



EYE TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Held via Zoom at 7.30 pm, Tuesday 27th April 2021.

In the Chair, Cllr Johnnie Walker, Town Mayor

Present: Cllrs Walker, Berry, Smith, Mann, Turner, Evitt 7 Members of the Public and Wendy Alcock – Town Clerk.

1. Welcome from Cllr Johnnie Walker, Town Mayor
2. Apologies for absence – Cllr Gould.
3. Approval of the minutes of previous meeting held on Tuesday 9th April 2019 and any matters arising.

Proposed by Cllr Smith, Seconded Cllr Evitt – All in favour.

4. Presentation of 2021/22 Civic Awards

Wendy Alcock – For her profession standing within the Town Council and her commitment and dedication which has gone well beyond the call of duty during not only this trying year but all the time she has been with ETC.

Jackie Aling and Fred Astbury – For their tireless work over the past few years to ensure that the memory of our American Allies during WWII is never forgotten. By securing funding to have Memorial build to the 490th Bombardment Group, archiving documents for prosperity to the Suffolk Records Office and a dedicated website.

Rosemary Berry - For volunteering to help get the public toilets ready to be open to the public following the refurbishment during 2020 and always being willing to lend a hand to others.

June Gould – For her contribution to the successful completion of the refurbishment to the public toilets during 2020. Without June's hard work and research, the project would have incurred additional expenditure and possible delays.

Bruce Salter – For his voluntary work for the residents of Eye especially during lockdown but every year including his role as Parade Marshall, the Christmas lights and providing a valuable community service in the Handyman. Always service with a smile and time for a chat.

Sue Warnes – For her devotion to the service of the community at the Chemist over many years, always helpful and cheerful to her customers.

Gill Watson - Gill has been the coordinator for the Eye Volunteer Center for the last 15 years. Her role involves scheduling volunteer drivers to transport people to hospital and medical appointment when they have no other way of getting there. Over the years this has helped tens of thousands of vulnerable people. Gill also organises tea parties for the elderly to combat loneliness during the summer months.

5. Outgoing Mayor's Report

Get Johnnie's full report shown in **Appendix A**.

6. Councilors' Reports

7.1 Planning Chair – Cllr Richard Berry full report shown in **Appendix B**.

7.2 Cllr Maryanne Henderson – Carbon Reduction Plan for Eye unable to attend details of progress in relation to the plan are available in the Town Council Minutes.

7. Report from County Councillor – Cllr Guy McGregor

Cllr McGregor expressed thanks to ETC for its continued enthusiasm and support. Pleased with achievements in the town during the past year. People care about the environment in which they live, work and play in and this should be supported by authorities.

Cllr McGregor gave his support for the Eye Neighbourhood Plan.

MSDC's Local Plan is now nearing completion, and this will give guidance for future development of the area.

Eye is at the forefront in terms of the town centre, education, environment, carbon reduction and other high-profile initiatives.

Things continue to improve and there is progress on HGV's and Paddock House. Hartismere Hospital now has social prescribing and the refurbishments to the bus shelter has made a marked improvement to the town centre.

In summary thanks again to everyone who makes Eye the great place that it is.

8. Report from District Councillor - Cllr Peter Gould is unable to attend due to the pre-election period for the County Elections.

9. Police Report – Halesworth Locality Team – Simon Green, Community Engagement Officer – Full report in **Appendix C**.

10. Reports from organisations and charities within the Town all are shown in full at the end of the minutes in the appendices. Those organisations marked with * gave verbal reports at the meeting.

- *Home start – Sue Elsdon – **Appendix D.**
- *Eye Magazine – Chris Willoughby – **Appendix E.**
Penny McSheehy thanked Chris Willoughby for continuing with the Eye Magazine during lockdown. It was much appreciated.
- *Eye Town Moors - Chris Willoughby - **Appendix F.**
- *Eye Outdoors Group/Walkers are Welcome - Carol Alexander-Williams – **Appendix G.**
- Eye and District Twinning Association – **Appendix H.**
- Eye Women’s Institute – **Appendix I.**
- Eye New Age Kurling Club – **Appendix J.**

11. Elector’s questions

No questions from electors.

12. Close of meeting @ 20:10

Appendix A – Mayors Report, Cllr Johnnie Walker

What a year! We have just gone through one terrible year and during this we have as a nation heaped praise rightly so on our N.H.S. and Care Services.

So, I would like to take this time to heap praise on the other heroes of our community starting with our Shop Workers our Toilet cleaners Dawn & Carl, our street cleaner Sue our Town Hall caretaker Steve.

Also, to include our dustmen our Bus driver's Police and Fire services our Volunteers. While we have as community been mostly locked in our homes being kept safe from this terrible disease, while these people have been getting up each morning to carry on delivering the services that that we all take for granted.

So, I give a big thank you to them all.

On other matters because of Covid 19 we have been very limited on what progress we have made as a Council, but we have managed to keep functioning as a Council throughout this pandemic when there have been other Councils that have closed down.

No matter we have managed to complete and open our newly refurbished toilets plus two new electric car charging points both being in the Cross ST Carpark. We also managed to repair the Chapel in the cemetery and repair the potholes on the cemetery entrance road.

Lastly, we managed to help the N.H.S. Testing regime by allowing them to use the Town Hall.

Appendix B – Chair of Planning report – Cllr Richard Berry

Planning committee summary for year to April 2021

The main focus of the planning committee has been in two areas: the use of the Referendum Version of the Eye Neighbourhood Plan (ENP) to shape local developments and the formation of a Traffic Management Group to seek to reduce unauthorised HGV traffic journeys through the town centre.

The status of the ENP was strengthened by the substantial weight given to it by the Inspector in dismissing the appeal for 126 homes on land adjacent to Tuffs Rd/Maple Way. This fell outside the ENP's nominated sites and was successfully opposed by the council on that basis.

The council supported a potentially contentious but long-awaited development at Paddock House. This was a nominated site within the ENP, and the council felt it to be a high quality application, offering much needed affordable housing included shared ownership. The council will be able to have a say in who gets allocated 10 of the 16 homes to be built in the site. A leisure green space has been saved as a result of community action and a citizens group co-ordinated by Councillor MaryAnne Henderson will develop the detailed landscaping solution for this area. Thanks go to Paul Abbot for his design input into this space.

The first phase of the major development of Eye Airfield was submitted by Persimmon Ltd in March. The council felt that this was a poor application in terms of its design quality and likely final total of numbers way in excess of those shown in the ENP. Thus, the council opposed this application in its consultee response, and this is now to be considered by BMSDC as the decision makers. The council supports development on the airfield both to deliver the new market and affordable homes which are required. Numbers and dwelling mix should however be contained as close as possible to ENP levels and the design and specification be of good quality.

HGV traffic has proved a major issue before and after lockdown. The council is working with a resident's group, Trucks Out Of Our Town (TOOOT), and both the district and county council to reduce the number of HGVs using Eye town centre as a through route. This has grown significantly in the past two years or so and each planning application is assessed for its contribution to traffic management. The council lead on this matter is Councillor Tunie Brandon.

Looking forward the most immediate event is the referendum to test whether citizens of Eye will vote to adopt the ENP on May 6th. This will be an important decision and the council hopes that as many residents as possible will consider this sufficiently important to take part in the referendum process.

Appendix C

Eye Annual Police Report for the period 23rd March 2020 to 23rd March 2021 Halesworth Locality Team – Simon Green, Community Engagement Officer

Suffolk Constabulary has recorded a total of 117 investigations for Eye for this period which compares with 134 for the same period for the preceding twelve months. This represents a reduction in recorded investigations of 12.7%.

Of the 117 investigations for the period 2020/2021, 61 are of the types shown below; those having a community impact, the remainder being made up of Adult & Child Protection Investigations and miscellaneous offences with no community impact.

Drugs offences	4
Assaults	24
Public Order	6
Motor Vehicle Offences	3
Burglary Non-dwelling	1
Burglary dwelling	2
Theft offences	8
Criminal Damage Offences	9
Anti-Social behaviour	4

For noting. Eye has only 1/5th of the reported crime in comparison to Leiston.

Appendix D
Homestart Mid and West Suffolk

Contact Sue Elsdon – Eye Charity Shop Manager

sue@homestartmidsuffolk.org.uk - Tel 07891869120

Report for the Annual Town Meeting 27/4/21

Homestart has been in great need this year as many families have struggled with lockdown in so many ways. We were very fortunate in that our organisation did get more publicity over the Christmas period as John Lewis supported our charity which we were thrilled about. We have adapted like many other businesses but have continued as best we could to support families via telephone and internet. All our staff have been working from home.

Just to remind you that our main work is supporting families who find it hard to cope. We provide trained volunteers to help and support families in whatever way we can. We also run specialist groups for mothers/babies and toddler groups.

Our 2 charity shops have had to adapt too. We were very fortunate that we were able to furlough our staff who run the shops and a grant from Mid Suffolk Council helped enormously. After shutting in March 2020 for the lockdown we re-opened in July 2020. The Eye shop was extremely busy and most of our volunteers returned. We took the opportunity to adapt the Stowmarket shop to run just as an eBay hub and this has proved to be very successful as it gives us a wider audience to sell to.

Our Eye shop is very well supported by the local community and customers have been very patient as we have been unable to receive donations this year 2021 due to the lockdown. We are hopeful that we can re-open on 12th April.

We are looking forward to being part of the 2021 Hare and & Tortoise trail organised by the Blossom charity. Our work at the shops raises much needed money to continue our work supporting families and by recycling lots of items we are being environment friendly by sorting through goods to sell on and prevent items going into landfill sites!

In the future we hope to provide a 'click and collect' service from our Eye Shop too and welcome anyone who would like to join our team of friendly volunteers.

Sue Elsdon 26/3/21

Appendix E

Eye Magazine - 2020- 2021 Covid Year Report:

Chris Willoughby tollgate53@icloud.com

Early on in the first Covid Lockdown we discussed whether the Eye Mag should continue. Critical to the decision were support from the magazine distribution crew and from advertisers. Nearly all the distributors agreed that they would schedule their delivery rounds in with their daily exercise walks and that they would carry on, while sufficient advertisers remained to support a reduced size magazine. We are very grateful to both groups and hope that with the prospect of restrictions relaxing the readers will come out and support all of advertisers and enable us to expand the magazine back to its former glory.

Missing this year have been all the "What's Ons" both the repetitive week-in/week-out notice of times and places of recurring society meetings and the one-off announcements of special events. We look forward to a blossoming of events and supporting articles. Meanwhile we have printed articles from most of the old regulars plus a spectrum of new authors, reviewing films, recording life histories and sometimes just the whimsy of an original poem. Thank you all for your contributions.

Most of my readership, and most of my authors probably admit to being older than average, but I would welcome contributions from the younger generations. The written word can be exciting and beautiful - let's hear it from you.

When the magazine started in July 1978 the editor was backed up by a management committee lead by the Vicar of the Parish Church, and the editor was supported by a treasurer and advertising manager. Preparation of the copy ready for printing was not as easy as it is now, but once the text was delivered to the printer there was nothing left to do until copies returned for distribution by the distribution manager and the various distributors. By the time I took over at edition 400 the printer had taken over responsibilities for advertising and finance and the management group was almost extinct. Now, 73 editions later, I am very much a one-man band: collecting texts, compiling for the printer, selling adverts, collecting revenue, and proofreading the draft magazines. The distribution side is still active, although I am also involved in helping with this. I would not continue putting the magazine together if I did not enjoy it, but there is no safety net and one brush with Covid could have killed off the magazine. I am happy to share some of my tasks and look to establish a successor. So please, if you want Eye to continue to have a magazine into the future, consider your own position and whether you could help.

Appendix F

Eye Town Moors 2020 - 2021 Report

Chris Willoughby tollgate53@icloud.com

Covid has hit many of our work parties this year but we have managed a few as “exercise sessions” and working as pairs in the open air. Hopefully we will get down to some more effective working later in the year. The footpaths show evidence of much increased footfall through the year as many of you have used the area for your Covid Exercise.

We had two major problems to resolve during the past year: Firstly- to improve the site drainage and secondly- to clear the many dead and dying ash trees. We were very fortunate that a campaign led by Andy Robinson resulted in us obtaining a grant for £2500 from the Sapphire Grantmaking Fund and that Mike Smith has been able to do this work for us.

Working through the year Mike has slowly dug out the full length of the ditch so that the water now runs off with a merry tinkling sound as you go across the concrete footpath bridge. He has also worked on the central ditch and plans to install pipes under the main path to connect the lateral ditches to the main ditch and help drain the main path.

The spoil removed from the ditch has been left to dry out on the bank and we have started to convert these areas into wildflower meadows, to make an improved habitat for insects and birds on the fringe of the wood.

Mike has also removed many of the dead ash trees from the site, creating more open spaces which will either be developed as woodland glades or replanted with trees resistant to ash die-back and tolerant of the wet conditions found though most of the Moors.

Unfortunately, at the beginning of December, we had a visit from the Electricity Board to install another transformer pole alongside the ditch. Their heavy machinery has totally wrecked areas of the path, making it even muddier than before, despite Mike’s efforts. The good news is that they will be coming back when the area dries out to smooth off the path and re-seed, but it all depends on the weather.

Working in the open air and hugging the occasional tree is well recognised as being good for your mental health. Volunteering to work in the woods can provide a feel-good feeling and you can point out on the results of your work to your friends as you stroll through the woods.

We are just starting to test out the possibilities of developing a Covid Memorial Healing Wood and linking the Town Moors more closely into the inner circle of footpaths round the town. So, if you enjoy the open air, gardening and would like to help with ongoing and new projects in the Woodlands please consider joining the Eye Town Moors Volunteers - regular meeting 3rd Sunday each month 10 - 12:00 or call Chris on 01379 870298.

Appendix G

Eye Outdoors Group Walkers are Welcome Review of 2020

Although some of our Walkers are Welcome projects and activities last year were suspended due to Covid 19 restrictions, our group was still able to fulfil its aims to encourage and promote walking and related activities around Eye. This proved to be especially important as so many more people are getting out using the footpaths and trails around Eye. Here is a summary to inspire more walking in 2021.

On New Year's Day 2020 Eye Plodders led a charity walk around the Eye Circuit walking trail for local charity Homestart that attracted around 50 walkers and £150 was raised for the charity through their generosity.

In January and February Eye Outdoors Group led Health Walks, that were well attended by local people. We also led health walks in September, October and December and feedback from participants confirmed how vital it is to provide this opportunity when possible. Walks are currently suspended due to Covid-19 restrictions.

In February EOG and Eye Town Council held a successful tree planting session with local residents. Around 100 trees were planted in the Green Burial site in Eye Cemetery. The Woodland Trust supplied trees. There are further plans to plant more in 2021 along footpaths where possible.

In April EOG with Suffolk County Council Green Access Team published a new walking trail leaflet as part of the Suffolk CC 'Discover Suffolk' series, highlighting 3 trails around Eye footpaths. Thanks to a Locality Fund grant we could meet the cost of producing the leaflet. The leaflets are available at the Library, and cafés in Eye when they are open.

In May we were due to lead three walks in the Suffolk Walking Festival, but sadly the whole festival had to be cancelled. We hope the festival can go ahead this year, and if so EOG will be jointly leading a history walk with the 490th Bomb Group.

EOG completed a survey of all our local footpaths and submitted this to Suffolk CC early 2020. From this information we identified a neglected footpath near the centre of Eye with potential to upgrade the path to create improved disabled access. The project is currently suspended until funds can be secured and works safely undertaken.

In September, an Eye Heritage Day was organised by 490th Bomb Group and as part of this, EOG devised a self- led historic walk-through Eye and provided information and leaflets. The event was well attended, and we hope to hold this event again this year.

If you would like to get involved with Eye Outdoors Group walking activities and projects, please get in touch with us.

Maryanne Henderson 07935846542

Appendix H

EYE & DISTRICT TWINNING ASSOCIATION **TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING REPORT 2021**

Like almost all Clubs and Associations Covid 19 decimated our plans for the last year.

Of course, last year started well, with the Association still buoyant from the successful thirtieth anniversary visit. With no visit planned to Pouzauges until 2022, and reasonable funds in the bank, the plans for 2020 were to focus on retaining and recruiting members, to ensure Eye Twinning Association's future. Ideas to promote the Association included developing an Eye Twinning Association website, the erection of a Twinning notice board near the Pouzauges signpost at the entrance to Cross Street carpark in Eye, and some informal social events running throughout the summer, suggestions included a boules night, an evening at Station 119 and a visit to a vineyard.

Like most Associations, regrettably, our plans had to be placed on hold, with restrictions and the safety of the Committee in mind, monthly meetings ceased after March 2020. I must of course still thank the Committee for their hard work and support. Even with lockdown, progress has been made thanks to the hard work of Councilor Peter Gould, The Tatum Family, and our secretary Anne Smethurst as we have managed to secure the adoption of the piece of land with the Pouzauges signpost where we hope to place our noticeboard soon.

With the current restrictions, both in France and the UK it is hard to plan for future trips, but we are optimistic we will be able to meet up face to face as a Committee this summer. I hope when the time comes, we will be able to unite and build up on the strong bonds that have been established amongst the members of Twinning Association and our friends in France.

Julie Hammond – Chairman (eye.twinningassoc@gmail.com)

Appendix I

Eye Women's Institute.

Report of the last 15 months, January 2020 till March 2021.

This is written in the lockdown of our countries epidemic, so dates and reports of our activities are very limited.

January 2020, in the Eye Library, 28 members present and 4 visitors, to have an illustrated talk by Mr Tony Diamond about the life of John Betjamen, including Tony reciting quite a few of John's poems.

February 2020, in the Library 26 members present to hear Mr Kevin Dodd give a talk on Laughter Yoga for 90 minutes! All the ladies laughed continually, it released endorphins and the ladies left feeling "on a high!" Hope Kevin returns soon.

March 2020, this would be the last meeting of the W.I. in the Library, a talk by Mr Stephen Govier on the life of Mary Rose Tudor, younger sister of Henry VIII. 22 members present. We have kept in touch with telephone calls, e mail and Zoom meetings. All members get a Birthday Card from our W.I. just to let the ladies know they are not forgotten.

Because of an increase in membership, we will now be meeting in the Eye Town Hall on the second Thursday of the month at 2p.m.

In December members of the W.I. gathered at the entrance of the Cross Street Car Park where a tree planting Ceremony to commemorate the centenary of the Suffolk East Federation of the W.I in 2019 and the "Plant a Tree" in 2020 campaign. Eye W.I. were keen to take up the offer of a tree and the costs incurred in planting were paid by Suffolk W.I. Mid Suffolk District Council provided a lovely large wooden planter. The tree planting was performed by the High Sheriff of Suffolk, Bridget McIntyre M.B.E. Bridget said she was honoured to be asked and "I am glad that to hear that Eye, W.I was thriving, it is an inspiration to the community". Members keep an eye on the tree especially Barbara Stanley who has added extra plants around the tree. A plaque is due from S.E.F.W.I to place on the planter.

Speakers are ready to come to see us when all will be safe. We hope to organise more groups to cover ladies' interests and restart our Book group with Julie's help from the Eye Library. Then we can once again say we are proud to be members of the Eye Women's Institute.

Ginny Parmenter Secretary of Eye W.I. March 2021.

Tel: 01379 309038. Email: eprmnt@aol.com

Appendix J

Report for Eye Annual Town Meeting April 2021 **Eye New Age Kurling Club**

This group formed with effect from 1 January 2019 as the independent Eye New Age Kurling Club and has therefore just completed its second full year in its current form. We are self-funding and enjoy playing kurling on a weekly basis for the benefit of undertaking some physical activity and also the social side of meeting together regularly. We play in the Town Hall in Eye and membership costs have been set at an annual rate, which is payable in advance, in two parts during the year. We aim to cover our costs (equipment purchase and replacement, hall hire, insurance etc) but to be non-profitmaking. We currently have 14 members and regular players (from whom we elect a committee of 4).

In line with government requirements due to the Covid outbreak, we ceased playing in March 2020. We managed to recommence for a short period during the summer/autumn of 2020 with a limited number of members, after consultation with members of Eye Town Council, and in line with all covid-safe procedures in place at the time.

For health and safety reasons and to ensure we all have a chance to play a reasonable number of times, we agreed an initial maximum membership number. When permitted to do so, and when all members feel comfortable to do so, we hope to restart playing. However, this will always only be conducted in line with all safety and social-distancing requirements at that time.

For any further information, please contact our secretary, Pam Cooke, on 01379 678100 or by email on pamcooke130@gmail.com.

Pam Cooke
11.03.2021