STURMINSTER NEWTON TOWN COUNCIL

Twinned with Montebourg France

Mayor: Councillor Helen Reed
Town Clerk: Kate Squire

Council Offices
Old Market Hill
STURMINSTER NEWTON
Dorset DT10 1FH
Tel: 01258 475136
Email: admin@sturminsternewton-tc.gov.uk

ANNUAL TOWN PUBLIC MEETING
Thursday 27th April 2023
At 7.30pm in the Council Chamber

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Mayor welcomed the 21 people in attendance.

2. Community Awards

The Mayor presented Community Awards to Gail Morris, Shaun Weeks and Chris Hawkins for their services to Sturminster Newton clubs and associations.

3. Presentation by Elliott Wagner-Hale on the Swanskin Project and Sturminster Mill.

Elliott presented a presentation about the Swanskin Project and its connections to Sturminster Newton, followed by a short film.

4. To approve and sign the minutes of the Annual town Public Meeting held on 28th April 2022.

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Mayor Helen Reed, and seconded by Chris Hawkins.

5. To receive the Annual Report from the Town Mayor.

Town Mayors Report Year Ending 31st March 2023

The new civic year started with plans for the Platinum Jubilee, this took place in June with a full programme of community events including the big Jubilee Lunch, beacon lighting, bell ringing demonstration, cream tea at the Mill and a Civic Service at St Mary's Church.

With increasing numbers of cars attending the Car Enthusiasts event this was moved to Ricketts Lane recreation ground for the summer months, this has brought increased trade to the Town and brightens up the first Saturday of the month.

The Town Council started working with the Community Learning Centre to produce the 'What's Happening in Stur' bimonthly newsletter. This has grown in popularity over the months with both printed and online versions. We would like to thank both David Shepherd and Penny Mountain who are responsible for its success.

July saw the Town Council tree's group working with the Queens Green Canopy community group to increase tree planting in the town and encourage private planting too. We have planted trees at both Ricketts Lane and Rixon recreation grounds, Riverside Meadows and Butts Pond nature reserves, the trailway entrance and at the Cemetery. We also supported a Community Tree Planting Day at Filbridge rise, planting Beech and Cherry trees and a wildlife friendly hedge. Thank you to Cllr Peter Marks and our Grounds Manager, Adam Dodson for giving up their time to dig holes and organise the trees and planting.

In September we were all deeply saddened by news of the death of Queen Elizabeth the second. During our Civic Service at St Mary's Church, we paid tribute to her lifetime of service to our nation.

Information boards were installed at the trailway entrance as part of the enhancement project to give visitors details of the history of the North Dorset Railway and to encourage people to stop in Town a while to visit other places in Town. Thank you to Cllr Martin Jones who has worked so hard on this project.
In November we hosted a Civic event at Stour Connect to showcase the many and varied community groups we have in Town. Mayors from other areas and members of the public attended to chat to members of over 30 groups and watch demonstrations by the Boxing Club and Bulgarian dancers.
The festive season was filled with Civic carol services and Christmas events, including a busy light switch on day in Town. We also awarded grants to the SN literary festival, U3A croquet club, SN Amateur Dramatic Society, and the SN Heritage Trust.
The New Year is when the Town Council considers its budget for the next financial year. This year, taking into consideration rising costs and economic uncertainty we agreed to a revenue only budget, without funds allocated for projects, to keep the Council Tax request as low as possible while ensuring we are able continue providing the same services. With several projects in progress, we will concentrate on completing these over the next year. These include:

Replacing and upgrading play equipment at Ricketts Lane Recreation Ground.
Progressing the renovation of the Scout Hut to provide better youth facilities.
Extension of the Grounds maintenance workshop and improving the footpaths and car park in that area.
Installing electrical points in the Railway Gardens for events.
Renewing the Neighbourhood Plan.

In February we started looking at plans for the Coronation, working with the Sturminster Newton branch of the Royal British Legion to organise a family fun day on Monday the 8th May. Just prior to this we will be holding a community litter pick as part of the 'Coronation Big Help Out.' We also have a Civic Service on Sunday the 7th May at St Mary's Church. All are welcome to attend these events.
March and February have been busy with civic events including the installation of our new Vicar, Rev'd Mary Gubbins, we warmly welcome her to Sturminster.
With another clear external audit for the previous year and no queries from the internal auditor for the current financial year we have closed the year ready for the next external audit and exercise of public rights.
The biggest project of the year was upgrading the CCTV system. After an increase in antisocial behaviour the Town Council decided to purchase a new CCTV system. Our Grounds Manager has prepared a short PowerPoint to show its capabilities. After which I'm happy to take any questions about this or any other Council business.

6. Open Forum – an opportunity for members of the public to raise questions or comments on any topic already presented or to raise new items for discussion.

Cllr Pauline Batstone stated that we are very lucky here in Sturminster Newton to have so many voluntary organisations – there really is something for everyone.
Cllr Debbie Mantock had visited the Long Close nature area that the Grounds Staff had been working on. She praised them for their excellent work in making this a lovely area.
The Town Clerk showed the meeting a short presentation created by Adam Dodson, Grounds Manager, to show the newly installed CCTV around the town.
The Rev Mary Gubbins spoke to thank the town for the wonderful welcome she has received since moving to Sturminster Newton.
Cllr Batstone informed that the mural on the wall at Hansons will hopefully be finished shortly.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.23pm.

Signed ……..

Date ……