

# KEYNSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

## Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held in The Baptist Church on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 7.30 p.m.

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**PRESENT:** Councillor H MacFie (Chair),  
Councillors and Parishioners – see attached attendance list.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Dawn Drury - Town Clerk  
Katherine Sears – Deputy Town Clerk

**1. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL KEYNSHAM TOWN MEETING HELD ON 20<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2023.**

***RESOLVED:***

***That the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.***

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Halliday, Beaumont and Leonard

**3. GUEST SPEAKER – SARAH BIRTH – AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE**

This year's Speaker was Sarah Birth who is a Beat Manager for Keynsham.

Sarah explained that there has been a serious Anti-Social Behaviour issue in Keynsham, mainly made up of two groups of young people. An older group who are stealing mopeds and a younger group who are targeting shops, throwing eggs and causing general issues, the Police have been working hard with the Schools, in particular the secondary schools Wellsway and Broadlands which has been productive. They have been using anti-social behaviour letters and "acceptable behaviour contract".

New Police Sergeant, Rob Turner, based in Keynsham is working closely with the local businesses to tackle any problems and also receiving support from other Police Teams from Bath and Radstock. All these initiatives are working and the ASB is diminishing in the area.

Sarah explained that she is also working closely with Abi Gray from the Youth Centre.

### **Questions**

Cllr Biddleston – you talk of Anti-Social Behaviour letters, a few years ago it was all

about Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.

Sarah explains that these "ASBOS" are not in use, the letter and the process involves the Police speaking to the child and the parents and making sure that they are aware of the issues. They can have up to 4 letters before an Acceptable Behaviour Contract is introduced.

Cllr Brennan – When speaking to the parents, what response do you get?

Sarah said that they get a good response from the parents and the reception is, on the whole, acceptable.

Cllr MacFie – How are you dealing with the increased activities of the older group, those that are stealing mopeds, etc?

Sarah said that she has raised this with their Violence Reduction Department and the Sergeant, putting in her concerns and recording on the system. She explained that they have the power to raise Section 35s, which are dispersal zones, so if there is going to be a major ASB within the community, the Inspector can authorise a 48-hour dispersal zone and we give the culprit a ticket to leave the area for 48-hours.

The Neighbourhood Team are now based at Ashmead Road, which means they can work closer with their response colleagues, and they can be more engaged.

There was a discussion around the proposed Radio System and how this could support the shops in the High Street area. Sarah confirmed that the Police would happily carry one too and that there is also the system DISC which would support the town.

Cllr Wait – Could you elaborate a little on the partnership with Abi Gray from the Youth Centre?

Sarah explained that it will be the Violence Reduction Unit that has stronger ties with the Youth Centre to support the young people and their families.

Sarah summarised that she has strong connections with the local businesses and is supporting them, but that people must report incidences rather than using social media, and that the more reports received, the increased chance of more Police Officers can be employed. CCTV is the best tool the Police have as it is instant and irrefutable in an interview.

Cllr Alenshasy – raised concerns that with the holiday approaching there will be an increase in ASB and that the best deterrent is active policing. Would there be a chance of increased policing during this time?

Sarah explained that they are aware of the peaks and will try but if they get a call to respond to a 999 call then they must attend this, and this could mean leaving the Keynsham area.

It was explained that although the population of Keynsham has grown dramatically in the past few years with new estates such as Somerdale, The Mead and Bilbie Green, unfortunately the number of Beat Managers in Keynsham still remains at 2 and in fact the number of PCSOs has decreased from 6 to 3.

George Leach – You mentioned CCTV, is there any blind spots that need addressing?  
Sarah explained that there is only coverage on the High Street, so there is nothing on the top end of the High Street, Temple Street or the side streets.

Cllr Brennan – Do you have any remit to monitor the Social Media groups where crimes are being reported?

Sarah explained that they don't monitor these and urged people to report through the correct channels of 999.

Cllr MacFie thanked Sarah and the team and advised that there has been an increase in Police presence in Keynsham and that the Council will ask for more CCTV and another Beat Manager.

#### **4. PRESENTATION OF KEYNSHAM GOOD CITIZENS AWARDS 2023 - 2024**

##### **The recipients of the Keynsham Good Citizen Awards 2023-2024**

Laura Jefferies (Keynsham and District Mencap) – Lifetime Achievement

Mary Maule (Keynsham In Bloom) – over 25 Award

Molly Hale (Keynsham & District Mencap) – Under 25s, not present

All Award recipients received a framed certificate and £100 payable to the organisations of their choice. They were also given the opportunity to give an acceptance speech and speak about the organisation that they support.

#### **5. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TOWN COUNCIL 2023/2024**

The Annual Report is available and downloadable from the Town Council website or as a hard copy from the Town Council office. Copies were available at the meeting.

No questions were asked in relation to the Annual Report.

#### **6. PUBLIC FORUM**

Question/comment from Mary Woodman (resident)

I know this isn't the remit of the Town Council but one thing that comes to mind is the High Street, double yellow lines have been painted, do you think it will be made a little safer for the public?

Answer

Cllr MacFie – we have tried to contact all those that have fallen to try to find out in detail what happened. B&NES seem to have acknowledged that there is a problem, but every time we raise the issues, they come back with a solution, this recent one being the double yellow lines and the dotted line along the cycle path, which should help identify the change of levels.

We haven't had many falls recently since it's been done, there has been a couple reported.

50% of the falls are people falling from the pavement into the cycle lane which hasn't been resolved.

Cllr Biddleston explained that B&NES have built to lawful specification and the theory is that if it is changed in any way so that it no longer meets the lawful specification then they are opening themselves for legal action. Hereford had similar issues, and came up with a different plan, saying that irrespective of law, common sense says to change it and they did. They have made a number of changes but these seem to be "Sticky plaster arrangement" and as B&NES Ward Councillors they are constantly saying that it hasn't been good enough.

Question/comment from Chris Davis (Town Councillor)

I would like to address the modest turn out to this Annual Town Meeting and ask whether this is normal?

Regardless of the venue of this meeting, someone was waiting at The Space directing people to the Baptist Church, so either people didn't want to walk to the new venue or people didn't come, there is also the issue with the roadworks meaning the roads are closed in the town centre which could be a deterrent for people attending. Normally, yes, we do have more people attending. It isn't because it hasn't been advertised, as it has been on social media, posters, in the paper and the radio.

Also there has been a number of public meetings to discuss the Local Plans Options and opportunities to engage with the Police in the Community, which could be a factor as to why people haven't attended this evening as their questions have already been answered.

Question/comment from Souzan Alenshasy (Town Councillor)

A question that gets asked a lot is what is the Council doing about the number of charity shops on the High Street.

The Audience was reminded that the Town Council have no say on what shops or businesses are on the High Street, that a large proportion of the High Street is privately owned so those decisions lie with the Landlords.

Feedback has been received to the Town Council that people visit Keynsham purposely to shop in the charity shops because they are good quality, this then brings them to our High Street where they will visit other businesses.

We need to remember that there is a good number of independent shops and traders and compared to other High Streets nationally we have a good amount of variety.

**7. DATE OF 2025 KEYNSHAM ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the next Annual Town Meeting will be held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

The meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.

SIGNED: ..... DATE: .....  
(Chairman)