

# **CIRENCESTER TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES** of the Thirty-fifth Annual Town Meeting held in the Bingham Gallery, 1 Dyer Street, Cirencester, at 7.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

**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  
A Lichnowski  
D J Nash  
Mrs B Potter  
Mrs M S Rickman

Andrew Tubb – Chief Executive Officer  
Sally Mason – Customer Information & Administrative Officer  
Mr Stephen Wright MBE – Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town

Councils

Organisation representatives detailed in Minute No. 252.09  
Local residents and press

## **242.09 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs C Braidwood (business), Mrs S A le Noury (personal) and Mrs J Hincks (personal).

## **243.09 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.

## **244.09 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 22<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 2008**

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Thirty-fourth Annual Town's Meeting held on Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.**

## **245.09 MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT**

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

“This has been an exciting year for the Town, with the granting of Quality Council Status and the launch of the Community Plan ‘Our Future Cirencester’.

In September we hosted the Annual General Meeting of the Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum and used the occasion to launch the Community Plan. The four themes and 16 projects have been progressed through the winter months with groups of volunteers working with the Steering Group to prioritise the projects and to plan a way forward. The green spaces in the town, which are very important to people, is one aspect being progressed.

We have provided recreation equipment and a youth shelter in Chesterton, refurbished the Abbey Grounds play area after consulting with children and young people about their requirements and continue to promote St Michaels Park as a venue for picnics, barbecues, games and fitness. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ground staff for all their hard work in

keeping the parks and grounds, including other green open spaces within the town, in good order.

I have continued to visit local schools, along with the CEO/Town Clerk and members of the Corporate Group in order to engage in two way communication with the children and young people of the town. We have held a youth day with students from the college and young people from both the senior schools attending to help us understand their needs and requirements. We also held a youth lunch with professionals in the field attending and, as part of the Community Plan have, with assistance from the District Council's Youth Participation Officer, established Cirencester Youth Town Council.

Communication with the wider community is equally as important and to this end we continue to publish the well received quarterly Newsletter and seek to regularly update and improve our web site.

The economic situation has touched many people within the town and Cirencester has experienced shop closures as national retailers go into liquidation. To mitigate this situation we have, with the Bingham Library Trust, sought to promote tourism, within the town and the local area by holding a 'tourism lunch' and inviting people involved in the business to get together and talk about a way to promote the town. When people can not afford air travel they holiday at home, the Cotswold is a prestigious destination and after all we are "The Capital". We have also held an 'Arts' lunch to promote art and culture within the town, which also helps to make Cirencester a visitor and tourist destination.

As part of the promotion of the town we have attended various conferences and seminars and were invited to speak at a national conference in London on the Energy Neighbourhood initiative, where we are seeking to tackle climate change at a local level.

On the town's behalf I have attended a number of social occasions with my husband, including the Mayor of Gloucester's charity dinner, the Scope Ball and, with my son as consort, the Cirencester Soroptimist Diamond Jubilee lunch. I have judged competitions, opened the Churn Fun Day and attended the induction of the new vicar Father Leonard; I have welcomed new businesses to the town, including the Body Shop and Crown Catering and represented the town at Gloucester Cathedral and at Dean Close School for the County's Guides and Brownies presentation of "Showtime". The Newsletter and web site continue to provide on-going communication with the people of the town and both have been well received.

The Town Council leases its offices and meeting rooms from the Bingham Library Trust and is proud to be associated with the name and legacy of Daniel Bingham which continues its prominence in the town with the opening of the Daniel Bingham Studio at New Brewery Arts, the celebration of the Centenary of the Bingham Hall and the opening of the newly refurbished Cirencester Bingham Library.

As mentioned, Cirencester Town Council has been awarded Quality Council Status, we were the first town in the county, and one of the first in the south west, to be awarded such status under the new revised scheme, we are justifiably proud of this achievement which affirms our commitment to community engagement and a high standard of management and administration. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Chief Executive Officer and all staff for the part they have played in achieving this award.

We look forward, in 2009/10 to building on this achievement, for and on behalf of the local community."

Mr Stephen Wright MBE gave an enthusiastic and engaging speech, followed by the presentation of a Certificate to the Mayor, Councillor Mrs S A Alexander, to commemorate that Cirencester Town Council has been certified as a Quality Town Council.

**247.09**

**FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Councillor Mrs M S Rickman, Chairman of the Finance Committee, gave a report and provided a summary of the budget for 2008/09 as follows: -

“All members of the Council are members of the Finance Committee and there have been three meetings during the year.

A high standard of service has been maintained throughout the year which has cost a Band D Council Tax payer £1.65 per week.

The many services provided include:

- Contributions to the CCTV system
- Flower displays in the town
- Contributions to Christmas lights in the town
- Contributions to fund additional local Police service
- Grant Aid to the Citizens’ Advice Bureau, Cotswold Counselling and other worthwhile organisations which benefit residents of the town
- The Abbey Grounds and St Michaels Park
- Sports and recreation Areas at Kingshill Lane, at Chesterton and Baunton Lane.
- A new play area has been provided in the Abbey Grounds and a Teen Shelter and Multi Goals at Chesterton.
- Specialist reports have been commissioned for the further development of the Kingshill Lane Sports Field.
- Substantial financial support and Officer time to the Community Plan, Our Future Cirencester.

These services, and others, are successful because we are fortunate to have a team of loyal and dedicated staff working in the office and the parks department.

The Council has also made a commitment of £150,000 towards the much needed Market Place improvements which we look forward to.

We believe this represents good value for money and look forward to an equally good year, 2009/2010, with minimal increase in cost to the Taxpayer.

I have thanked the staff, but to end this report would also like to thank the many volunteers who have contributed to the ongoing Community Plan. This would not be so successful without their valuable contribution.”

## **248.09 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. During that time members have been very grateful to Sally Mason who has looked after the technical hardware to ensure we can view clearly the now digitalised applications.

Different ward members comprise the committee so they are able to bring relevant and knowledgeable information about local situations and issues. This helps the Committee to make, what we hope are, practical and well-considered recommendations to the Cotswold District Council.

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

## **249.9 CORPORATE GROUP**

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

“The Corporate Group consists of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairman and Vice Chairman of Finance, Chairman of the Project Group and Chairman of Personnel.

It has looked in depth at the many issues covered by the Town Council over the past 12 months and receives regular reports from the Senior Management Team.

The work programme for 2008/09 included overseeing the drive towards Quality Council Status, development of the Newsletter and Ward Grant guidance. It has also considered a draft complaints procedure, Children and Young People’s Policy and reviewed the Council’s Purpose Statement and Standing Orders.

In addition the Group is responsible for advising the Council on administrative, strategic and policy matters and undertakes the CEO/Town Clerk’s annual and six monthly appraisal, as well as leading on member support and training.

A number of national legislative and policy briefings have been considered and, where appropriate, responses have been provided as part of the consultation with the town and parish sector. It was also a privilege to host a visit from the Larger Councils Development Officer of NALC (National Association of Local Councils) and the GMTF (Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum) AGM.

The Corporate Group now looks forward to 2009/10 when it will continue to support work towards Fairtrade status and the Career Academies initiative led by Cirencester College.”

## **250.09 PERSONNEL 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: -

“This year has been one of primarily overseeing and approving the setting up and implementation of the following policies.

### **Staff Appraisal Policies/Staff Training**

These have been implemented across all areas of the Council staff, with both full years and six monthly appraisals being carried out. The Chief Executive Officer, with the aid of the senior staff, has identified and put into place appropriate staff training including his own.

### **Member Training**

All members have undergone training including some media training and these have been well received by all Council Members.

### **Health and Wellbeing**

This policy has been set up and an additional section, that of hearing tests for all employees, has been amended.

### **First Aid Payment**

It was agreed that all first aiders would be given payment for these responsibilities.

It is felt by the Personnel Group that although this year has been busy implementing these policies and getting them established, the preceding years will be easier and more efficient.”

## **251.09 PROJECT GROUP**

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

### **“Introduction**

The Council’s Project Group has met regularly throughout the last municipal year to consider matters within its Terms of Reference. Much of this work is routine but the following are worthy of note.

### **Abbey Grounds**

The project to modernise and improve the play facilities in the Abbey Grounds has been completed. There are one or two snagging issues still to be resolved but it is anticipated that these will be settled very shortly.

There have been ongoing problems with the drainage for the toilets in the Abbey Grounds. These are to be repaired so that the facilities can re-open before the summer. However, the Project Group believes that eventually new facilities will have to be provided, possibly adjacent to the yard where they will be more accessible to the play area. There could be archaeological problems in this area but we are seeking professional advice before progressing any further.

### **St Michael’s Park**

The flood lighting for the tennis courts are in need of repair, but a decision on this has been deferred until the autumn when the Project Group will consider costs and the available budget before making a recommendation to Council.

### **Kingshill**

The Project Group have given a lot of consideration to further developments at the Kingshill sport and recreational area. Progress on a possible all-weather pitch is being made but it is still some way from realisation. The problems with the wind-powered lighting have proved to be insolvable and the Group is seeking further information and costs with a view to connection to the electricity supply.

### **Chesterton**

Two multi-goals and a teen shelter have been erected at Two Acres with the help of part funding from the Big Lottery Fund. These are proving very popular with local young people who, to a large extent, are 'policing' the area themselves.

The Chesterton Project Group has continued to be active and, with the support of the Town Council and others, has led a number of worthwhile initiatives. The new Chairman, Damien Lyons, met with the Project Group in February and discussed several plans for the future.

### **Recreational Area Sub-Group**

Earlier this year the Group formed a sub-group with the specific task of reviewing all the open space recreational areas under the Council's control. The sub-group has made a number of recommendations for consideration during the next twelve months; details of these are available in the report attached to the Minutes of the Project Group meeting dated 16 March 2009."

251.9

## **OUR FUTURE CIRENCESTER - COMMUNITY PLAN**

Councillor A Lichnowski, Chairman of the Steering Group, gave his report for the past year as follows:

"With the support of Market and Coastal Towns Initiative, the 'Our Future Cirencester' project has been guided by a Steering Group representing a mix of local people, organisations, businesses and local government service providers and an appointed Project Manager. It is based on information gathered together through various consultation exercises and initiatives to understand our community aspirations. In September 2008, Cirencester Town Council adopted "Our Future Cirencester" as its Community Plan. The Plan was broken down into four themes:

A sustainable market town  
A good place to grow up in  
An attractive town to live in, visit & where we can enjoy vibrant culture  
A better place to do business

These themes contained 16 potential community projects relating to economic development, heritage and culture, young people and sustainability. From September 2008 to March 2009, the OFC Steering Group set up four working groups to consider how to take the Community Plan forward in detail and to make recommendations to the Steering Group on how the project should proceed in 2009-2010. The four working groups were Heritage, Business, Infrastructure, and Children & Young People; over 50 volunteers enthusiastically contributed their time and energy to develop the ideas.

Two 'Planning for Real' exercises were conducted, eliciting comments from over 250 local residents. Funding from Rural Renaissance also enabled the commissioning of a 'Cirencester Local' report by Hyder Consulting which undertook a study of local businesses to see how they could co-operate together and improve competition against other urban areas, changes in retail & shopping patterns and internet shopping.

The working groups prepared individual reports on the following topics:

Amphitheatre Strategy  
Heritage Interpretation Strategy  
Festival and Events Strategy  
A Good Place to Grow Up  
Report of the Infrastructure Working Group  
Townscape Strategy

From these a number of projects have been identified for future development:

Cirencester Local Partnership  
Cirencester Local Information  
Cirencester Local Business  
Sustainable Transport Plan  
Young Persons Officer  
Fun Places  
Youth Town Council  
Open Air Swimming Pool  
Living History  
Green Strategy  
Townscape Strategy  
Amphitheatre  
Festivals & Events  
Market Place

A Final Report has been produced that summarises all the above projects and makes recommendations on how the OFC project may proceed in 2009-2010. The Steering Group will now consider this report to guide the prioritisation and delivery of the 'Our Future Cirencester' plan. A request has been made for Volunteers to progress the next phase.

All the information on the OFC Project is available on the Town Council's Web Site:  
[www.cirencester.gov.uk/ofc.php](http://www.cirencester.gov.uk/ofc.php)

Comments on the OFC proposals are very welcome."

## **252.09 2008/09 GRANT AWARDS**

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

Action Cirencester (D Fowles)

Cirencester Chamber of Commerce (D Fowles)

Cirencester Police (Insp. P Offord)\*

Cirencester Housing for Young People -CHYP - (A Coles)

Living Memory Historical Association (P Grace)\*

Corinium Radio (Ms L Young and G Carr)\*

Gloucestershire Chest Fund (B Cooper)

Citizens Advice Bureau (R Newman)

Cirencester Hospital League of Friends (N Whereat)

Cotswold Counselling (Reported by Andrew Tubb on behalf of Ms M Morgans)\*

Apologies were received from:

Impact Youth Service (Ms V Wright)

\*Written reports available

## **253.09**

### **TOWN DISCUSSION**

Mr J Watson, past Mayor, expressed his concerns about the poor location of the Tourist Information Centre and asked that Cotswold District Council find a more suitable position. He also raised the subject of trees within the town, which he feels are suffering from the actions of Cotswold District Council. Mr Watson stated that trees are precious to the environment and without them there will be desert. He believes that education on trees is essential for the future environment.

Mr B Cooper reiterated the need for the Tourist Information Centre to be positioned in a central location.

Mr G J Bartlett, past Mayor, also raised the subject of the location of the Tourist Information Centre. In addition, he stated that there is a lack of signage directing the public to it. On the subject of trees, Mr Bartlett expressed his concern that the trees in Catalpa Square were removed by Cotswold District Council on the grounds of maintenance costs, rather than disease, without any public consultation.

A local resident drew the Mayor's attention to the 'stumps' of street lights at the Forum car park which are labelled as dangerous.

Mr N Whereat, past Mayor, asked why car parking is such a problem in Cirencester and also why the cost is so high when other towns are able to provide free parking.

Mr Bartlett asked Councillor Deryck Nash to comment on the subject of the amount of income that the Cotswold District Council receives from car parking. Councillor Nash suggested that Councillor David Fowles should be contacted in this regard and that Mr Bartlett should put his query to the Cotswold District Council.

Ms M James queried why cars were being parked in the vicinity of the Abbey Grounds and Hereward Road during the day, in a haphazard manner, and was informed that people who work in the area were parking there to avoid paying. She also raised the point that there is dangerous parking at the Waterloo junction traffic lights, near the Wagon and Horses.

In response to a question relating to the Norman Arch and Cottage, it was noted that the Vivat Trust had appointed a Project Manager with the view to progressing the option to lease as a holiday cottage.

The Angling Club Bailiff, John Hacker, raised the matter of residents objecting to car parking at Corinium Gate during angling matches and asked for consideration to be given to parking at the Abbey Grounds depot.

The Mayor thanked the speakers for their input and will make representation to the Cotswold District Council and Gloucestershire Highways concerning the relevant matters raised.

## **254.09**

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

The Mayor 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.

Andrew Tubb, Chief Executive Officer, presented a bouquet to the Mayor, and thanked her, on behalf of the Town and the Town Council, for all her hard work during her term as Mayor.

The meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.

Councillor Mrs S A Alexander  
Mayor