

## CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES of the meeting of the POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October 2005

**PRESENT** Councillor V.M. Abraham, Vice-Chairman (presiding)

Councillor C.H. Spruytenburg  
“ Mrs P.R. Wilkinson MBE  
“ P.W. Yerrell

#### In Attendance

Councillors Mrs P.R. Lindsley

Officers: Ms S. Butt - Policy and Projects Officer  
S. Pearson - Finance and Contracts Manager

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A.K. Bacon, Ms J.E. Bramwell, N.L. Brown and P.J. Murphy.

#### 27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In respect of Agenda Item No. 4 – Annual Donations, the following personal declarations of interest were recorded:

Chiltern Racial Equality Council - Councillor P.W. Yerrell and V.M. Abraham.  
Chiltern Dial a Ride - Councillor Mrs P.R. Wilkinson  
Chesham Town Twinning Association - Councillor Mrs P.R. Wilkinson  
Chesham Students and Apprentices Fund - Councillor Mrs P.R. Wilkinson  
Priors Charity – Councillor Mrs P.R. Wilkinson  
Rachael Johnson Trust Education & Eleemosynary – Councillor Mrs P.R. Wilkinson  
W J Standring Bequest – Councillor Mrs P.R. Wilkinson  
Chesham Museum – The Stables – Councillor C.H. Spruytenburg  
Asheridge Vale and Lowndes Community Association - Councillor C.H. Spruytenburg

In respect of consideration of complimentary use of the Town Hall and The Elgiva, the following personal declaration of interest was also noted:

Chiltern District Sports Council – Councillor Mrs P.R. Wilkinson

Before the business laid out before the committee commenced, the Policy & Projects Officer advised that as the committee was not quorate, any decisions made would have to be put forward as recommendations to be ratified at the next meeting of the Council.

28. **MINUTES**

It was

**RECOMMENDED**

that the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2005 be confirmed and signed by the Vice-Chairman as a true record.

*Councillor. C.H. Spruytenburg entered the meeting at 7.40pm.*

29. **ANNUAL DONATIONS**

The Committee gave detailed consideration to the 29 applications from community organisations requesting financial assistance. The report summarised each organisation, purpose of application, grant awarded last year, where applicable, and extent of financial assistance requested for 2005. It was

**RECOMMENDED**

(i) that grants be made to the following organisations:

<b><u>Organisation</u></b>	<b><u>Amount £</u></b>
Amersham and Chesham Hard of Hearing Club	£200
Amersham and Chesham Lions Club	£100
Asheridge Vale and Lowndes Community Association	*£300
	* Subject to receipt of full accounts by Council meeting
The Buckinghamshire Association for Mental Health	£250
Chesham and District Community Association	£200
Chesham Environmental Group	£300
Chesham Evening Townswomen's Guild	£200
Chesham Museum – The Stables	£200
Chesham Old Peoples Christmas Day Party	£200
Chesham Rugby Club	£200
Chesham Sick Poor Fund	£150
Chesham Students and Apprentices Fund	£60
Chesham Town Twinning Association	£400
Chesham Women's Institute	£50
Chesham Youth Centre	£350

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Amount £</u>
Chesham Youth Council	**£400
	**Subject to receipt of further details by Council meeting regarding purpose of trip to Berlin, cost of trip per individual, number of young people going and other sources of funding approached
Chiltern and Beaconsfield Branch of Cruse Bereavement Centre	£100
Chiltern Citizens Advice Bureau Ltd	£950
Chiltern Racial Equality Council	£350
Chesham Older Persons Action Group (COPAG)	£50
Priors Charity	£40
Rachel Johnson Trusts Education & Eleemosynary	£130
RELATE Mid Thames and Buckinghamshire	£300
Unit 78 Sea Cadet Corps (Chiltern Unit)	£500
Vitalise (Formerly Winged Fellowship Trust)	£360
Voluntary Action (Chiltern and South Bucks)	£350
W J Standring Bequest	£40

(ii) that no grant be made to the following organisations where their applications were submitted late:

Chiltern and South Bucks Dial-A-Ride  
Way In (Chiltern and Youth Matters)

(iii) that any balance of monies remaining following the allocation of grants (£430, assuming all the above grants are approved) be kept ring fenced for possible utilisation later on in the year for contribution towards any local organisation or town project that may be brought to the Council's attention for consideration.

The Committee then discussed the matter of complimentary use of the Town Hall and The Elgiva. Details of complimentary use for the 12 months ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2005 were given in the report and noted by Members. Those present endorsed the continuation of complimentary use of the premises to those listed organisations and it was

**RECOMMENDED**

(iv) that the extent of the Council's support to those local organisations in receipt of complimentary use of the Council's premises be continued and that a letter be sent to those organisation in question confirming the extent of the Council's support.

30. **INSURANCE – FIDELITY GUARANTEE**

Members considered the Council’s level of Fidelity Guarantee Insurance and were in agreement that to safeguard the Council from financial risks the level of cover should be increased to £700,000 for an annual cost of £345.

It was

**RECOMMENDED**

that the Council increases the level of Fidelity Guarantee Insurance to £700,000.

31. **BID TO COUNCIL’S REVITALISATION BUDGET**

The Committee discussed details of a bid to the Council’s revitalisation budget to enable the provision of additional cycle racks in the town centre. Whilst those present welcomed the proposal to provide additional cycle racks in the town centre and release the monies from the revitalisation budget to enable their installation, clarification was sought regarding the proposed locations. In the absence of the Town Clerk who had compiled the report and Councillor Mrs J.C. Fulford who had been working on the project, it was

**RECOMMENDED**

that up to £500 be committed from the revitalisation budget to help fund the installation of additional cycle racks in the town centre, subject to clarification of the locations.

32. **CHILTERN DISTRICT COUNCIL’S ON-LINE PLANNING PROPOSALS**

Members considered the report on the District Council’s on-line planning proposals and its implications for the Council’s comments on planning applications. It was noted that the move to on-line planning by the end of the calendar year was a Central Government, ‘Priority Outcome’, e-government requirement.

The Policy & Projects Officer gave a verbal update on the outcome of the discussion held at the recent Town and Parish Clerks Liaison Meeting with the District Council. It was noted that a number of issues and concerns were raised by the Town and Parish Clerks regarding the implementation of the new system.

Whilst the District Council was sympathetic to the many issues that would be faced by the sector in using on-line planning, it was confirmed that there would be no scope for the provision of hard copies alongside the new on-line arrangements either in the short or long term.

To help with the change over, the Policy & Projects Officer explained that the District Council would be providing a statement detailing the minimum specification of the equipment required for the projection option and that workshops would be organised in the near future to show Town and Parish Councils how the system would work.

It was further noted that since the meeting with the District Council, the Policy & Projects Officer had approached the Director of Planning and Environment with a view to providing a laptop with Internet connection at the Town Hall enquiry desk for the public and Members to use to view on-line plans. A response had yet to be received as to whether the District Council would be able to provide such a facility but those present welcomed this suggestion.

Members expressed their concerns about the proposed new on-line planning arrangements and in particular on how the new system will impact on the ability of Members to consider planning applications both prior to and during a Development Control meeting. Members were particularly concerned about the reliance of the new on-line planning system on the use of IT where the Town Council does not provide elected representatives with IT equipment or have the resources to do so. Those present also expressed their concern about the possible impact the new system may have on officer time with preparing Development Control committee papers and explaining the new system to members of the public if the new laptop facility is introduced.

It was accepted that there were no District Council resources to enable the provision of any alternative system to run alongside the new on-line arrangements and that the new way of working would have to be used by officers and Members alike by the 'going live' date of end of November 2005. It was therefore

**RECOMMENDED**

that a District Council officer be invited to a future meeting of the Council to demonstrate the new on-line planning system and that this workshop be opened up to other neighbouring Parish Councils.

33. **BUCKINGHAMSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCIL'S (BALC) AGM**

Councillor Mrs P.R. Lindsley requested that she attend as a representative of the Council. No further nominations were received.

It was

**RECOMMENDED**

That Councillor Mrs P.R. Lindsley attend the Buckinghamshire Association of Local Council's AGM as one of the Council's representatives with any further nominations to be put forward to the Council for consideration.

Note:

In discussing the agenda for the AGM, Members raised the issue of the sudden passing away of Sir Nigel Mobbs KStJ JP, Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant for Buckinghamshire. The Town Mayor, Councillor C.H. Spruytenburg, agreed to send a letter of condolence on behalf of the Council.

34. **FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 6 MONTHS TO 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2005**

The Finance and Contracts Manager presented the financial report for the first 6 months of the financial year. Members noted with interest that all planned expenditure for the remainder of the financial year was forecast to fall within budgets.

Some Members queried how the forecast expenditure for the remainder of the financial year and preliminary budget setting for the next financial year would impact upon the level of precept that would be likely to be levied next year. The Finance and Contracts Manager advised an actual figure was difficult to predict at the present time where budget setting and financial forecasting for the next financial year had just begun. There was difference of opinion as to whether a 5% level of increase was acceptable where some Members reiterated the need to prioritise expenditure and ensure a very small increase whereas others spoke in favour of having a 5% increase to enable some flexibility.

It was

**RECOMMENDED**

that the Report be noted.

35. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

Members duly noted the information items listed on Sheet No. 11.

36. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.56pm.

*Publication date 25.10.05*

CHAIRMAN