

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY 17 MAY 2007

PRESENT Councillor Mrs M. Molesworth, Town Mayor (presiding)
Councillor Mrs A.M. Pirouet, Deputy Town Mayor

Councillor	E.L. Bamford	Councillor	Mrs J.C. Fulford
"	M.Z. Bhatti	"	F.G. Holly
"	Ms J.E. Bramwell	"	Mrs C. Littley
"	M.E. Brand	"	Mrs G. Walker
"	N.L. Brown	"	P.W. Yerrell
"	M. Fayyaz		

Officer: W. Richards - Town Clerk

In Attendance:

Police Sergeants S. Buckland and M. Mutch and 58 members of the public, including representatives from outside organisations.

1. TOWN MAYOR'S WELCOME

The Town Mayor, Councillor Mrs Merrin Molesworth, welcomed everyone present to the Annual Town Meeting. She explained that it was usual for the outgoing Mayor to chair the Annual Town Meeting but, as this was an election year, the meeting was scheduled for after the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 14th May .

The Town Mayor gave a brief outline of Town Council's policies and actions during the council year 2006/07. These included:

- Obtaining of £50,000 grant aid for the Meades Water Gardens renovation. Phase I completed.
- Devolvement of services from Buckinghamshire County Council through the 'Getting Closer to Communities' initiative.
- Production and adoption of an Environmental Policy.
- Key partner in the highly successful 'Chesham Heritage Weekend'.
- Attainment of Silver Award in 'Britain in Bloom' competition.
- Production of the Lowndes Park 'Conservation and Management Development Plan' following a £44,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- Took over the management of the outdoor swimming pool to save it from closure.

- Erection of the ‘Welcome to Chesham’ signs at Lucia’s delicatessen.
- Installation of cycle racks in the Town Centre.
- Continued financial support for, and proactive involvement in the tasking of the Police Community Support Officers.
- Record attendance for the Elgiva pantomime ‘Sleeping Beauty – and the Beast’

She indicated that next year’s projects were likely to include:

- Preparation to ensure long term management of the outdoor pool.
- Submission of HLF Lottery bid for the park.
- Continued restoration of the River Chess through the ‘Impress the Chess’ campaign.

On a personal level she stated she was keen to develop and promote the idea of a ‘Cherish Chesham’ theme invoking a sense of civic pride in tidying and cleaning the town.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Town Councillors V.M. Abraham, A.K. Bacon, D. J. Lacey and Mrs P.R. Wilkinson. An apology for lateness was received from Councillor N.L. Brown.

3. MAYORAL AWARD SCHEME

The Mayor gave details on the third Mayoral Award scheme. She explained that much of the work had been undertaken by the previous past Mayor, Councillor Mohammad Fayyaz, and asked Councillor Fayyaz to read the achievement of the nominees.

After announcing and introducing the short-listed nominees, Councillor Fayyaz revealed the winners as follows:

- The People’s Award – the late David McCluney for his work with the local Lions Club and the setting up of various advocacy groups in town.
- Rafe Chiles Young Person’s Award –Adam Sims for his efforts in respect of Chesham Youth Council
- Business Award – Waitrose for supporting local community events.

The Mayor presented all the short listed nominees with certificates and the winners with cheques made payable to their chosen charity.

4. MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 18 May 2006 were agreed and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.

5. MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ON THE AGENDA

There were no matters arising.

6. PRESENTATION ON 'FRIENDS OF LOWNDES PARK' AND POSSIBLE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND BID.

Mr Michael Rowan, Chairman of the Friends of Lowndes Park, gave a brief presentation on the reformed Friends of Lowndes Park. He explained that it is important for the park to have an active 'Friends' group if the Council was considering a large-scale lottery bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. He gave examples of other 'Friends' groups in London that had helped access external funding for parks. He emphasised that joining the group would not be onerous and members could be involved as much or as little as they wished with physical activities around the park.

He advised that he had already recruited 45 people for the group but was seeking a membership of over 100. He gave notice of the group's A.G.M. to be held on the 23rd May 2007 and stated that he would welcome further applications to join.

The Mayor thanked Mr Rowan for his enthusiastic presentation and urged as many people as possible to join the Friends group.

7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Mayor invited questions and comment from the public on matters in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affect the Town. There were no questions or comments forthcoming.

Councillor N.L. Brown arrived at the meeting at 8.35pm

8. POLICING IN CHESHAM 2006/2007 REPORT

Sergeant Steve Buckland gave a brief overview of policing in Chesham for the last financial year.

He reported that reported crime overall had risen by 2% over the last year though, he opined, that crime levels generally for Chesham remained low when compared with other parts of the country. The amount of burglaries for both dwellings and non-dwellings had fallen dramatically over the last year. Regrettably, reported violent crime had increased but, in Sergeant Buckland's view, this was partly due to the fact that domestic violence was being more proactively encouraged to be reported by the victims and that fixed penalty notices were now being issued by the police. Reported thefts of cars had also increased.

In respect of 2007/08, Sergeant Buckland reported that the levels of policing were to be increased with two Area Beat Officers and two Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to be designated for different areas of town. The number of PCSOs would eventually be increased to ten. He further reported that the town would have two sergeants and introduced one of his replacements, Sergeant Melvin Mutch. Sergeant Mutch advised that one of his main tasks would be to tackle anti-social behaviour in the Town Centre though he would be able to

move resources to other potential 'hot-spots' such as Chesham Moor if the need arose. He reported that it was proposed to use a mobile CCTV camera around the Town Centre to detect problems as they developed. A brief discussion then ensued on the effectiveness of CCTV provision in attempting to deter anti-social behaviour.

Finally, Sergeant Buckland reported that it would be his final visit to the Town Meeting as he would be retiring in June. The Mayor, on behalf of all those in attendance, thanked him for his many years selfless service to the town and wished him many years of happy retirement.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

Mr Ian Freeman, Chairman of the Environmental Group, gave a verbal report on the Group's activities for 2006/07. Among the projects successfully completed this year were:

- Major clear-up at Lowndes Park.
- Major clean-up of River Chess by Croxson's printers following sponsorship of a skip and a wood cutting machine.
- Two large-scale clearances of the Pond Park area.

Mr Freeman thanked the Council of its continued support through grant aid and the District Council for its regular removal of litter that the Environmental Group bagged up after collection.

The Mayor offered her congratulations and appreciation for all the works the Environmental Group had done during the financial year and particularly Mr Freeman.

10. TOWN MAYOR'S CLOSING REMARKS

Councillor Mrs Molesworth thanked all those present for their attendance and lively contributions throughout the meeting. She iterated her enthusiasm for being Mayor for the coming year, particularly in light of some exciting projects being planned and looked forward to meeting as many people as possible in her official capacity.

11. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

Town Mayor