

Woodley Town Council

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on Thursday 22nd May 2025 at 7pm

Present:

Councillors:

*D. Bragg (Chairman); J. Anderson; J. Cheng; Y. Edwards; D. Errawalla;
M. Firmager; L. Guttridge; M. Holmes; B. Soane*

WTC Officers:

*K. Murray (Town Clerk); M. Filmore (Deputy Town Clerk);
A. Ransley (Communications Manager); B. Fennelly (Town Centre Manager)*

Also present: 54 members of the public

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baker, Bello, Gilder, Horskins, Jewell, Kennedy, Lewis, Nagra, Rowland, Sartorel, Singh, Smith, Swaddle and Taylor.

2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING – 23 MAY 2024

Those in attendance noted the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting which was held on 23 May 2024.

3. TOWN MAYOR WELCOME

The Mayor welcomed everyone and outlined the format for the Annual Town meeting.

4. COMMUNITY ORGANISATION PRESENTATIONS

Attendees received presentations on the work of the following community organisations:

- Woodley Adopt a Street – Shelagh Flower
- Woodley Volunteer Centre – Alistair & Karen Todd
- Link Visiting Scheme – Marjie Walker

5. TOWN COUNCIL PRESENTATION

Attendees received a presentation from the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk on the role of Woodley Town Council, its recent activities and future focuses.

6. PUBLIC SESSION

A panel of Town Councillors, comprising the Town Mayor, Cllr David Bragg, the Chairman of the Planning & Community Committee, Cllr Bill Soane, and the Deputy Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee, Cllr Michael Firmager, received questions from attendees.

- 6.1 A question was raised regarding the Council's recent VE day beacon lighting event and why the Council had not initially planned to hold an event.

The panel explained that the Council weren't originally planning on organising an event and had not budgeted to do so. However, a delegate of local residents, which it was noted was headed by Ronnie Goodberry, had requested the Council do so and a successful event was pulled together, with a good crowd attending, in a short period of time. The panel noted the desire from residents for the Council to run such events and would take this into account when planning in future.

- 6.2 In relation to the future development of Woodford Park Leisure Centre (WPLC), a query was raised as to whether a timeline was known for this.

The Town Clerk advised that a timeline had not been finalised, but that the Council had commissioned surveys on the centre which would feed into plans to be considered by the dedicated WPLC Development Sub Committee and Leisure Services Committee in the near future.

- 6.3 Following a concern raised with the amount of parking available at Bulmershe Leisure Centre, it was noted this was a Wokingham Borough Council issue. The panel advised that they believed Wokingham were aware, but that Borough Councillors would be asked to raise the issue.
- 6.4 Concern was raised about the issue of cycling, scooting and skateboarding through the town centre. It was noted this was a problem across the country, and not specific to Woodley, and that it was a matter for the police to manage but with updated legislation needed. The panel advised that the Town Council were considering options within its power help improve the situation, including better signage to discourage cycling and scooting, such as updated painted markings on pavements.
- 6.5 A resident noted that delivery drivers and WBC refuse teams were regularly using bushes in the green space at the end of their road to relieve themselves, and a request was made whether anything could be done to stop this. The panel noted that Borough Councillors were aware of this, having seen correspondence, and would be following this up.
- 6.6 Concern was raised about tree roots coming through the pavement near to the bottle banks outside Lidl. The panel stated that tree roots had been a big problem, but it was noted that this was a WBC issue.
- 6.7 Yuan Yang MP highlighted that she had been in discussion with the two GP practices above Lidl who had identified a need to expand their services but were having issues finding physical spaces, and it was commented that they may wish to explore if there were any possible options with the Town Council.
- 6.8 A comment was made that, since the change in bin collection timetables, local bins were being used by residents to dump household waste. The panel suggested that overflowing bins were rare, but that this could be reported to WBC.

7. MEETING CLOSE

The Mayor brought the meeting to a close by offering his thanks to those who had attended, and reminding residents that all Council meetings were open to the public with residents welcome to attend.

Following the Annual Town Meeting the Council's Community Heroes Awards for 2025 were presented by the Mayor to the following individuals and organisations:

- Debbie Willis – Volunteer of the Year
- Warren White – Neighbour of the Year
- Woodley Detachment Army Cadets – Voluntary Group of the Year
- Woodley Adopt a Street – Climate Champions of the Year
- Kick Twist Cheerleading – Mayor's Special Recognition
- Mayor's Award – Tony Roper (presented by Past Mayor Cllr Juliet Anderson)

The meeting closed at 8:45 pm
