

## **CESHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 18 MAY 2006**

**PRESENT** Councillor C.H. Spruytenburg, Town Mayor (presiding)  
Councillor M. Fayyaz, Deputy Town Mayor

Councillor	V.M. Abraham	Councillor	Mrs P.R. Lindsley
"	E.L. Bamford	"	Mrs M. Molesworth
"	M.Z. Bhatti	"	Mrs A.M. Pirouet
"	M. Bignell	"	Mrs P.R. Wilkinson MBE
"	N.L. Brown	"	P. Woodburn
"	Mrs J.C. Fulford		

Officer: W. Richards - Town Clerk

In Attendance:

Police Sergeant S. Buckland and 53 Members of the public, including representatives from outside organisations.

#### **1. TOWN MAYOR'S WELCOME**

The Town Mayor, Councillor Chris Spruytenburg, 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 2005/06. These included:

- Completed and re-opened the Lowndes Park public conveniences.
- Erection of palisade triple pointed security fencing at the Sunnyside Road boundary wall and the Alma Road entrance gate to complete the fencing for the cemetery in June followed by £20,000 worth of road and paths improvements undertaken in the cemetery
- Obtained Premises Licences for Lowndes Park, Nashleigh Hill Recreation Ground and Codmore Field to allow major community events such as circuses to take place on Council land
- Increased the number of patrons attending live shows at the Elgiva while achieving savings of £29,000 on budget.
- The Trustees of the Little Theatre by the Park (formally the Temperance Hall) and the Council agree on producing a new 21year lease, allowing the Trustees to successfully continue to manage the Council owned building.
- The completed '*Chesham Community Vision*', the town's Market Town Healthcheck is formally launched.
- New multi-games sports area is installed in Woodland View.
- In conjunction with the Allotment Group, ensured that all 203 plots on the Council's 3 allotment sites across town are rented for the first time and waiting list set up.
- In partnership with the Town Centre Consortium, entered 'Britain in Bloom' competition for the first time and obtained silver commendation award.
- Completed a Management and Conservation Plan for Lowndes Park following receipt of grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

He indicated that next year's projects was likely to include:

- The regeneration of Meades Water Gardens and other river improvements as part of the on-going 'Impress the Chess' campaign
- A possible major Lottery bid to regenerate and upgrade Lowndes Park following the recommendations of the Management and Conservation Plan
- A major refurbishment of the Elgiva theatre;
- A possible taking on of devolved services from the principal authorities as part of the 'Getting Closer to Communities' initiative, the possibility of the Council issuing fixed penalties for litter, graffiti and dog fouling through the powers granted to through the new Cleaner Neighbourhood Act.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Town Councillors A.K. Bacon, Ms J.E. Bramwell, Mrs S.M. McEwan and D. J. Lacey; Mrs Cheryl Gillan M.P; Ken Austin, Environmental Group and Ms D. Rutter, Voluntary Action.

## **3. MAYORAL AWARD SCHEME**

The Mayor gave details on the second Mayoral Award scheme. He stated that he was very pleased that the Awards had been expanded this year to include the Business Award and the Young Persons Award and he was particularly pleased to welcome the family of Rafe Chiles who had been instrumental in setting up the Young Persons Award in memory of their son. He also thanked representatives of the Chesham Society and the Chesham Chamber of Trade and Commerce, the Bucks Examiner, last year's winner Bob Fish, the Deputy Mayor and the previous past Mayor for sitting on the judging panel. He similarly offered his appreciation to the Examiner for its sponsorship.

After announcing and introducing the short-listed nominees, the Mayor revealed the winners as follows:

- The People's Award - Reverend Colin Cartwright for works promoting Chesham as a Fairtrade town
- Rafe Chiles Young Person's Award –Lisa Page for works supporting the Pyramid Trust
- Business Award - Chapter One Booksellers for supporting community events.

The Mayor presented all the short listed nominees with certificates and the winners with cheques made payable to their chosen charity.

## **4. MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

In consideration of the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 11 May 2005, Councillor Bhatti requested that his opening comments last year, namely that the length of the Mayor's period of office should be longer than one year in his opinion, be recorded.

The minutes 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. NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION GROUPS (NAG's) - POLICING POLICY**

Sergeant Steve Buckland reported that it had been decided by the appropriate bodies that NAGs needed to be in place in Chiltern by the end of 2006. He advised that Chalfont St Peter was being piloted for this. In Chalfont St Peter, baseline data on crime had been collected, a public meeting held and the public's top three areas for concern had been set as priorities for the area. It was proposed that all Neighbourhood Action Areas should follow this approach and the NAGs would be made up of representatives of statutory agencies and community groups. It was proposed that the NAGs would meet every six weeks and there would be 12 neighbourhoods in the Chiltern area. The NAG areas for Chesham had been agreed and would be based on current electoral wards. There would be three wards in the town and a fourth covering the outlying villages. Each NAG area would have a minimum of one Area Beat Officer and one PCSO, dependent on grading. It was likely that the NAGs in Chesham would commence in early autumn.

Following a query from a member of the public on how the public would get to know who their beat officer was, Sgt Buckland stated it would be down to the police undertaking good publicity. Councillor Brown opined that it would be important to ensure all residents' concerns were addressed not just the few who may attend a public meeting.

On general policing matters, Sgt Buckland advised that squad cars were usually only despatched when a 'crime in progress' report had been received. He stated that he understood that people might feel that uniformed police officers are not visible enough in the community but explained that higher detection rates resulted in greater paperwork which was why the Police Community Support Officers now acted as the 'eyes and ears' for the police.

In response to an observation from Councillor Wilson, Sgt Buckland advised that parking matters were the responsibility of the District Council unless there was an obstruction of the footway, which was normally defined as blocking the progress of a wheelchair or double buggy whereupon it became a matter for the police.

## **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:

### **Potholes in the Highways across Chesham**

A resident raised his concern on the number of potholes across the town. Councillor Mrs Lindsley advised that she had been informed by County Council officers that they were some two or three weeks behind schedule in repairs. Councillor Wilson reminded those present that the reporting of potholes could be done through the 'blue card' system and these cards were available at the Town Hall. The same resident then asked about the possibility of installing speed humps in Vale Road. Councillor Mrs Lindsley replied that it was not usually the policy for the County Council to install them in an

urban area. Sgt Buckland concurred and suggested that the congestion in the area acted as a natural speed restrictor but agreed to report the concerns to the Police's Speed Enforcement Officer.

### **Chesham Museum**

Sue Gordon from the Chesham Museum thanked the Council for its support, both financially and generally. She then made a general appeal for people to provide any spare storage space they may have since the Museum was limited in storage and changed its exhibits every six months.

### **'Chesham in Bloom' Competition**

Gordon Dixon advised that Chesham would again be entering the 'Britain in Bloom' competition and requested that any nominations for the most attractive front garden competition would be gratefully received.

### **Potential Drought Restrictions**

Joy Pearce of COPAG asked whether there were any contingency plans in place to assist the elderly and disabled should water restrictions mean that water is available from standpipes only. The Town Clerk suggested that this was likely to be under the auspices of the Emergency Planning Officer at Chiltern District Council but who endeavour to keep abreast of the situation.

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Mr Ian Freeman, Chairman of the Environmental Group, gave a verbal report on the Group's activities for 2005/06. Among the projects successfully completed this year were:

- Major clear-up at Pond Park in partnership with BCTV, The Pond Park Environment Group and the 'Love in Action' group.
- Anti-graffiti project at the Backs in association with the Police Community Support Officers
- Continued clearing works along River Chess in line with the draft action plan forthcoming from the 'Impress the Chess' campaign.

A brief discussion ensued on the current low water levels within the River Chess and the works the Impress the Chess campaign was doing both in regard to river works and the monitoring of water abstraction.

The Mayor offered his congratulations and appreciation for all the works the Environmental Group had done during the financial year and particularly Mr Freeman.

## **9. TOWN MAYOR'S CLOSING REMARKS**

Councillor Spruytenburg 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 his wife

Barbara and officers of the Council. Finally, he wished the Deputy Mayor every success for the forthcoming year.

**10. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.46pm.

Town Mayor