

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the TOWN COUNCIL

held on Monday 22nd February 2010

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

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

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs M. Molesworth, Mrs A.M. Pirouet and P.W. Yerrell.

92. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on the 11th January 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.

Councillor Bhatti arrived at the meeting at 7.33pm

93. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Bhatti declared a personal interest in agenda item 6 in respect of his son's involvement with the Youth Council.

94. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

95. **MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Members had before them and duly noted the list of the Town Mayor's engagements from 12th January – 22nd February 2010. The Mayor reported that she had also attended the following events which had not been recorded:

- Saturday 16th January - attendance at 'Chiltern Music - Live, the Chiltern Baroque Soloists' event at St Mary's Church.
- Monday 1st February – Chairman of Public Open Meeting on the Post Office closure held at Trinity Baptist Church.

The Mayor then announced the death of former councillor and Town Mayor, Mr David Ponting and asked Councillor Bacon to say a few words in his memory. Councillor Bacon said that Mr Ponting had been his deputy in 1999-2000 and then served as Town Mayor during the 2000-01 administrative year. Councillor Bacon paid tribute to Mr Ponting and extolled his commitment to the town and particularly to his residents within the Waterside ward. He said that Mr Ponting had been passionate about the Moor and was proud of the benches he had helped to install there. Councillor Bacon recalled that Mr Ponting had been particularly prevalent in liaising with the Chess Valley Sports and Leisure Association to ensure the Open Air pool operated smoothly for a number of years and recounted his effective negotiation with developers during the time of the Sainsbury's store being built. Finally Councillor Bacon stated that Mr Ponting had been a real character in his opinion, both as a councillor and Town Mayor and had a great affinity for his constituents. The Mayor thanked Councillor Bacon for his kind words and asked for the Council to stand for a minute's silence in memory of the late Mr Ponting which was duly observed.

The Mayor then advised the Council that Councillor Spruytenburg had requested that he may be allowed to say a few words in tribute to the late Mr Shay Comaskey. Accordingly Councillor Mrs Fulford invited Councillor Spruytenburg to address the Council. Councillor Spruytenburg stated that without Mr Comaskey's assistance in allowing the Gamekeeper's Lodge to be the original site for the museum, the Chesham Museum project would never have got off the ground. Councillor Spruytenburg suggested that the people of Chesham owed Mr Comaskey a great debt and he would like that to be recorded.

Councillor Mrs Fulford then reported that she felt duty bound to announce that, regrettably, the High Street Post Office had not re-opened today. She reported that she had spoken to Post Office Ltd. about this and its representative had forwarded her a statement which she duly read out. The statement apologised for the delay in opening and advised that while '*the office is fully staffed and ready to open ... an IT problem which governs all the Post Office systems has delayed the opening*' and further advised that, at this stage, Post Office Ltd. did not have a confirmed opening day. The Mayor opined that, unless the security of tenure for the post office and the associated commercial pressures were resolved, periodic closure would continue to be an issue. Accordingly she stated that she believed the Council should be considering the possibility of providing

premises. This concept was agreed by Members and the Mayor therefore asked for Members to contact the Town Clerk if they wished to be part of a working party to look at this possibility.

Councillor Bamford arrived at the meeting at 7.45pm

96. **CESHAM YOUTH COUNCIL**

The Minutes of the Youth Council Meeting of the 20th January 2010 were presented and noted.

Councillor Mrs Walker opined that it was disappointing that there was more in the minutes about the planned party than possible community, youth-based projects.

97. **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor F.G. Holly and seconded by Councillor Ms J.E. Bramwell and

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Development Control Committee held on 18th January 2010, be received and approved.

It was moved by Councillor F.G. Holly and seconded by Councillor Ms J.E. Bramwell and

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Development Control Committee held on 8th February 2010, be received and approved.

98. **RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor Ms J.E. Bramwell and seconded by Councillor A.K. Bacon and

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 18th January 2010, be received and approved.

99. **PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor M. Fayyaz and seconded by Councillor F.G. Holly and

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Performance Review Committee held on 25th January 2010, be received and approved.

100. **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Arising from *Minute No. 58*, Councillor Ms Bramwell asked that it be noted that she proposed to hire the Elgiva for a funding-raising event rather than a Mayor-making ceremony.

It was moved by Councillor V.M. Abraham and seconded by Councillor F.G. Holly and

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 8th February 2010, as amended, be received and approved.

101. **PURCHASE OF DIGITAL MAPPING SOFTWARE**

Arising from *Minute No. 60* of the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 8th February 2010, Councillor Abraham advised that Pear Technology has revised its quotation and was willing to include the toughened Pocket PC with GPS at no additional cost. Councillor Abraham accordingly congratulated the Policy and Projects Officer for negotiating this.

102. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

It was moved by the Mayor, Councillor Mrs J. C. Fulford and seconded by Councillor Ms J.E. Bramwell and

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Committee held on 22nd February 2010, be received and approved.

103. **TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Members considered the proposed Tree Management policy devised by the Policy and Projects Officer.

Councillor Bamford queried as to whether the recently purchased digital mapping system, integral to the tree management policy, would allow for the mapping of hedges and trees with tree preservation orders on them. The Town Clerk advised that as much as possible would be recorded on the system but would be done over a period of time with the priority being the recording of the Council's trees. In response to a further query from

Councillor Bamford, the Town Clerk confirmed the tree management policy would be reviewed on a regular basis.

In noting that the Council had already agreed to the policy in principle, subject to the purchase of the digital mapping software, it was

RESOLVED

that the Tree Management Policy be adopted.

Councillor Brown arrived at the meeting at 7.55pm and Councillor Mrs Walker left the meeting at 7.55pm

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

The Council received the External Auditor's Annual Governance Report for 2008/09.

The Finance and Contracts Manager explained that the report was substantially complete with one issue currently outstanding which concerned the internal apportionment of central services. It was noted that the officers were currently looking at this and provided it could be resolved, the Council would receive an unqualified report.

It was

RESOLVED

That the annual governance letter be approved and:

- a. That the un-amended adjustments be left un-amended.
- b. That the amended adjustments and value for money conclusion be noted.
- c. That the draft letter of representation be agreed (subject to incorporating a note on the un-amended misstatements) and that the Town Mayor be delegated to sign the letter and final amended Statement of Accounts once agreed with the Auditor.
- d. That the Action Plan be noted and the recommendations be implemented.

105. **REPLACEMENT TREE IN MARKET SQUARE**

Members discussed the proposal to replant a tree in Market Square.

Councillor Bamford, while stating categorically that she was not 'anti-tree', raised a number of concerns on the issue, particularly the matter of branches obstructing lorries entering the Market Square and the encroachment of the branches to nearby buildings. She expressed her preference for some sort of public art/sculpture and opined that there would be considerable local support for this.

The Mayor reminded the Council that the decision to replace the dead robinia tree with another tree had already been resolved at the Recreation and the Arts Committee and the discussion should be only in respect of what sort of tree should be planted and how it would be financed. Councillor Brown added that while a piece of public art had its merits, he did not believe it would be affordable and the Council were better advised to take up the quotation for the planting of a London Plane tree in Market Square and a Flowering Japanese Cherry tree in Lower Church Street as recommended within the report.

The Council was in agreement with this suggestion and it was

RESOLVED

That a London Plane Tree be planted in Market Square and Flowering Japanese Cherry Tree be planted in Lower Church St at the cost of £470 and this to be funded through a combination of the Mayoral Allowance, Buckinghamshire County Council Member's Community Leaders' fund, private sponsorship and Council monies if required.

Note: Councillor Bamford asked that her vote against this resolution be recorded.

106. **PAY SCHEDULE NO. 6**

Following consideration of Pay Schedule No. 6, it was

RESOLVED

that Pay Schedule No. 6 in the grand total of £256,045.26 be approved and the various payments and transactions set out therein be confirmed.

107. **INFORMATION ITEM**

The item presented on Information Sheet No.18 was received and noted.

108. **POW WOW WATER – GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE APPLICATION**

Members considered the late report in regard to a possible response to Pow Wow Water's revised Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence application for the licensing of 10 vehicles as opposed to 20.

The Council was of the view that the same objections it had made at the Development Control Committee meeting of the 7th September 2009 were still relevant and it was

RESOLVED

that the Clerk be instructed to write a letter to the Traffic Commissioner for the Eastern Traffic Area objecting to the revised application re-stating the reasons previously given in the Council's response to the original application.

109. **ROYAL GARDEN PARTY INVITATION**

Before closing the meeting, the Mayor announced that she had received two nominations for Members to have their names put forward to attend the Royal Garden Party in June through the Buckinghamshire Association of Local Councils (BALC). Since only six councillors across Buckinghamshire would be selected to attend, only one nomination from this Council could be submitted. It was agreed that both the nominees, namely Councillor Bhatti and Councillor Brown, were worthy of representing the Council and therefore the name to be put forward should be drawn from a hat. This was duly done and, following the outcome, it was agreed that Councillor Brown be the Member nominated to attend.

110. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

TOWN MAYOR

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