

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF ATHERSTONE PARISH 2021

Date of meeting Wednesday April 28th 2021 at 6.30 p.m.

Place of Meeting VIA Zoom

Present

Atherstone Town Cllrs: Denise Clews, Sara Bishop, Ray Jarvis, Carl Gurney, Mark Jordan, David Wright, Tony Clews, Mejar Singh, Stacey Wightman, Jacky Chambers.

Town Clerk Odette Ghent / Deputy Town Clerk Sally Oldham

Will Mulheron – Chairman of Atherstone Cricket Club
Paul Negus – Secretary of Atherstone Adders Hockey Club
Karen Meads – Local Commissioner Atherstone Guides
Martin Horner – White Hart Community Groups
Martin Short – member of the public.
Gwyn Short – member of the public
Gary Chamberlain – Atherstone Partnership

Chairman: Cllr Ray Jarvis

Clerk: Sally Oldham

Cllr Ray Jarvis opened the meeting by welcoming all the attendees.

1/ TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING OF 17th February 2021.

Mr Short raised a point of order that as it had been finally decided that the February 17th 2021 meeting had not been called in the correct timeframe why would we want to approve minutes of a meeting that technically did not happen? We should be looking at the minutes approved at the February 2021 meeting bearing in mind that no members of the public had turned up as they did not have enough notice and it was just six Councillors discussing that Cllr Bishop had got things wrong when in fact she was right. Mr Short felt it was the previous minutes (22nd May 2019) that should be looked at.

Cllr Wright acknowledged Mr Short's comments but added that the situation had been clarified on numerous occasions by the Clerk both verbally and in writing. We followed the advice of both NALC and WALC and although there were only a few people there at the time we thought it was a legal meeting at the time and that is why we have the minutes.

Mr Short thought it wrong to receive minutes of a meeting that did not actually happen and stated he was trying to offer solutions. It was a public meeting but the public were not there as they did not know about it.

Cllr Ray Jarvis re-iterated to all those present that legal advice had been sought from both WALC and NALC, given to the Clerks and followed to the letter. It was later found to be incorrect advice. The meeting took place in line with the legal advice and therefore it has to have a public record.

The minutes of the 17th February 2021 were approved.

Matters Arising:

Cllr Bishop pointed out that the minutes that had just been approved stated that she was not correct and she wished it to be recorded in these minutes to show she was correct in raising her objection at the last meeting. It was an error by WALC in the advice given to the Council. People were not able to see the notice on the market square about the previous meeting due to the lockdown and also there was no way at that point to gain access to the meeting via a phone line. Cllr Bishop thanked the Clerks for now arranging a landline dial in facility for those who do not have computers for this and future virtual meetings.

2/ PRESENTATION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT.

Cllr Ray Jarvis presented the Annual Report of the Town Council outlining the work and responsibilities of Atherstone Town Council.

(Copies of the Annual Report are attached to these minutes or are available on request from Atherstone Town Council or can be viewed online at www.atherstone-tc.gov.uk)

Gary Chamberlain asked about the financial situation just reported.

What is the Town Council's plan for next year regarding what seems to be the deficit in the accounts? The last two years have seen £52k and £51k taken from reserves. If that follows suit there is deficit again of £50k with only £35k in reserves.

Cllr Jarvis responded that when the precept is looked at in January (2022) this will be looked at as part of the budget setting.

Cllr Wright said forecasting such use of reserves is clearly not sustainable however in 2020-21 the forecast was £52K but only £30K was taken. It is hoped that again the £51k forecast will not need to be fully called upon. He re-iterated that an increase of 0.76p per household per year for a Band D Property had been precepted.

3/ LOCAL ORGANISATIONS INVITED TO GIVE UPDATES

Martin Horner - White Hart Community Groups.

Over the last 12 months it has been closed for face to face meetings.

However contacts have been maintained. A lot of online training has been taking place especially for those working back into employment. The next few years are going to be difficult as people re-build after Covid.

There is a Craft Club, Computer Club, Jobs Club, Wood Working Workshop and Allotment which are just some of the initiatives that are running.

Gary Chamberlain – Atherstone Partnership

During 2020 not too much happened but Atherstone Partnership did support Atherstone Town Council with the Community Support Team and in turn the Partnership also received help from Atherstone Town Council with a Christmas Event and Santa Live and Lights Switch On.

Over the last couple of months with support from both Atherstone and North Warwickshire Borough Council the Partnership is developing the Visit Atherstone website and the Enterprise Hub.

The Partnership is also beginning a schedule of events for the coming year in line with the government roadmap.

The Stone Channel is set up and is a dedicated channel for Atherstone – it is streaming this and other meetings live. The Channel moves forward and potentially is now teamed up with group of young entrepreneurs – promoting sustainability. A new project is launching with national charities and it will be a first for Atherstone.

Cllr Denise Clews – Edible Links

Cllr Clews thanked Martin Horner and his volunteers and Gary Chamberlain for all the work the Atherstone Partnership are doing and the proposed sustainability project.

Paul Negus – Atherstone Hockey Club

We have been very well supported by both local councils and we have been doing many things during lockdown. Firstly a Bounce Back to Hockey Programme in September 2020 all run by volunteers. A crowd Funding Appeal raised just over £10k initiated by Atherstone Town Council's support. A new Coaching Strategy has been set up along with a Scholarship programme to support our talented youngsters. We set up a hardship fund for players and members who were affected by the pandemic so that they could continue to play, exercise and keep fit. Members were kept in regular contact and team challenges were set along with a Junior Hockey Camp so everyone was ready for a return to playing.

We have achieved Club Mark which is a nationally recognised – confirming we are a fully registered and structured sports organisation.

The Hockey Club is now back up and running after a Move in March Campaign to get our members running, walking, cycling and active in order to raise funds for the Local Charities. 117 members signed up raising £1030 for charities in Atherstone.

Cllr Tony Clews - Climate Change Champion gave an update on a move towards a base line carbon impact which had been delayed due to Covid but now there are many green initiatives in the local area regarding, leisure, housing, travel and other Climate Change activities.

Will Mulheron – Atherstone Cricket Club

An update was given on a challenging year. It was feared there would be no cricket but a 10 week season was achieved. The Junior section was difficult to organise to Covid rules but we managed it and 24 children came every week. 10 Junior games were held at U11 and U13. Senior teams performed well winning leagues and in stronger positions than expected.

This year we are going from strength to strength – thanks to the local community and Atherstone Town Council the club has a new roller which has now been purchased after years of saving. 42 children are now signed up in addition to 3 senior teams on a Saturday – 2 on a Thursday and a Sunday Team. Cricket is all going well in Atherstone with tremendous support from club volunteers.

Cllr Jacky Chambers thanked all the organisations who have worked through the difficult year. At the start people were very fearful and it must have taken a lot of courage to keep going and especially to carry on supporting the community. It is hoped this has set a good foundation for the future.

Karen Meads – Atherstone Girl Guides

It was reported that during lockdown meetings had continued for youngsters of all ages. Some did not fully engage with Zoom initially but once face to face groups meet again leaders are confident they will return.

Katie Meads one of the leaders adapted the programme of activities so that they could be carried out virtually. Packs of information, materials and treats were hand delivered to homes ready for virtual group sessions.

Rainbows age 5-7 had a great time and activities included making robots, Christmas decorations and Mother's Day cards. They also read stories and learned about the value of money.

Brownies ages 7-10 did badges such as Aviator and Local History and they learned about their bodies and how muscles work.

Guides ages 10-14 struggled the most but virtual Harry Potter escape rooms were created along with cooking activities and crafts but often they just wanted to meet up to chat with their friends.

From May 2021 more virtual activities are planned with extended sessions – some of them 4 hours or longer where an activity is set and the youngsters then report back later. Brownies have even done virtual sleepovers.

The volunteers have been amazing with a lot of work especially by Katie Meads who has attended every zoom session.

The Council were also thanked for their support and the group fully expects to come back even stronger over the coming months.

Cllr Denise Clews – Edible Links

On behalf of Edible links Cllr Denise Clews (one of the volunteers) thanked the Town Council for its support of Edible Links with the Arcade Unit and also the team of volunteers from the Atherstone Support Team and Fire Service who helped with deliveries during lockdown.

Cllr Jarvis thanked everyone for their reports and commented that the volunteers in Atherstone are exemplary. Atherstone is a Town that supports everyone as is shown by the commitment of those here tonight and many others.

4/ ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Short firstly asked Atherstone Town Council to consider re-instating a Footpaths Officer to protect local rights of way.

Cllr Jarvis responded that the position is a Warwickshire County Council function and still exists.

Mr Short said that as well as a County role it would be good to have a local person. Secondly Mr Short said that Atherstone Town Council needs a Heritage Officer.

Cllr Chambers agreed with Mr Short that the two suggestions need to be looked at by Atherstone Town Council and discussed as a local champion for footpaths is needed and a Heritage champion following the sad loss of Lorna Dirveiks. Cllr Chambers agreed with previous speakers and said that volunteers are important for the vitality of the Town.

Cllr Denise Clews suggested contacting Mancetter Parish Council as one of its Councillors is a dedicated representative for footpaths. Cllr D Clews also thought Atherstone Town Council should consider having a representative on the Civic Society.

Cllr Gurney stated that Civic Society have a designated person who responds to planning applications. He added that fly-tipping is another issue affecting footpaths.

The meeting closed at 7.24pm

To view a live stream of the meeting go to:

https://youtu.be/y4_js8ftwd0

Date of the next meeting to be confirmed for Spring 2022.

Atherstone Town Council



Annual Report 2020 / 2021



LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
FOUNDATION

TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE

Town Clerk Mrs Odette Ghent
Deputy Town Clerk Mrs. Sally Oldham

NWBC
The Council House
South Street
Atherstone
CV9 1DE

Opening hours

Monday to Friday 9.30am to 11am by appointment only.

Outside of these hours appointments are necessary.

Phone Number	01827 720829
Mobile	07928 974576 Town Clerk
Mobile	07541 946062 Deputy Town Clerk

Postal Address	Atherstone Town Council, P.O. Box 2000, Atherstone, CV9 1YN.
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Web Site Address	www.atherstone-tc.gov.uk
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E-mail	clerk@atherstone-tc.gov.uk
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Meetings Structure 2020/21

May to November 2020

Chairman Cllr D Clews

Vice-Chairman Cllr R Jarvis

Mayor Cllr D Clews

November 2020 to May 2021

Chairman Cllr R Jarvis

Vice – Chairman Cllr D Wright

Monthly meeting, all meetings are Full Council.

Meeting business.

All Town Council meetings have been held via Zoom since May 2020, this has worked well, and the meetings follow the same format as the face-to-face meetings.

A Public Session at the beginning of the meeting

Reports from other Councils and Police

Approval of invoices and cheques

Correspondence

Planning applications

Financial and internal reports

Memorial applications

Recent burials

Policy matters

Funding Applications

Applications to use the Market Square

Contract matters

Any other scheduled business

The Town Council are temporarily based inside the NWBC building at The Council House on South Street Atherstone CV9 1DE.

This is whilst plans are formulated to demolish and rebuild the Old Mortuary as two storey office accommodation and community space. The Town council have engaged with a project manager to oversee the project.

ATHERSTONE TOWN COUNCILLORS

As of 31st March 2021

Sara Bishop	01827 717480	Labour North
Tony Clews	01827 711340	Conservative North
Carl Gurney	01827 713976	Conservative North
Brian Henney	07931 588218	Labour North
Mejar Singh	01827 712305	Conservative North
David Wright	07711 330040	Conservative North
Vacancy		Labour South
Denise Clews	07477 607255	Conservative South
Ray Jarvis	01827 716534	Conservative South
Jacky Chambers	07966 425052	Labour Central
Vacancy		Vacancy
Vacancy		Vacancy
Mark Jordan	07775 987866	Conservative Central
Angie Spencer	07974 302910	Conservative Central
Vacancy	Vacancy	Vacancy

FAREWELLS AND WELCOMES

In October 2020 Cllr Lorna Dirveiks sadly passed away followed by Cllr Dawn Downes in February 2021 this was very sad news for both the Town Council and the residents of Atherstone as both Councillors did so much for the Town. Our thoughts and prayers go out to their families.

Cllr Gary Chamberlain was Co Opted onto the Town Council in July 2020 this was replacing Cllr Ian Driver who resigned in December 2019 Cllr Susan Allan Stubbs resigned in November 2020 followed by Cllr Gary Chamberlain in February 2021

The year ended with four vacancies one in the South Ward and three in the Central Ward

What has the Town Council done in 2020/21

This year has been a very challenging year for the Town Council and the residents of Atherstone.

In March 2020 the Country went into lockdown as the Covid 19 Pandemic took hold and immediately the Clerks got to work setting up the Atherstone Community Support Team there was a remarkable response to a call for volunteers to help their neighbours and fellow residents and support was put in place for every street and road throughout Atherstone.

Over 60 Volunteers registered to help and between them they covered over 4300 households helping with essential shopping, collecting prescriptions, walking dogs or just a friendly phone call for those who were unable to leave their homes during the Covid-19 outbreak. There was also a dedicated team of volunteers that helped the local Chemist delivering prescriptions, and volunteers delivering food parcels from Edible Links Food Bank.

In December 2020 Town Mayor Cllr Denise Clews instigated the delivery of 200 High Teas as a welcome early Christmas present for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents in Atherstone.

The past year has been one where everyone has pulled together to support each other.

1. Allotments

The Town Council provides allotments for rent. There are two sites, Merevale and Gypsy Lane.

Both sites are almost fully occupied, anyone requiring a plot should register at the Town Council offices.

The Town Council also owns the neighbouring Atherstone Allotment Association site, in Gypsy Lane.

The Town Council works with the Associations, and tenants, at the sites for their general improvement.

Due to Covid 19 restrictions there were no allotment awards this year but will resume in 2021.

2. Cemetery

The Town Council maintains the cemetery at Sheepy Road and is also responsible for the maintenance of burial and memorial records for the cemetery.

3. Old Allotment Gardens

The Town Council has been unable to attract funding to improve the land between the Cemetery and the A5, which runs from Sheepy Road through to the brook at Abeles Way, now known as The Old Allotment Gardens. Under consideration was provision of a wildlife conservation area and walkthrough, for the people of Atherstone. It also allows for the future extension of the cemetery and investigation works began in early 2021 looking into this.

4. CCTV

The CCTV cameras and ducting in the town centre are owned and maintained by the Town Council who also contribute to the staffing costs for monitoring the screens.

The Town Council is in partnership with North Warwickshire Borough Council and Warwickshire Police.

The system includes a direct link to Police Headquarters at Leek Wootton.

An upgrade to the CCTV system began but was temporarily put on hold due to Covid 19 this is now due to be complete by Summer 2021.

The Town Council supports the retail radio system, for the town, now known as Town watch. Subsidies are given towards the cost of the radios, for those taking part.

5. Play Areas

There are two Play Areas managed and maintained by the Town Council: St Mary's Road, which is owned outright, and Westwood Road, which is leased.

Because there have been several instances of damage, vandalism, and anti-social behaviour the St Mary's Road area, is covered by a mobile CCTV camera administered by the Police, while Westwood Road is covered by a camera on the town centre system.

6. Planning

The Town Council is a Statutory Planning Consultee, and comments on planning applications in Atherstone, and those which would affect Atherstone.

7. Christmas Lights

The Town Council owns the Christmas lights in the Long Street, Church Street and Market Street areas and outside St Mary's Church, and is totally responsible for the purchase, testing, maintenance, erection and dismantling of the lights.

Additional pole mounted displays were planned for December 2020 to compliment the new Christmas light displays installed in 2019 but due to Covid restrictions this could not happen, but they are planned for December 2021.

8. Support for Local Community Events held in the Market Square

No events could take place this year apart from the twice weekly market that was a great benefit to the Town during lockdown as people could shop safely outdoors.

9. Support for Local Community Groups

The Town Council can make small grants to assist local community groups. Details of these can be found on the website.

During 2020/21 the Town Council also supported organisations via Community Grants

Atherstone Sports Club
Atherstone Rangers under 7's
Adders Hockey
First Responders

10. Honorary Citizen and Annual Dinner.

Each year the Town Council debates the choice of Honorary Citizen, an award made to a person(s) who, in the opinion of the Town Council, has made an outstanding contribution to the life of the town.

This year there were two awards made to Karen and Katie Meads in recognition of their commendable contribution and many years' service to the Girl Guiding of Atherstone.

There is also a new award proposed by Cllr Denise Clews this year named The Ruby Chambers Sports Award.

The Annual Dinner could not take place in March 2020 as planned due to lockdown restrictions; this was very disappointing as Cllr Carl Gurney had around 100 guests due to attend. This also meant the 2019-20 Honorary Citizen Awards or Special Achievement Awards could not be presented.

The event had raised £1,135.00 for the Mayors Charity the Singing for Breathing Group at George Eliot Hospital this was due to the kindness of guests donating their Annual Dinner ticket fee and funds raised at Dickens 2019.

11. Floral Displays

The Town Council has maintained the floral displays in the town centre during the year with summer and winter plantings.

12. Website

The Town Council has its own website which is maintained by the clerks and gives up to date information of Council activities, local news, and documentation. The new website is working well.

13. Local Council Award Scheme (formerly Quality Council)

The Town Council was re-accreditation of the Foundation Level in February 2021.

14. Market Square

The Town Council has an agreement with North Warwickshire Borough Council, to manage events on the Market Square. The Town Council continued to manage the twice weekly market.

The Town Council owns pop-up stalls and a canopy which cover most of the Square. These are available for the use of community groups, and events,

Details and costs can be obtained from the Town Council office.

The use of the Market Square for events was curtailed this year but the Town Council did support the local publicans by allowing them to serve drinks outside on the Market Square as lockdown measures eased.

15. Arcade Shops

The Town Council owns and operates the Arcade Shops, in Long Street. This complex provides a mixture of retail use, and space for community groups and organisations to have office or meeting space. assess demand for the upstairs space will be considered when further plans are made.

During 2020/21 there were again some changes of tenants due to retirement.

Anyone wanting space in the Arcade should contact the clerks at the Town Council offices.

During the first lockdown the Town Council supported their tenants by giving a rent-free period of three months.

16. Owen Street Community Arts Centre

The Town Council owns The Arts Centre, Owen Street, Atherstone, CV91DG.

This was purchased to retain and protect this important community asset for the people of Atherstone and the surrounding area.

All covenants restricting the future use of the building as a community resource remain in place.

The building has been leased back to the Owen Street Community Arts Centre whose Board of Directors are fully responsible for running the facility, including bookings and items such as maintenance, insurance and running costs. The Board are keen to promote wider community use of the building.

**STATEMENT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR APRIL 1ST 2020 TO
MARCH 31ST 2021**

Bank Balances at 1 April 2020

CCTV Account	£111,884.60
Precept Account	£63,985.86
Business Current Account	£32,830.36
Reserve Account	£35,368.18
TOTAL	£244,069.00

Bank Balances at 31 March 2021

CCTV Account	£111,942.32
Precept Account	£39,467.50
Business Current Account	£27,006.16
Reserve Account	£35,383.86
TOTAL	£213,799.84



ATHERSTONE TOWN COUNCIL 2020/21
Budget information

<u>2020/21</u>		<u>2021/22</u>
£268,922	Gross Expenditure	£279,127
£197,477	Net Expenditure	£198,529
£71,475	Income	£80,597
£145,447	Precept	£145,529
£52,000	Amount from reserves	£51,000

The Town Council has finalised its budget for 2021-22 and has set a Precept of **£145,529**

This has been achieved by taking funds from the general reserves to support the budget requirements.

The Parish Charge for a Band “D” property of £54.52 with an increase in the charge for a Band "D" property giving an increase of **£0.76p** for each property.