

MINUTES OF THE
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

of BROMYARD AND WINSLOW

**held on Wednesday 17th April, 2024,
at 7pm in The Old Vicarage, 1 Rowberry Street, Bromyard, HR7 4DU**

PRESENT: Cllr. Dr D Dunne-Thomas (Chairperson)
Cllrs P Andrews, G Churchill, C Davies, L Law, P Nielsen, and R Page.
1 Member of the public.

In attendance: Town Clerk

Cllr Dr Dee Dunne-Thomas, Town Mayor/Chairperson of Bromyard and Winslow Town Council welcomed everyone to the annual town meeting.

24/01 Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Mr F. Clark.

The Chair reported that she had received an email from Cllr Fred Clark earlier that afternoon, advising that, due to ill health, he would be stepping down from his role as Town Councillor with immediate effect.

Apologies were also received from Cllrs M Franklin, M Stevens and C Robinson.

24/02 Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 19th April, 2023.

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 19th April, 2023 be received, approved, and signed as a correct record.

24/03 Town Mayor's Report: Cllr Dr Dee Dunne-Thomas

The Chair welcomed all present and reminded attendees that only registered electors of Bromyard and Winslow may speak or ask questions. She reflected on a busy and eventful year, highlighting the appointment of Rev. Philip Miller, upcoming local events including the Mayor's Civic Service and the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant, and the Town's role in hosting Armed Forces Day in 2024. National events such as the Jubilee, changes in monarchy and government, and the upcoming Coronation were also noted. The Chair expressed concern over the lack of candidates for the upcoming Town Council elections, encouraging public engagement and co-option to fill any vacant seats. Thanks were extended to current and retiring councillors, as well as to the Clerk and staff for their continued support and hard work.

24/04 Reports from Bromyard and Winslow Town Council's Committee Chairs

1. Burial Committee– Cllr Clare Davies

The Burial Committee continues to oversee all matters relating to internments and cemetery maintenance, with delegated authority to the Burials Officer or Town Clerk for standard internments and memorial approvals. Extraordinary requests are considered by the Committee.

Regular site visits ensure standards are maintained, and any issues are promptly addressed. The Committee maintains a good relationship with local undertakers, although plot availability is now limited to around 20 single plots and ashes internments only. Efforts to secure a new cemetery site have so far been unsuccessful. Restrictions remain in place for surrounds and memorial benches due to space and maintenance challenges. Incidents of vandalism have also led to guidance on the appropriate materials to be used for memorial benches. The Peace Garden continues to be appreciated by visitors, and the Committee looks forward to the installation of a new memorial commemorating the lives of those from the Workhouse, expected in early June. Appreciation was expressed to Committee members for their continued commitment.

2. Finance - Cllr. Mark Franklin

In the absence of the Chair, Cllr Franklin, the Finance Committee report was presented by Vice Chair Cllr Law. The Committee ensures the Council's financial systems and internal controls are robust, reviews auditor reports, and oversees all Council expenditure in line with policy. It scrutinised all financial records for 2023–24 and prepared the 2024–25 budget, which includes a 5% precept increase after three years of no rise. This reflects the need to fund the refurbishment or replacement of the Tenbury Road public toilets, begin rebuilding reserves, support the development of a Neighbourhood Development Plan, and maintain funding for community and public realm projects.

3. Planning & Economic Development – Cllr. Gill Churchill

The Chairman of the Planning & Economic Development Committee expressed gratitude to committee members and the committee clerk. She emphasised that the Council's role is advisory, receiving plans from Herefordshire Council and providing comments. All comments should align with planning policies and the Herefordshire Core Strategy, which is currently under review. The committee can request that a plan be reviewed by the Herefordshire Planning & Regulatory Committee, rather than decision by Officers. Bromyard and Winslow is allocated a minimum target of 750 new homes by 2041, though development is currently paused due to phosphate and nitrates issues in the Lugg catchment area, which must be addressed by Herefordshire Council, Natural England, and the government. Future builds must include sustainability features such as solar panels and EV charging points. Residents are encouraged to complete the Core Strategy consultation and support the development of the town's Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). Additionally, the Committee manages a modest tourism budget, recently used to fund new promotional banners for the bypass.

4. Properties - Cllr. Lisa Law

The Chairman of the Properties Committee provided an overview of the committee's responsibilities, which include managing various properties and facilities such as the Old Vicarage complex, Heritage Centre, Town Green, car parks, public toilets, Riverside Walk, CCTV, street lighting, street furniture, and the ground maintenance contract.

Recent activities include a modest increase in allotment fees from £65 to £75 per plot, while office space rental charges remain unchanged. Support for the People's Project at St Peter's Churchyard continues, and 20 bird boxes were installed around town. A new policy for the use of Town Council property has

been developed. Car park charges for Rowberry Street and Tenbury Road were reviewed and slightly increased, with new machines soon to be installed that accept cash and card payment; RingGo is also available as a payment option. The Tenbury Road public toilets are temporarily closed due to vandalism and drainage issues. The Committee is also engaging an architect to redesign the toilet block to ensure fully functional, accessible, and attractive facilities. Efforts to upgrade the electric vehicle charging stations at Tenbury Road are ongoing, though limited by infrastructure constraints. The Committee continues to prioritise health and safety, repairs, and maintenance, working with external advisors to meet current regulations. The Properties Clerk was thanked for her work supporting the committee.

5. Traffic Management – Cllr Peder Nielsen

The Committee meets on a quarterly basis to discuss various local traffic related issues around the town and how they can be addressed. Additional meeting can be held if necessary. Over the past year, several projects have been completed, including a new zebra crossing outside the Leisure Centre and changes to parking on Cruxwell Street. The Community Speedwatch scheme remains a concern, with limited support from organisers. Traffic speed, both in town and on major roads, continues to be a significant issue, and Bromyard is collaborating with neighbouring parish councils to address it. Efforts to manage parking focus on safety, particularly at road junctions, without discouraging visitors to the town. Traffic management issues often require liaison with Herefordshire Council, which can be time-consuming. Regarding potholes, the public were encouraged to report road surface damage to the Local Highways Authority for action.

6. Staffing Committee - Cllr Roger Page

The Staffing Committee meets as required and is responsible for all staffing matters, including recruitment, pay, conditions, and employee welfare. Currently, there are five employees and one vacancy. As an equal opportunities employer, Bromyard and Winslow Town Council ensures full compliance with employment legislation. The Committee consists of all Committee Chairpersons, the Council Chair, and one member elected by Full Council at the annual council meeting.

24/05 Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) - Cllr Naomi Brookes, Project Facilitator

Cllr Naomi Brookes gave an overview of the preparation of a NDP for Bromyard & Winslow and the significance of community involvement in shaping the future of the parish.

Bromyard and Winslow Town Council resumed work on its Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), which was initially started in 2015 but paused for several reasons. The NDP will set local policies that complement national and county planning policies, adding detail to support the interests of the community. For the Plan to become statutory, it must be approved by a majority vote from the electorate of Bromyard and Winslow. A public meeting was held in late 2023, resulting in the formation of a Steering Group. The first meeting was held recently, with a second scheduled for 24th April, 2024. The Steering Group is working with planning consultant Kirkwells, with funding expected from a Government grant. The NDP will need to align with the ongoing review of Herefordshire County Council's Local Plan and remains the only substantive way

for local people to directly influence planning decisions. Those interested in getting involved were encouraged to contact Cllr Brookes directly.

24/06 Armed Forces Week 24th - 29th June 2024.

The Town Mayor provided an update on events planned for Armed Forces Week in Bromyard, organised by a working group of local volunteers and Council staff. The week will celebrate the Armed Forces and their contribution to daily life, with free events funded by Bromyard and Winslow Town Council and supported by a Ministry of Defence grant. While a full timetable is still being finalised, the events will include a Flag Raising Ceremony, a history of military music with performances by Bromyard Wind Band, talks on military history and communication, a film screening in the Conquest Theatre. The main event on the Saturday will feature a parade, a service at St. Peter’s Church, and entertainment on the Town Green, including music, face painting, balloon modelling, and rural crafts.

24/07 Comments and Questions from Electors of the parish.

Cllr Andrews spoke about comments on Facebook about the derelict Hop Pole Hotel, with residents suggesting it could become a community asset. The Mayor explained that the Town Council could not afford to purchase or fund its restoration, as it is in an extremely poor condition and privately owned. It was noted that the building is due for auction in three weeks time. Cllr Page highlighted that Herefordshire Council had placed a Section 215 notice on the property, which could allow them to carry out repairs if the owner does not act, though the Council’s enforcement could impact their liability in the event of injury. The Town Council had already written to Herefordshire Council regarding the building’s condition and invited the Listed Buildings Officer to a meeting to discuss the issue.

A resident commented on the new traffic markings and crossing on Cruxwell Street, suggesting that a lamppost near the corner shop was a hazard. This issue has been reported to Herefordshire Council. The same resident inquired about the availability of additional allotments; however, the Town Council does not own any land for new allotments, and the allotment association which manages the site under lease, had not requested more plots.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and then closed the meeting at 7:54pm

Chairman

Date