

Salisbury City Council
The Guildhall
Market Place
Salisbury
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Minutes

Meeting of: Annual Parish Meeting
Date: Monday 29th April 2024
Meeting held in: The Guildhall, Salisbury
Commencing at: 6.00pm

Chair: Cllr Sven Hocking, Deputy Mayor of the City of Salisbury

Supported by the Administration Group Leaders: Cllr A Bayliss, Cllr V Charleston, Cllr A Riddle, Cllr I Tomes, Cllr J Wells,

Cllrs Present: J Broom, C Hibbert, J Nettle, C McGrath, R Rogers and P Sample

Cllr Apologies: A Hoque, L Blackwood

Council Officers: Sarah Gregson, Penny Muxworthy, Asa Thorpe and Thomas Simpkins

Members of the public: 9

Members of the press: None

1. Deputy Mayor's Welcoming Remarks:

Cllr Sven Hocking, the Deputy Mayor of Salisbury, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone in attendance. He reminded everyone that this is an informal meeting affording the Leaders the opportunity to brief the public, for the public to comment on how the City Council have performed, and that the meeting was being livestreamed on social media.

2. Administration Group Leaders' Update on Current Activities:

Administration Group Leaders provided updates as follows;

2.1. Cllrs Annie Riddle provided the following update about Finance Activities:

- Most of 2023/24 was an 'annus horribilis' for the Finance team and their council clients due to the lack of a permanent RFO.
- With the appointment of a new RFO the last quarter of the financial year has been frantic catching up on finance backlogs.
- Looking forwards, 2024/25 will be a pivotal year as the Council is 'promoted' from being a smaller authority to the first parish council ever to become a principal authority, requiring the Finance team to ensure the council is fully compliant with the same 'full code' accounting and auditing regime as Wiltshire Council, all other principal authorities and the private sector.
- The City Council is also radically redesigning the Council's management accounting structure to provide more accurate and detailed financial information to councillors and officers including fuller costing.

2.2. Cllr Victoria Charleston provided the following update on Business and Communications activities, including events and markets:

- 2023 saw a good year of growth and evolution for the Charter Market.
- We now have a really strong base of core regular traders for the Charter Market, plus around 10-12 casuals per market in the busy months.
- We continue to get regular applications from new traders looking to join the Charter market from a variety of interesting industries.
- The success of our festive markets can be capitalised on in 2024 and grown to provide a really strong shopping and eating experience around Christmas for the people of the city.
- Throughout 2023 our Customer Service team, welcomed and served 23,537 visitors and local residents in our Information Centre.
- The Information Centre has seen a rise in coach tours returning to city, and membership of and re-hire's in Shopmobility has increased.
- In October 2023, Shopmobility ran a Scooter Scoot in collaboration with Silver Salisbury with the theme of 'Secret Spots of Salisbury' ending with a warming drink and social time together back at Shopmobility.
- We will host the Salisbury section of the inquiry into the death of Dawn Sturgess. This is a hugely important moment for the city, ordinarily an event of this nature is held in specialist buildings, and this is testament to the professionalism and service our Guildhall team provides.
- The brand-new City Council website was launched in 2023 bringing a fresh and modern look that is image led and easy to navigate.
- As well as hosting over 200 paid bookings and over 100 other functions, from craft fairs to wine tasting, concerts, talks, art exhibitions, conferences and weddings, the Guildhall team are planning to run six ticketed music events this year, with the first two happening in June. These are The Guildhall Sessions with DJ Emma & DJ Bong on the 28 June and aimed at the under 18's, The Guildhall SWIFTIE Sessions happening on the 29 June.
- A new Business Team Support Officer joined the team on 25 March bringing a wealth of experience in administration and marketing.
- St George's Day will be our first event of the year on Sunday 28 April. This will include the usual civic parade, free Blue Badge tour, free make & take workshops, medieval music, puppet show and, new for this year, we have some re-enactment displays and they will also be holding a children's "Knight School."

- Fayre on the Square and Christmas on the Square will not have a bar this year, instead there will be a café/bar that will tie up with the food vendor and create an open seating area that will be more family orientated and there will be cover for wetter days (which hopefully will be less than 2023).
- We are introducing a “Gift Fayre” as part of Christmas on the Square, which will be an undercover area outside that will house 24 traders who will be selling all things craft, food and drink where people can hopefully find that little special gift for Christmas. We are working in partnership with Mynt Image on this.
- Throughout 2024/2025, the City Council will continue to keep Salisbury residents informed and updated on what the Council has been up to and what is in the pipeline. This will include general news, events, meetings, environmental steps, jobs and opportunities.

2.3. Cllr John Wells, Chair of the Environment and Climate Committee provided the following update on the Environmental Services items to note:

- The team cut the grass, hedges, emptied the bins and dealt with fly tipping, transitioning to bring all in-house. We kept our city clean and green.
- Recycling has continued to grow across the City Council, although the market remains a challenge.
- We have moved into our new depot at Tollgate Road.
- Planned maintenance programme commenced and saw works across SCC’s estate, including redecoration of the foyer of the Guildhall.
- The issue of weed control continues to provide conflicting opinions. We are trying new herbicides and working towards a clearly defined management plan.
- SCC’s fleet started the transition to electric with 4 EV’s in the Parks team, 2 in the Streetscene team and 1 in the Markets team.
- Phase 1 of the refurbishment of the camping & caravan shower facilities and the creation of additional hard standing pitches has taken place. With income of circa £170,000 coming to the Council per annum, it is important to keep this facility in good condition.
- The Fisherton Rec toilets have been completely refurbished and will open when the River Park works conclude.
- The copper roof of the Crematorium was replaced and included additional insulation to help improve our carbon footprint.
- We secured £135,000 in funding from the urban tree challenge fund to plant and care for 200 additional trees in the city, with the first 100 planted in January.
- We secured funding for 4 deployable CCTV cameras as part of the PCC Safer Streets funding.
- We upgraded much of our estate with LED’s to lower our carbon footprint and reduce our bills.
- We recorded record hours of coverage from our CCTV team of paid and volunteer operators - 28 different CCTV Operators covered 1,169 visits to the control room providing 4,700 hours of coverage which is equivalent to 196 full days.
- We worked with the Salisbury Wildlife Volunteer Group to repair part of the River Bank near Five Rivers Health & Wellbeing Centre.
- After listening to resident feedback, we have targeted resources to tackle weeds across the city for 2024/25.

3. Open Forum - Matters raised by the public:

The Chair asked if anyone present would like to ask a question. Questions and answers discussed as follows:

Question 1. *How does the City Council manage its procurement processes, and does it take advantage of the frameworks available to public bodies?*

Answer 1. The Chief Executive Officer, Asa Thorpe confirmed that SCC takes full advantage of the procurement frameworks available to public bodies if and where it can. It looks to use local businesses, multi-year contracts and best prices. Procurement legislation constantly changes, and SCC will continue to aim for good value and local.

Question 2. *Does SCC consider how it might improve its communications, particularly of this Annual Parish Meeting? Perhaps consider notices through every door, and a communications person per ward to promote, etc? especially remembering that not everyone does social media.*

Answer 2. The Leaders agreed that only a very small number of the parish attend these meetings, with a mix of positive and negative feedback. But communication about the event is widely shared, including with and through Ward Councillors, social media, press, noticeboards, etc. However, costs and budget are considering factors – eg postal, printing for leaflets, volunteer management, etc – and what are parish residents' budget priorities? Residents often let the Council know their thoughts throughout the year, through their Councillors. Cllr Hocking confirmed that councillors get more positive feedback from residents than negative. SCC continue to receive issues that are for Wiltshire County Council, despite explanatory leaflets being delivered to every house. Unfortunately, you cannot 'make' people read or hear things, no matter how hard and often you try.

Question 3. *Very positive feedback on the condition of Elizabeth Gardens, with great planting for pollinators. It is great to see that cutting and management have come back in-house, perhaps consideration could now be given to more bespoke mowing/cutting (as per the Plantlife report)? Dorset County Council take part in a seed-saving scheme – could SCC do the same?*

Answer 3. Cllr John Wells Confirmed that it was confirmed that Marc Read, Mostyn Coombes and the environment team try to be responsive and work with resident's requests. This also applies to the Tree Strategy and audit.

Question 4. *There seems to be a good Market Strategy, which is busy, is there something similar for retail shops/outlets, especially as there are lots empty?*

Answer 4. The Officers confirmed that indeed the market is busy with increased enquiries, and it is picking back up from all the recent challenges. With regards to retail, SCC meets with its BID partners regularly, although Salisbury has one of the lowest empty-shops ratio in the area and nationally, but everyone continues to work to make improvements.

Question 5. *"Thank you" for the work on College Stream gardens and area – they look lovely and are well maintained.*

Coach Park refurbishment and alternative arrangements in the meantime – meeting a coach at 5am in St John’s street does not feel safe, or welcoming. Consider a website notice advising all coach operators to use the same, city centre, area.

Answer 5. The Officers agreed to look at this in conjunction with Wiltshire County Council.

Question 6. *River Park area – when will it open, and hopefully SCC will be fully involved in any formal opening?*

Answer 6. Cllrs confirmed this was originally scheduled for May this year, but the Environment Agency have advised that due to the adverse weather conditions this should now be June/July. A formal opening is planned sometime, and SCC will be fully involved.

Question 7. *Why is recycling among the markets so low? Why are there no recycling bins available on site? Surely it should be part of the traders’ contracts? The public and businesses must recycle – the market must do the same or better.*

Answer 7. Cllr Tomes, as an ex-market trader, explained it can be difficult for markets to recycle, mainly due to the mixed nature of materials (both from traders and manufacturers), is currently unsustainable, and some are better at it than others. However, it was agreed that the level of recycling must improve, it will be better for the whole environment, but it is a difficult balance between putting prices and not losing traders; a bridge must be devised to support the traders through transition. Currently the obligation is on traders to recycle. SCC’s Carbon Reduction Plan must include market traders.

4. Communities Team presentation

Sarah Gregson (Head of Communities) highlighted the work of the Team in the SCC communities including:

- This has been a very strong development year for the Communities Team, engaging with over 3,000 residents for the first time.
- The Pantry has also continued to reach more people this year and is a key part of the city’s response to the Cost-of-Living crisis.
- All areas of engagement have seen increases on 2022/23 year.
- Adults and Older people work includes: Public Art – Ongoing input to our city’s art works, Community Café, Senior Social Club, Bemerton Lunch Club, Community Lunch Club – Brown Street, Financial Inclusion advice, Friary Art Group, and Respiratory Health.
- Children’s and Families work includes: Nurture circles, Music Mondays, Supporting Homestart at the Friary, Under 5s picnics, Holiday craft and food. Victoria park nature event, Wednesday and Monday Clubs, and Scouting Development Work.
- Young people’s work includes: Friary Hangout, Our Salisbury – Museum Exhibition Project, Bishopdown Youth Club, Safe Spaces Network Project, Salisbury Youth Provision Forum, Schools Engagement Holocaust Memorial Day, Bemerton Youth Club, and RISE 61 drop ins.
- Active Lifestyles work includes: Ability Counts Football, Kids Love Fit – Healthy Little Monsters, Ramblers Wellbeing Walks, Impact MMA – Anti Bullying, Homeschool P.E., St Osmunds school sports sessions, and 2 x Bike repair events.

- The Community Centres have continued to see a variety of hirers and events organised including Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire Creative, HCRG, Springfields School, Salisbury Museum, Kidz Love Fit, Sounds Better CIC, birthday parties, Introduction to BSL, Home Educators, Salisbury Foodbank, Homestart, Spurgeons, Read Easy, WASP, Fijian Assembly and Grace Church.
- The Pantry welcomes an average 375 visits and between 853 and 2011 people per month; undertakes 610 surplus collections and saves 57,111kg of CO2 annually.
- The Evaluation Approach used is 'Anonymised, SIMPLE, Rigorous, flexible'. Self-reported wellbeing is scored 1 – 5 against the 5 Ways of 'Connect, Be Active, Keep Learning, Give and Take Notice', looking at building on what we do well and identifying opportunities for improvement: **Good Because** ; **Better if**
- The Wellbeing snapshot showed: 76% of respondents are learning new things by participating in our programme; 69% of people have a greater opportunity to connect with others because of our work; Though only 7 % respondents are volunteers, 69% have found the opportunity to give to others and/or feel valued through our work; Our low scoring responses are from a variety of individuals and do not sit within one activity; Though we have not yet evaluated physical activity focused work, 42% of respondents are significantly more active as a result of participating
- New partnerships this year have included: Wellbeing Walks, The F3, Salisbury Manor, Beautiful Bemerton, Scouting Development, Impact MMA and Acorn Community Bank.
- The presentation concluded with a short video by the Kaleidoscope group.

4.1. Lousie Dancy, Take Part Director for Wiltshire Creative, presented on Wiltshire Creative's Community Engagement over the year.

4.2. Sarah Gregson also presented on behalf of the Our Salisbury Museum Past Forward project work including:

- Schools outreach
- Sarum Academy
- S6C
- Piloted Primary Schools projects
- Giant Friend project
- EYFS pilot project
- SEND pilot projects.
- Community youth projects
- Friary U5s
- Work with adults on 'a local museum for local people.'
- Community co-curation
- Young producer's lab

The Museum re-opens on 13th July.

Sarah was thanked by those present.

5. **The meeting closed at 7.30pm** with networking opportunities.

To be signed as a correct record at the 2025 Annual Parish meeting.

Signed:.....

Date:.....