

# **CIRENCESTER TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES** of a Special Meeting of Council held in The Bingham Gallery, Bingham House, 1 Dyer Street, Cirencester, at 6.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> February 2006.

**PRESENT:** Councillor N E Whereat – Mayor  
Councillor Dr P A Hedges – Deputy Mayor

**Councillors:** G T Adams  
Mrs S A Alexander  
R Bourne  
Mrs M T Eccles  
Mrs S A le Noury  
J B Leicester  
J D Leigh  
Mrs R A Leicester  
R G Lock  
D J Nash (7.00 p.m. arrival)  
Mrs B A Potter  
Mrs M S Rickman

Andrew Rennie Crook - Town Clerk  
Johan Newman – Personal Assistant

A Prayer was read by the Mayor.

## **118.06 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor B D Hudson and Mr C Sherwood, Deputy Town Clerk.

## **119.06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs S A Alexander declared a personal interest with regard to the tenancy of the Norman Arch, as she knows the tenant's mother and left the meeting (Minute No. C123.06).

## **120.06 WARD AUDITS**

Councillor Mrs S A Alexander advised that the original Ward Audit Group were going to go through all the information received from Members and that a report would be presented on 14<sup>th</sup> March and a further report in June 2006.

## **121.06 RE-STRUCTURING OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND RESULTANT AMENDMENTS TO STANDING ORDERS**

The Clerk outlined his report (a copy of which is appended to the signed Minutes) which was to enable Members to review the Council's meetings and committee structure and to determine whether changes should be made for the year 2006/7. The Clerk also stressed that the object of the exercise was to try to enable the Members to identify with certainty their responsibilities taking into account the demands on their time whilst acknowledging the limited resources available.

During a lengthy discussion, it was identified that some Members believed that monthly Council Meetings should be held, along with regular Finance Committee Meetings. It was also felt that Budget Working Party meetings should be reinstated.

**RESOLVED that: -**

- a) **the Council meets on the second Tuesday of each month (such arrangements to be effective for the experimental period of the Civic Year 2006/7);**
- b) **there shall be a Finance Committee (including all 15 Members of Council) which shall meet on the first Tuesday of the month of July, October and December;**
- c) **the Finance Committee shall establish a Budget Working Party to meet as required during the civic year;**
- d) **the roles of the Planning Sub-Committee and Project Board be confirmed;**
- e) **the Council meets at 7.00 p.m.;**
- f) **the Standing Orders be re-drafted to accommodate the new arrangements identified above and approved prior to the Annual Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2006.**

**122.06**

**NORMAN ARCH**

The Clerk outlined his report (a copy of which is appended to the signed Minutes), which was to enable Members, pursuant to the Council's decision on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2006 (principally to defer the decision to sell the Norman Arch until 10<sup>th</sup> July 2006), to determine on the involvement of the Council and any action to be taken between now and July 2006.

Members noted both the report and also the fact that Landmark Trust had now identified that it would not be seeking further involvement with the Norman Arch.

Councillor Dr Hedges reminded Members of the options available for the future of the Norman Arch, namely: -

Option A – Open Market Sale

Option B – Commercial/Residential Lease

Option C – "Heritage" Lease

Option D – Public Ownership (by the Cirencester Town Council)

Councillor Dr Hedges hoped that Members would support the submission of an outline application by the Group to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

A wide ranging debate took place with Members expressing concern over the nature and style of a lottery application and any costs arising there from.

A Member referred to the rumour that had come to the Members' attention that the Norman Arch be opened for public viewing over the Easter weekend. Members were astonished at the suggestion and made it clear that no such permission would be given.

The Clerk stated that it was necessary for the Members to receive legal advice but advised that it would not be appropriate in open session.

**RESOLVED that: -**

- a) **further monies should be expended (up to £1,500) in taking up legal and professional advice in respect of the risks of enfranchisement should a long lease be granted;**
- b) **the Council should not support the outline application for a lottery grant in respect of the Norman Arch;**
- c) **the Councillors who are members of the Norman Arch Working Group should work with others to achieve an acceptable and viable alternative to sale;**
- d) **the Clerk be authorised to seek advice from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Government for the South West on whether the Council could accept a financial sum of less than the market value;**

**PART TWO**  
**CONFIDENTIAL**

**C123.06      NORMAN ARCH**

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 8.10 p.m.

Councillor N E Whereat  
Mayor