

CIRENCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of Council held in the Council Chamber, Bingham House, No. 1 Dyer Street, Cirencester, at 7.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 10th August 2004.

PRESENT: Councillor D J Nash – Mayor
Councillor G T Adams – Deputy Mayor (from Minute No. 82.05)

Councillors: Mrs S A Alexander
R Bourne
Mrs M T Eccles (Deputy Mayor for Minute No. 71.05 to 81.05)
Dr P A Hedges
B D Hudson
Mrs R A Leicester
R G Lock
Mrs B A Potter (7.20 p.m. arrival)
Mrs M S Rickman (7.30 p.m. arrival)
D J M Sankey

Andrew Rennie Crook – Town Clerk
Clive Sherwood – Deputy Town Clerk
Johan Newman – Personal Assistant

A Prayer was read by the Mayor.

71.05 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors D S P Clifford and N E Whereat.

72.05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors D J Nash and D J M Sankey declared their interest in Minute No. 84.05 – Freedom of the District to 29 Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps, as they had previously served on the Regiment.

73.05 MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Tuesday, 20th July 2004 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor, subject to Minute Nos. C67.05 to C70.05 to be considered under confidential matters and subject to Councillor G T Adams being added to the list of Councillors appointed to the Code of Conduct Working Group.

The following updates were presented: -

a) Minute No. 57.05 – Review of the Council and its Staffing

Councillor R Bourne has indicated that he would be interested in being involved with the Code of Conduct Working Group and Councillor N E Whereat has indicated his interest in joining the Staffing Working Group.

b) Minute No. 60.05 – Kingshill Lane Sports Development Site – Skateboarding

Councillor Dr P A Hedges advised that he had received a letter from Mr B Cox of the Impact Youth Centre and advised that he would make a copy of the same available to the office.

74.05 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that the availability of recently considered applications and decisions be noted (the files being available for inspection both at the meeting at the Council Offices).

75.05 FINANCE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, 20th July 2004 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman at their next meeting.

Attention was drawn to the following: -

a) Minute No. 45.05 – Draft Accounts 2003/4

It was noted that Councillors G T Adams and Dr P A Hedges would be carrying out a regular internal appraisal in the current financial year.

The Clerk advised that a short guide on Accounting for the Large Local Council, produced by NALC, was available to Members on request.

RESOLVED that the recommendation of the Finance Committee be noted and that the Draft Accounts be accepted.

76.05 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor advised that the next Area Liaison Panel/Functions Working Party Meeting has been arranged for 28th September 2004 and asked Members with any questions or topics to advise the office as soon as possible.

77.05 QUESTION TIME FOR ELECTORS

No questions were received.

78.05 QUESTION TIME FOR MEMBERS

The following question was received from Councillor Dr P A Hedges on 6th August 2004: -

"Can Council please be advised of the approximate level of office staff time that is dedicated to deal with correspondence received and what is the approximate number of telephone calls, letters and emails received by the office in a typical month?"

What proportion of the received correspondence is from members of the public that should have been addressed to the County or District Councils, the Police Authority or agencies?"

RESPONSE:

"The response to this question involves estimates.

Taking averages over a 12 month period, it is estimated that 150 letters are received into the office per month, 40 planning applications are processed, 50 invoices are processed and 140 relevant emails are received (the term "relevant" is used to exclude SPAM mail).

The Officers deal with approximately 1,000 telephone calls per month, some of them being duplicated in passing between Officers.

In assessing the time spent, it is estimated that 100 Officer hours are involved in dealing with the post, dictation, research and despatch.

With regard to planning and invoices, we have not quantified the Officer time involved.

Emails appear to involve Officers in approximately 35 hours of Officer time per month.

Officers' time on the telephone totals approximately 28 hours per month.

As the office is a County Information Point, it is not easy to answer the second part of the question. As a rough guide, it is anticipated that up to 5% of all incoming letters, emails and telephone calls are erroneously received in the Town Council Offices."

Councillor Dr P A Hedges accordingly asked a supplementary question on whether there are any noticeable trends in changes in correspondence received that should be borne in mind when considering staffing.

The Clerk advised that there had been a considerable increase in email correspondence, which tended to "jump the queue" and be dealt with before postal correspondence.

79.05 RESOLUTIONS MOVED ON NOTICE – STANDING ORDER NO. 19

None were received.

80.05 GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

No questions were asked of this authority.

81.05 COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

No questions were asked of this authority.

82.05 RESIGNATION OF DEPUTY MAYOR

Members received and noted the formal resignation of the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs M T Eccles, due to family and work commitments.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Mrs Eccles for all her help and support.

RESOLVED that Councillor G T Adams be appointed as Deputy Mayor to hold office until the Annual Meeting 2005.

83.05 DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995 IN RELATION TO PLAY AREAS

Members received a copy of a letter from Councillor N E Whereat referring to the initial report presented by Councillor G T Adams at the Council Meeting held on 20th July 2004 (a copy of which is appended to the signed Minutes).

Councillor G T Adams advised that the Play Areas Working Party would be meeting on 18th and 25th August 2004 and that he hoped to report to Council in September 2004.

RESOLVED that Councillor N E Whereat's letter be noted.

84.05 FREEDOM OF THE DISTRICT TO 29 REGIMENT, THE ROYAL LOGISTIC CORPS

Declarations of interest were made by Councillors D J Nash and D J M Sankey as they had previously served on the Regiment.

Members received a report relating to the 29 Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps (a copy of which is appended to the signed Minutes).

The Clerk advised that the Town Council was not empowered to grant a Freedom of the Town and that accordingly any freedom granted through the Cotswold District Council would be a freedom with a small "f". It followed that as the Council did not have the power to grant a freedom, so it was without a specific power to finance such an event. If monies were to be applied for this purpose then the only power to be found would lie within S137 of the Local Government Act 1972, provided that the Members felt that in their opinion the expenditure would be in the interests of and will bring direct benefit to their area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants.

The Mayor advised that there were already tangible links between the town and The Regiment and a freedom would strengthen and make links more apparent to the community. It would be an event that would raise civic pride.

The Mayor confirmed that the Town Council was unable to grant a Freedom and it was up to the Cotswold District Council to decide whether it was disposed to do so.

This Council RESOLVES that Cirencester Town Council: -

- 1 requests Cotswold District Council to grant the freedom of the District to 29 Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps; and subject to 1) being granted: -**
- 2a) invites 29 Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps, to exercise that freedom in Cirencester on a date and at a time to be determined;**
- b) allocates a provisional budget of up to £3,000 for the purpose;**
- c) in the event that 29 Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps, accepts the above invitation, that Council establishes a Working Group of representatives from the organisations and interests involved to progress the arrangements for the Ceremonies and to report further to this Council.**

and Council further

RESOLVED that in pursuance of the powers conferred by S137 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and being of the opinion that the expenditure satisfies the requirements of that Section, the Council approves expenditure in the sum of a maximum of £3,000 in the granting of a freedom to the 29 Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps.

85.05 CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR CLOSING 2004/5

RESOLVED that the Christmas/New Year 2004/5 closing arrangements for the Office and St. Michael's Park be as follows: -

Friday, 24 th December	CLOSE AT 12 NOON
Saturday, 25 th December	CLOSED – Christmas Day
Sunday, 26 th December	CLOSED – Boxing Day
Monday, 27 th December	CLOSED – Bank Holiday
Tuesday, 28 th December	CLOSED – Bank Holiday
Wednesday, 29 th December	CLOSED
Thursday, 30 th December	CLOSED
Friday, 31 st December	CLOSED
Saturday, 1 st January	CLOSED – New Year's Day
Sunday, 2 nd January	CLOSED
Monday, 3 rd January	CLOSED – Bank Holiday
Tuesday, 4 th January	OPEN

Members noted that keys could be made available for those wishing to play tennis at St. Michael's Park over the Christmas/New Year period.

86.05 RURAL WHITE PAPER AND MARKET TOWNS HEALTHCHECK

As per a previous resolution to refer to the above on a regular basis, the Clerk advised that the Market Towns Healthcheck – Cirencester Partnership was floundering at the moment but he was genuinely trying to revive the same and stated that any assistance would be appreciated.

87.05 REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

No written reports by Members were received.

PART TWO
CONFIDENTIAL

- C88.05 MINUTES**
- C89.05 ABBEY GROUNDS W.C.'S**
- C90.05 KINGSHILL LANE SPORTS DEVELOPMENT SITE**
- C91.05 PERSONNEL - GROUNDSTAFF**

See Confidential Minute Book.

RESOLVED that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest, that the public and press be excluded and they were instructed to withdraw.

The meeting closed at 9.08 p.m.

Councillor D J Nash
Mayor