

TOWN MEETING

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Wednesday 28th May 2002 at 7.30pm
At Haverhill Town Hall Arts Centre

PRESENT: **Town Mayor:** **Eric Bowman**
 Town Councillors: **M Dane, P French, E Goody, P Hanlon,**
 Gerry Kiernan, Larry Kiernan, Maggie Lee,
 Mary Martin, A Trewartha and M Woodley.

IN ATTENDANCE: **Clerk to the Council – Gordon Mussett**
 Arts & Leisure Manager – Nick Keeble
 Mayor's Secretary – Vicky Ward
 Eighty-seven members of the public

MINUTES

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Dunning, Hancock, Millar and Smith.

2. Minutes of Meeting held 25th April 2001

Cllr Bowman proposed and Cllr Gerry Kiernan seconded that the minutes of the Town Meeting held on 25th April 2001 be approved as a true record, all being in favour.

3. Reports from Councillors on Matters Affecting Haverhill During the Past Year

Cllr Maggie Lee reported that the past year had been a highly successful one for the Town Council, which had campaigned vigorously and successfully to protect the Town from inappropriate out-of-town developments and for the establishment of a Town Centre Management Group to plan future growth of the town centre, and provided comment on major planning applications to ensure that the social infrastructure is enhanced as more houses are built. In addition the Town Council had provided over £10,000 of direct grant-aid to local organisations and assisted them in raising in excess of a further £5,000 for their funds, provided information and support to over 200 local community groups and organisations supporting over 10,000 members, and ensured continued and new funding for two local groups (Wednesdays for Women and Haverskate). The Town Council's concern for the environment meant it had enhanced the Town with additional planting, and campaigned successfully for better treatment of the bypass roundabouts, continued to campaign for removal of the sewage works, and campaigned for safer roads. The Town Council had supported the initiative to enhance the provision of community transport in and around the Town, and campaigned to enhance public transport links, both in-Town, and out

of Town. The Town Council had published the Haverhill Directory, delivered free to every household in the CB9 postcode area. To promote the Town, the Town Council had represented Haverhill at local, County, Regional and National events, provided a recruitment pack for local organisations looking to attract key staff, such as teachers, health workers, etc.. The Town Council recognised the difficulties facing people entering the housing market and had campaigned for additional low-cost housing, life-long housing, and key worker housing.

Cllr Maggie Lee referred to the Town Council's Arts and Leisure events. Over 800 young people attended the Haverhill Rock Competition, the 2001 Haverhill Country Music Festival attracted visitors from as far away as Milton Keynes, Peterborough and Rochester, over 700 people attended the Haverhill Drama Festival – the winners of which went on to compete in the national finals, and over 1,100 places on out-of-town coach trips were filled by Haverhill pensioners.

Over 1,500 people attended events at the Arts Centre during the Haverhill Festival – which included 6 full houses, over 20,000 people attended the open-air events, and over 28,000 attended all Leisure events, including over 1,500 attending the “Big Bash” day raising over £5,000 for local organisations.

The Town Council had staged the popular Summer in Haverhill and Winter in Haverhill seasons of events, and provided Christmas Lights. For those looking for entertainment the Town Council had distributed over 14,000 copies of “What’s On”.

Cllr Maggie Lee reminded those present that the year began with the publication of Face of 2000 – that had received national and international press coverage. In addition films produced by [Multi@rts](#) featured in the Bradford Young Film-makers Festival and the project was featured at the East of England Local Government Arts Forum.

At the conclusion of Cllr Maggie Lee's speech those present broke into spontaneous applause.

Cllr French addressed the meeting on the forthcoming Arts & Leisure programme, drawing attention to the Leisure Committee's commitment to enhance the environment of the Town. Cllr French particularly thanked Nick Keeble, the Town Council's Arts & Leisure Manager, without whose dedication the Town's Leisure programme would not have been so varied and yet so popular.

4. For the public to discuss any matter relating to the Town of Haverhill

A member of the public complained of the state of the ladies' changing rooms and toilets at the Haverhill Leisure Centre. The changing rooms were always crowded, and there was a smell that lingered at all times. The member of the public stated that she had made complaints at the Leisure Centre but no long-term changes had arisen as a result. The Mayor indicated that the Clerk would bring the matter to the attention of St Edmundsbury Borough Council, the Council responsible for the Centre.

A member of the public stated that there was a need for more litter bins in and around the Town. The Mayor stated that the Clerk would be asked to press St Edmundsbury Borough Council to provide more bins. Another member of the public asked if more of the shopkeepers, especially the fast-food proprietors, could be encouraged to provide bins. Cllr Maggie Lee asked the public to advise the Clerk of location where further bins were required.

A member of the public enquired regarding negotiations for the transfer of management of the Arts Centre. Cllr Maggie Lee advised that negotiations were still proceeding with St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

A member of the public enquired regarding the recent decision to grant a temporary Public Entertainment Licence to the Rose & Crown Hotel increasing the permitted numbers to 200. Cllr Gerry Kiernan advised that the previous Public Entertainment Licence for 100 did not correspond with the Fire Officer's Certificate that 200 people may be in the building and that this amendment brought the two in line. The temporary nature of the permission was to give the neighbours time to evaluate whether the increase affected their quality of life.

A member of the public considered that the Town Council should not have made a grant towards the proposed sculpture on the Cambridge roundabout. Cllr Maggie Lee advised that the grant was made to a project to document the project, to be used both as a historical record, but also distributed throughout the country as an example of true partnership working in a community arts project. As such the booklet would bring additional recognition of Haverhill as a community where the Arts mattered, and where a good community spirit existed. The booklet would also include reference to the Face of 2000 project and the Multi@rts project.

A member of the public asked whether the work on Swan Lane bridge would be completed within the published timescale. The member of the public was referred to Suffolk County Council who were responsible for the works on the bridge. The member of the public drew the Town Council's attention to the potential loss of trade being experienced by some town centre traders whilst Swan Lane was closed and asked if a period of free car parking could be provided.

A member of the public referred to the need to change the pedestrianisation sign at the entrance to the High Street every week and asked for better signing. Cllr Maggie Lee advised that it was not a question of changing one sign to provide better information on access to the town centre, but a review of all town centre signing and routing was required.

A member of the public asked regarding progress on the skatepark. Cllr Mrs Mary Martin advised it would be before the Borough Council Planning Committee in June.

A member of the public enquired regarding the planning application for Hales Barn, asking whether affordable housing would be provided. Cllr Mrs Mary Martin advised that the definition of affordable housing was unclear, and that it was a balance between low cost housing and the community facilities that the Town required.

A member of the public, in referring to the proposed sculpture on the Cambridge roundabout, asked if St Edmundsbury Borough Council could tidy up the nearby cyclepath.

A member of the public asked whether the land near the river could be made more attractive, with additional seating and tidying up of the shrubs.

5. Closure

The meeting was closed at 8.10 p.m.