

MINUTES OF ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 18th May 2022 HELD AT ST. ROSE'S SCHOOL, STROUD

Present:

- Mayor: Stella Parkes
- Deputy Mayor: Camilla Hale
- Town Councillors: Shyam Ananthan, Kevin Cranston, Tony Davey, Laurie Davies, Rob Green, Lucas Schoemaker and Louisa Stinton
- County Councillor: David Drew
- Town Council officers: Helen Bojaniwska (Town Clerk); Laura Beattie (Community Development Officer), Kate Buckingham (Communications and Engagement Officer); Chris Woolner (Green Spaces Manager)
- 50 Stroud residents and award recipients

Minutes

1. The Mayor Cllr Stella Parkes welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. The Mayor introduced the Deputy Mayor Camilla Hale and confirmed that they had both been re-elected for the 2023-24 civic year.
3. The Mayor introduced other Councillors present.
4. The Mayor presented the Council's Annual Report for 2022-23.
5. No questions from the public were received.
6. James Jeffery, the recently appointed Cycle Mayor for Stroud District, gave a presentation on this voluntary role and his ambitions for the future of cycling in the Stroud area. He wanted support people to be competent and confident cyclists and encouraged everyone to work together to make cycling possible and improve infrastructure.

James explained that he is "Proud to Be Stroud" and recognised that there are lots of organisation working to create a friendly environment for cyclists in the area. He noted the benefits of cycling for health, the community, reducing car use, getting children active and reducing carbon.

James was asked whether he rides an e-bike or a regular road bike. He confirmed that he rides a road bike, but recognised the benefits of e-bikes for people in hilly areas and noted a scheme developed in Malvern which allows visitors to rent them.

A question was raised about accessibility for disabled riders. James highlighted that there are great groups operating locally to support disabled people, including Active Gloucestershire and Allsorts, and noted the importance of providing safe routes for all cyclists.

A Stroud resident reported difficulties in getting out of her house and concerns about money. The Mayor asked the Council's Community Development Officer to see what support might be available for her.

7. Sheila Talwar, Principal of St. Rose's welcomed everyone and presented some slides on a wide range of activities and events at the school. She explained the history of the school, noting that when it was established in 1912 it was only the second special school in the country. The school's ethos includes: community, compassion, courage, challenge, hope, peace, perseverance, respect, inclusion and understanding.

St Rose's welcomes students up to 25 years old, mainly from Gloucestershire. In recent years the students' needs have become more severe and complex, including many who are non-verbal. As a non-maintained school St. Rose's receives local authority funding for salaries and running costs, but relies on fundraising for other resources. The new residential facility, Quentin House, had been funded entirely through fundraising efforts. The school's next project will be to provide more residential facilities.

Sheila noted that their students battle against the odds, but are not well served by accessibility limitations in Stroud town centre, most notably the ongoing failure of the lift at the Five Valleys Shopping Centre and the lack of a step free crossing at Stroud station. The Rose's students are well known in Stroud and value being part of the community.

The Mayor sympathised about the lift and station and noted that the town council have been campaigning for improvements, with Sheila's support.

There was a short break for refreshments

8. The Mayor presented the following awards:

Young Person of the Year

Winner: Cate James-Hodges

Runners-up: Emily Boitz, Megan Land

Environment Award - for action to enhance the environment or improve awareness of sustainability issues

Winner: Dr John Meadley

Runners-up: Wild Stroud (Chloe Cox), Oakbrook Community Farm

Trader of the year

Winner: The Shambles Market

Runners-up: Chris Sparrow, manager at Curio Lounge, Loganberry

Community Award - for significant contribution to the community of Stroud

Winner: Stroud Stands with Ukraine

Runners-up: Norma Mills (UkeStroud), MOBS (Mothers Offering Breastfeeding Support)

Inclusivity and Diversity Award

Winner: Stroud Pride

Runners-up: Martin Weeks, Helena Petre, Stroud Valleys Project

Mayor's Award

Winner: Hawkwood College

Mayor's Community Resilience Award

Winners: The NoSH Network (Network of Stroud Hubs) including Uplands, Trinity Rooms, Paganhill Community Group, Top of Town, Middle of the Hill and The Marah Trust