

The Guildhall
Market Place
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Minutes

Meeting of : Annual Parish Meeting
Date : Monday 17 April 2023
Meeting held in : The Guildhall, Salisbury
Commencing at : 6:00pm

Present:

Chair: Cllr Tom Corbin, The Mayor of the City of Salisbury

Supported by: Administration Group Leaders Cllr Annie Riddle, Cllr Victoria Charleston, and Cllr John Wells

Present: Cllrs A Bayliss, J Bolwell, J Broom, S Charleston, S Hocking, A Hoque, J King, J Nettle, R Rogers, P Sample, C Stanway and E Wills

Cllr Apologies: C Hibbert, E Rimmer, I Tomes

Council Officers: Annie Child, Janine Whitty, Marc Read and Sarah Gregson

Members of the public: 14 (Including 4 members of the public present to provide presentations)

Members of the press: 1

1. **Mayor's Welcoming Remarks:**

Councillor Tom Corbin, The Mayor of the City of Salisbury opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance.

2. **Administration Group Leaders Update on Current Activities:**

Councillor Annie Riddle gave another introduction and informed those present of Salisbury City Council's 2023/2024 council tax information available at the meeting on the display board and leaflets. A copy of this leaflet can also be found [here](#) on the Salisbury City Council's website.

Administration Group Leaders provided updates as follows;

Cllr Riddle, provided the following update about the business activities.

Demand for the council's services has been on the rise post-Covid. The Guildhall staff are far exceeding their income targets. On the hire of the area outside the building, their target for the financial year was £20,500, and with one month to go they had already taken more than twice that amount - £49,071. Events within the building, targeted to bring in £50,000, actually achieved £83,669 over that period. The surplus will help rebuild our reserves. We'd like to thank them for all their proactive marketing and excellent service to the public.

We're investing to raise more income from our leasing arrangement with the Caravanning and Camping Club at Hudson's Field by making more of the pitches hardstanding, suitable for motorhomers in all weathers.

To try to reduce the cost of providing our Pantry food service we're partnering with Safer and Supportive Salisbury. They are seeking charitable status which will enable them to rent the building to showcase their service alongside ours without paying business rates, which we currently have to do.

The costs of staging our popular family events are rising, as contractors, struggling with inflation like the rest of us, put up their prices.

But we are looking after the pennies – right down to the fact that our St George's Day celebrations next Sunday will all be taking place outdoors in the Market Place and Guildhall Square, so we don't have the expense of opening and staffing the Guildhall as we've done in the past. Let's hope the weather stays fine.

With just a few weeks to go, we're working hard on our Coronation plans – with a family-focused Big Lunch event in Queen Elizabeth Gardens on the Sunday, featuring fete-style stalls run by charities and voluntary groups. It's important to us that this will be an event to benefit local causes and suit all budgets - there will be food vendors, but people are also welcome to bring a picnic. If you know any face painters looking for a day's work, please point them in our direction! That'll be followed on the Sunday evening by the free Big Gig, headlined by The Deloreons, in the Market Place. We're trying to help boost local businesses by having four of our traders whose premises face the market selling food and drink for this event, rather than bringing in outsiders.

There are lots of other fun events planned over the summer including our car boots and our increasingly popular street sellers' Sunday markets, featuring a dog show on May 14, with themes later in the summer including dinosaurs and art. Our Fayre on the Square returns from late July- early September.

Our main Tuesday and Saturday markets are looking livelier than ever, trader and footfall numbers are increasing week by week, with new traders including high quality food vendors approaching us asking to take part.

Our information centre has also been busy selling souvenirs and tickets, and a mini guide for travellers has been produced. Our redesigned website is now up and running, improving the council's communication with the public, and our Facebook following is rising every month.

Finally, we're delighted to say that after having to budget for a reduced grant to Wiltshire Creative and our Museum next year, we've been able to make up the difference due to better than expected bank interest receipts in recent months and a reduction in business rates on one of our buildings.

Cllr John Wells provided an update on some of the Environmental Services work. It has been an important year for our Environmental Services Team and Marc Read our Environmental Services Manager will shortly provide an update on the progress of Environmental Policy Action Plan (EPAP) but first of all I would like to publicly thank and congratulate Marc and his team of officers and operatives for all their hard work over the past year.

Marc Read and his team have faced several challenges in maintaining and delivering essential services in the face of rising costs whilst simultaneously addressing the important issue of reducing the overall carbon footprint of Salisbury City Council.

In 2021/22 Salisbury City Council's emissions per £M turnover decreased from the baseline year by 15.2%. This has largely been achieved by switching to renewable energy tariffs and investigating opportunities to reduce energy consumption on the Council's sites across the city. We are awaiting a report on the reduction for 2022/23.

The most significant change for Environmental Services has been the acquisition of a new site to accommodate the vehicles and equipment of our expanded team following the termination of the grounds maintenance contract with ideverde. The logistics of relocating staff and equipment, whilst recruiting part of a new team and maintaining a "green and clean" city has not been easy. During this period some services were understandably temporarily affected, but Marc and his team have successfully risen to the challenge. We are confident this change will result in a more effective deployment of staff and improvements in efficiency.

Looking forward we have a clear strategy to maximise our potential for enhancing biodiversity and carbon capture in the coming years with a detailed professional Tree Strategy and Biodiversity Plan. This is a long term investment to address long term environmental issues. Our work is guided by this strategy and informs our Environmental Policy Action Plan.

Cllr V Charleston provided the following update regarding the communities team. I have the pleasure of highlighting some of the fantastic work our Communities team, led by Sarah Gregson, have been up to this year.

The City Council Communities team plays an integral role within our city, bringing together different interest groups to support residents, plugging gaps in help, and trying to engage with our residents who often aren't heard. The team have five priorities:

- Supporting people on low income
- Improving access to active lifestyles
- Bringing communities together
- Improving opportunities for young people
- Working to better understand marginalised communities

And in the past year, the team have surpassed themselves. In terms of 'Bringing Communities Together' we have projects such as Youth on the Heath and the Community Café.

The flagship for 'supporting people on Low Income' is the Salisbury Pantry, an integral part of our city support network. There were 3,503 shops this year at the Salisbury Pantry, 867 Pantry members in total, 1,381 adults and 953 children through those shops.

Continuing to fund our sports officers enables the team to deliver a whole range of activities to support active lifestyle including dodgeball, boxing, and a bike repair event in February.

I think the intangible value of our communities team is their networks. Our Communities Team has been worked with community partners across the city this winter to create this list of Warm and Welcoming Spaces. Places residents can visit for low to no cost to be with other people in a safe, warm and welcoming environment. These spaces include community centres, church halls and other projects. Most of these places are supported by volunteers or community workers and are all great spaces to meet people or simply be.

Looking forward, the focus is on the Coronation Big Help Out to support the Salisbury Pantry, Salisbury Food Bank and Bemerton Community Fridge.

In these difficult times, our Communities team are more important than ever, helping to stave off loneliness, worry, and the stress of.

3. Environmental Action Plan Update

Marc Read, Environmental Services Manager provided a presentation on Salisbury City Council's Environmental Policy Action Plan which aims to move the Council towards carbon neutrality, Enhanced biodiversity in the spaces we own and manage, displaying positive leadership to the community. A copy of the presentation and the 6 themes the policy includes can be found [here](#) on Salisbury City Council's website.

Questions 1 River Park project - Why have so many trees been taken down?

Looks very destructive.

Answer 1 Marc Read confirmed that the River Park project is managed by the Environment Agency and therefore can't comment on the project. However, Andy Wallis from EA does attend the Environment & Climate committee to provide updates and to answer questions. Further information about the project can also be found [here](#).

Question 2 Why are there numerous allotments currently vacant while there is a long waiting list?

Answer 2 Marc Read confirmed that the allotments are monitored by council officers and if they aren't being maintained or become vacant then they are re-let as soon as possible. Marc Read also offered to discuss the matter further with the member of the public present if they wish.

Question 3 Cllr J King asked what is to be done with the wild meadow area in the Crematorium?

Answer 3 Marc Read provide an update that the leaf pile has now been removed and wildflower planting has taken place in this area.

4. Communities Team Introduction

Sarah Gregson, Communities Manager, provided a presentation on Salisbury City Council's communities work, support and facilitations including, summer fun days, community café, wellbeing art groups, jumble sales, Silver Salisbury, senior club, public art consultation, youth club at the Friary, Partnership F3 project, SaSS hub, Ukrainian hub, active lifestyle, plus various sports and coaching sessions provided, including annual senior games. A copy of this presentation can be found on [here](#) on the Salisbury City Council website.

5. Partner and Grant Recipients Presentations:

Sarah Gregson introduced some of the partners which receive a rent reduction or grant from Salisbury City Council, who provided presentations as follows;

Sarah Gregson invited Fiona Ollerhead from Pantry Partnership to answer questions about The Pantry Partnership which is now located at the former Bowls Club at Victoria Park. Not long after refurbishing the building, the covid pandemic happened, however the Pantry Partnership were able to help the Salisbury Pantry and Bemerton Heath Centre provide fresh food and frozen meals to the public. The rent reduction scheme means that the Pantry Partnership can put more funds into the work they do. The organisation has between 25 – 40 volunteers that help carry out various roles for the Pantry Partnership. Key things they have continued to do is food distribution and projects such as cooking workshops.

Mike Dibbons from Salisbury Sea Cadets provided information about the cadets located in Churchill Gardens who also receive a rent reduction. The sea cadets have been running for 84 years. There are currently 90 children, aged between 10 and 18, and there is a waiting list. Activities include mountain biking, sailing, football, swimming, and lots more.

Louise Dancy from Wiltshire Creative, provided an introduction regarding its Young Ambassadors. The group is open to any young person aged 14-21. They are individuals who are interested in a variety of artforms and support Wiltshire Creative's work with young people in Salisbury and the wider county. A member of the Young Ambassadors spoke about the Shift project in 2022, a weekend long event which included a concert, music, discussions about climate change. A video of the event was shown. This year's Shift event will be in October. Louise also highlighted another event which took place at Salisbury Cathedral in October 2022, Congress (Meaning - To meet). The audience were encouraged to participate by listening. A video of the event was shown. This year's big project this year is The Tempest, located at Churchill Gardens as part of Salisbury International Arts Festival.

Sarah Gregson read an update from Alice Madicot from Salisbury Museum. They have been working with the community, such as The Friary hang out as well as creating a safe space at the Museum. Early years engagement with pre-schools, including under 5 Friday's and community picnics. Also, local schools to create new sessions for the museum and an after-school history club. The museum also attends community events and has a pop-up museum. Other community engagement includes co-creation groups, with the aim to set up inclusion and advisory groups. Salisbury Museum are also currently recruiting a Community Curator.

Finally, a video about the Community Café, run by Salisbury City Council and many volunteers, was presented by Sarah Gregson and it can be found [here](#).

6. Open Forum:

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

Question 3 Congratulations on the presentations and work of Salisbury City Council, however the Mayor has previously given his support for one side of the Ukrainian war. There have been deaths to both Russian and Ukrainian soldiers. The British government have sent Depleted uranium to be used in the war. We haven't got the full story and the council are supporting the Ukrainian refugees, and why has the council got an unbalanced support of one side and no acknowledge or support of the other side?

Answer 3 The Mayor, Cllr Tom Corbin talked about the war in Ukraine and that he does show support for those refugees that come to Salisbury.

Question 4 Why do we have a Ukrainian flag on the Guildhall? Its not people that cause wars, its governments.

Answer 4 Cllr Corbin confirmed that the Ukrainian flag has been flown on occasion, including on the anniversary of the start of the war. Currently the city flag (which is also blue and yellow) is being flown. Cllr V Charleston also informed those present that the Administration have and do discuss these matters and have considered whether further public consultation is required regarding who SCC show support or fly a flag for.

Question/ Statements 5 Mr Jennings read a statement which thanked Salisbury City Council for their work and presentation provided at the meeting. He also raised the following two issues;

1. Social media and public engagement - The council seem to be advertising committee meetings and events more, however this is not the only platform that can be used. Those that do not use or have access social media are being excluded. Live streaming should be considered by the council, so more can engage or view the discussions after the meeting. This would show that the council is being inclusive and listening.

Mr Jennings also talked about councillors' engagement and conduct on social media and suggested that the council needs to reinforce its social media policy. He also urged councillors to read the code of conduct.

Question - Please can we have a Community Engagement policy?

2. Parish Council Tax - Various services, some I do, some I don't use, or may chose not to use. It should be the council's responsibility to consider all costs and be transparent. Council tax precept should be kept as low as possible. How is it that many who live the same distance outside Salisbury use them but don't pay the precept. There are many new housing developments outside the parish, and those who will live within these areas will benefit from Salisbury facilities however won't pay the precept. What facilities can I use that are paid for by others? Mr Jennings suggested calling for a Community Governance review, to include neighbouring parishes within the Salisbury parish boundary.

Question – Please can we trigger a Community Governance review?

Answers 5 – The Mayor responded regarding both questions, and Cllr S Charleston gave his support for a possible community governance review. Cllr V

Charleston also provided some answers to the questions, including that press releases are being sent to many newspapers to pick up, agreed that there has been some unpleasant use of social media and that new code of conduct will be considered at Full Council.

No further questions were forthcoming.

The meeting closed at 7:58pm

To be signed as a correct record at the 2024 Annual Parish meeting.

Signed:.....

Date:.....