

Minutes of the proceedings of the **CHILTON ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY** held at
St. Aidan's Church Hall, Chilton on Tuesday 28th May 2024.

Present: -- Chair Cllr. P. Malpas (Mayor)

Cllrs: - E. Bruce, V. Collinson, D. English, P. Herbert, J. Houlihan, K. Hornsby, S. Reece,
S. Sutherland

Locum Town Clerk: - Mrs. Joanne Dickinson

Ferryhill Ladder Centre- Nigel Jones, Advice Worker- left the meeting at 7.33pm

There were 4 members of the public present- (one entered the meeting at 7.15pm)

The Mayor Cllr. P. Malpas welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised the meeting would be audio recorded for the purposes of taking the minutes of the meeting. The recording will be destroyed once the minutes are approved. There were no objections from those present for the meeting to be recorded.

1. **Apologies for Absence** – Cllrs J. Cairns and M. Young

2. **Declarations of Interest-** None received

3. **Minutes of the Annual Assembly held 2nd May 2023** –

RESOLVED-Cllr Sutherland proposed the minutes be accepted as a true record. Seconded by Cllr Reece.

4a. Annual Report by Mayor Cllr. P. Malpas of Chilton Town Council– The Mayor presented the Annual Report and advised there were paper copies of the report available. The Mayor thanked all councillors and staff for the help and advice over the past year and provided the following information-

- Since becoming Mayor in May 2023 Peter Davies had resigned as councillor due to ill health after a long service to the council and Cllr Alan Bruce stood down after 25 years plus due to ill health. The Mayor thanked those councillors for their service to Chilton Town Council.
- The Mayor thanked all volunteers who have helped over the year with the events.
- Preparations for this years events will be advertised in due course.
- The Mayor thanked the new councillors who have joined during the year- Cllrs D. English, C. Kipling & S. Reece and is looking forward to working with them in the next year.
- The Mayor invited Nigel Jones to present a report and thanked him for all of the work carried out for Chilton residents.

4b. Report from Nigel Jones from Ferryhill Ladder Centre- Mr Jones provided the following information-

- Thanked Chilton Town Council for their hospitality and support over the last 18 months.
- The Ladder Centre is a charity organisation that has been running for about 20 years.
- 18 months ago the charity was asked to consider taking over the drop in session from the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- Due to funding received from the council they started a weekly morning drop in session which has been successful.
- On average see 13 residents at each session.
- Mr Jones helps residents see what benefits they are entitled to and helps them with the paperwork and the process.
- Last year the amount of unclaimed benefits Department of Work and Pensions was £14 billion and from the local authorities was £4 billion.
- They are helping a lot of the older residents and are building relationships with residents to help overcome barriers for people to claiming for benefits.
- No fault evictions are an issue in the locality and private rents have increased considerably over the last few years.
- Works closely with Durham Money Advice Service and they can signpost residents within 48 hours to this service.

Signed by Mayor ----- 13th May 2025

- Due to the success of the service they have been funded for another drop in morning session on a Friday morning.
- Funding is year on year from the Area Action Partnership. Currently working hard to be awarded funding from other organisations.

The Mayor advised that Dave Evans was not present to present a report and that the Junior Council Presentation will be on the council website once parental permissions have been granted.

4c. Cllr Sutherland The Chair of the Allotment and Cemetery Committees provided a report- Cllr Sutherland provided the following information-

- Cemetery improvements over the last year have included an extension to the paved area which has considerably improved access to vehicles and those with accessibility needs.
- Cemetery Committee Members have spent a lot of the year focusing on grounds maintenance which is an ongoing process. Cllr Sutherland thanked the volunteers and committee members for their help over the year.
- Due to the support of Cllr Malpas the Letters to Heaven Post Box has been installed in the cemetery.
- Land secured for an extension to the cemetery and the committee will ensure that plans for this area will be administered correctly.
- Chilton Town Council looks after 225 allotments spread across 5 sites.
- Over the last year the committee has replaced 200 metres of allotment fencing. A substantial amount but there is a lot of work to do as there are 2 miles of fencing across the sites. In the 24/25 financial year it has been agreed to replace 100m of fencing at the West Chilton allotment site. The aim is to have the fencing in place over the summer.
- 2 drone inspections have taken place, there is a cost to this but the amount of saved hours of 80 to 100 hours of tenants being in attendance for the inspections and for staff/councillors to attend is of benefit.
- Public allotment meeting held which was well attended and there was some good feedback.

4d. Launch of the Neighbourhood Plan- Cllr Sue Reece provided the following information-

- The Town Council agreed at a meeting on 14th May 2024 to commence the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Chilton Town Neighbourhood Plan would run from 2025 to 2035.
- The Neighbourhood Plan will be the community plan and provides an opportunity for input into the development of new housing/businesses etc and what infrastructure would need to be in place to support any additional housing.
- The plan will take approximately 2 years, some have taken up to 4 years and community engagement is important to shape the plan.
- Setting up a community group which will include local community groups, residents, businesses.
- Looking to carry out surveys, focus groups and visiting local groups to engage the community in helping with shaping a place based plan.
- Throughout the whole process there will be consultations.

- 5. Annual Accounts for the Civic Year 2022/2023-** The Responsible Financial Officer was not in attendance. Cllr Reece advised that the information for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 22/23 is on the council website. Any resident can contact the council office to make an appointment to view the documents if required and they are publicly available. Within the Annual Report the budget spend across the year is detailed.

The Mayor advised that County Councillor J. Cairns had submitted their apologies and that there is a summary of the County Councillors Report at the end of the Annual Report.

6. Items raised by members of the public-

Signed by Mayor ----- 13th May 2025

- a. Regarding the County Councillors Report the member of the public asked if the councillors know what County Councillor Cairns has spent her large Neighbourhood Funding on within the town. Members present were not aware of the answer. The Mayor will ask Cllr Cairns for the information on behalf of the resident.
- b. A member of the public was present to ask County Councillor Cairns for an update on the planning application for the recreational grounds and the issues with the Charlie Wayman Field. The Mayor will ask Cllr Cairns for the information on behalf of the resident.
- c. A complaint by the Football Club has been sent to the Chair of the Trust and an update was requested as there has been no recent response. It was agreed that the matter would be included for discussion at the next Miners Welfare Trust Trustees Meeting.
- d. Several members of the public asked if there had been any consultation on the proposals for the recreation ground. The Town Council had not been consulted on the proposals.
- e. Members of the Development Group have not been consulted on the planning proposals.
- f. It would be helpful to have an Annual Report from the Trustees of the Miners Welfare Trust at the Town Assembly. The Council had requested a report from the Trustees but it was not received before the report was completed.
- g. The Town Council has requested a full report and business plan for the development to be brought to the next meeting of the Town Council.
- h. A member of the public asked if there was funding secured for the development. The Town Council were not aware of this information which is why the business plan has been requested.
- i. Concern raised about traffic safety for pedestrians if the development is approved.

7. Date of next meeting – Tuesday 13th May 2025

Meeting Closed at 7.45pm.

Mayor of Chilton
13th May 2025

Signed by Mayor ----- 13th May 2025