelfingen Park.

June saw the approval for the installation of an inclusive communications board at Sindelfingen Park, alongside the new play equipment installed earlier on in 2023. Towards the end of June our outside services team also began to plant over 7,000 flowers in the flower beds and install hanging baskets around the town.

During the summer the two wildflower gardens in Sindelfingen Park and a further two at Hilltop were blooming. Grounds maintenance and repair work was also carried out across various play areas and parks within the town. Extreme Wheels also continued to offer free sporting activities for children during the summer holidays.

September saw Council agree to fund repairs to the previous toilet block within the Cemetery and turn the area into a storage unit. A motion passed at the September Council Meeting also saw the Council write to NEDDC's new Leader Cllr Nigel Barker for confirmation that the £500k of UKSPF funding allocated towards public realm improvements in Dronfield Civic Centre will be honoured by the now Labour led administration and that the monies will not be allocated elsewhere. During September a temporary 300m 4 lane running track was also marked out at Dronfield Woodhouse Recreation Ground at the request of Dronfield Running Club. The track was also available for use by the wider Dronfield community, promoting running in a safe environment. Dronfield Running Club also used Hilltop Park during the Big Dipper Half Marathon event with permission from the Council.

In October over 150 poppies were attached to lamp posts around the Town in the run up to Remembrance Sunday. Council also gave approval to book Extreme Wheels again, providing free activities for local children during school holidays in 2024-2025. The Council also agreed to continue supporting the Arts Festival by providing free use of the Civic Hall.

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In November approval was given for works to be undertaken on the Bell Tower on one of the Chapels within the Cemetery. The path around the bowling green in Cliffe Park was resurfaced and various tree maintenance work was carried out following a tree survey. During November the Town Council also took back possession of the Sports & Social Club at Dronfield Woodhouse following forfeiture of the lease by the previous tenants.

Following extreme weather in November and December and throughout the winter months, various tree work has been carried out. At the December Council Meeting permission was granted to the Scouts for the Dronfield 10k and fun run to be held in Sindelfingen Park in April 2024.

January saw further work undertaken on various trees following stormy weather. The outside services team also refilled over 140 grit bins during the month.

February saw approval of the budget and precept for the forthcoming year. The wooden footbridge within the Lea Brook Valley was also totally replaced. New fencing was also installed along the front of Cliffe Park.

During March the boards surrounding the bowling greens at Cliffe Park, Dronfield Woodhouse and Coal Aston were all replaced ahead of the start of the new season. Twenty new trees were also planted in various parks to replace the trees that had been felled in the last 12 months.

April saw the return of Extreme Wheels to Sindelfingen Park during a wet Easter break.

Throughout the year the Town Council were pleased to have organised so many popular events once again, which bring the community together. The Dronfield Gala was another success with many people enjoying the activities on offer during a sunny Sunday in June, with many free activities provided and funded by the Town Council. During September the Civic Service, hosted by the Town Mayor, was well attended in the Civic Hall in coordination with Dronfield Churches Together. In November, in partnership with local organisations, the Town Council organised an event on Remembrance Sunday, which included the annual parade and service. Christmas Trees and lights were installed around the town in November and the popular Christmas Lights Switch-on and much-loved Christmas fest attracted many residents, who enjoyed fairground rides, food and drink stalls and a visit to Santa, plus Christmas songs from a local school choir.

However, after nine years as Council Leader, I have taken the decision to stand down and would like to take this opportunity to thank councillors both past and present for their support during my time as leader.

We continue to witness what a caring, helpful and resilient community Dronfield is and I must thank all the local groups who have continued to help and support their members and community throughout the year.

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Finally, I would like to thank all councillors who have served selflessly over the past 12 months and council staff, for their continued hard work and commitment to our Town.

Looking ahead, the Council will continue to work hard this year to help Dronfield move forwards, bringing together community Groups, local businesses and residents and keeping Dronfield a great place to live and work.”

Cllr Angelique Foster, Leader of Dronfield Town Council

04/24-25 RESOLVED

That this report be received and noted.

7. To receive a report on the activities of the Thomas Taylor Charity.

The following report was given by Cllr Phillip Wright

“The Thomas Taylor Charity was established by a blacksmith who died in 1681, he bequeathed a fund for the training of Dronfield children in apprenticeships.

The fund currently grants awards to young people between the ages of 16 – 21 embarking on a full-time educational course or an approved apprenticeship.

Last year, ten successful applicants received a grant of £100.00 each.”

05/24-25 RESOLVED

That this report be received and noted.

8. To receive comments, requests and recommendations of any elector residing within and on the electoral roll of ward within Dronfield Town Council

There were no comments, requests or recommendations from any elector.

9. 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 7:18pm.