

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD AT THE GRANGE HALL, THE GRANGE, COVENTRY ROAD, SOUTHAM ON THURSDAY, 12th MAY 2022 at 6:30pm

Present: The Mayor Cllr G Foster - In the Chair
Councillors Cllr A John, Cllr L Ellard, Cllr A Walster, Cllr M Connors, Cllr M Ray, Cllr N Savage & Cllr A Jamieson

In attendance: Town Clerk – Mr D Carro and Cllr A Crump

**Approximately 65 Members of the public were present including:
Mr B Cadogan, Mr M Hill, Mrs L Doyle, Mr L Gale, Mrs M Gale, Mr P Guy, Mr R Hamlett, Mrs A Dunkley, Mrs T Sadler, Mrs A Strauch, Ms D Murrin -Foyle, Mr M Brookes, Mr M Brown, Mrs F Howell, Mr I Wilson, Mr A Foster**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following:

Sue Gillespie, Hilary Nealon, Tim Lyson-Marshall, Ann Jakeway, Mike Gaffney MBE TD, Cllr Keith Medgett, Cllr K Mullen, Cllr Chris Lambert, Audrey Harris, Bill Pease, Julie Edwards, Marie Sadler, Ranjit Samra & Clare Thomas

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 16th May 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record of the proceedings.

3. MATTERS ARISING

None

4. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The Report of the Town Mayor for the year 2021/2022 was presented to the meeting and is attached to these minutes as Appendix A.

5. REPORTS FROM ORGANISATIONS Appendix B

The meeting received written reports from the following:

Southam Carnival
Southam Luncheon Club
Neighbourhood Plan
Southam Ramblers
Southam Melody Makers
Southam Darby & Joan
Southam WI

Verbal Reports

Grange Hall Management Committee – Cllr L Ellard
Southam Twinning Association – Michael Hill
Southam Heritage Collection - Bernard Cadogan
Southam Christmas Lights Association – Cllr L Ellard
Southam Civic Ideas Forum – Len Gale
Southam in Bloom – Tessa Sadler

Southam Rotary 2000 – Iain Wilson
Southam Neighbourhood Plan – Mike Brooks
Southam Volunteer Transport Scheme – Cllr L Ellard
Volunteer Public Rights of Way Group – Cllr M Ray
Southam First – Cllr G Foster
Southam Flying Fields Committee – Cllr M Connors
Southam Lions – Peter Guy
Cllr Crump – Councillor year
Southam Rubbish Friends – Fran Howell
Iain Wilson – Graham Adams Centre
Ashley Foster – The Grange Players
Len Gale – Southam United Charities (Food Vouchers)

The Town Mayor thanked all those attending and submitting reports to the meeting. Those reports submitted in writing, both before and after the meeting, are attached to these minutes as Appendix B

6. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS RAISED BY ELECTORS**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7:45pm

APPENDIX A

Town Mayor's Annual Report 2022

My mayoral term coincided with turmoil and tragedy across the town, across the country and across the world.

My predecessor, Mike Brooks, was hit with the first lockdown and, as the pandemic wore on through 2021, most of our activities as a council during that first year were made possible only by things called "Zoom" and "Teams". Many thanks to Debbie the Town Clerk and the office staff for somehow coping and keeping things going (and I'm sure we all wish our Finance Officer Lauren a speedy recovery from her nasty dose of Covid).

As a Town Council, we have continued to function, and I would like to touch on a couple of examples. Responding to planning applications continues to be a major element of council meetings. I must express my appreciation to Cllr. Andrew Walster as our planning representative, supported by Cllr Angela John, for guiding us through some difficult and controversial applications.

Our Public Rights of Way are maintained purely by volunteers, organised under the Town Council by Cllr Michael Ray and they are behind the restoration of the Southam Stories sculpture currently in progress. I think they do a fantastic job, thank you.

A new Flying Fields community hall, paid for by that development, will be managed by the Town Council alongside this hall and will be occupied just as soon as the legal bits and pieces are out of the way.

Southam Town Council also coordinates an HS2 liaison group that includes surrounding villages. There have been some extremely difficult moments here as you can imagine but after the A425 debacle they are learning to improve their communication although there continues to be much disruption.

There has been some staff changes through the last year and my thanks go to the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Angela John, and the Personnel Working Party for sorting out recruitment: we have a new Halls Administrator, Ros, and will be welcoming a new Deputy Clerk very soon.

We lost much during the pandemic, and I find myself reprising themes from last year's report: many of us lost relatives and friends, some lost their health and we all had to forego a social life. Only now can we start to talk about "it" as being in the past but, as we do, another global crisis, triggered by a senseless war, is starting to have an impact and will challenge us, causing an increasing number of Southam residents severe difficulty in making ends meet.

One thing that shone through the pandemic was the willingness of people to help others, whether by donating food, by staffing the food bank, fetching and carrying for the vulnerable or by simply working on the front line in the care professions and essential services.

Volunteers continue to work to support Southam's disadvantaged, its youth, the sick, the lonely and to enhance our environment and community life. They continue to work quietly and without fuss, so I am grateful that I had the opportunity to thank many of them in person at a tea party I hosted last Saturday. It took a bit of detective work to track some of them down and I'm sure I didn't manage to find everyone. I should point out that all your town councillors are volunteers too. The work we do is not always the most exciting, but it can be very rewarding. So to conclude I would like to thank all our Councillors and remind everyone that there are a couple of vacancies if anyone wants to have a go!

APPENDIX B

Mayor Making 2022/23

A report on behalf of The Southam Neighbourhood Development planning Team

The project is now in its sixth year though we did lose some valuable working time over the Covid lockdowns. Currently the average time it takes for a plan for to be constructed and finally adopted is five years, so we are not panicking just yet. The team, a blend of volunteers and councillors continue to meet, currently reviewing and refining the latest version to ensure it meets basic conditions and is based on sound principles backed by evidence and this will be the nature of future work on it from this point to hopefully a successful conclusion.

In the second half of last year we reached a major milestone, Regulation 14 Public consultation. This was the first time a full completed version of the plan was made public to Southam residents and an extensive list of statutory consultees inviting comment. The responses received were considered at length and replies drafted for each one. Changes to the plan were logged for action when felt comment was deemed appropriate or necessary and based on sound reasoning backed by evidence. Where this was not the case we explained why, which for example may have been as outside our authority, not backed by evidence, need or just didn't reflect current situation. In the past few weeks we also had a review meeting with the SDC Neighbourhood planning Team to seek advice on several remaining issues and talk through the next stage.

All the documentation relating to the public consultation will now be combined with other evidence gathered during the plan build into an evidence base report which along with other required statutory reports and the updated plan takes us to the next phase Regulation 15, formal submission to Stratford District Council as a pre-cursor to Regulation 16, a further publication and representation stage managed by them.

It has taken a lot of challenging work and time to get this far, we started out as a group with practically no Town and Country planning experience but have learned much and been supported all the way. We still can't call ourselves experts in the field but there is finally light at the end of the tunnel.

Mike Brooks
NDP Team

Family Fun day (Southam Carnival)

This event will take place on Saturday 25th June 2022. This is in place of the Southam Carnival that would have happened on the last Bank Holiday in May. Unfortunately we are now unable to arrange a procession through the town as usual, due to the insurance firm demanding public liability for all in the procession at a cost and a firm to close the roads, after long discussions we have decided not to do any more procession this is very disappointing for us as a committee . This was our main source of income usually around £ 500-£ 600 raised by going through the town. AS many of you are aware in the past we have provided free rides etc down the recreational ground in Southam. as we will also be doing again this year, therefore for us to carry on giving this service we need to income generate more monies in other ways. We are going to set up a just giving page. Also we are running a fancy dress competition for children the them is Royal. We have also had a grant from Southam and District Lions Club and have sent out appeals for donations from other people, we are being supported by Alsters Kelly Solicitors Let, also by Southam Town Council

MONDAY LUNCH CLUB

Annie Lane and Terry Grey have been delivering lunches on a Monday for the last 2 years, to various elderly people around Southam and District, we have delivered around 3,000 meals and puddings. The chocolates, and custards are provide by Southam Town Council free of charge, also they received the odd goodies that we get from other donations . We have now set up our own account with Appetito and they deliver direct to the Graham Adams Centre on a Tuesday. Annie and Terry do not claim any expenses for this services

Southam Darby & Joan Club

Annual Report 2022

Southam Darby & Joan Club is open to all senior citizens in the Southam area. We meet on the first Friday afternoon of the month. Our meetings are held in Southam Sports and Social Club from 2.00pm to 4.15pm.

The club provides an opportunity for members to meet up socially and enjoy a variety of speakers, entertainment, a chance to play bingo and have a go on the monthly raffle. It is also an opportunity to chat with friends and enjoy a cup of tea and cakes.

Free transport is available to and from the venue to anyone who needs it.

During the Covid lockdown restrictions we kept in touch with members to make sure that they were all OK. We began our meetings again in September 2021. Since then, we have enjoyed talks from the RNLI, Southam Heritage Collection and David Fry with his photographs of old Warwickshire. We have also been entertained by "Away with the Fairies" and the Melodymakers.

We look forward to enjoying another successful year.

Ann Jakeway

Chairperson of Southam Darby & Joan Club

Southam Flying Fields Community Hall Committee

As part of the S106 Agreement for the Taylor Wimpey Flying Fields Housing Development a Community Hall has been built and will be gifted to the Town Council, in September 2021 the Town Council resolved to form a committee of the council to manage the Southam Flying Fields Community Hall on behalf of the council.

The building is now complete, conveyancing is currently taking place, unfortunately, the Town Council do not yet have a completion date, but it is envisaged that it will complete in the next few months.

The building will be used for community activities and will operate in conjunction with The Grange Hall

Southam Ramblers have continued to walk on alternate Wednesday mornings over the last year and are pleased to have seen an increase in membership with all walks very well supported. More information about our walks programme and how to join Southam Ramblers can be found on our new website:

southamramblers.org.uk. Also on the website you will find details of the Harry Green Way, the 20-mile circular walk starting and finishing in Southam. Ramblers' members have adopted sections of the walk to ensure that all of it is in good condition and passable. Any problems we do encounter on this or any other right of way are reported to the appropriate authorities.

For those who are unable to walk during the day we will be running our usual programme of Summer Strollers on Thursday evenings from May to early August. These are open to all at no charge. As all the strolls start and finish at Wood Street, no transport is required. Again, full details are shown on our website.

SOUTHAM RUBBISH FRIENDS

Rubbish Friends (Southam) is a community group of like-minded people passionate about recycling and keeping Southam clear of rubbish for the benefit of residents, visitors and wildlife. It was started by a group of friends in 2019. We usually meet monthly to pick up litter in different areas of the town. It's a great way of meeting new people, getting fresh air and exercise and encouraging children to get involved in keeping the town tidy. Litter picking is suitable for all ages and abilities! Residents of the town often stop to give their thanks during our picks, or toot their horns when passing. It's lovely to know our efforts are appreciated.

We started meeting again in September 2021 having stopped in March 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. Various members borrowed equipment and continued to litter pick as individuals during lockdowns. We have met three times this year so far, twice in the car park of St Wulfstan Surgery and once at the Grange Hall. We found huge amounts of litter around the industrial estates, supermarket car park and pathways in the area! Very satisfying but at the same time very frustrating that people just drop their litter rather than dispose of it safely. It is hugely damaging to the environment and wildlife in the area. We are hoping to be able to get in touch with the local companies on the industrial estates to ask them to encourage their staff to think about the impact their littering has on the community they work in!

The Town, District and County Councils are always supportive of our group, giving grants towards insurance and equipment. We are grateful for the recent support of Taylor Wimpey for their generous donation of a gazebo which proudly shows our new logo, designed by our competition winner, Jackson. Local companies Cherwell and T M Grey Builders have also kindly donated useful supplies such as gloves, hand sanitiser, refuse sacks and brooms.

We have a good stock of equipment now and would be more than happy to loan it to other groups in the area when not using it ourselves. We have been supporting several young people in the town in their voluntary work for the Duke of Edinburgh Award and have also visited a local Beavers group to give a talk and take them for a mini litter pick. The younger generation's enthusiasm for caring for their environment is hugely encouraging.

The dates for our litter picks for the rest of 2022 are:

June 18th (Saturday) 2-4pm July 17th (Sunday) 10-12 noon August 14th (Sunday) 10-12 noon September 11th (Sunday) 10-12 noon
October 8th (Saturday) 2-4pm November 13th (Sunday) 10-12 noon December 11th (Sunday) 10-12 noon

The meeting points vary depending on which area of town we intend to litter pick. Details are posted on the Rubbish Friends (Southam) Facebook group, we have an email distribution list for those who are not on Facebook and also display posters around the town. Everyone is very welcome to join us!



Southam WI Report 2022

Southam Women's Institute, which is part of the Warwickshire Federation, currently has 26 members who meet on the first Tuesday of each month in St Mary's School, Southam. There has been a decrease in our membership recently not helped by the pandemic that has affected everyone. However, we look forward to welcoming more members, as people gain more confidence in mixing and with the increased number of houses in Southam.

During lockdown we kept in touch with our members by email, and notes through the door for those who were not online. We also kept in touch by telephone, ensuring help was given to anyone who needed it.

At the first opportunity we had a coffee morning in a member's garden, and it was wonderful to catch up with everyone in person. We also took a trip out to the National Herb Centre, although our plans for tea and cake were upset by the closure of the café due to Covid!

From September we resumed our meetings at St Mary's School. Since then, we have had some entertaining evenings, ranging from flower arranging demonstrated by one of our members, to a talk on Wood Street Car Park by Bernard Cadagon. We intend to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee with a supper and a special cake.

We have continued to raise funds and collect items for good causes including the Christmas Boxes and toiletries for the Afghan refugees. Locally we have supported the Southam Christmas Lights Association and Southam in Bloom. Knitted squares have been created to make blankets which we have presented to Greenways Care Home. We also agreed to provide and serve refreshments for the monthly Indoor Market at the Grange Hall.

The committee has once again worked hard for our members, and we are hoping that we can continue to flourish without Covid interruptions.

Southam WI

2nd May 2022

THE SOUTHAM MELODYMAKERS' REPORT

After over a year of being unable to sing together and having to make do with seeing each other only on Zoom, we finally managed to restart our rehearsals outside on the Primary School playground in the open air all socially distanced in June 2021. It was a very moving and joyful experience.

Since then we have been able to rehearse every week, although we had to change our rehearsal venue in the Autumn and move into St. James' Church which has a greater volume of air than the Primary School Hall where we usually rehearse

Although at that time we had no concerts booked, it was a good opportunity to extend our repertoire and learn some new songs. As Covid cases started to decline, it became clear that it might be possible to perform again by Christmas so we planned accordingly.

We were delighted to be invited to take part in some Christmas events in December 2021.

We sang at the Christmas Lights Switch On in Southam which was magical in the semi blizzard. We led the singing and sang 2 anthems for St. James' Advent Service and entertained the shoppers and stallholders in the Grange at the Craft Fair. This ended the year with us feeling that at last things were getting back to normal.

2022 saw us preparing for a huge fundraising concert on April 2nd for Molly Olly's Wishes in Warwick, but at the last minute, the organiser's husband was taken ill and ended up in hospital so we had to consider what to do for the best. We decided to postpone that concert but still put on a concert on the 2nd April which we called "Sing for Ukraine". The Two Castles Male Voice Choir in Warwick and Cubbington Silver Band joined us in St. Nicholas Church Warwick and we performed to a packed church. It was a very special, moving concert which started with the band playing the Ukrainian National Anthem and included some poems written during this crisis which moved the audience to tears. We raised £2500 for the Red Cross Ukraine appeal, something of which we are extremely proud. Unfortunately, the event turned into a Superspreader for Covid with many of the choirs, band and audience succumbing to the virus during the next few days; a stark reminder that things are not quite back to normal yet. Undeterred, we performed on Friday 6th May at the Sports and Social Club in Southam for the Derby and Joan Society to a very appreciative audience and have a number of different events planned for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations next month.

Julie Edwards

Musical Director



Town Meeting Report 2022

Southam First was established at the time of the Tesco planning application as a means of helping to ensure that an out-of-town shop would not unduly deplete footfall in the centre.

Since then, there have been multiple other pressures on our town's retail heart including Brexit, Amazon, the pandemic and now a cost-of-living crisis. All these continue to take their toll, with many businesses seeing a downturn.

These days, a slimmed down Southam First continues to work to promote and assist with events that bring people to the town centre. And it really works: more people go into the shops when there is an event on.

Here is what we've been up to in the past year:

- In November we started monthly **Indoor Markets** at the Grange Hall. This has been successful, and a market sub group has decided to continue for at least 12 months. Thanks to the WI for supporting our income by selling refreshments.
- Last month we had the first **French Market** since the pandemic which, although some of the French stallholders were put off by Brexit queues and paperwork, attracted a large crowd. However, with fewer stalls from France now, it's more work to organise as we need to get local traders to supplement the French.
- In September the **Produce Show** returns to Southam. There are new members on the Show Committee and the Programme will be published at the end of this month.

Assistance has been given to:

- **Jubilee Celebrations** – sourced the bunting and arranged for it to be put up (by Jason Goode), created and distributed flyers to encourage businesses to window dress and inform about the beacon lighting event.
- Gazebos have been lent to the **Mayday fete, Southam Twinning Association** and also lent other stuff to **Southam Christmas Lights, Southam Heritage** and the **Lions** for the Mop.
- We also helped with a grant application to HS2 to help fund a possible soapbox derby next year and liaised with the recent International Food Tour event.

Southam First owns the equipment it uses and lends out, including gazebos, but has suffered two separate thefts from the original lockup where it was all kept. Happily, the insurance paid up and the remaining equipment has been moved to a top-secret location to deter further pilfering. SF continues to finance this storage (as well as the southam.co.uk web site) and although our events are usually self-financing, there will be a limit on how long the money will last.

Graham Foster