

PARISH OF GODALMING

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting **Held via Zoom** **on Tuesday, 11 May 2021**

1. **WELCOME**

The Mayor, Councillor PMA Rivers welcomed all those present particularly those Members of the Public watching the Facebook livestream.

2. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 18 April 2019, having been previously distributed, were approved by the Meeting and signed by the Town Mayor as a correct record.

3. **REPORT BY THE TOWN MAYOR**

The meeting approved an oral report by the Town Mayor, Councillor Rivers, summarising the work of the Town Council since the last Annual Town Meeting. In addition, a printed Annual Report 2019/21 was tabled at the meeting and a copy of that report is attached to the official record copy of these minutes.

4. **PRESENTATION OF THE MAYOR'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTEERS 2019/20 AND 2020/21**

The Town Mayor, Councillor Rivers, announced the recipients of the 2019/20 and 2020/21 Mayor's Award for Volunteers.

Awards, comprising a framed certificate and town badge were presented to:

2019/20

Suzanne Cacciottolo
Ian Coult
Doreen Ekins
Denise Hodgkiss
Maureen Jones
Pat Mercer
Mary Mutton

2020/21

Broadwater School
Farncombe Day Centre
Free My Meal
Godalming & Villages Community Store Volunteers
Godalming Fridge
Rotary Sewing 4 Good Volunteers

5. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS RAISED BY ANY LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTOR CONCERNING THE TOWN'S AFFAIRS.**

A question was raised by Maxine M Taylor, a resident of the town:

Please can the Town Council brief residents on any plans to rejuvenate the small business culture that has historically been a feature of our High Street and one of its key attractions?

Cllr Paul Follows answered on behalf of the Town Council:

Although Godalming Town Council has no direct responsibility for economic development or business support and receives no funding from the business rates, the past year has

demonstrated the importance of a local council in supporting its retail centre. It is for this reason that in April of this year the Council adopted a strategy paper for the Godalming Town Centre Area. You can read the document by visiting

<https://godalming-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Godalming-Town-Centre-Area-Preserving-The-Past-Protecting-the-Present-Planning-the-Future-Adopted-April-2021.pdf>

Please be assured that the action plan at section three is being actively worked on and that Godalming Town Council is also working in partnership with Waverley Borough Council economic development team.

It is also important that we look at what is positive within our town (without denying that there are always things that need improving). Although during the pandemic the vacancy rate within the central area rose from just over 5% to nearly 11% a number of the vacant units are under negotiation for new tenants.