

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 MAY 2005

PRESENT Councillor M.Z. Bhatti, Town Mayor (presiding)
Councillor C.H. Spruytenburg, Deputy Town Mayor

Councillor	A.K. Bacon	Councillor	Mrs M. Molesworth
"	E.L. Bamford	"	P.M. Murphy
"	M. Fayyaz	"	Mrs P.R. Wilkinson MBE
"	Mrs J.C. Fulford	"	P.W. Yerrell
"	Mrs P.R. Lindsley		
"			
Officer:	W. Richards - Town Clerk		

In Attendance:

Police Sergeant S. Buckland, 4 Police Community Support Officers and 40 Members of the public, including representatives from outside organisations.

1. TOWN MAYOR'S WELCOME

The Town Mayor, Councillor Mohammad Bhatti, welcomed everyone present to the Annual Town Meeting.

The Town Mayor gave a brief outline of Town Council's policies and actions during the council year 2004/05. These included:

- Obtaining Town Parish Status from the Office of Deputy Prime Minister.
- Involvement in the Chesham Festival.
- Headstone safety testing in Chesham Cemetery.
- Installation of Multi-Games Area in Marston Field.
- Support for the town's bid for Fairtrade Status.
- Partnership funding of Police Community Support Officers.
- Involvement in the 'Chesham Community Vision' – the Town Plan.
- Setting up of the Mayoral Awards scheme.
- A financially and artistically successful year for the Elgiva.
- Implementation of a door-to-door house survey on Council services.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Town Councillors N.L. Brown, Ms J.E. Bramwell, Mrs S.M. McEwan, P. Woodburn: Ms V. Phillips, Newton County Infant School, Ms H. Richardson, Cruse Bereavement Care and Ms D. Rutter, Voluntary Action.

3. MAYORAL AWARD SCHEME

The Mayor gave details on the inaugural Mayoral Award scheme he had helped set up with the Bucks Free Press and fellow Members and officers. He stated that he was very proud to have been the catalyst for the People's Award scheme that recognised the many good unpaid works undertaken within the town and had been moved by the dedication and selflessness of all the shortlisted nominees for the award. He also thanked representatives of the Chesham Society and the Chesham Chamber of Trade and Commerce for sitting on the judging panel.

After announcing and introducing the seven short-listed nominees, the Mayor revealed the winner as Mr Bob Fish. Mr Fish had done exceptional work, both within the confines of Voluntary Action and directly with a number of local charities since moving to Chesham. The Mayor duly presented Mr Fish with his certificate and a cheque for £100 to be donated to a charity of his choice.

4. MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 6 May 2004 were agreed and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.

5. MATTERS ARISING NOT COVERED ON THE AGENDA

There were no matters arising.

6. POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS

Sergeant Steve Buckland introduced the four Police Community Support Officers and outlined their responsibilities and designated beat areas. It was noted that their roles were predominantly to assist the police in tackling low-level crimes and anti-social behaviour. The Town Clerk advised that the town had been piloted for the partnership scheme in the County and therefore the Council had contributed considerably less than other parishes who had been invited to pay directly for a Police Community Support Officer.

Following a query from a member of the public on how the Police Community Support Officers were to be monitored, the Town Clerk reported that a number of performance indicators were being devised by representatives of each District's Community Safety Partnerships.

7. 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 affect the Town. The following issue was discussed:

London Underground – Metropolitan Line Service to Chesham

Bernard Meldrum (Chesham Society) reported on the research that the Chesham Society had undertaken in evaluating the perceived degrading of the current service, particularly on the punctuality of through trains coming from, and going to, London. The Chesham Society was of the view that the service could be greatly enhanced by

restoring the Bay Road platform at Chesham and by providing an additional set of points and a crossover west of the existing junction at Chalfont and Latimer. He asked whether the Council would be able to support the Society's campaign to have these facilities installed.

The Town Clerk responded by saying that the Council had already replied to the recent London Underground consultation requesting that the through trains to Chesham be not withdrawn and had indicated that it was prepared to support other improvement measures if appropriate. However, it could not confirm its position on this until more information was forthcoming from the Chesham Society and the Council as a whole had considered the matter.

David Carter (Chesham Society) asked whether the Council could contribute to either of the projects financially. The Town Clerk advised that the Council was legally limited as to what it could contribute monies to but, again, no definitive position could be taken until a more formal request had been received.

The Mayor thanked all those who had contributed to this debate and he stated he was aware that the issue of the train service to London was of great importance to both the Council and the residents of Chesham and the matter would certainly be addressed again.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

Mr Ian Freeman, Chairman of the Environmental Group, gave a verbal report on the Group's activities for 2004/05. Among the projects successfully completed this year were:

- publication of the Chesham Heritage trail in association with the Chesham Society
- re-painting of Victorian railings at Amersham Road allotments
- initial works along River Chess in line with the draft action plan forthcoming from the 'Impress the Chess' campaign including two major litter picks in March and April.

Mr Freeman paid tribute to the various other groups working to improve the town's environment and thanked the Council for its grant to cover insurance and the costs of river waders.

Councillor Mrs Fulford offered her congratulations and appreciation for all the works the Environmental Group had done during the financial year.

9. TOWN MAYOR'S CLOSING REMARKS

Councillor Bhatti thanked all those present for their attendance and lively contributions throughout the meeting. As he was now at the end of his period of Mayor, he stated his appreciation for all those who had supported him during the 12 months, particularly the Town Clerk and Council staff. He offered his thanks to both the Bucks Examiner and Bucks Free Press, especially in regard to the assistance offered for his tsunami fund raising dinner. Finally, he wished the Deputy Mayor every success for the forthcoming year.

10. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Town Mayor