PENWORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Annual Meeting of the Township of Penwortham

Meeting held at Penwortham Community Centre, Kingsfold Drive, Penwortham on Tuesday 4th March, 2025 at 7:00pm.

Present:	The Mayor:	Cllr David Shaw
	Councillors:	A Cassidy, G Crewe, H Crewe, P Cronin, T Flannery, D Howarth, K Martin, A Rae, A Turner and I Watkinson.
	In attendance:	Marie Curran, Town Manager Daniel Guise, Democratic Services Officer
		Kelly Love, Corporate Engagement Lead with Galloway's Society for the Blind Lorraine Virco, Galloway's service user
		Members of the Public: 2

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors William Adams, Deborah Ashton, David Bennett, Sarah Emery, Harry Hancock, Jim Patten and Robert Taylor. Cllr Cronin entered the meeting during item 4.

2. Minutes of the Last Town Meeting

Councillor Howarth proposed that the minutes of the last Township meeting be approved. Cllr Martin seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the Township meeting held on 5th March 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

4. Presentation on Galloways – Support through sight loss

The Mayor welcomed to the meeting Kelly Love, Corporate Engagement Lead with Galloway's Society for the Blind, who gave a presentation about the charity's work.

Ms Love reported that Galloways had been in existence for 157 years, and had bases at Howick, Chorley and Morecambe. She explained that the mission of the charity was to bring connection, choice and confidence to everyone affected by sight loss.

Ms Love advised that 55,700 people were living with sight loss across Lancashire and Sefton. She advised the Council on the services which Galloways provided, including sight loss assessments, low vision clinics, advice & guidance, tech support and programmes to get people active. The annual cost to keep these activities going was £1.5m.

Ms Love introduced Lorraine Virco, a user of Galloway's services, who told the Council her story of sight loss, which included the additional challenge of having become registered blind during the Covid lockdowns. Ms Virco related how she had taken part in all of the "get active" options available, including rock climbing, tennis and water sports such as paddleboarding. She reported how she had benefitted from one of Galloway's bungalows, adapted for independent living, and the use of technology such as phone apps.

The Mayor invited questions for the Galloways representatives. In response to a question from Cllr Flannery, Ms Virco related her experience using Voicevista, a phone app which aids those with low vision to confidently navigate their desired routes. She reported that she would shortly be meeting her second guide dog.

Cllr Howarth asked if it would be possible for members of the Council to make a tour of Galloway's facilities, as this had proven to be a valuable experience. Ms Love replied that the charity would be happy to arrange this. The Mayor recommended the "Sim Specs" as an educational experience.

5. Report by the Town Mayor, Councillor David Shaw, for the year 2024-25

The Mayor reported as follows:

REPORT OF THE TOWN MAYOR, COUNCILLOR DAVID SHAW

I would like to thank the people of Penwortham, my colleagues on the Council, and its officers, for their help and friendship over the course of my mayoral year, and I would like to thank the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Will Adams, who has been a very supportive and helpful deputy, and I wish him an enjoyable year to come.

The charities I nominated for the mayoral fund were Galloways, and St Catherine's Hospice. They will benefit greatly from the generosity of the people of our town, and my thanks go to everyone who donated, or otherwise contributed at any of our events, and may I encourage everyone to support these important charities. For example, I was grateful for the chance to attend a plant sale at Priory Lane Community Centre, generously organised by two wonderful volunteers Elizabeth and Geraldine in June, which raised £205 for the mayoral charities.

Penwortham Town Council is responsible for two community centres and the Arts Centre. The community centres are hubs of activity with numerous groups meeting to support local needs. Priory Lane houses the community library, Kingsfold has traditionally had the bulk of the Council meetings and our offices, but the facilities have seen a bereavement group, dance lessons (not together), faith groups and other social and interest groups. Importantly, the Kingsfold site sees the food bank distributing supplies donated locally and it is a feature of our community that so many are willing to volunteer and give to others.

The Arts Centre sees a range of entertainment being performed, but can also be used for other purposes, and an exhibition and sale by "In the Frame" in aid of St Catherine's Hospice drew a healthy number of customers including myself and a number of other councillors. We are also looking to expand the potential of the building. The buildings, of course, will need ongoing maintenance, and we are looking to quantify and prioritise. Our Lengthsman, James Horne, has meanwhile been carrying out a number of tasks on the sites.

The Town Council also administers the town cemetery on Hill Road, and James, along with Fred Hackett, maintains the site. I am grateful that they are both so hardworking and above all, friendly, which can make a big difference for visitors to the cemetery.

The Town Council, with other relevant parties, ran an activity scheme last summer for youngsters which was a great success, and we are hoping to run a related scheme at Easter 2025, to give the participants activities in a safe environment for the holiday period.

While the Town Council does not decide planning applications, it is consulted on applications in the Town and makes representations. Of course, members take a keen interest in the local area, and we have attended public meetings, exhibitions, and briefings on new school buildings proposed for Applebee Wood and Penwortham Girls Schools, changes to the road systems along the A582 and Leyland Road corridors (greatly assisted by the submissions of local residents), the power line implications for Howick of proposed windfarms in the Irish Sea, the Penwortham Masterplan for our local centres, and with the Borough planning officers and consultants on the Central Lancashire Local Plan and the Penwortham Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The Council has also a small budget for providing grants, and I was delighted to meet some of the recipients this year, and to find out more about their activities. I very quickly realised how little I knew about curling or throwing when I met competitors at junior

national level, and even my knowledge of American Football is superficial and out-of-date. I did learn that competition involves a lot of expense for the participants, and I continue to wish them all every success.

I should mention that Penwortham is an active member of the Lancashire Association of Local Councils, with Cllr Keith Martin being on the executive, and he, Cllr Andy Rae and myself attended two conferences locally during the year, plus the AGM.

Of course, some of the functions of the Town Council are much more participatory, for example, our charitable fundraising for the Mayoral charities, and the annual act of Remembrance. In his report last year to the Township meeting, Councillor Ian Watkinson hinted at further events in support of his charities, and these included a golf competition and a proposed cricket match between Penwortham and Vernon Carus, both events being supported financially by Skyscape Property Management. Due to rain, the cricket match was postponed until after I became Mayor, so while Ian still led proceedings, I was able to join him, the Deputy Mayor, and a number of other councillors in spectating (in excellent weather) an exciting cricket match which was decided in Vernon Carus' favour on the last ball.

As Cllr Watkinson also intimated, Penwortham Gala did include the procession for the first time since the pandemic, and the enthusiasm was a delight, repaying the efforts of the officers, including Rodney Adams as Events Coordinator, Cllrs Robert Taylor and Peter Cronin, and everyone else involved. The energy of those who can not only walk the procession route, but dance along the way, then join in with dancing on the park before their own performance is just amazing to me. I was also delighted to be joined by a few of the Galloways community, including on the procession.

Saturday remained fine, and hopefully everyone enjoyed the many stalls and the entertainment. I am grateful to those who donated to, and those who collected for, my Mayoral charities. I have to point out again the wonderful community spirit involved in moving vehicles from the soft ground at the end of the afternoon. Thank you.

Sunday threatened to rain but changed its mind, and the early morning litter pickers gave way to an ecumenical service, with Rev Nick Mansfield's demonstration of a new approach to Tug-of-War: a call for co-operation. Among many attractions on Sunday were a dog show and a teddy bear competition. If I have a strength, it is not in choosing between expectant faces of dog owners and definitely not those of teddy-cuddlers, but with considerable help from colleagues (albeit a bit of barracking as well) prizes were awarded.

Later in the year, the firework display again gave an opportunity for the town to come together, and again, I am grateful to both donors and collectors for the Mayoral charities. Remembrance Sunday is an important occasion for the town, and I was delighted to be accompanied by the new Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire, Michael Conlon, and his wife, who were impressive and interesting company as we took part in the procession from the St Leonard's service to the War Memorial for the short but very well-attended observance, before marching back to the Royal British Legion.

The Town Council also organises Christmas markets and we were entertained by a choir from Kingsfold Primary School outside the Black Bull. Liverpool Road is still a bigger event, and very well attended again. Middleforth had its own event this year, thanks to the Fire and Rescue Service, who hosted stalls and a choir, while giving the local residents a view of the equipment and people of the service. All were different, but enjoyable events.

As Mayor, I am honoured to have met a number of notable people over the past months. In addition to Mr Conlon, I met his colleague, Charles Hadcock, at the flag-raising for Windrush in Leyland, having previously met him at Galloways. I also had a chance to chat with Walter Behrens, district president of Schleswig-Flensberg, on his visit to plant an oak tree at Hurst Grange Park with the Mayor of South Ribble (his English is much better than my German). I was also invited to join the Archbishop of Liverpool at St Mary Magdalen primary school, where he blessed the new nursery, and I was able to chat with governors and staff about the new facility.

I was also asked to open the wonderful new library at Penwortham Primary School, and attended the summer fairs of Cop Lane and Kingsfold Primary Schools and the Christmas fair of the latter (which included a brass band performance).

I was generously invited to performances of “The Sorcerer” by St Leonards Gilbert & Sullivan group, “The Tales of Hoffman”, performed by Preston Opera, and a gala concert by Preston Opera accompanied by Blackpool Symphony Orchestra which a total of 4 mayors attended, a book launch of “Up and Down”, an anthology of poetry by a local writing group and an event at the Church Hall of St Mary Magdalen, welcoming some tapestries by local artists which depicted the Biblical account of creation. The donation of the artwork to the church had been co-ordinated by Peter Frankish of ‘In The Frame’, who raise funds for St Catherine’s Hospice.

Galloways invited me to a number of events during the year, including a firewalk (I did it twice!), an “It’s a Knockout” competition (I said a few words, but stayed a spectator as visually challenged folk joined supporters in tackling obstacles, including a water obstacle), and a Gala Ball, plus meetings of the corporate supporters, volunteers, and the AGM.

I also inspected scarecrows and presented prizes for Penwortham in Bloom, appeared in a video to promote Penwortham’s high street, and another at the Liverpool Road Christmas market, attended the “Bark Life” dog show held at the Tom Finney pub, cut the ribbon on the opening day of the new RSPCA shop at Liverpool Road, (and met Daisy the Rottweiler), then visited the RSPCA cattery at Ribbleton.

The Mayor of South Ribble invited me to his Civic Parade at Higher Walton, and I also joined him for South Ribble Borough Council’s 50th anniversary dinner. I met with Theo Curran, aged 8, who won the competition to design the mayor’s 2024 Christmas card, for which I thank him. He is very talented.

In addition to the above, I attended the Feast of St Teresa of Lisieux festivities, the St Vincent de Paul society lunch, with a quiz and concert at St Teresa's social centre, the Christmas Tree festival at St Leonard's church, and goodbye events for Nick Mansfield after 24 years as vicar at St Leonard's, both by the foodbank that he was instrumental in establishing, and by his congregation after his final service. I thank him for his involvement in the community in Penwortham, and trust he will enjoy his retirement in Alnwick.

Finally a particular thank you to Marie, for those occasions when you went above and beyond to save me, and for putting up with this coming late!

Councillor David Shaw
Mayor of Penwortham

Cllr Flannery asked the mayor what his top 3 highlights of his mayoral year had been. The mayor replied that he would choose Remembrance Sunday (for its importance to the town), the opening of the new library at Penwortham Primary School (where he remembered the enthusiasm of one of the pupils reading Roald Dahl), and the Penwortham In Bloom awards (for the happiness which the award brought to one particular winner).

6. **Matters Raised by Members of the Public**

Since an ordinary meeting of the Town Council would follow immediately, with another opportunity for the public to raise matters of local concern, no questions were asked under this agenda item.

The Mayor thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

……Town Mayor

(The meeting finished at 7:40pm)

The minutes of this meeting will be published on the website
www.penworthamtowncouncil.gov.uk