

# **CIRENCESTER TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES** of a Meeting of Council held in the Bingham Gallery and Conference Suite, Bingham House,  
No. 1 Dyer Street, Cirencester, on Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2009 at 7.00 p.m.

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

**Councillors:** Mrs C Braidwood  
P A Braidwood  
A N Curry  
W Helm  
Mrs J Hincks  
R Hughes  
H G C Gray  
Mrs S A le Noury  
A Lichnowski  
D J Nash (arrived at 7.30 p.m. due to Council business)  
Mrs B A Potter  
Mrs M S Rickman

Andrew Tubb – Chief Executive Officer  
Clive Sherwood – Deputy Chief Executive Officer  
Johan Newman – Executive Officer

## **163.09 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Ms K M Yarrow (personal).

## **164.09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None were received.

## **165.09 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor, subject to the letter 'A' being added to the abbreviation at the beginning of the following sentence at Minute No. 141.09 - Police Liaison Panel: -**

**ANPR - An Automatic Number Plate Recognition operation held on 6<sup>th</sup> November resulted in 4 arrests and 60 vehicles being stopped.**

## **166.09 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported that she had attended the following: -

13<sup>th</sup> November - The Churn Project's Thursday Group visit to the Bingham Gallery

14<sup>th</sup> November - Cirencester Scope Ball and the newly refurbished library was opened (at which the Deputy Mayor attended)

19<sup>th</sup> November - Met with the new vicar, Reverend Leonard Doolan

20<sup>th</sup> November - The opening of the Crown Catering Company at Cirencester Business Park. The Mayor stated that in these difficult economic times it was a great pleasure to welcome a new business to the town.

21<sup>st</sup> November - Along with members of the Chamber of Commerce, judged the Christmas window dressing competition ahead of the Advent Festival

Hall 21<sup>st</sup> November - The Cirencester in London Society reception at the Bingham

22<sup>nd</sup> November - The Advent Festival, at which the lights were turned on by Meera Parmar who was the winner of the picture competition and the Chamber of Commerce had kindly presented the Town Council with a framed copy of the winning picture

19<sup>th</sup> November - Following a meeting of Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Council's Accreditation Panel, the Town Council was awarded Quality Council status

25<sup>th</sup> November - Chamber of Commerce dinner and debrief following the Advent Market

26<sup>th</sup> November - Community Lunch with the theme of "Youth", which was a very successful event and will feed into the Our Future Cirencester Community Plan - Action Plan

4<sup>th</sup> December - Visited Paternoster School Council Meeting, along with the Deputy Mayor and the Project Group Chairman. Issues raised by the School Council were discussed and communication will continue

4<sup>th</sup> December - Met with a number of Councillors, together with the Deputy Mayor, at the Abbey Grounds to have photographs taken of the newly refurbished play area

8<sup>th</sup> December - Cirencester Opportunity Group's Annual General Meeting. Wonderful work is achieved by the Group, which raises its own funds and this year managed to break even.

11<sup>th</sup> December - Service to celebrate the work undertaken by the Meningitis Trust. The Trust will be supplying the Council with some small information leaflets to be made available to the public at the Council's Information Point

12<sup>th</sup> December - Cirencester Town Band's "Christmas Cracker"

23<sup>rd</sup> December - Unfortunately, the Mayor was unable to attend the visit to the New Brewery Arts by Prince Charles, as she was ill but understood that the event was very successful

The Deputy Mayor reported that he had attended a lunch at Watermoor Church on Christmas Day, which was organised for the lonely, homeless, elderly and disabled.

## **167.09 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (Standing Order 68 refers)**

The following question was received from Mr D Reid on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2009 along with a similar question asking that no pay rises be awarded but linking that with services provided by the Cotswold District Council as opposed to the Town Council: -

**"Given the recent and ongoing controversy relating to Council pay rises will the Council clarify the situation and tell the public what council employees earned in 'wages' OR salaries, ( including the Town Clerks (CEO) and Deputy Town Clerk's (Deputy CEO's) remuneration) in the year 2008/09 and what, given the proposed pay award those figures will be in 2009/2010. "**

The Council responded as follows: -

"The estimated expenditure for staff wages/salaries in 2008/09 was £327,275. The estimated expenditure in 2009/10 is £349,870. This is in respect of all 17 staff employed by the Council.

The estimated 6.9% increase of £22,595 includes £9,820 in respect of the yet to be negotiated national pay award applicable across all sectors of local government (based on 3%) and £12,775 in respect of contracted increments.

In addition there is an estimated £2,510 added to the budget in respect of an increase in part-time office hours.

The estimated budget for salaries/wages in 2009/10 is therefore £352,380.”  
Mr Reid, present at the meeting, was invited to make a supplementary statement; that due to the economic situation, he very strongly believed that this is wrong time to increase wages/salaries over and above inflation. He believed that the Council was not transparent, as it appeared that the Council covered up the pay rise and urged the Council not to support the increase.

Members noted Mr Reid’s comments.

**168.09 MEMBER PARTICIPATION (Standing Orders 27 to 30 refer)**

No notification of questions was received.

**169.09 PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**a) RESOLVED that the recently considered applications and decisions, under delegated authority to the Planning Committee, made at Meetings held on the 20<sup>th</sup> November, 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and 8<sup>th</sup> January 2009 be noted.**

**b) RESOLVED that the response to the Settlement Hierarchy Topic Paper - LDF Core Strategy consultation be approved as follows: -**

**Q1 Which Option (1, 2 or 3) do you prefer and why?**

Option 2 should be ruled out, Cirencester should be looked at separately.  
Cirencester Town Council Planning Committee agree with Option 3:-

“Cirencester

Major Service Centres

Minor Service Centres (large villages or small towns

Large Villages

Small Villages

Settlements considered as part of countryside, where development will not be allocated through the LDF”

on the basis of maintaining sustainability of all population centres. As always, support will inevitably be taken from one area to give to another but, in all conscience, we feel we would be doing a disservice to small villages etc. if we ignored them.

**Q2 Do you agree with the criteria for Main Towns? Would you like to suggest something else?**

Agree with criteria.

**Q3 Do you agree with the criteria for Key Local Service Centres? Would you like to suggest something else?**

Agree with criteria.

**Q4 Do you agree with the criteria for Small Local Service Centres? Would you like to suggest something else?**

Agree with criteria.

**Q5 Do you agree with the criteria for Major Service Centres? Would you like to suggest something else?**

Agree with criteria.

**Q6 Do you agree with the criteria for Minor Service Centres? Would you like to suggest something else?**

Agree with criteria.

**Q7 Do you agree with the criteria for Large Villages? Would you like to suggest something else?**

Agree with criteria.

**Q8 Do you agree with the criteria for Small Villages? Would you like to suggest something else?**

Agree with criteria.

c) Members considered the approval of the recommended response by the

Planning Committee to the letter received from the Quakers and other churches in Cirencester and the "wider picture" regarding parking enforcement issues as follows: -

"Recommend to Council that a letter be written to the appropriate authorities with a request that free parking be allowed throughout Cirencester between the hours of 9.00 a.m. - mid-day on Sundays.

The suggestion was made that other Churches be contacted to see what they do about parking outside their Churches, before replying to the letter. A Member suggested asking the Police to provide cones which could be put out before each service and taken in afterwards.

It was Recommended that a response be made to the letter when the above replies are received."

**RESOLVED that the matter be deferred for a detailed report to be submitted to the Planning Committee by the Chief Executive Officer on the wider implications and issue as a whole, due to the legalities of the same.**

**170.09 FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED that the draft Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2008 be noted.**

**171.09 CORPORATE GROUP**

Members received the Notes of the Corporate Group Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

The Chief Executive Officer provided a verbal update relating to the Norman Arch Cottage further to a meeting with The Vivat Trust, which was held on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2009. The Council had been assured at that meeting that progress is being made and that a realistic timeline and regular updates on the project would be provided.

**RESOLVED that the Notes of the Corporate Group Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2008 and the verbal report from the Chief Executive Officer be noted.**

**172.09 PROJECT GROUP**

Members received a report (tabled at the meeting) from the Chairman of the Project Group on meetings held on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2008 and 7<sup>th</sup> January 2009, relating to the Chesterton Community Project, City Bank Allotments, Play England - Making Space for Play Funding and grounds machinery.

**RESOLVED that: -**

**a)the report be noted;**

**Chesterton Community Project**

**b)the proposed play area be situated at The Thistle Park, Chesterton;**

**c)the Town Council fund the play area fencing, seating and litter bins;**

**d)the play area be incorporated into the Council's public liability insurance policy;**

**e)the Town Council undertake responsibility for future play area maintenance/safety inspections;**

**City Bank Allotments**

**f)the deferred allotment rent increase be not extended for a longer period;**

**g)in prepared unused plots, they be rotovated and herbicide spraying**

be avoided;

h)the proposal to plant a small orchard on unused land (formerly plots 24 to 29) be considered in conjunction with the City Bank Management Plan - this request to be forwarded to the respective Community Plan Working Group;

i)the Town Council confirms that full size plots which become available can be split in half to accommodate people on the waiting list;

Play England - Making Space for Play Funding

j)the Town Council submits an expression of interest to Cotswold District Council, for funding in respect of Chesterton and Kingshill, no later than 19<sup>th</sup> January 2009, including a brief outline of how the criteria would be met;

k)delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the Project Group, to lead on the bidding process and any detailed submission for funding;

Grounds Machinery

l)the Ransomes TG3400 hydraulic mower be purchased for £21,700 less discount for part exchange of £4,220.

### **173.09 POLICE LIAISON PANEL**

Members received a Briefing Note from the Chief Executive Officer relating to a meeting of the Police Liaison Group held on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2009, which was tabled at the meeting. The Note included updates on the Policing Pledge, spend to-date from Council funding at £18,141, operations that have taken place/planned directly as a result of the funding and current priorities in Cirencester, i.e. anti-social behaviour in the Market Place, anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in North Home Road and anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and speeding in the Thomas Street area.

The Chief Executive Officer also referred to the CCTV system and advised that more information would be available to the public over the next 12 months.

**RESOLVED that the Briefing Note and verbal report be noted.**

### **174.09 SCHEDULE OF ACCOUNTS PAID 1<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER TO 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2008**

Members received a copy of the schedule of payments made for the period 1<sup>st</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008.

**RESOLVED that the payments for the period 1<sup>st</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008 be approved and authorised.**

### **175.09 ESTIMATES 2009/10**

Members considered the recommendation of the Finance Committee that the Estimates for 2009/10 be approved at £643,505.00 and that the precept be levied from Cotswold District Council for the same.

The Deputy Chief Executive Officer made amendments to the figures by adding £5,000 to the Norman Arch income and reducing the Interest income by £5,000.

The Chief Executive made the following statement: -

“Following recent press coverage in the Wilts and Glos Standard, Cirencester Town Council welcomes the opportunity for the 2009/10 budget to have been discussed and commented upon.

The Finance Committee met twice in 2008 to discuss the proposed budget for

2009/10, on October 21<sup>st</sup> and December 9<sup>th</sup>. It was further considered for approval by the Town

Council on January 13<sup>th</sup> when all the relevant factors including the rise of £7.18 per annum for a Band D property were taken into account.

The recommended budget in respect of 2009/10 has been agreed at £749,785. The Town Council receives some income from various sources but unlike county and district councils gets no funding from central government. Taking this into account the council tax for 2009/10 is £643,505 which is an increase per annum on a Band D property of just £7.18 per annum, or about 14 pence per week.

The recent allegations relating to pay rises has been the main focus of attention. Cirencester Town Council confirms that its pay structure is no different to that which is applied in all sectors of local government including many other publicly paid for services.

In administration the Town Council employs 4 full-time and 2 part-time staff and in the grounds service there are 10 full-time and 2 part-time staff.

The 'actual' spend for administrative salaries in 2008/09 is expected to be £163,337; against the estimated budget for 2009/10 of £171,850 this equates to an increase of 5.2%.

The actual spend for grounds maintenance staff salaries is expected to be £172,488 for 2008/09; against the estimated budget for 2009/10 of £180,530 this equates to an increase of 4.7%.

Taking the totals of £335,825 for 2008/09 and £352,380 for 2009/10 the budget increase for salaries/wages equates to 4.9%.

It is important to correct some inaccurate statements made in the press. Firstly the Town Council is the first in the County of Gloucestershire and one of the first in the South West to have received Quality Status under the revised and more rigorous scheme, launched in 2008. Secondly staff, have not, and do not award themselves pay rises. The local government pay award is negotiated and settled nationally. Lastly, for avoidance of doubt, Councillors on Cirencester Town Council do not get paid an allowance but give of their time and energy for the community out of regard for the common good.

Members of the public and press are welcome to attend our meetings and local residents are afforded the opportunity to speak at both Council and Committee meetings on any matter being discussed at that meeting. All you need to do is to notify the office by 5pm on the day before the meeting with your name, address and the matter on the agenda you wish to speak about. The meeting dates and agendas can be found on our noticeboards throughout the town, on the website and by visiting our Customer Information Point at Dyer House between the hours of 9am and 3pm Monday to Friday.

Information about our meetings and the services we provide locally is also available in the quarterly newsletter which is delivered to local residents.

We extend a welcome to all future meetings of the Council and its Committees and in particular to the Annual Meeting of the Town being held on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April at 7pm in the Bingham Gallery and Conference Suite at Bingham House, Dyer Street."

**RESOLVED that the Estimates for 2009/10 be approved at £643,505.00 and that the precept be levied from Cotswold District Council for the same.**

## **176.09 OUR FUTURE CIRENCESTER AND THE VISION UPDATE**

Further to a meeting of the 'Our Future Cirencester' - Community Plan Steering Group held on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Councillor A Lichnowski, Chairman of the Steering Group, advised that works were in progress and gave an update as follows: -

Councillor Lichnowski advised that following the support obtained from Rural Renaissance for the Cirencester Local Project, Hyder Consulting has held business consultation workshops in December for the local business community and there will be a further two events on 29<sup>th</sup> January.

"Planning For Real" exercises engaging the general public and organisations by looking at the streetscape and street furniture provision were to be held and discussions with organisations and interested parties continued.

Proposals on delivering the Plan are to be provided by the respective Working Groups by the end of March 2009.

The Chief Executive Officer advised that there was nothing to report at this time on the District Council's Vision work for Cirencester, as the next meeting was scheduled to take place in the coming weeks.

**RESOLVED that the report be noted.**

## **177.09 PUBLICATION OF CANDIDATES' ADDRESSES AT UK PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS CONSULTATION**

To consider a response to the consultation on whether the addresses of candidates at UK Parliamentary elections should continue to be included on ballot papers and other election documents open to the public.

It was noted that some Members' were of the opinion that candidates should be transparent and all details should be available to the public, but it was also noted that some caution should be identified for the candidates and their families' safety.

**RESOLVED that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive Officer, together with the Mayor, to prepare and respond to the consultation by 28<sup>th</sup> January 2009.**

## **178.09 SHOULD THE VOTING AGE BE LOWERED TO 16? CONSULTATION**

Members considered a response to the consultation on whether the voting age should be lowered to 16 following the Government's Green Paper 'The Governance of Britain (2007)' and the setting up of the Youth Citizenship Commission to examine ways of developing young peoples understanding of citizenship and increase their participation in politics.

It was noted that the Corporate Group had previously considered the same on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2008 and felt strongly that the voting age should not be lowered to 16 and that this should apply to all local elections. Whilst the Town Council has recently introduced a Children and Young Peoples Policy it was considered that the voting age should remain aligned to the mandatory school leaving age i.e. young people remaining in education, training or apprenticeship until the age of 18.

**RESOLVED that the Chief Executive Officer respond to the consultation that the voting age should not be lowered to 16.**

## **179.09 REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES**

Councillor Mrs S A le Noury had attended a meeting of Cirencester Age Concern and reported that the closure of the Pop-in in Cirencester had caused great distress for the elderly, particularly as no suitable accommodation had yet been found. The organisation continued to financially support 13 groups in the area. Councillor Mrs le Noury also attended a Fairtrade meeting, which continued towards Cirencester becoming a "Fairtrade Town".

Councillor A Lichnowski had attended the NALC conference, along with the Chief Executive Officer and Councillor D J Nash, and gave a presentation.

Councillor A N Curry reported that with regard to Cotswold Road Safety Liaison Group, he was delighted that the advanced driving courses on 5<sup>th</sup> February had gained a lot of interest.

Councillor P Braidwood had attended a Safer Cotswolds meeting at which issues in the Beeches, Thomas Street/Open Air Swimming Pool area and the soon to be available portable CCTV camera.

Councillor D J Nash had attended a meeting of the GAPTC and the papers on the same would be made available to the Chief Executive Officer.

## **180.09 CORRESPONDENCE**

a) Council Information Sheet;

Members noted the Council Information Sheet, which was circulated at the meeting.

b) Any other correspondence received in accordance with Standing Order 68g).  
- Letter received from The Reverend Leonard Doolan, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2008, relating to the National Holocaust Day on Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

**RESOLVED that the letter be noted and referred to the Corporate Group to consider ways of offering support for future years.**

## **181.09 MATTERS IDENTIFIED FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

None were identified.

The meeting closed at 8.03 p.m.  
Alexander

Councillor Mrs S A

Mayor