

(Draft Minutes subject to confirmation at the next Annual Town Meeting)

BEVERLEY ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

28th April 2021

Via Zoom at 6.30pm

12 members of the public were present via Zoom who wished to speak at the meeting. The meeting was also broadcast on You Tube for members of the public to watch/listen. Also, in attendance were: The Mayor of Beverley, Councillor Tom Astell; Matthew Snowden, Acting Town Clerk and Libby Woodhouse, Administrative Assistant.

1. Mayor's Introduction and Welcome

The Mayor, Councillor T Astell, welcomed everyone to the meeting, either via Zoom or You Tube and explained protocols in place.

The Mayor gave a brief report to the Meeting as follows:

This year had been a tumultuous year for Beverley and the wider world. His time as Mayor was very quiet in comparison to other Mayors with very few engagements. However, the Council had still achieved a lot – great floral displays, spectacular Christmas Lights and investment into CCTV in the town. Moving forward, the Council will be able to start doing events, and achieve more for the town.

The Mayor had raised £600 for his two Charities from his digital fundraising cabaret evening in March which will be presented to Hull Royal Infirmary Ward 4 and the Lollipop Group.

The Mayor reminded those attending that only residents within the four wards of the parish of Beverley would be able to speak.

2. Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 5th March 2019

It was resolved to approve the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting of 5th March 2019 as a true and correct record.

3. Matters of Interest or Concern relating to Beverley

3.1: Floral Displays:

A resident congratulated the Council on the floral displays and requested that more tree planting is undertaken. This will be placed on a Planning Property and Services agenda.

3.2: Expenses:

A resident queried the expenses claimed by Councillor P Astell, whilst he had done a great job during lockdown, his expenses were £500 and why did he not use the van?

The Acting Town Clerk reported that this was due to work undertaken that related to the Planning, Property & Services Committee and specifically with regard to plants and planting. Work had been undertaken on a voluntary basis and travel expenses were paid. The work involved helping the Handyman between Covid lockdowns with trips outside of the town boundary.

3.3: Events:

A resident queried whether the Mayor is planning a Pride event this year, or whether the Mayor is planning to extend the length of office as other towns have done this year?

The Mayor responded that there were no plans for a Pride event this year due to Covid restrictions making the planning of events difficult. The Council had made the hard decision to cancel the Food Festivals and it was felt that a Pride event should be postponed until 2022.

With regard to the length of terms as Mayor, the Council would make that decision at Mayor Making however the current Deputy Mayor, Councillor Johnson, would be looking forward to her year as Mayor and he hoped that things would be better for her.

3.4: Accounts:

A resident stated that there have been issues with the annual accounts for two years in a row leading to an investigation by the external auditor and there is a list of recommendations by the internal auditor. There was a previous audit where recommendations were not acted on. What is the Council doing to ensure the accounts are on a firmer footing?

The Mayor stated that the Acting Town Clerk would provide a full answer in writing. He reported that this last year had been difficult to function properly and the Council knew there had been issues. Last year there had been a specific investigation by Audit Yorkshire into specific complaints and that it was not true that the External Auditors had refused to sign off the previous AGAR. Due to a backlog of investigations that the External Auditor is dealing with across the country, they have not even opened the case yet. Separately, the new Internal Auditor has highlighted areas where the Council had fallen short of current regulations in 2020-2021 resulting in a 32-point plan to positively resolve all points raised by the Auditor. This spans all four quarters of this year to enable efficient working and to put correct processes in place. The Audit Report (Interim) and the plan are available to view in the papers for Full Council.

The Acting Town Clerk advised that documents were also available to view on the audit page of the website. The plan is a standing item on Full Council and the relevant Committees. The Internal Audit (Interim) took place from March 2021 to December 2021 and the final audit will take place in May following the year-end of 31st March. It is an ongoing process of development which includes checks and balances and there may be some "no's" on the AGAR this year.

3.5 Banking Reserves:

A resident was concerned regarding the amount of money held in reserves in one bank account which is a risk in any banking collapse. What does the Council plan to do?

The Acting Town Clerk reported that it had proved difficult to invest money with other bodies during Covid as banks did not class this as essential business, however the Council is looking to invest with the CCLA and Beverley Building Society.

3.6 Covid Memorial:

A resident asked whether there were plans for a memorial to those lost due to Covid from Beverley?

The Acting Town Clerk stated that this could be raised at a subsequent meeting of the Council.

3.7 Hanseatic League:

A resident queried the Hanseatic League.

The Mayor reported that Beverley is now one of 196 towns and cities across the world which were known as Hansa towns and trading towns in ancient medieval times. There is now a league of towns such as Hull, Kings Lynn, Aberdeen and Edinburgh in the UK. Beverley is now part of the league.

A resident reported that instead of the trip to RIGA this year for the Hanseatic League, there will be a trip to Kings Lynn.

3.8 Tree Felling:

A resident reported that there had been concern in social media about the number of trees being felled by the Pasture Masters.

The Acting Town Clerk replied that the Pasture Masters make their own decisions with regard to their business and ERYC have no oversight. The Town Council is currently trying to foster a stronger link in order to work together in future.

3.9 Community Spirit:

A resident reported this had been a difficult year for everyone, people had been lost and residents and business had suffered. However, the community had grown stronger in terms of neighbours and community groups helping each other. It was hoped that this would build strength in future to benefit the community.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 18.52 and thanked everyone for attending.

Signature:

Date