

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting, held in Middleham Key Centre on Wednesday 22 May 2019 at 7.00 pm.

Present

The Chairman, Cllr Mrs Susan Fairhurst and Clerk, Mr David Keep.

In attendance: County Cllr Mrs Karin Sedgwick, Cllr Honor Byford

Residents of the Township of Middleham as recorded on the attached attendance sheet.

There were no apologies

1. Chairman's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the electors of Middleham to the meeting.

A copy of the minutes of the previous year's meeting held on 17 May 2018 signed as a true record by the chairman of that meeting were available for inspection.

Copies of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2018 were available for inspection.

2. District Council report

Cllr Mrs Fairhurst in her capacity as District Councillor reported upon the following key issues during the past civic year:

- The boundary review had reduced the number of seats from 32 to 24 with effect from the recent election with the aim of saving costs. She was pleased that representations made locally during the process had been listened to. As the successful candidate she undertook to do her best to represent local interests and follow up issues with the appropriate teams at the District Council.
- Charges had been introduced across the District for use of public toilets, which the Town Council had been in favour of as it was relatively small charge (20p) that it was hoped would lead to improved standards.
- The District Council was refurbishing bins across the area and the Town Council had successfully lobbied for the installation of a combined general and recycled waste bin as part of a pilot project.

In response to a resident's question, Cllr Fairhurst advised that the emergence of a coalition at RDC represented a significant change in the political balance of power. It was probably too soon to know what the coalition's approach would be, as the Conservatives were not part of it.

3. County Council Report

Ward Cllr Karin Sedgwick reported on her activity representing the Middle Dales Ward of North Yorkshire County Council, which had been a busy year. In addition to attending regular meetings at County Hall, her main activity had been as follows:

- She had been appointed chair of the Care and Independence Overview and Scrutiny Committee that oversees how service remits were fulfilled. The first meeting would be held in July.
- She had now stood down as NYCC's Older Persons champion but continued to volunteer at Kirkwood Hall residential home and was supporting 'The Great Get Together' inspired by the late Jo Cox MP in conjunction with local schools.
- She had sought to raise the profile for older people and their needs; patient and general transport services were a problem and she thanked Cllr Blackie for his work in that area.
- She reported upon her use of the locality and environment budget which had benefitted Middleham for the dog fouling campaign and the youth theatre.
- She wished to support the playing fields community garden and would meet with Mr Hopper onsite to discuss this.
- Car parking in Leyburn continued to be an issue and she hoped that a feasibility study would be undertaken. Parking wardens attended only once a week.
- She continued to liaise with the Highways department over local road conditions.
- She regularly attended parish meetings in her area.

In response to a residents' question the school transport fees, Cllr Sedgwick said that she was in favour of something being done as it was over-budget. She was not however familiar with the background as she was not on the relevant committee.

4. Safer Roads Project

Middleham Cllr Honor Byford spoke about the 'Safer Roads Project' that she had initiated as a collaboration between the Town Council, NYCC Highways, Middleham's training industry and universities seeking to improve the grip and resistance to wear of road surfaces and improve the shoes used by horses accessing the training grounds on the Moors. This was against a background of spending cuts and higher wear on roads used by horses. An initial meeting had been held in Middleham in March.

In a wider discussion on safety for riders and other road users, residents questioned whether vehicle speed limits were appropriate and also whether trainers adequately supervised horse movements. Cllr Byford confirmed that these issues were also being looked as part of the project's brief.

5. Chairman's Report & Financial Overview

The Chairman and Clerk read out their respective reports for the year.

A copy of the Mayor's Report and the Financial Overview from the Clerk / Responsible Financial Officer is attached to these minutes.

Residents asked questions regarding the following matters:

- Were any youth projects likely over the summer? The Council would ask Cllr Sedgwick and liaise with MSCWA.
- Was English Heritage able to more actively and creatively promote the castle? In response, it was felt that EH focussed more on its larger sites.

- Trainers were using the moor after 1pm. This was a known problem under discussion with the trainers' association. In practice it was hard to police effectively.
- Did the Council pay for its office? No, only a contribution towards the costs of heat, light and power.

No other questions were put forward, the Chairman thanked the guest speakers for their interesting and informative presentations. She also thanked residents for attending and the meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.