

Chesham Action Partnership Inaugural Meeting
Wednesday 24th September 2008 at Chesham Town Hall

In attendance:

Tom Gorsuch (Chairman) – Chesham Society
Kathryn Graves (Minute taker) – Chesham Town Council
Roy Abraham – Chiltern Racial Equality Council
Ken Austin – Chesham Community Vision/Chesham Environmental Group
Noel Brown – Chiltern District Council
Rob Burnett – Bucks Examiner
David Carter – Chesham Society
Daphne Clarke – Chessman & Partners
Rod Culverhouse – FastBreak Sports
Alison Derrick – Buckinghamshire County Council
Mohammad Fayyaz – Anjuman-ul-Muslameen
Teri Floyd – Paradigm Housing
Phil Folly – Chesham Over 50s Positive Action Group
David Gardner – Chiltern District Council
Malcolm Godwin – Buckinghamshire County Council
Sue Gordon – Chesham Museum
Anne Hawkins – Hospice of St. Francis
Nick Hobday – Wendy Fair Markets
Martin Holt – Chiltern District Council
Monica Lawrenson – The New Surgery
Angela Martin – Buckinghamshire County Council, Community Learning Team
Bernard Meldrum – Chesham Society
Merrin Molesworth – Chesham Town Council
Julie Murdoch – Business Link
Kevin Patrick – Chesham Park Community College
Irene Perrin – Shed at the Park
Thomas Pirouet – Chesham Youth Council
Bill Richards – Chesham Town Council
Chris Schwier – Buckinghamshire County Council
Mike Shepherd – Thames Valley Police
Kerry Stevens – Buckinghamshire County Council
Mora Walker – Chesham Museum
Fred Wilson – Chesham Chamber of Trade and Commerce
Hugh Wilson – Buckinghamshire County Council
Peter Yerrell – Pond Park Community Association

Apologies:

Mark Averill - Buckinghamshire County Council
Learie Bacchus – Thames Valley Police
James Benfield – Thames Valley Police
Julia Brammer – Transition Town

Siobhan Bygate – Chesham High School
Caroline Campion – Children’s Centre
Julie Cawood – Chesham Chamber of Trade and Commerce
Andy Clarke – Chiltern District Council
Ian Freeman – Chesham Environmental Group/Chesham Museum
Moira Hamer – Amersham & Wycombe College
Peter Hawkes – Hawkes Publishing
Graham Hull – Chesham Chamber of Trade and Commerce
Cllr Tina Michael – Chesham Town Council
Stephen Moore – Gladstone Road Surgery
Jean Pritchard – Chesham Chamber of Trade and Commerce
Barbara Richardson – Chesham Over 50s Positive Action Group
Michael Rowan – Friends of Lowndes Park
Cllr Gill Walker – Chesham Town Council
Linda Walton – Federation of Small Businesses
Claire Young – Bucks Fire

1. Welcome and Introduction

Tom Gorsuch (TG) welcomed everybody to the meeting and outlined its purpose and the objectives of the proposed Chesham Action Partnership (ChAP).

2. Open Discussion

TG explained that he, along with Bill Richards, David Carter, Fred Wilson and Kathryn Graves had formed a working group to develop the concept of the ChAP and put together a constitution, based upon a successful market towns model. TG invited questions to be addressed to the working group.

In response to a query as to whether ChAP was primarily a way of accessing funding, TG explained that the overall objective is improvements to the town, but that funding is an essential part of this process. Malcolm Godwin stated that many funders require that a community partnership, such as ChAP, is in place and that a community appraisal (in Chesham’s case, the Chesham Community Vision) has been undertaken.

It was questioned whether ChAP would fit under the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Bill Richards (BR) explained that a “bottom-up” group, such as ChAP fits with the community agenda being pushed forward by central government. It is hoped that ChAP will feed into the LAA, Local Area Forum and the revitalisation work of Chiltern District Council.

3. Constitution and Agreement to Proceed

BR outlined the importance of being a constituted group. The proposed constitution is based on one that has been used by a number of other market towns, including Newport Pagnell, and is recognised by central government and the regional development agency.

Concern was raised as to the inclusion in the constitution of the ability to raise membership subscriptions. TG explained that it is not currently intended to raise subscriptions, but it was felt appropriate to retain this power should it be needed in the future, e.g. to cover minimal operational costs.

The geographical coverage of ChAP was considered. Whilst it is intended to work to the boundary of the Great Chesham parish, it is hoped to engage with the villages surrounding Chesham.

A number of amendments were suggested for the constitution. Subject to these amendments and final ratification of the constitution, there was consensus that ChAP should proceed.

4. Elections

BR took the chair and invited nominations from the floor for Chairman. Tom Gorsuch was elected Chairman, Fred Wilson as Vice-Chairman, David Carter as Treasurer and Kathryn Graves as Secretary.

The following people were elected to serve upon the Management Committee: Ken Austin, Peter Yerrell, Mohammad Fayyaz, Noel Brown, David Gardner, Mora Walker, Hugh Wilson, Tom Pirouet and Julie Murdoch. In their absence, Gill Walker (Chesham Town Council), Sheila England (COPAG) and either Geoff Gigg or Anthea Watkins (Paradigm Housing) were proposed as committee members.

5. Examples of Current Programmes

Ken Austin described the recent successful project undertaken by the Environmental sub-group of the Chesham Community Vision working group to produce a series of walks leaflets for the town.

Bernard Meldrum outlined a proposed project by the Chesham Society to replace street trees in Chesham's avenues.

Noel Brown explained that the District Council is involved in new initiatives in Chesham including the set-up of a branch of the University of the Third Age and a pilot social isolation project working with the county council.

6. The Way Ahead

The first meeting of the management committee will be held in October and meeting dates will be circulated in the near future.

TG explained that a web page for ChAP is now live at www.chesham.gov.uk/ChAP.aspx and will contain the meeting minutes in due course.