

**CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of the TOWN COUNCIL**

held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2010

**PRESENT:** Councillor Mrs J.C. Fulford, Town Mayor (presiding)  
Councillor Ms J.E. Bramwell, Deputy Mayor

Councillor	V.M. Abraham	Councillor	Mrs C. Littley
"	A.K. Bacon	"	Mrs C.M. Michael
"	E.L. Bamford	"	Mrs A.M. Pirouet
"	M.E. Brand	"	M.W. Shaw
"	N.L. Brown	"	C.H. Spruytenburg
"	M. Fayyaz	"	Mrs G. Walker
"	F.G. Holly		

Officers: Mr W. Richards - Town Clerk  
Mr S. Pearson - Finance and Contracts Manager

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M.Z. Bhatti, D.J. Lacey, Mrs M. Molesworth and P.W. Yerrell.

71. **MINUTES**

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.

72. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Fayyaz and Mrs Pirouet declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 in respect of their representation on the Youth Council.

Councillors Bacon, Bamford, Spruytenburg and Mrs Walker declared a personal interest in agenda item 10 pertaining to public conveniences as members of the Chiltern District Council. Councillor Brown declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 10 pertaining to public conveniences as a member of the Cabinet of Chiltern District Council and he left the Chamber during its discussion thereof.

73. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Town Mayor invited questions from the public. No questions were forthcoming.

74. **MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Members had before them and duly noted the list of the Town Mayor's engagements from 17<sup>th</sup> November 2009 – 11<sup>th</sup> January 2010. The Mayor reported that she had been unable to attend the last three listed meetings in January due to the snow.

The Mayor advised she was holding a Public Meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010 to discuss the continued closure of the High Street Post Office. She also encouraged Members to join her at the Wycombe Swan Theatre on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2010 to view a production by 'Shed in the Park', which is the Mayor's chosen charity.

75. **CHESHAM YOUTH COUNCIL**

The minutes of the Youth Council meeting of the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009 were presented and noted. Councillor Mrs Pirouet advised that the proposed events in December had been cancelled due to the poor weather.

*Councillor Bamford arrived at the meeting at 7.37pm*

76. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

It was moved by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Ms J.E. Bramwell and seconded by Councillor A.K. Bacon and

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2009, be received and approved.

77. **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor F.G. Holly and seconded by Councillor Mrs C.M. Michael and

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Development Control Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009, be received and approved.

It was moved by Councillor F.G. Holly and seconded by Councillor A.K. Bacon and

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Development Control Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009, be received and approved.

78. **RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor Mrs A.M. Pirouet and seconded by Councillor A.K. Bacon and

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009, be received and approved and the recommendations be adopted.

79. **JAPANESE KNOTWEED CONTROL**

Arising from *Minute No.70* of the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009, Councillor Brown queried as to whether any progress had been made in possibly sharing clearance with the principal authorities as suggested in the Minutes. The Clerk advised that the Policy and Projects Officer had made queries with both Buckinghamshire County Council and Paradigm Housing but neither had produced a response to make this practicable. Councillor Bamford expressed her disappointment with this and asked for her objection to proceeding with the recommended contractor be recorded.

80. **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor V.M. Abraham and seconded by Councillor C.H. Spruytenburg and

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009 be received and approved and the recommendations, as amended, be adopted.

81. **SECTION HEADS' MEETING**

Arising from *Minute No.46* of the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009, Councillor Abraham reported back on the meeting Councillor Bacon, Councillor Mrs Pirouet and he had held with the officer section heads. He stated that the meeting had been very productive and he had been impressed with the officers' business-like approach and understanding of the Council's finances. Councillor Brown expressed his concern that no opposition Members were invited to this meeting and opined that, in this case, notes of the meeting should have been produced. However Councillor Abraham replied by saying the outcomes of the

meeting were clearly outlined in the report on the estimates about to be considered, thus giving ample time for queries to be raised in advance of the meeting. Moreover it was pointed out that two opposition Members were on the Finance and Trust Working Party charged with looking at medium and long term finances.

82. **MAYORAL PROTOCOL**

Arising from *Minute No.49* of the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009, Councillor Ms Bramwell proposed an amendment to the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Spruytenburg, namely that *'the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor, be authorised to make the minor amendments recommended at Committee, and the document be then adopted'*.

Councillor Ms Bramwell suggested that this document would then set out the expectations for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, particularly enforcing the principle that the Deputy Mayor will, other than in an election year or due to exceptional circumstances, become the Mayor for the following administrative year. This, she opined, would allow for the Deputy Mayor to properly plan for a Mayor-making event if so desired and to accept invitations to civic events received before the Annual Meeting of the Council. Councillor Bacon queried whether this may require an alteration to Standing Orders if adopted and therefore would need to come before a further Council meeting. In response, Councillor Ms Bramwell stated that the document would be adopted as a protocol policy and therefore would not impact on Standing Orders or contradict Council procedure but merely confirm and clarify the roles of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The Deputy Mayor would continue to be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

Councillor Brown stated he would be happy to accept the document if it was confirmed that the other amendments previously proposed, particularly the emphasising of the Mayor's role as being politically impartial, were to be definitely included. After some discussion, the Mayor put the amended resolution to the Council and it was

**RESOLVED**

that the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor, be authorised to make the minor amendments recommended at Committee, and the document be then adopted.

83. **CEMETERY LOCKING UP AND PROCEDURES**

Members discussed the locking up hours for Chesham Cemetery.

Councillor Ms Bramwell opined that it should be remembered that the facility was in fact a cemetery and not a public right of way. As the facility was open 365 days of the year, she expressed her view that opening hours of 8.15am to 3.45pm were quite acceptable, particularly as this would mean no overtime payments needed to be made during normal weekdays. This was agreed by Council. It was noted that the Friends of Chesham

Cemetery had kindly offered to lock the cemetery up later on Friday evenings and Members agreed this option should be followed up to allow one late night visiting times.

In respect of keeping the cemetery closed during adverse weather conditions, it was agreed that the Council's duty of care required for it to stay closed if deemed unsafe by the Parks and Premises Manager. However it was also accepted that the Council needed to improve its communication on this matter both on its website and with the erection of permanent signage to re-enforce this decision.

It was

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the Chesham Cemetery opening hours to be amended from March 2010 to the times agreed by Council, following discussions with the Friends of Chesham Cemetery confirming their offer to lock the facility on Friday evenings during the summer months.
2. That the facility remain closed during periods when deemed unsafe by the Parks and Premises Manager and this be advertised both through permanent signage and on the Council's website.

#### **84. ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS**

The Council discussed the current adverse weather conditions and this and other Councils' response to it.

Members paid tribute to the work undertaken by the Parks and Premises team and the Town Hall Caretaker for their hard work in clearing and salting parts of the High Street although Councillor Spruytenburg expressed his disappointment it took some time before the first clearance. The Clerk responded by saying this was unfortunately due to the ineffectiveness of the salt barrow provided by Buckinghamshire County Council in deep snow. Councillor Brand offered his personal thanks to the Parks and Premises team for its clearance of the car-park which allowed the Christmas Day Party for the Elderly to go ahead. The team was also congratulated for its efforts on filling the many salt bins in town once supplied with gritting material by Buckinghamshire County Council.

Councillor Brand opined that the three tiers of local government had worked well together during this period of adversity and he expressed his hope that this could be built upon. Councillor Brown advised that, as Chairman of the Chesham Local Area Forum, he would be happy to raise this matter at the next meeting.

Councillor Bamford expressed over her concern over the number of pot-holes that had appeared after the recent cold snap and suggested that the Council took the lead in pressing for these to be repaired. Councillor Spruytenburg also queried why the Community Resilience team had not been proactive. In response to the latter comment,

Councillor Brown advised that the team had been active and gave the example of it opening up a community facility to accommodate a stranded coach party.

Other Members also expressed concern on the general lack of information forthcoming from the principal authorities and the tendency for a minority of residents to empty salt bins for their own personal usage.

In light of the comments forthcoming it was agreed that a small working party be set up and meet before the next Local Area Forum so the Council's concerns and priorities can be put forward.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that Councillors Ms Bramwell, Brown, Fayyaz, Mrs Pirouet, Spruytenburg and Mrs Walker be appointed as representatives on a working party charged with compiling a response to the recent adverse weather conditions and the local authorities' actions thereof and forwarding this response to the next Local Area Forum.

*Councillor Brown left the Chamber during the consideration of the next item.*

85. **PUBLIC CONVENIENCES WITHIN CHESHAM**

The Council considered a letter from the Director of Planning and the Environment at Chiltern District Council which set out the District Council's position in regard to the two public conveniences which it manages in Chesham, namely Star Yard car-park and The Moor. It was noted that the District Council was considering the possibility of demolishing them and the option was there for this Council to take over its management of these facilities as a possible alternative to closure.

The Council was unanimous that the facilities should remain open and continue to be maintained by Chiltern District Council and it was

**RESOLVED**

that the Council do not agree to the taking over of the management of Star Yard and The Moor public conveniences from Chiltern District Council.

86. **TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Members considered the proposed Tree Management policy devised by the Policy and Projects Officer and congratulated her on the document. It was agreed that such a policy was needed, particularly in regard to ensuring compliance with the Council's duty of care

to the public. However it was agreed it would be prudent to defer the adoption of it until the Council had determined its position in respect of investing in a digital mapping package which appeared integral to the policy. Members agreed that such a deferment should not result in the delaying of any emergency tree works.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the proposed Tree Management policy be deferred until the Council had determined its position in respect of investment into digital mapping.

87. **COMPLETION OF EXTERNAL AUDIT 2008/09**

The Finance and Contracts Manager had advised that the Audit Commission had been unable to complete the Governance Report in time for the meeting. Accordingly this item was deferred to the next Council meeting.

88. **REVISED ESTIMATES 2009/10 AND ESTIMATES 2010/11**

Councillor Bacon proposed, and was seconded by Councillor Abraham, that the Council levy the precept on Chiltern District Council to the amount put forward originally at the Policy and Resources Committee. It was noted that this figure of £806,390 represented a 2.2% increase on the 2009/10 precept and would result in a Council Tax charge for an average Band D property rising from £94.60 to £96.02 for 2010/11, an increase of 1.5%. This was agreed.

Councillor Bacon also proposed an amendment to the recommendation number four of the officers' report to read that, *'the existing Finance and Trusts working group set up to review future budgets and policies be instructed to devise a proposed balanced budget by no later than 2011/12 and bring its proposals to the Policy and Resources Committee at the earliest opportunity and that this working group be also instructed to make recommendations on the implications of filling staff vacancies as they arise'*. This was seconded by Councillor Abraham and also agreed.

It was

**RESOLVED**

1. That the 2009/10 and 2010/11 estimates be agreed subject to the adjustment for the £3,000 expected October 2009 swimming grant; £1,000 professional fees and other adjustments of £3,245 shown in the officers' report.

2. That that a precept of £806,390 be levied on the Chiltern District Council for the financial year 2010/11.
3. That the revised Renewal and Repairs Programme and Estimated Fund Balances be agreed and the officers be permitted to continue to progress any scheme, or item within a scheme, costing up to £5,000 without further referral to Committee or Council.
4. That the existing Finance and Trusts working group set up to review future budgets and policies be instructed to devise a proposed balanced budget by no later than 2011/12 and bring its proposals to the Policy and Resources Committee at the earliest opportunity and that this working group be also instructed to make recommendations on the implications of filling staff vacancies as they arise.

89. **PAY SCHEDULE NO. 5**

Following consideration of Pay Schedule No. 5, it was

**RESOLVED**

That Pay Schedule No. 5 in the grand total of £288,069.86 be approved and the various payments and transactions set out therein be confirmed.

90. **INFORMATION ITEM**

The item presented on Information Sheet No.15 was received and noted.

91. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

TOWN MAYOR

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