

**MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY MEETING OF KNARESBOROUGH TOWN  
COUNCIL HELD AT KNARESBOROUGH HOUSE, KNARESBOROUGH, ON  
Monday 23 September 2019**

**PRESENT:**   **Chair:**                   The Mayor – Councillor Christine Willoughby

**Councillors:**           M Clemmitt, A Wright and A Willoughby

**Staff Present:**           None

**Late Arrivals:**       None           **Early Departures:**   None

**EO19/011   ITEM 1 – To receive apologies for inability to attend the meeting**

Apologies were received from Councillors Darling, Ireland, Mearns, Wood, Hunter, Gair and Goode.

**EO19/012   ITEM 2 – Councillors’ Disclosure of an Interest**

None

**EO19/013   ITEM 3 - KTC Public Speaking Session**

None

**EO19/014   ITEM 4 – Presentation on Knaresborough Forest**

David Rhodes thanked Town Council for arranging to print 10,000 information leaflets on the Knaresborough Forest. These are in the process of being distributed far and wide to get the message out about the importance of the Forest of Knaresborough.

In 2020, it is the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Enclosure Act, which led to the disposal of the Forest of Knaresborough and the creation of the Harrogate Stray. On 13<sup>th</sup> August 2020 it will be 250 years since the Duchy Commissioners met at the Horse and Groom (now The Commercial Hotel) in Knaresborough. This date is in the middle of Feva, and it would be good if the anniversary was appropriately celebrated in the town.

David went on to explain about how Knaresborough has taken several hits throughout time, the first being when Knaresborough Castle was ordered to be demolished following the Civil War. Knaresborough lost its Royal patronage and never regained it. Later King George 3<sup>rd</sup> ordered the breaking up of the royal forests and this again was a blow for Knaresborough as the town suffered from this change of circumstances. Lastly was the reorganisation in 1972 when Knaresborough’s Urban District Council was abolished and all its powers and properties transferred to Harrogate Council.

However the town now has an opportunity to promote itself as important part of the new proposed White Rose Forest. The Northern Powerhouse is promoting a coast to coast forest, and the White Rose Forest sits at the centre of this new forest and the Forest of Knaresborough sits at the centre of the White Rose Forest. If the town lobbies hard, we might be able to get a visitor centre for the White Rose Forest in Knaresborough. The ruined farm buildings at Conyngham Hall would be an ideal location for this. This would

be a tremendous chance to promote Knaresborough, our forest, our castle and our gorge. A group of students from Leeds Beckett University who are studying landscape design have been tasked with designing a Visitor Centre at Conyngham Hall for the White Rose Forest.

The country needs trees, the UK as a whole has only 15% tree cover compared with most of our EU neighbours who have 30% tree cover. The area of the Northern Powerhouse has only 8% tree cover. The intention of the new Northern Forest is to plant 50 million trees by 2032.

In this area, Ripley Castle Park has some truly ancient trees, some of which are over 800 years old. Sir Thomas Ingleby has given permission for acorns from his trees to be collected by primary school children and the idea is that every school child in Knaresborough will grow the acorns into trees which they will plant when they leave primary school.

David feels that to enable Town Council to take the lead on this, it may be necessary to change some of our working groups, for instance the Conyngham Hall Working Group could become the Knaresborough Gorge Working Group. This would allow the working group to focus on the promotion etc of the whole gorge area.

To give an innovative lead on the idea of providing trees, David suggested that a number of trees could be planted in planters at key positions on Knaresborough High Street. This would mitigate for poor air quality, help pedestrians to cross the road, and promote the concept of Knaresborough Forest.

Following David's presentation, questions were asked.

Is there any land currently being planned to be planted on? There is some work going on looking at tree planting around Horseshoe Field. There are also a couple of fields for sale currently on Bogs Lane which could be purchased and have trees planted.

There being no further questions, the chair thanked David and closed the meeting.

**Meeting closed at: 9.00pm.**

**Signed by the Mayor:**

**Councillor C Willoughby**