

RUSHDEN TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF RUSHDEN TOWN COUNCIL HELD AT RUSHDEN HALL, ON TUESDAY 14TH MAY 2023 COMMENCING AT 7.30 PM.

Present: Councillor: Cllr David Coleman – Town Mayor

Councillors:	Richard Lewis	Barbara Jenney	Carol Childs
	Philip Humphrey	Adrian Winkle	Melanie Coleman
	Cameron Clarke	Kaye Rawlins	Tony Spooner
	Steven North	Paul Harley	Adrian House
	Tracey Smith	Marian Hollomon	Janet Pinnock
	Andy Mercer		

1/25 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR

It was proposed by Councillor Andy Mercer, seconded by Councillor Carol Childs and

RESOLVED

That Councillor David Coleman is to be elected as Town Mayor of Rushden for the forthcoming Council Year 2024/2025.

2/25 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

Councillor David Coleman signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and having done so took the chair.

3/25 MAYOR'S ADDRESS

Firstly, many thanks to my fellow councillors for electing me as Town Mayor for the coming year – 2024-25. I'm truly honoured and humbled by your confidence in me and will endeavour to do my utmost in representing our Town again in a Mayoral capacity.

May I also add my own personal congratulations to Cllr. Tracey Smith, ably supported by Councillor Paul Harley, for their sterling efforts on behalf of the town. I hope you enjoyed your year in Office.

I would like thank Melanie for her continuing role as Consort – where would I be without her valued support and fashion advice, which I am obliged to heed. The hats will be coming out again.

A big thank you also to family and friends for supporting me this evening and to local dignitaries for joining us – welcome and I look forward to catching up with you later.

2018-19, my initial year in Mayoral Office, seems an age ago. The intervening period has witnessed a series of historic events, not least Covid, the joy of our beloved late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, her sad loss and the accession of King Charles III. Over this period the Council has sadly lost a number of much valued friends and colleagues who are still sorely missed. We will remember them with affection.

On a happier personal note, Melanie and I have seen the birth of our two grandchildren, Sebastian (just 4) and Ophelia (nearly 2) – note Chicken nuggets available later.

The coming twelve months promise to be a busy time and I look forward to meeting as many people and supporting as many events and organisations across the Town as possible. Key events will include our Armed Forces Day, Remembrance Day and plans are in hand the 80th Anniversary of D-Day commemorations.

The Diary is already filling up and I thank Jemma for her continued role in her management of Mayoral enquiries, invitations from across the Town and for Civic events from across a wider area. I also look forward to the continuing wise guidance and prompting from our Town Clerk Vivienne, who will no doubt keep us on the straight and narrow over the year ahead.

Although I will confirm my chosen charities at a later date, can I say that they will include the Royal British Legion (Rushden Branch) and Rushden Sea Cadets. I'm pleased to announce and welcome my Mayor's Cadet for the coming year, Ben Dixon and I would ask Ben if he would kindly step forward to receive an appropriate badge for his uniform – sewing job for Mum. Ben, thank you for taking on this role which I hope you find enjoyable.

To conclude, I'm truly looking forward to the year ahead as Mayor of Rushden, undoubtedly meeting many nice and interesting people, spreading the town's name and its' attractions and probably extending the waistline.

4/25 VOTE OF THANKS TO RETIRING MAYOR

Councillor Melanie Coleman moved a vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor, Councillor Tracey Smith who had worked tirelessly during her mayoral year.

Councillor Richard Lewis seconded the motion and when put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED

Cllr Melanie Coleman gave a vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor Councillor Tracey Smith

“When you take on the role of Mayor everyone has a chance to put their own stamp on their year. When Tracey, Cllr Smith became Mayor last year she said she was going to make it her own. She has certainly done that. Guest appearance by Gladys (my name) the Guide dog mascot. Who had a strange way of appearing when the Mayor disappeared.

I believe Tracey has had a fun and busy year, supported by her consort and best friend Paul, and staged some well received and well attended events, raising monies for her charities. My personal favourite was the lovely carol service, but I know Tracey was thankful she had a dry night for Proms in the Park, this time around.

Well Tracey, I hope you have had the year you wanted, and wish you are least 4 days rest to put your feet up (you will find out why later) I am hoping our newly appointed Mayor will carry on where you left off.

On that note, congratulations, well done and relax!”

Cllr Tracy Smith gave the following response:-

“I would like to thank everybody who has supported me throughout my Mayoral year, in particular my consort Cllr Paul Harley who has attended many events with me. I would like to thank David Coleman for giving great support as my deputy and attending events when I was not able to. Finally, I would like to give thanks to the staff, in particular Jemma (Mayor's secretary) who has looked after me throughout the year, and to the Town Clerk for being a 'wise owl' and offering advice when I needed it.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my year and have made many new friends along the way.”

Cllr Smith then presented Jemma with a hand crocheted dog throw, and flowers for both Vivienne and Jemma.

5/25 ELECTION OF DEPUTY MAYOR

Councillor David Coleman, Town Mayor asked for nominations for the Deputy Mayor.

It was proposed by Councillor Tracey Smith that Councillor Paul Harley be appointed Deputy Mayor of Rushden for the year 2024/2025 and seconded by Councillor Adrian Winkle

RESOLVED

That Councillor Paul Harley to be elected as Deputy Mayor of Rushden for the forthcoming Council Year 2024/2025

Councillor Harley announced that Cllr Tracey Smith would be the Deputy Mayor's consort for 2024/2025

6/25 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf Councillor Gill Mercer.

Cllrs King Lawal, Joe Norris and Cesare Marinaro were absent with no apologies given.

7/25 PRESENT LEADER'S ADDRESS

Good evening Mr Mayor, civic dignitaries, ladies and gentlemen.

Many thanks for the opportunity of saying a few words this evening when technically speaking, the Leader's floor should be left to Melanie, but I can assure you it will definitely be my ultimate Leader's address.

Back in the good old days of 2007, the position of leader was taken by my dear departed ex councillor friend Colin Wright. At the time Colin worked out of town a lot, whereas I was mainly an 'in town' person. However, with a little encouragement from another dear departed ex Councillor friend Ron Pinnock, we came up with the idea that Colin could take me on as his so called 'deputy leader', and this way someone was always around and available.

In the event, Colin shared with me most of the activities and work within the Town Council and the system worked pretty well. After the four year term, when Colin wanted to retire as leader, another dear departed councillor friend, Sarah Peacock, became Leader and also decided to keep me on, riding shot gun. At the time I had a position at East Northants Council and in fact it was more difficult for me to really become leader.

This combination with Sarah continued for no less than 11 years. When I did eventually become leader in 2022, then I in turn selected councillor Melanie Coleman as my deputy. I believe this system, albeit unofficial, has considerably helped to keep driving Rushden forward and resulted in many a problem and decision being shared.

Melanie has been an excellent deputy for me over my 2 short years as leader and I wish her and the new deputy leader every success.

In many ways my last 17 years have been extremely frustrating since we have always been beneath a larger council of some sort and the Town Council can never be full masters of our own destiny.

However, I believe that we have worked hard and have made many achievements and also we do have some good plans and projects in progress.

We never anticipated in 2007 that there would eventually be a unitary council instead of the District and County Councils.

This change has no doubt complicated and slowed things down, but nonetheless we must work closely with North Northants Council and I am optimistic that Rushden will eventually get some much needed enhancements.

Tonight, Melanie has the more difficult task with her acceptance speech since Melanie has to build on where we are and to then be looking forward more than I do this evening.

My main reason for saying something this evening is really to say many thanks to my councillor colleagues assembled here and also to the great team of staff that I believe we have in this council.

Although I have said my 17 years, or actually 19 years in total, have been somewhat frustrating it has even so been a pleasure to work with both councillors and staff, and so this is my official stepping down thank you for all of your help and support over the years. You are really a pretty good group of people to work with.

There will be changes in any case this time next year, since there are elections and also several of us will be retiring as councillors. However, I believe that a lot of good foundations for the future work and activities in the town have been well made and that these will continue in the future.

We are putting a lot of faith in the Colemans next year with David as Mayor and Melanie as Leader and I wish you and your deputies, plus the staff, every success in your forthcoming endeavours.

Finally, my thanks once again to councillors and staff for your support over the years. And remember – build on the positives, remain optimistic and I am sure Rushden Town Council will keep looking to the Future.

Many thanks

Richard

8/25 ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Mayor, Councillor David Coleman asked for nominations for the Leader of the Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Adrian Winkle that Councillor Melanie Coleman be appointed Leader of the Council for the year 2024/2025 and seconded by Councillor Andy Mercer. It was

RESOLVED

That Councillor Melanie Coleman be appointed Leader of Rushden Town Council for the forthcoming Council Year 2024/2025.

9/25 LEADER'S ACCEPTANCE

Councillors, dignitaries and friends

I will keep this brief, a shock to my family!

Might I start with a thank you, to my fellow councillors for the trust and honour of making me leader of Rushden Town Council. I will put every effort into the task given to me. Wise words from my predecessor were, 'we work as a team' I totally uphold that sentiment as I believe everyone has a part to play. Along with our supportive officers, spearheaded by Vivienne, our trusted Town Clerk, who works hard to ensure we do everything correctly; I believe we can stride to the future with positivity.

At this point I would like to name the Deputy Leader, a task gifted to the leader, a councillor who is straight talking, Cllr Adrian Winkle. I very much look forward to working with Adrian, a Rushden man with his feet very much planted in the community.

It would be remiss of me to finish without a final thank you.

Richard, Councillor Lewis, I am indebted to you for your encouragement, guidance and support as my mentor, not only when you were leader, but when I first joined the council. I really enjoyed our Friday catch ups with the Town Clerk, over coffee, although I did sometimes get admonished for talking too much. You will be a missed leader but remain a respected member of the council, and I know you will always be there at the end of the phone for answers and advice. Sincerely. Thank you.

10/25 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of Rushden Town Council held on 16th April 2024 are approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

11/25 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES 2024/2025

- (a) Appointment of Standing Committees

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Standing Committees for 2024/25 are:

- Policy & Resources Committee
- Planning Consultative Committee
- Community Services Committee

- (b) Membership of committees:

RESOLVED

That membership of the committees are as follows:

Policy & Resources Committee

Steven North, Philip Humphrey, Melanie Coleman, Barbara Jenney, Gill Mercer, Richard Lewis, Cameron Clarke, Janet Pinnock, Adrian House, Andy Mercer, David Coleman, Adrian Winkle, Tony Spooner

Planning Consultative Committee

Cameron Clarke, Paul Harley, Richard Lewis, Cesare Marinaro, Philip Humphrey, Marian Hollomon, Carol Childs, Kaye Rawlins, David Coleman, King Lawal, Tracey Smith, Tony Spooner, Adrian Winkle

Community Services Committee

Adrian Winkle, Tony Spooner, Melanie Coleman, Adrian House, Barbara Jenney, Janet Pinnock, Richard Lewis, Carol Childs, Marian Hollomon, Gill Mercer, Kaye Rawlins, David Coleman, Cameron Clarke, Paul Harley, King Lawal, Joe Norris, Tracey Smith

12/25 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Members were circulated with details of proposed representatives to outside bodies as follows:

Rushden Parochial Charities

Councillor Adrian Winkle to serve until 20th May 2025

Councillor Kaye Rawlins to serve until 20th May 2025

Councillor Barbara Jenney to serve until 20th May 2025

Councillor Andy D Mercer to serve until 20th May 2025

Councillor Paul Harley to serve until 20th May 2025

Joint Action Group

Councillor Mrs M Hollomon, Chairman

Town Clerk, Vivienne Prodger

Contracts Manager, Paul Wilcox

Northants County Association of Local Councils – Board Member

Councillor R Lewis

Northants County Association of Local Councils

Councillor Melanie Coleman

Town Clerk – Vivienne Prodger

Northamptonshire Larger Councils Partnership

Councillor Mrs M Hollomon

Town Clerk, Vivienne Prodger

NNC Health and Wellbeing Forum

Councillor Mrs M Hollomon

Northamptonshire Police Liaison Group

Councillor Mrs M Hollomon

RESOLVED

That the list of appointments to outside bodies as mentioned above are approved.

13/25 MEETINGS OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES

The proposed calendar of meetings of the Council and its Committees for 2024/2025 had been previously circulated to members and it was

RESOLVED

That the calendar of meetings as appended to these minutes is approved.

14/25 BANKING ARRANGEMENTS

Members were advised of the list of current signatories. It was

RESOLVED

That payments continued to be signed by any two from the following:

Cllr Richard Lewis, Cllr Philip Humphrey, Cllr Marian Hollomon, Cllr Gill Mercer

Chairman