

# CIRENCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Council staff have not received a 9% wage increase!**

Following the recent article in the Wilts and Glos Standard, which was also included on their website, headlined 'Council staff get 9% pay rise' it should be noted that the article is both misleading and inaccurate.

The Town Council will respond formally in due course but wishes the following facts to be known.

The pay award for 2009/10 is yet to be agreed, and this is a nationally negotiated agreement.

The 2008/9 pay award has only just been agreed and was recently implemented at 2.45%; the Finance Committee has recommended to January's meeting of the Town Council that for 2009/10 the Council should budget for a 3% pay award. The headline should have really read 'Council budget set for 3% pay rise' (the estimated budget items include "on costs", contractual increments and factors in any extra hours existing staff may work, including office support for "Our Future Cirencester").

13 posts were evaluated in 2008 and the results of this have been implemented within the recommended budget for 2009/10; this process solely sought to ensure that a fair wage was being paid to staff, in keeping with other like jobs in the town and parish sector of local government. The evaluation process was undertaken independently by the South West Provincial Employers organisation.

Despite several re-assurances to the Standard following the introduction of a Senior Management Team structure and new job titles, there were, and have been, no pay awards as a direct result of this.

The Standard was also aware but chose not to refer to the fact that the burden on the local tax payer is reduced as a result of income being received, year on year, from the Bingham Library Trust (approximately £33,900); in addition to income being received from the Charter Market and other revenue generators.

Reference to the 'Our Future Cirencester' Community Plan was also factually incorrect by stating that it was over budget by £20,000; the budget was not overspent, it's just that the Finance Committee has recommended that the budget be increased to £30,000 in 2009/10 so that we can sustain delivery. The Town Council recognises the financial situation that many are faced with at this time but believes it is important to ensure that we do what we can to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the people and place of Cirencester and this is coming through ever more strongly and backed up by the fact that we have in the region of 50 local volunteers working with us to deliver 'Our Future Cirencester'.

We are disappointed that the article made reference to the factually incorrect overspend and stated "while no physical improvements have yet taken shape in the town". The Plan

was launched and formally published in September 2008, we then immediately established working groups, on one of which the Standard is a member, to establish a framework for delivery which are due to report in March 2009.

The Town Council has been proactive in 2008 and has already delivered on aspects of the Plan, including some physical improvements, which have and will continue to be featured in our newsletter.

Being in public service it is important that we do just that, serve the public. If there are any Town Council services that you would like to comment on, positive or constructive criticism, please contact the Customer Information Point at Dyer House, Dyer Street, which is open Monday to Friday 9am - 3pm; alternatively please telephone 01285 655646 or e-mail [administrator@cirencester.gov.uk](mailto:administrator@cirencester.gov.uk)

It should be noted that it is common practice across local government for employees to receive the national pay award plus an increment within a limited bandwidth of grades; additional increments can also be gained, as part of a nationally agreed framework. An example would be where an employee has obtained a post relevant qualification.

If other Town Council's of a similar size and larger are researched it will be noted that it is increasingly common practice to have a Chief Executive Officer CEO at the head of the organisation, it would also be noted from respective budgets that salaries and wages are increased, year on year, by up to 10% thus accommodating the nationally agreed framework.