

Middlewich Town Council

Annual Town Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting held on 8th May 2019 at 6pm in the Wych Centre, Civic Way, Middlewich

Present: The Mayor, Councillor W Walmsley and Mayoress Mrs Bernice Walmsley

Also present DJ French, Assistant Town Clerk

2 local residents

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors DJ Latham and G Williams.

2 Annual Report

The Mayor gave an outline of the work of the Council over the past year:

The council had faced many challenges, both short and long term, and some notable events included: the celebration of putting 14 names on the War Memorial, the Canal breach, the opening of two Connected Communities Hubs in Middlewich – at the Victoria Hall and at the Methodist Church; the fantastic refurbishment of Fountain Fields, and the regular events for the benefit of all local residents and businesses – the Mexon Market including the Middlewich Town Crier competition; the FAB Festival, the Classic Car & Bike Show; and the Christmas Lights Switch-On event including Christmas market.

Significant progress for the town had been made at Cheshire East on essential infrastructure for the town including a fully funded Eastern Bypass, the Leisure Centre funding and the planned upgrade of Victoria Building using S106 funds. There was progress with the start of a project to further improve the traffic situation in Middlewich with a possible Southern Bypass. The campaign to re-open Middlewich Rail Station had made giant leaps forward this year. The Mayor thanked the 3 Ward Members for their efforts to move all these things forward for the good of the town.

The Mayor noted that the May Elections had seen the retirement and departure of some long serving Members of the Council and placed on record his thanks to them all for their efforts on behalf of the town.

3 Questions from residents

Local residents were given the opportunity to ask questions or raise issues as follows:

- Could an update be given on the Railway Station? The Rail Campaign group had made significant progress and the inclusion of a station at Gadbrook Park had helped the campaign. The Local Enterprise Partnership were a key group that were now supportive of the campaign proposals. The next step

was for the Rail Campaign Consultants to submit a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the Department for Transport and the Secretary of State.

- What were the arrangements for the new Council to commence work? There would be an Annual Meeting on 20th May at which the new Chairman/Mayor would be appointed. At this meeting any committees would be set up along with membership.
- How would new committees know about any on-going work or projects? The new committees would have access to past documents including minutes; there would also be continuity provided by staff
- What was the current situation with the Eastern Bypass and was there any impact from changes to the Councillor representation on Cheshire East? There was planning permission in place along with confirmed funding. The policies had been set and funding of £2.5m had been allocated by CEC to progress the bypass which included staffing and the next stage to prepare an ecological assessment. There were also initial studies underway regarding a southern Bypass to commence from Tetton Bridge. This had support from both Winsford Town Council and Cheshire West and Chester Council.
- Were there proposals to transfer ownership of Civic Way car park to the Town Council? This was still on a list of possible assets to transfer but no decisions had been made as yet.
- Would the cemetery gates be repaired soon? This matter was with the Cemetery Board but it was understood that there were not many companies would could supply the cast iron design required.
- Would the cemetery be brought back into the Council? It was explained that the Council does not own the cemetery and in any case the cemetery constitution would have to be changed before any such action could be considered.
- Did Middlewich Council Tax go towards funding the Cemetery? The current budget was shown which had a zero figure for the Cemetery; in previous years there had been a budget allocation from the Town Council to the Cemetery Board but it was not paid out to the Cemetery.

The Mayor thanked residents for their attendance.

The meeting concluded at 6.30 pm