

DEREHAM TOWN COUNCIL

20th March 2019

At the Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 19th March 2019 in the Meeting Room at the Memorial Hall, Norwich Street, Dereham at 7.30pm.

Present:

Elected Representatives: Town Councillors: Mayor of Dereham H Bushell (Chairman of the meeting), A Bowyer, H Clarke, P Duigan, S Green, R Hambidge, L Monument, P Morton

Residents of Dereham in attendance: V Baker, S Barnes, D O'Callaghan, T Cara, C Coleman, B D'Arts, C Hawkins, K Hawkins, H King, N Smith, D Sneesby, P Sutton, and M Webb

Also in attendance: Town Clerk AN Needham and Town Council Officer D Brightman

The Mayor of Dereham, Councillor H Bushell welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. **To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors L Goreham, K Millbank and T Monument also J Manley and LJ O'Callaghan.

2. **To confirm as correct, record and sign the Minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting held on Tuesday 20th March 2018.**

Councillor H Bushell went through the minutes. Proposed by Councillor Duigan and seconded by Councillor Bowyer the minutes were received, confirmed as correct and signed.

3. Councillor Hilary Bushell then asked those present if they had any questions for the town council. There were none.

4. The grants that have been awarded by Dereham Town Council since the last parish meeting were read out:

Carnival Committee	£1,400
About Dereham	£500
William Cowper Pre School Nursery	£500
Dereham Saints Youth FC	£500
Norfolk & Suffolk 4x4 Response	£152
Dereham Band	£350
CAB	£4,500 (2018/2019)
CAB	£4,080 (retrospective grant for 2016/2017)
Dereham Caudebec-les-Elbeuf	£300
Twinning Association	
Dereham Ruthen Twinning Assoc	£750
Dereham Men's Shed	£1,250
CHiPS	£1,300

World War I Centenary Grants

Friends of Dereham Memorial Hall	£250
Royal British Legion	£700
Dereham Runners	£750
Dereham/Caudebec les Elbeuf	£1,000
Twinning Association	
Dereham/Ruthen Twinning Assoc	£900
Dereham Carnival Crafters	£3,000

5. The Mayor of Dereham, Councillor Hilary Bushell, then spoke about her year as Mayor

Having been re-elected to the office of Mayor for an immediate second year of office, I have been able to enjoy the privilege of representing the town of Dereham at Wisbech, Hunstanton, Downham Market, Thetford, Wymondham, Attleborough, Watton and Norwich as well as R.A.F Marham.

2018 has been an important year commemorating the end of the 1st World War and this year has involved the younger generations more than ever. After all they are our future and it is for them to continue to ensure that those who gave their lives are never forgotten.

Many visits this year have again been to events and organisations that are run by volunteers whose input and enormous efforts in fundraising for their individual groups, as well as working 'week in week out' to help and encourage others. These groups cover such as mother and baby, young children, teenagers and the infirm and older community.

Unfortunately like all these groups new volunteers are very difficult to encourage. I would say that giving of your time for others is very rewarding and I would recommend anyone to become involved.

Your council has continued to work hard throughout the year dealing with hostile planning applications, infrastructure issues and the council has also been involved together with local parishes to be prepared and to safeguard against the New Market Towns issues, which at the moment are quiet, but we are prepared to look after our town.

Our interests at this moment are involved in working together with Breckland District Council in the Market Town Initiative to encourage all organisations, as well as the Town Council, to make bids for funding for projects which will enhance the town and encourage more visitors.

Dereham has culture, heritage, leisure, the Windmill, Mid Norfolk Railway, brilliant open spaces and wonderful walkways, as well as great play areas; and cafes to enjoy a well-earned refreshing beverage. Dereham still enjoys the busiest shopping area in Breckland and indeed in many other areas of Norfolk.

We have a town to be proud of.

6. The Mayor then introduced the local groups that were to speak:

Dementia Friendly Dereham - Mrs Barbara D'Arts

Another 12 months has passed and we continue to make our presence known in the town by attending as many public events as possible. Over the last year we had an information stall at the Hospital Fete, the switching on of the Christmas lights and were part of the Northgate High school presence at the Dereham Carnival. The school is still a very great supporter of the charity and in fact, only this morning myself and a fellow committee member held an assembly about our work for 350 students and at the end we were presented with a cheque for £500.

Currently we are one of three charities in the town being supported by the Co-oP and have an information table in the store the last Friday of every month.

We continue to hold our training sessions and the next one is arranged for two weeks' time on 4th April at Meeting Point.

We held a coffee morning in Church House the middle of last year and will be holding another on 27th April – again in Church House.

The committee remains strong and we now have a member who has taken up the role as treasurer and have also been joined by Trudy Jordan who is an extremely talented web designer and keeps our site up to date.

We are supporting Dereham Meeting Point with the cognitive stimulation therapy groups that are now running twice a week for people living with Dementia. Our support is given by funding necessary resources and by members of DFD taking part who have been trained to run or assist in these groups. The sessions last for fifteen weeks and then those attending can either continue to do so, or if they wish, become part of the membership of Dereham Meeting Point.

The other exciting development is that, together with Meeting Point, we are appealing for and raising funds to purchase a Tovertafel. This is a piece of equipment that has been developed in the Netherlands – hence the name Tovertafel which means Magic Table in English.

It has been demonstrated at DMP by the company who have developed it, as it is hoped to purchase one by the end of this year, funds permitting. Several of DMP members with Dementia had a wonderful time playing the games. I am not going to give a huge explanation how it works other than to say that it consists simply of a very sophisticated projector that is suspended from the ceiling and interactive games are projected onto a table. I would urge you all to go onto the internet and type in Magic Table. The Tovertafel website will be listed showing videos of how it works but there is also a very good report and video on a BBC site. Suffice to say it is very expensive and we hope to be able to support DMP in helping to raise the £6500 needed to purchase the equipment.

Dereham Antiquarian Society - Councillor Phillip Duigan (on behalf of Mr Peter Wade-Martin)

The Antiquarian Society (or as they are now known the Dereham Heritage Trust) are now settled in their new home in the Assembly Rooms. This season's opening for Bishop Bonners Cottage will be from May-September, with some new and exciting projects being looked into. There will be lots of new exhibits for visitors to see which should make it an even more exciting place to visit.

aboutDereham - Mr Mike Webb

A year has just gone by since we formed aboutDereham and we had to hit the ground running. Our aim is to work together with other voluntary and commercial organisations to promote Dereham; to provide information/what's going on for residents and visitors; link voluntary and commercial sectors with public and private sectors; identify issues; consult; develop plans; help deliver change and to promote Dereham as "A good place to live and work and a great place to visit".

Mike asked the audience who had heard of aboutDereham and the vast majority raised their hands.

We have set up a fabulous website aboutDereham.org to allow voluntary and community organisations to promote themselves and to advertise their events.

We have produced, distributed and paid for 15,000 copies of a leaflet promoting attractions in and around Dereham.

We are a twenty five member organisation and have partnership meetings around town every two months. At these meetings we have a wide range of speakers and we distribute a newsletter after all partnership meeting. We have visited and learnt from other similar Partnerships in Watton, Wymondham and Swaffham.

We have agreed twelve areas of concern that we want to try to address. We are starting with a signage/wayfinding study in Dereham funded by the Market Town Initiative and we thank Breckland for this.

We are now going to review our progress and agree what is next and what our priorities are.

With the help of Dereham Town Council we need to encourage more voluntary and community organisations to join us. We need to consider how best to co-ordinate with Dereham Town Council.

aboutDereham – Carolyn Coleman

Producing the aboutDereham Brochure – we had 1,500 of this first brochure printed and they have nearly all gone. We did put in a bid for funding to Breckland but unfortunately this was declined. Having seen other brochures, we feel we need to make ours more professional, perhaps including a map. We need to look at getting it professionally designed and we would hope to get 2,000 to last us a bit longer, but this will be dependent on costs.

We believe that we need not only online information but a brochure as well. We need to look at how we can reduce our printing and distribution costs and local shops and cafes have agreed to have the brochures for their customers.

We had considered asking businesses that we will be promoting in the brochure to donate, but feel they would be unlikely to respond favourably.

We believe we need more visitors to keep the town centre alive.

Dereham and District Allotment and Gardeners Society – Mrs Ann Bowyer

The main aim of DDAGS is to support gardeners and allotment holders and to promote gardening as a healthy pursuit. The group provides membership to the National Allotment Society and we run a discounted seeds scheme.

The group organise a number of social activities including garden visits. Our main event is our Horticultural Show which showcases the best of vegetables, flowers and fruit growing in the district and also includes classes in craft and cookery. Anyone can enter, it is free to members, but there is a charge of 50p a class to non-members. This years date is Saturday 3rd August and is being held at Dereham Memorial Hall.

Membership had been down, but thanks to the support of the Town Council we have been able to offer two years membership for the price of one.

The group is looking at updating the website with a view to attracting more members. It would especially be nice to see some younger members who may also be interested in coming onto the committee and bringing some new ideas. Anyone interested can see me after the meeting.

Friends of Dereham Memorial Hall – Mr Tim Cara

A reminder that the “Friends” objectives include to bring more people into Dereham Memorial Hall (described memorably by Councillor Harry Clarke as “the jewel in the crown”) and to extend live entertainment to all sections of the community.

What have we achieved? On 2018 the output included an award-winning world war one drama; a children’s comedy show; a drama aimed primarily at teenagers; two musical tribute concerts; country and western music and the opening concert of the Blues

Festival, from Georgie Fame. From a standing start five years ago, we have built up our programme to around ten main hall events a year, plus ten film nights and eleven Coffee Plus! Mornings. This represents about one half of the public entertainment bookings at the hall.

We were asked to reach parts of the community which were under-served, as well as the main stream. We've done this, but it has been a drain on overall profitability. Apart from Coffee Plus!, Georgie Fame and wrestling, our events have either lost money or just about broken even. Last year our operating loss was more than £1,000; this is not sustainable. We rely on our more profitable events to do well for us, to cover the inevitable losses elsewhere.

FoDMH has publicised the hall, other promoters and the town by producing for free five half-yearly glossy brochures of events at the hall, distributed to 10,500 homes, with a further 4,500 copies going to businesses, public buildings and the villages around Dereham. The Town Council pays for printing and distribution.

On previous years my reports have been entirely positive. I'm afraid that this is not true this year and there are issues which we need to address urgently if the friends are to continue.

The main issues are first the limited capacity set for the main hall. We are sure that it can safely hold at least 50 more people. Last year's sell out Blues Festival concert brought a much reduced surplus, money we require to be able to offer breadth to the programme to reach less well provided for parts of the population and improve the already high standard of performers we can afford to attract. 50 seats at £28 = £1,400 lost profit.

The second, and potentially far greater threat, has been the reversal of an understanding reached some five years ago not to allow bookings close together which compete for the same audience.

FoDMH booked the popular Dire Streets band back in November for a concert on 29th March. It was a shock to find out five weeks ago the Dereham Town Council had accepted a booking for another tribute act the day immediately before our own Dire Streets concert. No theatre manager in the business would do this. The two events are clearly competing with one another. We lose twice over. First, the loss of revenue because of the inevitable reduction in sales and secondly because of the damage to our relationship with the musicians. Their fee is a share of the sales income and at a time of booking we could confidently expect a full house, sufficient to justify them travelling from the West of England to play for us. They cannot now trust us to be able to deliver what we offered them. They won't want to return to Dereham. They'll tell their friends in the music circuit that coming here is a risk. There will clearly be a loss of revenue to Dereham Town Council down the road because of this policy.

We sense that opportunities for consultation and feedback are being missed. I'd mention closing the hall for a whole month last May and the decision to make the bar area unavailable to coffee Plus! And U3A which caused real grief until it was reversed.

My position and that of the directors of the Friends is now that we don't look forward with confidence to book events for next year for fear that Dereham Town Council will undercut their profitability by accepting bookings in competition for audience.

We can live with the council's policy not to employ a manager for the hall, but we cannot accept decisions being made unfairly which directly and adversely impact upon our

efforts to improve the social, cultural and entertainment opportunities for the town's population.

So there we have it; ten events in the last year including Georgie Fame, with the kudos being brought to the hall and to Dereham and ten feature films not seen before in Dereham, but the prospect of the Friend's saying "sorry, but enough is enough, should we bother"?

We need to regain confidence that our efforts are supported and we'll be looking for an early meeting to take these points up.

Toftwood Angling Club

Mr John Manley was unable to attend this evening. However The Mayor, Councillor Hilary Bushell, informed the meeting what a fantastic and unstinting job John Manley has done at the Toftwood Pond for the Angling Club.

Toftwood Life Community – Mrs Val Baker

We were disappointed when the planning application for development off Boyd Avenue/Westfield Road was approved by Breckland Planning Committee in spite of efforts by Dereham Councillors. Councillors from miles away supported it without giving reasons why. We shall continue to keep an eye on the situation as we are keen to ensure that all large housing developments only proceed with adequate infrastructure and amenities.

We gave our views on the sites at the recent Local Plan examination and were impressed by the Inspector. We are currently looking at the latest consultation.

Finally we appreciate the efforts of Tony Needham in presenting the views of the Town.

Twinning – Dereham and Caudebec les Elbeuf – Mr Phillip Morton (on behalf of Mrs Brigit Morton)

We are a small group of 25 families who have been creating links with a town in Normandy and have a fairly fixed agenda.

Every year our French friends join us in November for remembrance. Normandy was invaded and bombed in the Second World War and saw the effects of war very strongly. This year we enjoyed a grant from Dereham Town Council to commemorate the end of World War 1.

We are extremely grateful for this and I would like to give you a resume of how we used that grant. We received a total of £1,300 from Dereham Town Council and £150 from Norfolk Twinning Association. With this we organised a dansant which was held in Dereham Memorial Hall, we paid £130 to musicians, £600 in catering and £344.76 for the hire of the hall.

We did not charge an entrance fee; we agreed to limit the numbers to 80 and opened it to our twinning friends across the county and not just anyone interested in the town. It was very successful and much enjoyed. We also spent a further £260 entertaining our guests. We held a raffle during the dansant at which we raised £150 and this was gifted to the British Legion.

During that weekend we also planted some trees on Neatherd Common to symbolise a poppy. Our German friends also planted some of those trees.

We hold events for our members during the year. These include a summer barbecue, a winter evening following traditional events in France and a quiz.

We also visit Caudebec in May for their town fete at which we hold a stand of typical English fayre.

This is a small taste of what we do, we have had visits from our friends to run in the town 5 k run, we have welcomed young people who have sung in the church in November and many other initiatives.

C.A.B. - Councillor - Phillip Morton

The Dereham office saw 2496 clients in the past year; these clients had 6710 issues. The main issues raised were benefits - tax credits, employment support allowance, personal independence payments and housing benefits.

The second most common issue was debt and these were all complex issues.

Housing and family relationships are common issues raised; which illustrates the serious nature of problems clients are bringing to Citizens Advice. In the future CA is being asked to help more with benefit issues, in particular, the introduction of Universal Credit.

Mid Norfolk, has last week, merged with Norfolk CAB. The aim is to continue providing a committed local service for Dereham residents.

Volunteers will continue to provide the majority of front line advice and are the cornerstone of the Bureau.

Twinning – Dereham and Ruthen – Councillor Linda Monument

Last year, we persuaded our German friends to come over in September instead of May, so that they could add an international element to a special occasion we were arranging.

In view of the celebrations of the end of World War One that were happening in Dereham last year, we decided to hold a concert for International Peace Day (21st September) although we ended up holding it on the following day, which was a Saturday to make it easier for our guests to join us.

The Mid-Norfolk Singers had agreed to perform and we had originally hoped that the Ruthen Kammerchor choir might come over and join them, but they were otherwise engaged.

As the Mid-Norfolk singers were reluctant to have to fill the entire programme so soon after their summer break, we decided to organise some other local talent to take part. We were treated to a wide range of entertainment, in the form of the hand bell ringers, a violinist and an unusual singing quintet who accompanied their songs on some very unlikely instruments.

We included a buffet tea in the ticket price. There was a last-minute run on tickets which had us worried that the food would not hold out, but nobody starved and a good time seems to have been enjoyed by all.

On the Sunday morning we convened at the top of the Neatherd Moor tree planting. We entertained our German guests to a traditional English Sunday dinner at the Bull at Litcham, and the chairman of the Ruthen Twinning Association invited us to a visit to Ruthen again this year.

I am pleased to report that arrangements for that visit are well in hand now and that we have at least eleven people travelling to Germany in May, including a couple of new members, with one or two more still considering the possibility of joining us.

Footpath Warden and Walkers are Welcome – Mr Ken Hawkins

In a recent Dereham Times survey walking was second most liked thing about Dereham and I believe we had something to do with that.

Footpath Warden work often also involves Walkers are Welcome colleagues and we are tasked with not just keeping footpaths in good order, but also the purpose is to bring people into Dereham and get them to appreciate what's on offer here. We have undertaken the usual maintenance work jointly with The Ramblers and the Conversation Volunteers especially on RB30/31. Over 12 months we have undertaken 66 hours work, 34 monitoring = £2000 worth at Norfolk County Council rates.

We would like to thank Dereham Town Council for their support in general and their funding for a hedge trimmer, strimmer, litter picking material, and other items. We would also like to thank Councillor Linda Goreham for her involvement.

We have produced 3,000 free walks guides which have now nearly all gone and we are now seeking funding for reprint, however we need £6,000 for this. We have parish links and web links and guides for neighbouring parishes (nine with 500 packs) through which our bus/train out walk back routes run. We have 51 of our logos displayed in town with 49 holding walk packs.

From our Annual Return to Walkers are Welcome UK we need to meet a very demanding criteria, the feedback was "A good year of steady planned progress, brilliant well done, very sustainable."

Our next walk is 22nd April and on 6th May we have a children's event. We have plans for more walks including a walk around town. We have also got planned a trip to Clare in Suffolk to undertake a walk there.

We now have links with other groups including Cromer active. Aylsham is now accredited.

I am on the Walkers are welcome National Committee, so Dereham is getting known.

Dereham Windmill – Councillor Ann Bowyer

We have recently had to say Goodbye to Brian and Alison Webb who have been our Chairperson and Fundraiser. They have helped leave the Windmill in a good position, both materially and financially.

Our new Chairperson is Alan Ferguson who will be keen to put his stamp on things, but unfortunately cannot be here tonight. However, he has asked me to assure everyone that the Windmill (a Dereham Heritage Site) is here to stay.

We are looking for more volunteers and Trustees to help with the day to day processes. At present we haven't got an event organiser, but I have expressed an interest in continuing the popular Christmas event which I can't do unless I have a stand in for Father Christmas. I was wondering if there is anyone out there who would be prepared to do it, or if any of you know of someone who would be prepared to do it. Any information would be gratefully received. The Dereham Windmill is the only venue which offers this facility in the town other than the Christmas Lights Event.

You can follow us on facebook and our website.

Royal British Legion – Mr D O’Callaghan

I think that most people think of the British Legion on Remembrance Sunday, but the British Legion is more than this. We are involved with making the wreaths, arranging for standard bearers to attend funerals (which can run into hundreds of pounds), welfare issues for ex-servicemen and many other things. The Dereham Branch has 135 members and we now have an online newsletter to our members. We meet the first Wednesday of each month at Toftwood Social Club.

The Dereham Branch of the British Legion raised £31,794.42 for the Poppy Appeal.

We have a number of events planned for the coming year: 24th March Bingo (TSC); 19th May O’Callaghan Service (in O’Callaghan Place); 8th June Concert (St Nicholas Church); 30th June BBQ at TSC; 7th July rededication of standards at St Nicholas Church; 22nd September Indoor bowling competition (TSC); 10th November Remembrance Day, parade through town; 11th November Armistice Day Service at the War Memorial.

TSC – Toftwood Social Club

Royal British Legion – Mr Hugh King

I would like to introduce myself, I am the County Chairman of the Royal British Legion and am a member of the Dereham Branch. I would first like to thank Dereham Town Council for your help, support and funding over the past year.

The Dereham Branch is very well supported. We now have affiliations with Northgate High School, Veterans of Norfolk; Veterans Gateway and Better Together.

Last year we had our Torch Event, once again thank you to the Town Council, Mayor and other Councillors. We had a pilgrimage to Ypres with 1,000 standard bearers (42 from Norfolk) and 1000 wreaths (42 from Norfolk).

We have the army cadets and scouts coming on board and would like to get more schools involved.

CHiPS

Miss LJ O’Callaghan from CHiPS was not able to attend, but the Mayor spoke of how it was an eye opener when two helpers came to a council meeting and described the work that was required to run this event each year.

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

