

Annual Town Residents Meeting 2nd May 2023

Present: C'llrs M Connolly in the Chair, H Jones, C Webb, P Hedge, A Birch, L Coleman, C Moore, S Musikavanhu, C Danso.

Guests

GSM Jamie Clark, J Thompson (Brownies/Rainbows), Revd Tim Laundon,

Members of Public

S Fell, F Galvin,

C Lovell – Town Clerk K Mooney - Admin

1. Apologies: C'Ilr D Wight, J Powell, D Kofitia, R Gregory, A Pickernell (Wiltshire Council)

2. Declaration of Interest: None

3. Minutes of the 2022 Annual Town Meeting: Minutes had been circulated. Proposed as a true and accurate record by C'Ilr H Jones, seconded by C'Ilr L Coleman, carried.

4. Wiltshire Councillors Report: Cllr Mark Connolly stated In my role as the Wiltshire Councillor for Tidworth North & West at the County level I am the Chair of the Audit & Governance Committee and the lead member for anti-Fraud.

I did not vote for the 4.99% increase for the Wiltshire Council element of Council Tax as I could not support such an increase when I represent an area where the vast majority of those working in Tidworth are public sector workers who have had a pay freeze in 2022 and lower pay increases than those in the public sector.

At a local level, I managed to get the fence along the A338 next to the River Bourne to be replaced as it was missing in parts and rotting in many other areas. The fence along Ludgershall Road will be repaired this financial year.

I chair the LHFIG, which covers the whole Community Area. It has a budget of around £22K for local highway and footway related schemes. The funds are supplemented by the local Parish and Town Councils who provide 25% of the scheme development and implementation costs for schemes in their areas. Tidworth has had new chevron warning signs at the bend at the top of Station Road, Waiting Restrictions outside the Post office and the parking bays outside the row of shops on Pennings Road, and have been successful with a substantive bid from Wiltshire Council for a safer crossing facility at the Ashdown estate roundabout to allow residents to access Tedworth Park easier. This work will be completed later this year.

The Group is also investigating providing a hard surface in Wylve Road to the entrance of the old Clarendon nursery site, which is now a resource centre for children with special educational needs. The grass verge is owned by MOD, so permission is being requested for this.

We are awaiting survey results for a possible crossing in Ordnance Road and metrocounts in three locations (Pennings Road, Bulford Road and Windmill Drive) to assess if any measures are

required to reduce speeding in these roads. The metrocounts were requested following a petition signed by nearly 500 residents concerned about speeding in the town.

I am the Area Board lead on the Environment, which is one of three priorities for the Board. A new Environment Action Group has been set up and the AB has allocated £5K to the group. The money will fund a biodiversity audit for the Community Area and insurance for a scheme to plant trees/shrubs in the green field in front of the Manor Rise development in Tidworth.

5. **Police Report:** PC Rupinder Kaur gave a report on Tidworth. Community Speed watch has taken place between Tidworth and Collingbourne. Regular foot patrols at the Wellington Lion School and Zouch Academy TIDWORTH during drop off/pick up times due to increasing the reports of people parking inconsiderately causing issues to those attending school. Warning letters have been given to vehicles parked on double yellow lines/causing an obstruction. Engaging with local youths while on regular ASB patrols, engagement with the local youth groups and Schools. Currently looking for locations to hold Police Consultations with members of the community. Patrols and ongoing investigation related to a spate of burglaries in Tidworth.
6. **Garrison:** GSM Jamie Clark stated that there has been over 2000 soldiers returning from America on Ex Warfighter. All units stood down for Coronation Weekend. Retention figures are currently a large focus of the Military as a whole. Heritage site is now complete and open to the public around Tedworth House. GSM Jamie Clarke also gave a big thank you and best wishes to Cllr Mark Connolly for his steadfast leadership and Military engagement.

Town Council Reports

Community Services

C'llr Hedge - The Services committee is one of three major committees reporting to the Full Town council, it is responsible for War Memorial, Cemetery, Mortuary chapel, play parks, issues with roads and pathways in Tidworth and soon the new civic centre and Riverbourne corridor.

At the start of last year, we were emptying the old community centre, giving away or selling of furniture etc. and moving to Castledown Business Park. Over the last year we have had various sub-committee meetings to discuss and plan for the opening of the new Civic Centre in November. Playparks. — We added Shepherd Street play park in June last year and has proved very popular as does Connolly Way play park both on the Riverbourne estate. Winter improvements and repairs should be completed soon.

The Mortuary Chapel is a very peaceful and picturesque place to visit this springtime with snowdrops in January followed by daffodils and then the primroses.

The War Memorial is not lit at the moment but after the completion of the civic centre build the mains will be reattached and should look good with the Civic Centre as a back drop.

Riverbourne Corridor should be part of the land we own shortly, we plan to keep it as an environmentally green area for wildlife.

Finally, the committee will take over responsibility for the new Civic centre when it has been built hopefully by November.

With Thanks to the admin. Staff, Carly, Kayleigh and especially Annie who is the Service Admin. Staff.

Community Engagement

C’Ilr Webb reported on the activities the committee had carried out during the year.

The last 12 months have been very busy for the Engagements committee.

Jubilee celebrations – planted flowerbed at the RBL, local children were invited to design the jubilee banners for the lampposts in Tidworth. Jubilee in bloom, best shopfront, photography, and best dressed house competitions. Finally, the Beacon lighting ceremony.

Two cinema events were held in July & August. These were very well attended.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel the planned litterpick due to the extreme heatwave at the time.

Following the death of HLM Queen Elizabeth II, the proclamation was held at RBL Tidworth, followed by the National moment of reflection.

Mortuary Chapel Open Day again was very well attended. Thank you for Cllr Birch for hosting the event.

Halloween hunt throughout October. A beautiful Remembrance service was held in partnership with RBL Tidworth.

The Christmas event held at TLC was the biggest we’ve had and was very busy all day, reports from the public and vendors were all positive.

We had the Tidworth Community Awards at The Clarendon Club, Tidworth.

Cllr Webb, Cllr Hedge, and the Town Clerk attended monthly radio updates with Castledown FM.

Tidworth times has received positive feedback.

Cllr Webb thanks Admin staff for their support this year, especially Engagements Admin, Kayleigh Mooney for her hard work and dedication to all events this year.

Leadership

C’Ilr Jones reported that Leadership continues to support the other committees. HJ also clarified the duties of the staffing committee.

Projects

In the absence of C’Ilr Kofitia, Cllr Mark Connolly reported that things have been quickly moving this year with the Civic Centre build. We hope to be completed in October/November time. Building works begin on 9th May for the BMX/Skate Park.

Although planning permission for the allotments has been submitted, due to an administrative error, they are due to be re-submitted.

Thanks to the Committee members and Council staff for their support.

Mayors Report

The past year has been a very busy one for the Council and me as the Chair and Mayor of the Council.

On the civic centre and Community Policing Team hub, we awarded the build contract to Neilcott, who were the cheapest but also the best technical bidder. The Council signed off on the lease with the Wiltshire Police, who will get 30 years free rent because of them paying the capital cost of their element of the build up-front. The lease took months of negotiations and many online meetings between the parties and their respective legal teams.

These are many hours of my life I will never get back!

Work commenced on the civic centre in early August 2022, a couple of months later than hoped due to some pre-commencement planning conditions that took longer than we had thought. Bad weather (rain and cold spells) delayed some elements of the work but the planned handover date is presently 19 Oct 23, with the opening a month later. One area that has gone significantly over budget

is the contamination in the ground. The site was previously owned by MOD and it was used as a dumping ground many years ago, when rules on such things were very different to now. The final additional cost could be around £500K. The build is going well and you can really see the size of the building now.

After months of discussions in the background with MOD, planners, environmental health, highways, utility companies and the Environment Agency, the skatepark is finally happening. The Council awarded the contract to Maverick, who consulted both online and at the Clarendon Club on their initial concept. As a result of feedback and a Noise Impact Assessment, the design was altered and turned 180 degrees. The work is due to start next week and the lease with MOD will be completed shortly. It will take 9-10 weeks to complete and should be open before the summer holidays. The total cost of the scheme is around £175K.

We have been progressing with the proposed allotments scheme in Humber Lane, next to Home Farm. Having amended designs over time as a result of feedback from residents and the allotment committee set up for potential users, a planning application was submitted to Wiltshire Council in December. Disappointingly, after five months waiting for a decision, we were informed just two weeks ago that the application was technically invalid. We have had to withdraw the application and are re-submitting, which will mean a new application number being allocated. The technical issue concerned land ownership of the visibility splay to exit the allotment site. If approved, there will be 15 allotments and some general parking provided outside of the allotment area. A further planning application will be submitted for the rest of the field to be split into three paddocks.

The Council gave Tidworth Town Council a 30-year lease for the Humber Lane pitches last year. This gives them a secure home for a long time and will enable them to make improvements, such as a club house. The Council also has over £70K from s106 funds received from the Manor Rise development allocated to assist with ground improvements for the site.

Finally, I would like to thank the Council's staff who have been brilliant over the last year with so many projects ongoing and preparing for the civic centre. I would also like to thank all Councillors, who are all volunteers and give their time to the Council, particularly those on Leadership, who have had to read many emails and documents relating to the civic centre.

AGM Comments

Before I call for nominations for the new Chair of the Council and Mayor, I wanted to say a few words before I relinquish the roles.

I have been lucky enough to be the Mayor of the Town on two occasions, from 2016 to 2019 and 2020 until tonight. It has been an honour and privilege to serve as Mayor, and for the majority of the time I have enjoyed it. There have inevitably been some difficult times over that period but the support of the staff and my Deputy, Humph, have helped me through these.

Whoever takes over as Mayor, will have the benefit of hopefully three major Town Council projects coming to fruition, the civic centre, skatepark and hopefully allotments. I think the completion of these schemes is the right time for a new guard to take over the running of the Council, and a new direction for it. I will be leaving with strong foundations, literally and metaphorically!

I have served as a Wiltshire Councillor for 30 years this month and the Town Council for over 15 years. I hope residents think I have served as Mayor well and in the manner it should.

So, thank you all for your support, whether just in recent months or for many years, I think the Council is in a very good position and can grow even more going forward.

7.

Janet Thompson – Rainbows/Brownies/Girlguides –

Holy Trinity & St James: Revd Tim Laundon stated the flower festival has been popular. Thanks Tidworth Town Council for their support with the Warm spaces' initiative.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at 6.55pm

Signed as a true record Date

C'Ilr M Connolly

Mayor