

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY 9 MAY 2013

PRESENT Councillor Mrs C. Littley, Town Mayor (presiding)

Councillor	Mrs P.R. Cherrill	Councillor	C.H. Spruytenburg
"	M. Fayyaz	"	F.S. Wilson
"	Mrs C.M. Michael		

Officers: W. Richards - Town Clerk
Ms K.A. Graves ó Policy and Projects Officer

In Attendance:

Chiltern District Councillor Mohammad Bhatti; Thames Valley Police Area Commander Steve Hockin and 55 members of the public, including representatives from outside organisations.

1. TOWN MAYOR'S WELCOME

The Town Mayor, Councillor Mrs Colette Littley, welcomed everyone present to the Annual Town Meeting.

The Town Mayor gave a brief outline of the Town Council's achievements and actions during the administrative year 2012/13. These included:

- Renovation of the play area at Gordon Road.
- Successful delivery of Town Council door-to-door residents' survey eliciting over 2,000 replies and resulting in 96% of respondents rating the Council as 'satisfactory to excellent'
- Green Flag reaccreditation for Lowndes Park.
- Introduction of all year round swimming at the open air pool at the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre.
- First-class production of the 'Aladdin' pantomime at the Elgiva.
- Installation of environmentally friendly water ionisation system at the open air pool.
- Continued operation of a local produce market in partnership with Transition Town Chesham and the support for a new street market now operating every second Saturday.
- Refurbishment of the Elgiva foyer.
- Active involvement with 'Chesham in Bloom' entry which resulted in the town winning, for the first time, the Thames and Chilterns 'Large Town' category.

Looking ahead to the new administrative year, she highlighted the following proposed projects:

- New skatepark in Lowndes Park
- New digital projector at the Elgiva
- Sixtieth anniversary celebrations of Lowndes Park
- Support for the repairs to the culvert in the Market Square to be overseen by the Environment Agency.

Councillor Mrs Littley then advised that her Mayor's Mayoral Allowance expenditure for 2012/13 had been printed off for tonight's meeting and encouraged anyone interested to take a copy for examination.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Town Councillors A.K. Bacon, Ms R.K. Bhatti, Mrs C.I. Boxer, N.L. Brown, T. Franks, Mrs R. Juett, D.J. Lacey and M.W. Shaw.

3. MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 10 May 2012 were agreed and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.

4. MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ON THE AGENDA

There were no matters arising.

5. MAYORAL AWARDS SCHEME

The Mayor gave details of the ninth Mayoral Award scheme. She offered her thanks to the Council's Policy and Projects Officer and the judging committee for its hard work and thanked the sponsors the Buckinghamshire Examiner, the family of the late Rafe Chiles and the Chesham Chamber.

The Mayor then read out the achievements of the nominees.

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

- *Business Award* ó **yourChesham** in recognition of the way in which this door-to-door magazine and online forum has brought the Chesham community together and got people talking about their town.
- *Rafe Chiles Young Person's Award* ó **Ms AiVan Mac** for her entrepreneurial efforts in opening a new and successful Vietnamese and Chinese restaurant in town with her sister and, in addition to this, helping to organise the highly popular Chinese New Year event at the February street market and joining a volunteer team to develop new markets in town.
- *The People's Award* - **Ms Barbara Richardson** for varied contributions to the town, particularly with older persons, including being a volunteer and trustee of Chesham Museum; active in the Women's Institute; a carer representative for Wycombe Hospital; volunteer in Lowndes Park; the Chairwoman of COPAG since 2007; an active member of Contact the Elderly; volunteer with the Good Neighbour Scheme, providing companionship to isolated, elderly people; volunteer for Dignity in Care and volunteer for the Older People's Christmas Day Party held at the McMinn Centre.

The Mayor presented all the winners and the short listed nominees with certificates.

6. POLICING IN CHESHAM 2012/13 REPORT

Area Commander Steve Hockin gave a brief overview of policing in Chesham for the last administrative year.

Area Commander Hockin started his presentation by giving a brief overview of the changes in policing in the area over the last twelve months, most significantly the merger of the Chiltern and South Bucks policing divisions. He was keen to assure the meeting however that, even though the area was larger geographically, policing of Chesham was still given a high priority and there had been no loss of officers for the town.

He then gave a synopsis of recorded crime in the Chiltern and South Bucks area. Before doing so however he emphasised that the area was one of the safest places to live in the country and therefore the likelihood of experiencing any sort of crime was low. He was pleased to report that burglary was down by 15%; violent crime (excluding domestic violence) by 17% and car theft and vehicle crime down 13%. In respect to the increase in domestic violence figures, he opined that, while such abuse was horrific and dealt with severely by his officers, it was in some ways encouraging that people were starting to come forward and report this abuse as was often not the case previously.

In respect to the coming year, Area Commander Hockin stated there would be a continued emphasis on tackling burglary. He stated that most offenders were local and the police would be proactive in arrests. A similar priority would be given to dealing with domestic violence. Police officers would again be arresting people in respect to this but also tackling through rehabilitation methods such as anger management courses. There would also be a focus on protecting vulnerable young persons. Finally he stated there was a common misconception that the police ignore cannabis and other soft drugs dealing. He stressed that this was not the case and his officers were committed to tackling drugs led criminality. He stated he wished to get the message out that any dealing would result in an arrest.

He concluded by assuring all those present that his style of leading was based around community led policing and not chasing targets and he was committed to building on the success of last year.

The Mayor thanked Area Commander Hockin for his presentation and invited those in attendance to ask questions.

Mr Mick Carling asked the first question, namely whether the police could look to try to reduce the low level anti-social behaviour in the High Street. Area Commander Hockin replied that often simply a police presence was required to deter this and, while he could not guarantee this all the time, if such anti-social behaviour was reported he would try and ensure a police officer and/or police community support officer was despatched to the area.

Councillor Spruytenburg suggested that some local people were reluctant to report crimes in their neighbourhood because of intimidation and enquired whether Area Commander Hockin had any thoughts on this. Area Commander Hockin replied that he was aware that this was an issue and would welcome the opportunity to talk with community groups to understand the exact extent of this and how best it could be alleviated without putting individuals at risk.

Councillor Wilson asked whether the police might be interested in a presence at the proposed Town Centre Hub to compensate for the reduced opening hours of the police station. Area Commander Hockin answered by saying he would always look at involving volunteers to aid policing but regrettably he had no funds or resources to facilitate this.

There being no further questions, the Mayor thanked Area Commander Hockin again and invited him to remain for the rest of the meeting.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

Mr Phil Folly, Chairman of the Environmental Group, gave a verbal report on the Group's activities for 2012/13. Among the projects this year was:

- Work in Captain's Wood by litter picking and joining together with the Chiltern Society in helping to grub out and cut back some of the holly bushes/trees in the wood.
- Planting some 106 tree saplings of six different species, along the bordering hedge in Berkhamstead Field.
- Removal of Himalayan Balsam from riverside habitats.
- In partnership with Newtown Baptists, regular 'Tidy Up Newtown' days, mainly litter picking the streets of Newtown.
- Continued and regular maintenance of the River Chess, working alongside the River Chess Association.
- Active involvement in 'Chesham in Bloom'
- Removal of ivy from the Parsonage Lane wall.

Mr Folly thanked his colleagues in the group and officers at the Town Council and Chiltern District Council. He then paid particular tribute to the out-going Mayor, Mrs Littley, for her excellent support of the group during her term of office and opined that the Council was very fortunate to have her as a Member.

The Mayor offered her congratulations and appreciation for all the works the Environmental Group had done during the administrative year.

8. 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 affects the Town.

Ms Linda O'Sullivan paid tribute to the efforts of Councillor Mrs Littley during her mayoral year and asked whether she could support the Shed@ThePark's sponsored walk scheduled for later in the year. The Mayor replied that her term of office will have ended by then but she would be happy to attend in her own right and suggested Ms O'Sullivan also invite the new Mayor who would be elected on the following Monday.

9. TOWN MAYOR'S CLOSING REMARKS

Councillor Mrs Littley thanked all those present for their attendance and lively contributions throughout the meeting. She congratulated again all the nominees and winners of the People's Award, Young Persons' Award and Business Award. She also stated her appreciation of the

Town Clerk, the Town Council's officers and her family for their support. Finally she wished her Deputy, Councillor Shaw, every future success in his likely role of Mayor in 2013/14.

10. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Town Mayor