STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL

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Mayor: Councillor Charles Fraser
Town Clerk: Kate Squire

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ANNUAL TOWN PUBLIC MEETING
7.30pm Thursday 28th April 2022 in The Bow Room, The Exchange

Min No	Comments
1.	Welcome and Introductions The Mayor welcomed those in attendance and introduced the High Sheriff of Dorset, Sybil King and Philip Hughes of Philip Hughes Associates
2.	Presentation of High Sheriff Awards by the High Sheriff of Dorset, Sybil King. The High Sheriff presented an award to Alan Harrison who had been nominated by the Town Council The High Sheriff presented an award to Jeremy Read who had been nominated by the Town Council She went on to thank both for their important contributions to the community quoting Hope is achieved when you tend your own garden, adding that Sturminster Newton was their figurative garden.
3.	To receive an overview of the work at The Mill by Philip Hughes, Building Conservation Consultant. Philip presented an overview of the emergency works done over the year to the Sturminster Newton Mill, funded by a grant received by the Town Council from Historic England.
4.	To approve and sign the minutes of the Annual Town Public Meeting held on 22nd April 2021. **The minutes of the Annual Town Public Meeting held on the 22nd April 2021 were proposed as a true and correct record by Councillor Pauline Batstone and seconded by Councillor Martin Jones.**
5.	To receive the Annual Report from the Town Mayor. The Town Mayor gave a verbal report. Expressing thanks to acting Town Clerk Mal Derricott who had been in post at the beginning of the municipal year and then to the current Town Clerk Kate Squire who had taken over in June 2021. He also thanked the office and grounds staff for their hard work over the past year. He reported that while having regretfully not been able to attend his recent Civic Event himself, due to an unexpected trip to A&E, the event to thank all the volunteers involved in community support during lockdown had been a success.

In response to the Queen Green Canopy project he advised that the Town Council had made a tree planting plan, with trees planted at the Riverside Meadows and Butts Pond nature reserve sites and more planned for the Autumn. Trees from dilapidated planters in the Community Garden had been moved to Rixon Recreation Ground and a special Cornus Kousa tree had been planted on the 70th day of the 70th year of the reign of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second.
Other projects completed or in progress at present include a new Youth Hub funded by the William Williams charity; planned improvements to the Trailway Entrance including the new gates and signal. Special thanks to Councillor Martin Jones who has worked tirelessly on the project and the grounds staff who responded so quickly to a privacy issue created by clearing the area by creating an on trend dead hedge to solve the problem; a new planting scheme for the centre bed in the Railway Gardens and the welcome return of the restored historic drinking trough which had been destroyed several years ago and undergone a total refurbishment, after much scrutiny by the local authority conservation officers.
Moving forward and in response to a spate of vandalism and assaults the Council would be prioritising an upgrade and increase in CCTV.
The Mayor concluded by thanking staff and fellow Councillors for their support during his recent term as Chairman of the Council.

6. To receive an overview by Dorset Councillors Carole Jones on helping Ukranian refugees in Dorset.
Dorset Councillor Jones reported that following the unbelievable response of the local community to the Ukrainian appeal, she had been contacted to get involved in helping get Ukrainian refugees matched with host families and over to Dorset. This had been and continues to be an unbelievable struggle. She shared some experiences with those in attendance. Over 20 families are due to arrive but the visa application process is causing huge delays.

7. Open Forum – an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions or comments on any of the topics already presented or to raise any new items for discussion.
Members of the Sturminster Newton Community Benefit Society, Pauline Batstone and Nick Dobson gave an update of the work of the society with news of a new venture, to take on the old Natwest bank building and transform it into a industrial 'steam punk' style units for small local businesses to have a customer facing outlet to display and sell their products. This will be called 1855 and is due to open over the summer.
A member of the Open Spaces group, Vic Fox reported that a sub group concentrating on the Queens Green Canopy project had been formed and were in contact with local land owners to promote and encourage participation in the scheme. A plan to meet with the Town Council and discuss ideas was underway.

All business having been transacted; the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.39pm