

CIRENCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Thirty-fourth Annual Town Meeting held in the Bingham Gallery, 1 Dyer Street, Cirencester, at 7.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 22nd April 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs S A Alexander – Mayor
Councillor G T Adams – Deputy Mayor

Councillors: P Braidwood
A N Curry
H G C Gray
W Helm
R Hughes
Mrs S A le Noury
A Lichnowski
D J Nash
Mrs M S Rickman

Andrew Tubb – Chief Executive Officer
Sally Mason – Customer Information & Administrative Officer

Organisation representatives detailed in Minute No. 261.08.

251.08 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs C Braidwood, Mrs J Hincks and Ms K Yarrow.

252.08 WELCOME BY THE MAYOR

The Mayor thanked the Councillors, guest speakers and members of the public for their attendance and confirmed the procedure for the meeting.

253.08 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 24TH APRIL 2007

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Thirty-third Annual Town's Meeting held on Tuesday, 24th April 2007 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

254.08 MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

Councillor Mrs S A Alexander, Mayor of Cirencester, gave her report for the year as follows: -

“This has been a year of change, a new council, with many new members, was elected in May and three other members were co-opted in June; also in June our Clerk retired and a new Clerk joined us opening up possibilities for Cirencester to move forward to Quality Council Status.

We began this process with the launch of a quarterly Newsletter delivered to every home in the town. The newsletter informs household about the work of the Town Council and includes information about the Bingham Library Trust, the Charter Market and events in the town.

We have begun a programme of Community lunches, the first, to launch the newsletter and promote the Twinning event, brought many people together whose paths would not cross in the normal course of events and enabled people to “network” and the town will continue to benefit from the relationships forged. The second lunch focused on the Arts and the cultural life of the town, many ideas came to the fore and we await the outcomes. In the future, we plan to have a “Sports” lunch to consolidate the consultation

process for the future development the Town Council's Sports facility at Kingshill Lane.

We are in the process of raising the profile of Cirencester at a national level with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). Councillor Nash has gained a place on a national committee, I have attended one of their Mayors and Chairs lunches, a seminar in London and we plan to go to the National Conference in May.

I have undertaken a number of Official duties and I have represented the town at functions outside of the town.

The Clerk and I have visited all but one of the schools in the town as part of our engagement with young people. We visited school councils and will continue to develop relationships with ongoing communications.

As well as change, we have also had continuity with our visit to Itzehoe in October 2007 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Twinning Charter. The Clerk and I travelled to Itzehoe with a party of people from Cirencester and a large group from Itzehoe came to Cirencester earlier this month to sign "statements of intent" to mark the anniversary of the signing of the Twinning Charter and to signal our intention to continue twinning into the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the office staff and the ground staff for all they do throughout the year but particularly for all the extra work undertaken for the twinning visit."

255.8

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Councillor Mrs M S Rickman, Chairman of the Finance Committee, gave a report and provided a summary of the budget for 2007/08 as follows: -

"The membership of the Committee for the year comprised all members of the Town Council and there have been three meetings.

We have maintained a high standard of service to the taxpayer with the precept for the year costing a Band D Council Taxpayer £1.55 per week.

Many of the services provided are not statutory obligations and these include financial support for the CCTV system and the Christmas lights, floral displays around the town and grants to local organisations.

The budget also includes a sum of £22,500 for the Policing Support Scheme that finances an increased Police presence in the Town. We are hopeful this will prove both successful and cost effective.

The Abbey Grounds and St Michael's Park have been maintained to the usual very high standard by Council staff.

Unfortunately our budget has been affected adversely by:

- Vandalism at Kingshill Lane Sports Development. This resulted in Stage Coach ending their contract with us for vehicle storage; a monetary loss in excess of £8,000 per annum.
- The Four Acres Pavilion was destroyed.
- Charter Market income has fallen by around £9,000. This was due to the very poor summer weather and despite the good management and loyalty we enjoy from the Market Manager and traders.

These problems have been financially managed, because we have built up a reasonable level of unallocated reserves.

Prudent investment has increased the Capital Reserve Fund allocated to the Kingshill Lane Sports Development and work on the next phase will hopefully begin in the near future.

Funds to re-develop the Abbey Play Area have been raised over a three-year period to ease the burden on the Council taxpayer. This project should be in place during the summer.

In summary, we consider the Council to be in a healthy financial state with reserves at an acceptable level. The precept set for the forthcoming year is costing a Band D taxpayer £1.65 per week. We trust the people of the Town consider this a fair cost for the many benefits provided.

I would like to record my thanks for support from Vice Chairman Councillor Howard Gray, the Responsible Finance Officer Clive Sherwood, all members of staff and the Committee.”

256.08 PLANNING COMMITTEE

Councillor H G C Gray, Chairman of the Planning Committee, gave his report for the past year as follows: -

“The Planning Committee of the Town Council has met every fortnight to discuss submitted planning applications. Since the end of March 2007, the Committee has discussed 315 applications. During that time, members have received helpful guidance from the Town Clerk, which has enabled careful consideration to be given to each and every application.

In recent weeks, the Committee has been able to consider on-line applications thanks to the use of a laptop and digital projector. This, as it becomes the norm, will reduce dramatically the amount of paper that is prepared for the planning meetings.

Apart from the planning applications, the Committee has also discussed the Cirencester Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document, the proposed housing development at the Kingshill North site, Cirencester Conservation Area Appraisals and Management plans, the Minerals and Waste Core Strategies and received a presentation from Mrs Sophia Price, Heritage and Design Manager (CDC) on Tree Preservation Order Legislation.

The regular attendance of Committee members has been much appreciated.”

257.8 CORPORATE GROUP

Councillor Mrs S A Alexander, Chairman of the Corporate Group, gave her report for the past year as follows: -

“The Corporate Group was established at a meeting of Council in July 2007 for the lifetime of the Council.

The Group consists of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, the Chair of Finance, the Vice Chair of Finance and the Chair of the Project Board.

The Group has worked on issues relating to Quality Council Status, the newsletter, internal auditing, the Council’s Purpose Statement and Standing Orders.

The Group reports back to Council and makes recommendations for consideration. The Group receives information on matters of interest to the Council including the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative and the Vision for Cirencester Project Board update and has responded on behalf of the Council on the Licensing Act, the Road Safety Review, Post Office closures and bus

passenger representation. The Group is currently working with Severn Wye Neighbourhood Project with a view to addressing climate change with a project at local level.”

258.8 PROJECT BOARD

Councillor D J Nash, Chairman of the Project Board, gave his report for the past year as follows: -

“The Project Board is a Working Group of Members with two functions; firstly to consider ideas for projects and schemes and to discuss the way forward and secondly to consider details of those projects being put forward and recommend the thoughts and ideas to Council. When an idea is agreed, the Project Board supervises the progress and ensures it continues to completion. For example, the new signs at the entrances to the town, progressing the detail about the continued development regarding play areas, cycle ways (which involved discussion with Sustrans and the County Council) and the Christmas lights (in liaison with the Chamber of Commerce).”

259.8 RECREATION AREAS WORKING GROUP

Councillor G T Adams, Chairman of the Recreation Areas Working Group, gave his report for the past year as follows: -

“The new play equipment for the Abbey Grounds has been chosen and the Scheduled Monument application has been sent in. It is hoped that work to dismantle the old and install the new equipment can commence in the summer, when approval from English Heritage and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has been received.

The total cost for this will be £85,000, which has been set aside in three tranches of £25,000 over the last three years with an additional £10,000 voted by Council on 8th April.

We were also successful in our Lottery bid for £5,000 to which was added a further £7,000 from earmarked reserves. This £12,000 will pay for a youth shelter and multi-goal equipment in Chesterton, which should be ready for installation in June.

260.8 PERSONNEL WORKING GROUP

In the absence of Councillor Mrs J Hincks, Chairman of the Personnel Working Group, Andrew Tubb, Chief Executive Officer, presented the report as follows: -

“The Group was created primarily to overview and approve the founding of the following policies: -

Staff Appraisal Policy

To encourage communication between colleagues, to achieve a clear understanding of what is required of the individual and to identify training needs.

Staff Training

Training is important to ensure the Town Council’s Purpose Statement is delivered.

Member Training

Training is important to support members in fulfilling their role with the Town Council structure.

Health and Wellbeing

To ensure the health and wellbeing of all its employees, a practical way to ensure the needs and safety of all its employees.

First Aid Payments

To recommend a payment to those who are trained and responsible for first aid within the work place.

Job Evaluation

Taking on board the recommendations of South West Provincial Employers in respect of the office and ground staff posts.

The Working Party also put forward to full Council a recommendation to establish a Senior Management Structure to consist of the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Personal Assistant to use the working titles of Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer and Executive Officer respectively, retaining the names of Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Personal Assistant for civic duties.

These recommendations were put to the full Council in April and approved.”

261.08 TOWN ORGANISATIONS

The following representatives gave a report of the successes and concerns that their organisations have experienced over the past 12 months: -

Chesterton Project (P Langman)

Home-Start Cotswolds Ltd (Ms S Mais)

The Police Authority (Ms V Clousten)

The Civic Society (reported by Councillor G Adams on behalf of the Civic Society)

CHYP (reported by Andrew Tubb on behalf of CHYP)*

Cirencester Chamber of Commerce (D Fowles)*

Action Cirencester (N Robbins)

Apologies were received from: -

Cirencester Archaeological and Historical Society (D Viner)

Cheltenham, Cirencester & Tewkesbury CAB (A Banfield)

*Written reports available

262.08 DISCUSSION PERIOD

David Fowles expressed his concerns regarding the implementation, funding and delivery of the proposed Vision for Cirencester and Community Plan. The matter was discussed and he was advised that this and other matters concerning the future for Cirencester as identified in the Community Plan would be detailed in a deliverable Action Plan.

Peter Langman raised the subject of the Amphitheatre and Obelisk. He was informed about the aims of Rory Young, Sculptor, to restore the obelisk with the help of young apprentices. Martin Portus is also working on this project and is keen to involve the people of Chesterton. Regarding the Amphitheatre, it was advised that English Heritage hope to take part in this year's Heritage Open Day. It is part of the 'Vision' that a footbridge from Lewis Lane leading into the Amphitheatre will be built and a competition could be arranged for architects to design the bridge. The Market and

Coastal Towns Steering Group is providing an overview for the public on 11th May 2008 at the Churn Family Fun Day.

David Fowles requested the up to date position regarding the Norman Arch. He was advised that the Vivat Trust had completed the feasibility study and that work on preparing the cottage for holiday lets was scheduled to commence later in the year.

263.08 CLOSING REMARKS

The Mayor drew attention to the reply slips distributed to the members of public for return to the Town Council and thanked all those who attended, with special thanks to the representatives of the local organisations for their most interesting contribution to the meeting and for all the hard work that they do within the town.

The meeting closed at 8.07p.m.

Councillor Mrs S A Alexander
Mayor