

NOTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF BRACKLEY TOWN COUNCIL HELD IN THE UPPER HALL, TOWN HALL, BRACKLEY ON MONDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2010 at 7.30 pm

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Present: The Worshipful the Town Mayor (Councillor Caryl Billingham)  
Councillors C J Blunden, K D Bonner-Dunham, C O Cartmell, K Dixon, D Dunham,  
T D Hayward, P Joyce, L D Ross, P H Stocker and P H Titchener  
Also County Councillors A Grant and R Sawbridge, Mr D Brookhouse,  
Sergeant Tim Pearson and Mrs J Morgan

Apologies: Councillors P J Broomfield, G Rhys and W B Stimpson

The TOWN MAYOR welcomed approximately 60 members of the public to the meeting and introduced the top table to everyone. She advised that the annual accounts had been received for the Sir Thomas Crewe's Almshouses, Brackley United Feoffee Charity and Brackley Hospital Trust and said these were available in the office.

The TOWN MAYOR invited Mr DAVID BROOKHOUSE Chairman of the Cottage Hospital Trust, to give an update. He said that after many years of reporting negative comments, he was pleased to be able to report that Northampton PCT had now committed 9 beds in the Care Home on the Sawmills site, which was exactly what was required. There would also be two doctors practices in a separate building with space for add on facilities and all the community services the town required. This would mean that the health complex would be all on one site which is what the Trust had been fighting for for some considerable time. The Town Mayor thanked Mr Brookhouse for all his work on this project.

Minutes of last year's meeting had been circulated and there were no questions from these. The TOWN MAYOR then invited questions/comments from the public on the play space consultation which included Swift Way play area.

JAMIE POPE, Highfield Court said somewhere was needed for the older children of the Town and particularly stressed the need for facilities for skateboarders. He asked if the Town Council could do anything to help to enable everyone to pull together as a community. The TOWN MAYOR said that she felt the Town Council was already doing what it could but the problem was finding a suitable site for a skatepark. COUNCILLOR DIXON agreed that finding a suitable site was the problem and the steering group had been trying for six years to find somewhere. Various places had been looked at and there was money out there if the correct site was found but ideally a lease of at least years 25 years was required. LINDA SCAYSBROOK, Team Brackley, advised that there was a trip running for youths on April 18<sup>th</sup> and she would be happy to take names of anyone interested.

KATE CROOT, Humphries Drive, commented that it was 'the best day' when the play equipment was removed from the Swift Way play area. Prior to that there had been constant problems and abusive language from the site. She said that the family would have to leave Brackley if the new equipment was put in. SUE MANISON, Jones Close, said she knew exactly what MRS CROOT was referring to as she had suffered constant problems when the equipment was installed at the bottom of Humphries Drive. She said her life had been hell this last year and there were many families moving house because of the problems.

ANDY RUSHTON, Humphries Drive, said there appeared to be some worthwhile ideas/plans but he stressed that it was important to have a policy to follow up any installations. People are aware that there will be vandalism and graffiti etc and these problems seem to be thrown over

to the Police. He did not feel it was the Police's responsibility but should form part of the ongoing management undertaken by the Town Council so that any area does not get closed down after only 18 months.

SGT TIM PEARSON, Northamptonshire Police, advised that anti social figures were down 5% on last year. He said that there had been a large number of calls from residents about the Humphries Drive play area during April/May but these fell off to only two calls in July, two in August, one in September, 3 in October and 1 in November. RYLAN MORRIS, Jones Close, commented that this had been because of the poor response from the Police and the fact that no-one attended. He said that the residents felt they were becoming a nuisance to the Police so they stopped reporting incidents. SUE MANISON said that before the play equipment had been installed in Humphries Drive she had never made a call to the Police and she did not think it was down to them to deal with the problems. 200 people had objected to the installation but this was totally ignored by the Town Council.

STEVE BUTLER, Woods Court, said he was in full agreement with a Skatepark in the right place but said there had been talk about installing one in the Humphries Drive area. The TOWN MAYOR said the Council had not been involved in this rumour and knew nothing about it. RYLAN MORRIS asked who had requested equipment to be installed in Swift Way. The TOWN MAYOR replied that no-one had asked for it but the old equipment had been removed because it was of poor quality and was costing more to repair than it was worth so the Council had resolved that it would be replaced at a later date. MR MORRIS asked if the residents in the area had been canvassed and was advised that a consultation had taken place and it was known that many neighbours were not in favour of replacing the equipment.

DAVID ROY, Swift Way, said that whilst the old equipment had been in place there had been numerous calls to the Police but since its removal there had been no problems. He asked if there had been any requests to have it replaced as he did not feel deprived because of its removal and there was other equipment nearby.

DENIS RYCE, Swift Way, quoted the resolution from the Council's meeting of July 2008 which said that the provision of equipment would be re-investigated but the recent consultation had been misleading in that he had been told that the resolution had been to replace the equipment.

ANDY RUSHTON referred to the Mayor's comments about the former equipment being of poor quality and its removal because of vandalism. He question how this could be avoided with future equipment and again reiterated the need for a robust plan, money and resources being put in place.

CAROLINE GILBART, Bridge Street, advised that at a meeting for residents about the new Fire Station a point had been raised about the preservation of the hedge and trees around the site and an assurance was given that this would not be damaged. She said that this hedge had been damaged and left in a garish state and also the trees wrecked.

She also said that in reality there was nothing for the youth of the Town in Brackley. The Youth Service had been axed in its entirety a couple of years ago and although people were told this would be looked into, this had never happened, all the spaces for community resources had been built on and the youth club had closed down. The TOWN MAYOR advised that Dillons had been taken back into the school and someone else advised that there was a youth club at the Leisure Centre and also the Zone.

JULIAN CHRONICLE, Robin Ride, also said that there had been problems with the Swift Way play area and a neighbourhood watch scheme had been set up. He also attended the Police meetings on a regular basis and was aware that youths were gathering in inappropriate places and lack of facilities for the youths was a subject which regularly came up at these meetings. He suggested that money be put into working with existing agencies to provide a skatepark and other facilities for youths rather than play equipment.

FRANCIS OLIVER, Brackley Town Football Club said that there had been an experimental night club, with no alcohol, at the Football Club for 14-17 year olds and only 6 people had turned up. Another one was being organised for Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March and if successful this could be held on a monthly basis.

ANNA CRAVEN, Pavillons Way, advised that there was a youth club at the Leisure Centre and this was very well attended.

JAMIE POPE said he would be happy to help with any youth project and the TOWN MAYOR suggested that he contact the office to put something on the Council's website to this effect and also advertise his juggling club or speak to ALAN SMITH of Global Mapping.

CHRIS ARNOLD, Wordsworth Close, said he had been pleased to hear that there were things for young people to do in Brackley. He advised that the Rugby Club had a youth element and also the Cricket Club but he was aware that this did not appeal to all. He felt that somewhere to 'hang out' was needed and suggested that the youngsters be asked what they wanted. The TOWN MAYOR said this had been done on two or three occasions and things like a ten-pin bowling alley or cinema had been requested. MR ARNOLD commented that a skate park had also been requested. LINDA SCAYSBROOK advised that two questionnaires had been sent out by Team Brackley and the top items requested were a skate park, youth café and cinema. She also commented that there was no community centre in the town and this added to the problem.

DENNIS RYCE, Swift Way, asked that a better use for the £40,000 be found. He commented that he had seen an aerial photograph of the town which showed five play areas with equipment, one at the Park and other areas adjacent to Humphries Drive and yet another was planned for the Humphries Drive area.

RYLAN MORRIS said he found it amazing that the Town Council had put something in Humphries Drive which duplicated the problems already experienced in Swift Way. He did, however, thank the Town Council for consultation with the residents about the new proposals for Swift Way. He also asked if there was any grant funding for the possible Swift Way project and was advised not.

JIM ADAMS, Highfield Court, said that the Town Council was talking about a lot of money possibly being spent on play equipment and yet the Saturday morning Music School was being taken away. The TOWN MAYOR said this was not correct and handed over to COUNTY COUNCILLOR ANDREW GRANT to explain the situation more fully. COUNCILLOR GRANT said that the service had been subject to scrutiny and a recommendation was made to reduce the grant for 2010/11 by £50,000 instead of the £238,000 originally proposed and the service would continue as before.

SUE MANISON said she had heard about a Cyber Café proposed in the High Street. The TOWN MAYOR replied that consent had been given by South Northamptonshire Council.

LINDA SCAYSBROOK said that this was about to come to fruition but helpers and volunteers would be needed. REVD PETER IDRIS TAYLOR, Ellesmere Close, advised that this was owned by the YMCA, and he was grateful to South Northamptonshire Council and Councillor Andrew Grant for the help given to make this possible. He said the lease had been signed but as yet he was unable to give a date when the facility would be open but he would appreciate patience for a little longer.

MIKE BARLOW, Westminster Croft, expressed his appreciation to Alan Smith at Global Mapping for getting information out to the public. He also said that Brackley was now a Fair Trade town with the full backing of all the churches in the Town and he would be pressing for the support of the Town Council.

COUNCILLOR CHRIS BLUNDEN read out a letter from a senior resident of Banbury Road about the unreliability of the Brackley Buzzer service run by Tex Coaches. The TOWN MAYOR asked for this to be put on the Agenda for the next Planning and General Works Committee.

FRANCIS OLIVER and SARAH CRANNAGE, Brackley Town Football Club, read out a statement which said that the services offered by the Club were under threat. The reason for this is that South Northamptonshire Council had issued the Club with a Noise Abatement Notice, which is being appealed, and this was due to be heard in the Magistrates Court later this year. It was the Club's intention to maintain the Community work for as long as possible and do everything in its power to overcome the situation.

CHRIS ARNOLD expressed serious concerns about the roads in the Town. Repairs were undertaken in Burwell Hill and Bridgewater Road but he questioned why new tarmac should rise so quickly. He said St Peters Road had been missed from the programme but the condition of this road was absolutely appalling. The TOWN MAYOR said that a report had been received from Northamptonshire Highways which stated that it did not intend to undertake too many 'knee jerk' repairs which would not last. COUNTY COUNCILLOR RON SAWBRIDGE said that there was a big problem throughout the county because of the severe weather conditions this year and County Council was doing its best to categorise the problems and the dangerous ones would be dealt with first. The TOWN MAYOR commented that Northamptonshire was a very big county with a lot of A roads and priority must be given to these.

JIM ADAMS asked why the junction of the Market Place/Bridge Street/Banbury Road had been re-surfaced when there were huge problems on other roads. The TOWN MAYOR explained that this was as a result of Section 106 funding, which had come from the Burgess Place development. Because of conditions laid down for 106 funding, this money had to be spent on the area specified by the developer or it would have been lost.

GEOFF WILKINS, Avenue Bernard said the County was 'wasting money hand over fist' on road repairs. He referred to a recent repair on Martial Daire Boulevard where no preparation work had been undertaken, the tarmac just dropped into the hole and left in a lump on the surface which soon came out after cars had driven over it. Mr Wilkins urged people to write to the Chief Executive of County Council and copy this to County Councillors Grant and Sawbridge. COUNCILLOR SAWBRIDGE said he had drawn this to the attention of County Council but he would do this again and ask for inspections to be carried out.

RYLAN MORRIS asked if it would be possible to have the whole of Humphries Drive gritted in bad weather. Mr Morris was advised that this had already been addressed.

RYLAN MORRIS asked where the other play areas referred to in the consultation were and also what the future plans were for these sites. COUNCILLOR PETER JOYCE listed the areas and said that all these were being looked at but no decisions had been made, or would be, about any site or any equipment until a full consultation had been undertaken.

ANDREW WHITE, Chartwell House, asked where the new swimming pool would be. The TOWN MAYOR felt that any discussions about this would be premature.

ALAN SMITH, Glebe Drive, asked if there were any plans for the old Fire Station. The TOWN MAYOR said that this belonged to the National Trust and was leased to County Council. It was not known whether notice had been given by the Fire Service. She suggested that if anyone had any rational suggestions for its future use the Town Council would be pleased to forward these to the National Trust.

DENNIS RYCE thanked the Council for the opportunity to come along and voice opinions and went on to read a couple of items which had appeared in the press about play equipment.

The TOWN MAYOR thanked everyone for attending and said whatever the Council did it was in the best interest of the majority of the town.

The TOWN CLERK advised that COUNCILLOR ROSS had been trying to get signatures for a Community Speed Watch project to assist with reducing speed in the Town and asked for the public's support.

Meeting closed at 9.56 pm