

## Woodbridge Town Council

Minutes of the **Annual Town Meeting** held at the Shire Hall on **Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023** at 7pm

### Councillors:

Present: Patrick Gillard (Mayor of Woodbridge) and fifteen members of the public.

Apologies: Cllrs. Caroline Blois, Robin Sanders and Caroline Page.

In Attendance: Mr G E Diaper, Town Clerk.

### 743. Welcome

The Mayor of Woodbridge, Councillor Patrick Gillard, welcomed those in attendance to the Woodbridge Annual Town Meeting.

### 744. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Caroline Blois, Robin Sanders and Caroline Page.

### 745. Consideration and approval of Minutes of the Town Meeting held on Tuesday 26th April 2022.

The minutes of the Town Meeting held on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were agreed and signed as a true record.

### 746. Civic Year 2022-23.

The Mayor of Woodbridge spoke to the following report on the 2022/23 Civic Year.

This has been a very busy and historic year in the history of our country. We started the year as we were just coming out of the pandemic times that occupied so much of our energies in 2020 and 2021; we finish it with a new monarch, a new Prime Minister and in two months, a new Woodbridge Town Council as this council has finished its four-year term.

As well as talking about this year, I would like to pay tribute to the way that our townspeople, our elected representatives and hundreds of volunteers helped us get through the pandemic. It has given me the greatest satisfaction during the term of this council that Woodbridge responded so well to an unprecedented crisis. And now we are back on our feet.

This year's highlights have seen much ceremony and celebration. In June the wonderful Jubilation Fun Day on Kingston Fields had about 2000 residents enjoying the chance to be together again in glorious sunshine to celebrate Her Majesty's 70th anniversary as Queen.

Then three months later the town was paying its respects for her long service and beginning the reign of King Charles III.

In the Town Council year there have been many highlights, including:

- The installation of new play equipment in Elmhurst Park, to complement the new equipment installed last year on Kingston Fields.
- The imminent arrival of the new 'Changing Places' accessible toilets in Elmhurst Park, to make the park a better facility for all residents and to help with the events that take place there.
- The work that the Town Council and individual Town Councillors have done to welcome refugees from the war in the Ukraine, work that is still sadly much needed.
- Collaboration and support for the County Council bid for up to £20m of Government 'Mini-Holland' funding to make Woodbridge and Melton much better places to get around on foot and two wheels. This comes on top of the work already done to make the Thoroughfare a much better place to stroll and shop.
- We decided in January that because of the unprecedented financial crisis facing many residents, the Town Council should provide what help we could. We voted to give £7,000 support to the excellent Salvation Army branch in the Town Centre, to help it with its Food Bank work.
- We have continued to contribute regular amounts to our long-term maintenance reserve to repair and preserve the assets that the town holds, and we have committed to research the views of the town before making any decision on the future of the Town's most historic asset, the Shire Hall in which we are now meeting.

To enable the Town Council to continue its work for the Town and its residents, we voted to increase the Town Council precept by an amount equivalent to an extra 11p a week for a band-D property. We believe this sum will allow us to continue improving the facilities which we manage and to continue responding to needs and opportunities where we can.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to the hard work of our Shire Hall team and to the engagement and energy shown by our elected councillors and other committee volunteers throughout the year that we are now closing. Thank you all.

Patrick Gillard, Mayor of Woodbridge 2022-23

Cllr. John Jewers thanked County and Town Councillor Caroline Page for her service to Woodbridge.

#### 747. Public Question Time

The Chair of the Woodbridge Riverside Trust provided a report on the progress of the tapestry project in the Longshed, funding for which had been provided by Woodbridge Town Council. The project is registered with the National Needlework Archive and is now self-funded due to donations from visitors.

A member of the public spoke regarding a potential planning application at St Mary's Church, outlining their concerns with the proposed development.

A member of the 'Save the Deben' campaign provided an update on the application to secure designating bathing water status for the River Deben. No answer had been received from DEFRA regarding the status of the application.

**748. Closure**

The meeting was closed at 7.20pm.

Councillor Gillard  
Chair