

# Background

The Market and Coastal Towns Association (MCTA) is a new and independent organisation which supports the development of vibrant, healthy and sustainable market and coastal towns across the south west.

Established in October 2004 and supported by a range of regional organisations including the South West of England Regional Development Agency and English Heritage, the Association is charged with delivering the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative throughout the region.

The Initiative is an innovative community based regeneration programme for market and coastal towns and their surrounding areas. It is led by and driven forward by the communities themselves and requires all those involved to think and work differently.

At the heart of the Initiative is the preparation by local people of a long term community strategic plan covering the social, economic, environmental and cultural futures of their towns and surrounding rural area and the provision of support to enable such plans to be implemented.

The Market and Coastal Towns Association delivers capacity building support to assist communities and their partners to,

- Prepare plans for their future covering all aspects of community life in their towns and surrounding rural areas;
- Develop their skills and organisational capacity to be effective partners;
- Share good practice and learn from local, regional, national and international experience;
- Secure funding and professional assistance.

The Association employs five dedicated community facilitators who work across the county areas delivering capacity building support - providing professional information, guidance and training, access to best practice and learning resources and a gateway route to funding opportunities.

Earlier this year, Cirencester Town Council announced that a partnership bid had been successful in securing funding towards a Market and Coastal Towns Initiative.

A "Steering Group" has since been established to represent the interests of those who live, work, visit or go to school/college in Cirencester and is working towards a deliverable vision for the future; to this end a Community Agent is sought.

Cirencester is one of nine partnership towns in Gloucestershire signed up to the market and coastal towns initiative, the others being Cam & Dursley, Cinderford, Coleford, Lydney, Newent, Stonehouse, Stroud and Tewkesbury.

### ***"Our People, Our Place"***

For Cirencester 2007 is a year of new beginnings with a new Council elected in May, three newly co-opted Members in June and a new Town Clerk.

Cirencester is a special place with special people, all of whom should feel valued and enabled to play their part in working together to make the town a clean, safe and vibrant place.

The Town Council takes seriously the needs and aspirations of all and undertakes the role of leadership on behalf of local people and businesses working together not only with the community but also the District and County Council.

The emphasis has to be on working together, in partnership as a community, and it is hoped that through this initiative all will seize this moment of new beginnings to address the issues which need to be addressed and deliver that which needs to be delivered, now and in the future.