

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Wem Urban held on Thursday in The Roden Suite Edinburgh House, New Street, Wem 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017 at 7 p.m.

Present:-Councillor Mrs R Dodd (Town Mayor) and 15 members of the public present. Mrs P O'Hagan (Town Clerk).

The Mayor welcomed all present to the meeting and publically thanked Shropshire Councillor's Mellings and Dee for all their work representing the town of Wem over the last year.

- 1 To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 17 May 2016.

**RESOLVED**:- to approve the minutes and they were duly signed as a correct record.

- 2 To consider any Parish matter.

Old Toilet Block on the recreation ground – Pauline Dee raised the issue of the old toilet block which has fallen into disrepair. She asked whether there was any interest in the community in developing a project to renovate it and bring it back into use as a toilet and a community building/café. She reported that Men in Sheds Group were interested in helping out and it would be useful if a small group could be formed to take ideas forward.

David Boddy raised the problem of litter on the approach roads to Wem and stated that there was a need for a litter pick. It was reported that the Keep Wem Tidy Group was still in existence but needed new volunteers. However litter picking on the main roads was very difficult to do with volunteers safely and Shropshire Council would need to undertake this project. A request was made for the community payback team to undertake a litter picking project in Wem.

Youth Club - it was explained that the youth club building is now being shared with the Wem in Sheds Group.

**Police report** - Sgt Greenaway of Wem Safer Neighbourhood Team reported that crime in the town is currently low and sporadic. The issue of speeding was raised and the ineffectiveness of speed enforcement as the police are so visible when undertaking speed checks. Sgt Greenaway reported that unfortunately the police are unable to carry out speed checks any other way.

Mr Lear raised the issue of parking on the High Street and stated that there was a recent incident during morning rush hour when a van unloading outside one of the shops contributed to the blocking of the road which caused chaos for traffic trying to travel through the town. Sgt Greenaway responded that it is a continuing problem and one solution would be to make a loading bay in the High Street. It was noted that this suggestion had already been put forward by the Town Council as part of its response to the HGV survey.

Sgt Greenaway concluded her report by commenting that the public in Wem are not reporting crimes or incidents that they might have witnessed and there is a need for

the public to better inform the police of all incidents so that they can act on them if necessary.

- 3 Deputy Police & Crime Commissioner, Tracey Onslow gave a presentation and answered questions on the role of the Police and Crime Commission.

Tracey started her presentation by outlining the background to the Police and Crime Commissioners role and reported that West Mercia Police is an enormous area with 1.2 million residents and 5000 employees. Scrutiny is one of the main responsibilities of the PCC and the role was created to feed back the view of the public to the police. The PCC is also responsible for setting the budget for West Mercia Police. This year a 0% precept has been set, one of the only two PCC's in the country to set a 0% budget. The decision was taken not to increase the budget but to use some of the their significant reserves (£50 million)

Tracey explained the content of the recently published Police and Crime Plan which was developed by the Police and Crime Commissioner as one of his first tasks. The plan is broken into 4 main sections;

- **Victims and survivors of crime** – Focusing on the need to improve services for victims and witnesses.
- **Building a more secure West Mercia** – The PCC has pledged to reduce harm and protect the most vulnerable.
- **Reforming West Mercia** – Including updating the IT system to enable officers to make better use of technology available including body worn video which will be useful in complaints situations and will make situations safer for officers.
- **Reassuring West Mercia's communities**

In response to an enquiry that victims of crime are not kept informed on the progress of the crime investigation. Tracey said that the PCC is looking at ways to improve this and the Track My Crime system is being developed as a process that will allow victims of crime to track a crime they may have been involved with.

A statement was made about the danger of centralisation and the need to increase the number of police in Shropshire, as the size of the county and its poor road infrastructure make it difficult for the police to travel between Towns when responding to urgent calls. Tracey responded that more efficient use of existing police officers is at the heart of what the PCC wants to achieve and this is outlined in the crime plan.

A question was asked about the future of Wem Police Station and Tracey agreed to find out and send a response via the Town Council.

Meeting ended 20.45

.....Town Mayor