

Minutes of the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING OF ELECTORS** held in the Victoria Hall, Market Square, Crewkerne on Monday 15 April 2024 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Alice Samuel Mayor of Crewkerne (in the Chair)
Katharine Sheehan Town Clerk
Gemma Hughes Deputy Town Clerk

Plus, approximately 70 local government electors of the Parish of Crewkerne.

1. WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. Community Groups were thanked for bringing their presentation boards and leaflets, which were available around the room. The Community Kitchen were thanked for providing food to everyone attending. The Mayor briefly introduced the Town Councillors in attendance, noting they were available to speak with residents after the meeting.

2. ANNUAL HONOURED CITIZENS AWARD 2024

The Mayor presented an Award to Mr David Lombard. The Mayor noted that for over forty years Dave has been involved in leading Scouting in Crewkerne. He started as a Cub Scout, moved through the sections and has held a number of leadership roles, including Group Scout Leader and District Commissioner.

Throughout this time, he has supported many young people to grow, to develop and has helped them become grounded and considered citizens of the future. He leads from the front, but is also adept in enabling others to lead; he happily provides them with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful and whether young or old, novice or skilled, he helps them to shine. He acts selflessly as both a mentor and a guide. He has enabled hundreds of young people from Crewkerne and surrounding villages to flourish. This is irrespective of their gender, religion, ability or need. When the wider local community is taken into account, he has had a positive impact both directly and indirectly on the lives of thousands of young people.

Mr Lombard accepted the award and thanked everyone.

The Mayor then presented an award to Mrs Annette Roffey. She noted that Annette has always liked to be of help to many causes in Crewkerne, including Rainbows, Karate, Crewkerne Voluntary Transport, and Crewkerne in Bloom. When the Aqua Centre opened, Annette took on reception duties every Saturday for many years. As a result of this, she became involved in the running of the Junior Triathlon every year. Christmas Lighting Up always needs more volunteers to raise money and spare pairs of hands to help out on the night – Annette gives her time freely and is always available. She has for many years shaken a collection bucket, marshalled the parade and accompanied Father Christmas, often in the grotto. She also willingly helps with putting up and taking down the small Christmas trees across the town centre each year. When Covid hit, Annette volunteered for the Be A Good Neighbour scheme, making sure everyone had the support they needed. She still, to this day, will not hesitate to pick up the telephone to check in with those she has been supporting.

Annette is a person who loves Crewkerne and strives to help her community in many ways. She is known to many – without volunteers such as Annette working hard behind the scenes, there is so much that simply wouldn't be able to happen in the town.

Mrs Roffey's award was collected on her behalf by Eileen Jones.

3. MAYOR'S COMMENDATION AWARD 2024

The Mayor presented a Mayor's Commendation Award to Sarah Langdon.

She commented that Sarah was a great role model to the young people in her Rainbows, Brownies and Guide units, teaching them all about their local community and how to be good citizens. When the accessible swing at Henhayes was vandalised beyond repair, Sarah had sat down with her groups and got them to think about what they could do to make a difference. Following this they held a cake stall and raised over £400 towards a replacement.

Sarah Langdon accepted her award.

The Mayor noted that it had been another busy year for Crewkerne, recalling that in September the Town Council and Charter Fair had received an award from Future 4 Fairgrounds, recognising the work which goes into ensuring the Fair tradition continues for future generations.

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Annual Town Meeting of Electors held on Monday 17 April 2023 were **APPROVED**.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS TOWN MEETING MINUTES

None.

6. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE POLICE AND THE MINI POLICE

PCSO O'Halloran was joined by three Mini Police Officers from St. Bartholomew's School. They gave a report on the work that the Mini Police had done in Crewkerne over the past nine weeks. The Mini Police said:

- They were working hard to improve their community
- They had picked up over 300 pieces of litter from Happy Valley
- They had designed new signs to go around the park
- They had requested new bins for Happy Valley

They were thanked for their work and presented with certificates by the Mayor.

PC Paul Nally reported that:

There was currently nearly a full team serving the Crewkerne beat although there had been some personnel changes within that team. This was positive compared to other nearby areas, which were understaffed. The team was still based out of the Crewkerne Police Station although not on a 24-hour basis and would shortly be joined by the Chard team while their station undergoes refurbishment. A new sergeant had joined the team and elections for the Police and Crime Commissioner for the area would be held in May.

In terms of crime statistics for the area, reported drug offences were down by 20%, burglaries down by 50% and theft and fraud both increased (however this was a trend nationally). The instances of theft and fraud were increasingly internet related. Anti-social behaviour incidences had increased, which could be related to a change in reporting methods.

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – update from the Steering Group

Pat Lunt, Chair of the Crewkerne Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group gave an update on the group's progress to date.

He stated that:

- The Group had been working on the Plan for nearly two and a half years.
- Draft Aims and Objectives for the Plan had been established following two consultations.
- Additional funding had been awarded for a Design Code to influence what future development in Crewkerne should look like, based on what is already here. Also a Housing Needs Assessment was being produced to provide up to date information on what types of housing Crewkerne needs most.
- There was a working draft plan in existence, and it was hoped that it would be ready for public consultation later in the year.
- Eventually electors will be asked to vote on whether to adopt the plan.

8. BINCOMBE 360 – a screening from Somerset Film's project in Crewkerne

Daniel Birch of Somerset Film screened some work undertaken with young people from Crewkerne during the Easter holidays. Based out of the GRC, the young people had used 360 cameras to create pieces of art relating to Bincombe Beeches Nature Reserve. They were able to use virtual reality headsets to bring the experience to life. He was looking forward to coming back next year to undertake more work of this nature.

9. MAYOR'S REPORT 2024

The Mayor gave a presentation which summarised the highlights from the year to date and some forthcoming events to look forward to.

10. PRESENTATIONS

Michael Fox gave an update on behalf of the Community Kitchen and Chop and Chat cooking group.

Larry Mills gave an update on behalf of Crewkerne Boxing Club, following which members of the junior and senior boxing teams gave a spirited demonstration.

Lorna Scudder from the Twinning Association gave an update on the work of the group and the forthcoming visit from Igny.

11. GRANT AWARDS 2024

The Mayor read out the Community Groups received grant awards, who then gathered for a group photo. These groups were:

Crewkerne & District Museum & Heritage Centre

Crewkerne in Bloom
Henhayes Community Centre
Merriott Majorettes
Citizens Advice South Somerset
Crewkerne & District Shed
1st Crewkerne Scout Group
Crewkerne Pegasus Karate Club
CUDOS
Speedwell Club
St Bartholomew's School
Severalls War Memorial Gardening Group
Severalls Jubilee Bowls Club
Phoenix Brass
Crewkerne Gardening Club
Crewkerne Cricket Club
Rotary Club of Crewkerne District
Crewkerne & District Twinning Association
Rockin Daddy's Emporion CIC

12. MATTERS RAISED BY CREWKERNE RESIDENTS

Members of the public raised questions relating to:

- Reporting near misses on North Street – residents who wanted to know how to do this should contact the Town Clerk or Deputy Clerk.
- HGVs using the town as a 'through' route – could an updated HGV survey be requested?
- Works to the Town Hall and associated council tax rises – Cllr. Mike Best offered to meet the resident to discuss further.
- Members of the Crewkerne Youth Council introduced themselves, stating that they were wanting to get involved more with the town and had set up social media pages to share their progress.

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

Signed:

Dated:

ATM15APRIL2024