

ANNUAL MEETING OF TOWCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Incorporating Mayormaking

Towcester Town Hall, Towcester

Monday, 13th May 2019 at 8pm,

Present: Cllr P. Conquest (Chairman), Cllr P. Allen, Cllr C. Blake, Cllr R. Dallyn, Cllr J. Godwin, Cllr J. Hart, Cllr M. Johns, Cllr D. Reynolds, Cllr L. Samiotis, , Cllr D. Tarbun

1a) Election of Town Mayor

Cllr Johns rose to congratulate Lisa Samiotis on stepping forward to become the Town Mayor for 2019-20. He commended her on her fundraising campaign for the school crossing patrol on Vernon Road and also her undying support of Towcester Town Football Club and her efforts to secure a permanent venue and additional sport pitches for the town.

Proposal

Cllr Johns proposed that Cllr Lisa Samiotis be elected as Town Mayor for the ensuing year; seconded by Cllr Godwin; all in favour

1b) Election of Deputy Mayor

Proposal

Cllr Blake proposed that Cllr Richard Dallyn be elected as Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year; seconded by Cllr Allen; all in favour

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr B. Cutts, Cllr K. Bond, Cllr J. Lynch, Cllr S. McMurray

3a) Town Mayor's Review of his Term of Office

Cllr Conquest rose to give a Review of his Term of Office, as follows:-

"I am happy to report that I have had a busy and fascinating year in office.

You will not want to be bored with a detailed report of all the events that I attended. So, I'll keep it brief. Representing Towcester at events in other towns is a privilege. Working for the benefit of this local community is an honour. I have attended Civic services: solemn occasions when Mayor's reaffirm their commitment to serving their communities, fundraising events of various descriptions, a few concerts, prize-givings, award ceremonies, remembrance services, exhibitions and Mayor making ceremonies such as this one today. All fascinating and interesting in their own right. Some of the outstanding memories of this year will be the dedication and self-sacrifice of the individuals who volunteer to serve their communities. I have also learnt some things about the work of these Civic servants, note not civil servants, because they are unpaid. Some of their work is novel others less so. Some of their ideas might be replicated in Towcester to good effect.

A few highlights of the year are: the Annual Towcester Midsummer Music Festival which also supports the Mayor's charities. For 16 successive years the community has supported this event which continues to be very popular. Another outstanding event was the annual Northamptonshire Amateur Swimming Association championship finals at the International Swimming Pool in Corby. We were fortunate to attend the 50, 100 and 200 meter sprint events. Run in rapid succession they held our rapt attention. The previous day's events consisted of distance swimming to which a Mayor from another town was invited. It was noted that the events were so riveting that the Mayor nodded off to sleep on occasions. So not only were we privileged to witness this County championship but also fortunate with the choice of date. We were delighted that our grand-daughter was able to accompany us. She is a keen swimmer.

Many other events will live on in my memory. The reopening of the Towcester Studio Band Hall, the youth football tournament last summer, the Mayoress, my wife, abseiling from the Northampton Abseil Centre Tower, known locally as Jimmie's End Lighthouse 418 feet high and our own Glitz and Glamour Ball at the Towcestrians Clubhouse just 9 days ago: to name just a few.



Meanwhile, and in addition to the foregoing activities, attendance at Full Council and Committee meetings are a statutory requirement. I am able to report that I was absent from two Committee meetings during the course of the year:- both held on the same evening.

I am indebted to the support of friends and strangers alike of our few fundraising events. The Mayoress and I were, and still are relatively inexperienced in fundraising. So it makes us even more grateful for the individual and corporate support that we have received. Not least is the help received from Towcester Town Hall staff and Lizzi Bucklow-Holt in particular.

During the course of the year, one of my chosen causes was obliged to bring its activities to a close. Volunteers who ran the Vision Youth Café were no longer able to give it the time and attention that it needed. I am sure that the sterling work that they did over many years with local youth will benefit those young people as they mature and develop into adults."

3b) Presentation of Cheques to the Mayor's Charities

The Annual Meeting was attended by representatives of the Town Mayor's two nominated charities; Tove Wetland Pocket Park and Blind Veterans UK. Cllr Conquest presented the charities with a cheque to the value of £2000 each.

Cllr Dallyn rose to commend Cllr Conquest's magnificent fundraising efforts and total for the year. He proposed that a hearty vote of thanks be accorded to Cllr Conquest for the able and efficient manner in which he has performed the duties of Town Mayor for the past year.

Cllr Conquest transferred the chain of Office to the newly elected Town Mayor.

The Town Clerk administered the Declaration of Acceptance of Office to Cllr Lisa Samiotis in the following terms:-

"I, Lisa Samiotis, having been elected to this office of Town Mayor for the town of Towcester, declare that I take that office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgement and ability. I undertake to observe the Town Council's adopted Code of Conduct."

The Town Mayor rose to deliver her Mayoral address, as follows:-

"Good Evening, Honoured Guests, Fellow Councillors, Family and Friends.

It's lovely to see you all this evening, our Town Hall which is looking very pretty. Thank you to Cllr Jacqueline Hart for arranging the beautiful flowers.

Back in 2011 whilst campaigning to 'Save our local Lollipop Lady', I happened to bump into Cllr Martin Johns, outside of what was then the Dolphin Café, he asked me, 'Have you got time for a coffee?', of course I said yes. Whilst chatting Martin asked me 'had I ever considered becoming a councillor?' It had never crossed my mind.

His powers of persuasions convinced me I could do it, so I said ok, I'll give it a whirl. The rest as they say, is history.

Back then I never would have thought I would be standing here 8 years later as the Mayor of Towcester.

However, I'm not the first member of my family to hold the title of Mayor, as I had a great uncle who was the Mayor of Enfield. I believe he probably had a better chain of office than I, but unlike him I very glad not having to wear a red costume and tri-corn hat.

I would like to thank Peter and Jonna for their efforts for the town during the past twelve months and I hope to continue some of the work they started during the year, but more of that later.

As we look ahead to the coming twelve months Towcester still looks for confirmation of 'dare I say it', a start to building the town's relief road. This road is much needed to take heavy traffic out of our town centre. But, it will only do so, as long as the A5 through Towcester is de-trunked, and I will be working hard with fellow councillors to achieve this.

As we know, it is expected that South Northants Council will be abolished and a new unitary council formed. That will include South Northants, Daventry and Northampton. As a town council we are in discussions with SNC to consider Towcester Town Council taking on responsibility for assets such as the Watermeadows, Bury Mount, the Town Hall and our car parks that we would like to continue to keep free for users.

As most of you will know, supported by our local councils, I have been working towards better sports facilities for the town and in particular more football pitches. I'm hoping for good news on this during my time as Mayor.

Towcester is very fortunate in having a wide range of active voluntary organisations, with many local people involved in volunteering. Some of which are here this evening. I will do my best to support our voluntary organisations, particularly with support for community events just as I have done in the past. I intend continuing Peter Conquest's work to make Towcester a 'dementia friendly' town and specifically in supporting the Alzheimer's Society.

Now, I am sure you would like to know what the Mayors Charities will be for the coming year.

They are, FOHNS – Friends of Nicholas Hawksmoor School, who are raising money for, amongst other things, a school mini bus.

FOTOPS – Friends of Towcester Primary School, who are raising money to build a new library on their site. And, it will not be a surprise to you that I also plan to support fundraising for Towcester Town Football Club. Finally, I would like to thank my fellow councillors for placing their support in me and my thanks to you all for attending tonight. Please remember I intend calling on your help with my fundraising over the year. Thank you.”

The newly-elected Town Mayor then asked the newly-elected Deputy Mayor, Cllr Richard Dallyn, to proceed to the platform to sign the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

4. To Record a Vote of Thanks to Officers and Servants of the Council

Cllr Johns thanked the Town Hall and Sawpits Centre Caretaker, Miss Suzanne Kempton, and the Towcester Community Centre Caretaker, Mr Sam Howkins, for all of their hard work over the past year, and also the TC Litter Picker, Mr Peter Smith. He also thanked Mrs Kay Iqbal who, although is not an employee of the TC, carries out litter picking across the town and can also be relied upon to cover in any caretaking emergencies or for annual leave. He thanked all the volunteer deliverers of the Town Crier magazine and Towcester Neighbourhood Watch for managing the Council's vehicle activated speed sign and co-ordinating the 'Speedwatch' scheme. Cllr Johns thanked the Town Clerk, Liz, and her assistant, Lizzi, for their diligent hard work throughout the previous year, including dealing with emergencies outside office hours. Cllr Johns finished by welcoming the Town Council's new Administrative Assistant, Sophie Weeks.

5. To Fix the Dates and Times of Meetings for the Ensuing Year

A schedule of the proposed meeting dates and times had been forwarded to all members of the Town Council prior to the meeting.

Proposal

Cllr Reynolds proposed that the dates and times of the meetings for the ensuing year be fixed in accordance with the schedule circulated;
seconded by Cllr Allen; all in favour

6. To Elect the Standing Committees

A list of the proposed Standing Committees had been forwarded to all members of the Town Council prior to the meeting.

Proposal

Cllr Tarbun proposed that the Standing Committees be elected in accordance with the list circulated;
seconded by Cllr Hart; all in favour

7. Adoption of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations & Risk Assessments

Proposal

Cllr Godwin proposed that the Town Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Risk Assessments be adopted;
seconded by Cllr Conquest; all in favour

8. Closure of the Meeting

The newly-elected Town Mayor announced that, in the absence of any further business, the Annual Meeting of the Town Council was closed, and invited all those present to join her for a glass of wine and refreshments.