

RAUNDS TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**Tuesday 9th May 2023 at 7.30pm****PRESENT:**

Cllr R Beattie, Cllr P Byrne, Cllr B Cross, Cllr O Curtis, Cllr A Fernley, Cllr K Harrison, Cllr H Howell, Cllr M Levell, Cllr R Levell and Cllr L Wilkes.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Steve Tucker, Clerk (Minutes)
Nicola Joy, Assistant Clerk

ALSO PRESENT:

20 Members of the public.

Prior to formally opening the meeting, Cllr Richard Levell addressed the meeting as the retiring Mayor and presented cheques to representatives from his chosen charities, East Northamptonshire First Responders and Raunds Foodbank.

Well, another year has flown by; so many Saturdays have been and gone, and here we are again at an Annual Meeting.

But it has been an interesting year, starting with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee last June and ending with the Coronation a few days ago. While as a Council we did a lot for the Jubilee, for the Coronation weekend we let people do their own thing. Magda and I watched the Coronation on Saturday, attended a street party in our road on Sunday and yesterday we were in Gumster for a splendid lunch. We had fun and I hope everybody else did.

The Council had planned to hold the Mayor's Show in September but sadly this had to be cancelled because of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. But panic not, this year's show is in a fortnight's time on 21 May and will have a royal theme, as will the Saturday market the day before.

I don't want to repeat the summary of achievements in the year that I spoke about at the Town Assembly a couple of weeks ago, except to say that we have achieved a lot, the result of the hard work put in by the Committee Chairmen and the Council staff. We have had a few comings and goings among staff members this year, but Nicola and Jane, who are looking after us this evening, represent an element of continuity, while Steve Tucker has made a great impact, positive I should add, since he joined us last autumn. On behalf of the Councillors and the residents of the town, I should like to thank them and the rest of the staff for everything that they have done throughout the year.

Being the Mayor this year has been less time-consuming than in my previous terms, as people still seem to be hesitant to mix as much as they did before the pandemic. Whereas I attended 180 events in the town and the county in 2018/19, this year I have been to under a 100. In particular, care homes, where I spent many happy hours last time, are still very cautious about admitting visitors – or maybe it's just me they've been avoiding. Either way, I hope that things continue to open up and get back to where we were before 2020.

I held a couple of fund-raising events. First was the Murder Mystery evening at Jesters Bistro back in August. The restaurant was filled to capacity and we were treated to a splendid meal. The second fund-raising event was a quiz in October which was attended by over 100 people.

Magda and I have been able to raise £4000 for my two chosen charities, and thank you to everyone who has supported us in this effort. As many of you are aware, the charities are the Raunds Foodbank and the East Northants First Responders.

As those of you who have been a Mayor will know, it's not a walk in the park – it's time-consuming and hard work, (and unpaid) and three times is enough. For now. Thank you for everyone's support during the year, not least my wife, Magda, whose year has also been turned upside down.

Best wishes to my successor. Thank you.

FC1.23 Election of Town Mayor & Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

RESOLVED that Cllr P Byrne be elected as Chairman of the Council and Town Mayor for the ensuing municipal year.

Cllr P Byrne made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

FC2.23 Election of Deputy Mayor & Signing of Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

RESOLVED that Cllr L Wilkes be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Council and Deputy Town Mayor for the ensuing municipal year.

Cllr L Wilkes made and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Deputy Mayor nominated Cllr Helen Howell to be his consort.

FC3.23 To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr D Hughes and Cllr T Swailes.

FC4.23 Notification of requests from members of the public to address the meeting in compliance with adopted protocol.

None received.

FC5.23 Notification of members questions in compliance with the council's standing orders.

None received.

FC6.23 Declarations of Interest.

COUNCILLORS ARE REMINDED THAT IF THEY HAVE EITHER A DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST OR OTHER INTEREST IN ANY ITEM THEN THEY SHOULD DECLARE THE INTEREST AND LEAVE THE MEETING FOR THAT ITEM.

None.

FC7.23 Minutes: to confirm the minutes of the Council meeting held 11 April 2023.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 April 2023 be confirmed as a true record.

FC8.23 Committee Minutes: To receive the minutes of the following Committees:

- **Planning Committee** held on 25 April 2023

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 25 April 2023 be confirmed as a true record.

FC9.23 Appointments to Committees and External Bodies: To confirm appointments to Committees and External Bodies for 2023/24.

RESOLVED that:

- The proposed appointments to Committees and External Bodies for 2023/24 be approved as set out in the report; and**
- That appointments to those positions on External Bodies currently listed as vacant be deferred.**

FC10.23 Schedule of Meetings 2023/24: To approve the schedule of Council meetings for the 2023/24 municipal year.

RESOLVED that the schedule of Council meetings for the 2023/24 municipal year be approved subject to:

- The provisional Finance Committee meetings scheduled for 6 July 2023, 26 October 2023 and 4 April 2024 be moved to 20 July 2023, 19 October 2023 and 18 April 2024 respectively;**
- The provisional Events Committee meeting scheduled for 2 April 2024 be moved to 30 April 2024; and**
- The schedule of Events Committee meetings being further reviewed at the next meeting of the Committee on 16 May 2023.**

FC11.23 Direct Debit Payments: To approve the list of payments to be made by direct debit.

- (i) That the list of payments to be made by Direct Debit be approved; and
- (ii) That renewed approval be given to the making of payments via variable direct debit, banker's standing order, BACS, CHAPS and internet banking transfer methods.

FC12.23 Subscriptions: To review annual subscription payments.

RESOLVED that the list of subscription renewals be approved.

FC13.23 Town Mayor's Address: Address from the newly-elected Mayor.

It's an honour and a privilege to stand here as the elected Mayor of Raunds and I express my sincere appreciation to my fellow Councillors for placing their trust in me and giving me this opportunity. I had no idea this would happen after agreeing to stand for Council elections. I take the responsibility and the trust you have shown very seriously and commit to serving the people of Raunds to the best of my abilities and offer my full support to our Clerk and the other members of the Council.

I would like to thank Richard and Magda for all of their efforts for the past year and the achievements made to keep Raunds Town a shining light within Northamptonshire. I have a lot to live up to but it is my intention to carry on this good work with enthusiasm and push forward and maintain the standards we have set for the town. I know I will be supported by my Deputy Mayor, Lee Wilkes, as well as my fellow Councillors, together with the Town Clerk and his staff.

I have chosen two charities to support this year. With the ongoing squeeze on spending, inflation etc, and the good relationship we have with Raunds Foodbank, I have chosen to support this for another year. My second charity is the Bone Cancer Research Trust. Bone cancer is one of those cancers that doesn't get the headlines like many of the others but its effects can be quite devastating. If discovered early, although it cannot be cured, it can be controlled, giving hope for its sufferers for a good quality of life. So any help that can be given for research and new drugs is a positive.

Going forward, we have our usual calendar full of local events and activities and I hope these will be well supported as usual.

You are now all invited to stay for food and drinks in the Mayor's Parlour which have been arranged by Nicola and Jane, and I thank them for their hard work.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 7:58pm.

Approved: (Town Mayor)

Meeting date.....13th June 2023.....(Council)

DRAFT