

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

HELD ON THURSDAY 11th MAY 2017

PRESENT Councillor N. L. Brown, Town Mayor (presiding)

Councillor	A.K. Bacon	Councillor	D. MacBean
"	M.Z. Bhatti M.B.E.	"	R.C. McCulloch
"	Miss E.A. Culverhouse	"	B.R. Whitfield
"	M. Fayyaz	"	F.S. Wilson

Officer: W. Richards - Town Clerk
Ms K.A. Graves – Policy & Projects Officer

In Attendance:

Sgt James Ellis - Thames Valley Police.
42 members of the public, including representatives from outside organisations.

1. TOWN MAYOR'S WELCOME

The Town Mayor, Councillor Noel Brown, welcomed everyone present to the Annual Town Meeting.

The Mayor opened the meeting with the sad news on the recent passing of former People's Award winner, Mr Stirling Maguire, who had been instrumental in restoring the bell to the Council's clocktower. The Mayor announced that it was proposed to rename the bell in his honour as a mark of respect.

He then gave a brief outline of the Town Council's achievements and actions during the administrative year 2016/17. These included:

- Progression of the Local Plan and the Council's responses to various consultations.
- Development and progression of the Parking Review.
- Completion of first full year of taking on the grass-cutting of highway verges and other associated tasks from Buckinghamshire County Council under Devolved Services.
- Active involvement with 'Chesham in Bloom' entry which resulted in the town again winning the Thames and Chilterns 'Large Town' category and retaining the 'Gold' category.
- The Elgiva having an excellent year particularly aided by the new 'bought-in' pantomime from Rare Productions which has guaranteed a sizeable income.
- The Gym and Swim Centre increasing its income despite some significant maintenance issues in 2016/17.
- Involvement in a number of community events over the last 12 months with Town Partners and other groups.
- Development of the Town Partner Scheme. He read out a list of those current various Partners' projects which were helping to deliver the Council's strategic objectives.

He concluded by announcing the Council's Annual Performance Plan had just been published and encouraged the public to view it if they wanted more detailed information in respect to the Council's operation.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Town Councillors A.W. Franks, Mrs J.E. MacBean, M.W. Shaw, N. Varley and S.P. Willmoth.

3. MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 12th May 2016 were agreed and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.

4. MAYORAL AWARDS SCHEME

The Mayor gave details of the eleventh Mayoral Award scheme. He offered his thanks to the Council's Policy and Projects Officer and the judging committee for its hard work and thanked the sponsors, the Buckinghamshire Examiner and the Chiltern Chamber.

The Mayor then read out the achievements of the nominees.

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

- ¶ *Business Award – Joint Winners*
 - Domesco** in recognition of its support for Chesham in Bloom over the last three years.
 - KCS** in recognition of its support for local events, particularly Christmas in Chesham.
- *The People's Award*
 - Mr Paul Jennings** for numerous and active campaigns and initiatives to ensure the River Chess through Chesham and its environs remains clean, free flowing and continues to support a diverse ecosystem.

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

5. POLICING IN CHESHAM 2016/17 REPORT

Sgt James Ellis gave a brief overview of policing in Chesham for the last administrative year.

He began by giving a synopsis of recorded crime in the area. Victim-based crime has fallen by 1.2%. Robbery, burglary, theft and criminal damage have all fallen, whilst vehicle theft and violence against the person have risen.

A year-to-year comparison of burglary offences in Chesham and villages has shown a reduction from 136 to 101; a reduction of over 25%.

By examining the details of the year's violence against the person offences, it has shown a significant number of domestic assaults where the victim is resistant to the police investigation, and/or unresponsive to prosecution. This was being addressed through the IDVA scheme.

He also reported that only one in five calls made to the police are to report a crime. Concerns for a person's welfare and reports of missing people are common examples of this 'hidden' demand on police resources.

Sgt Ellis then gave details on upcoming local priorities for the police. These priorities are:

- Tackling Anti-Social Use of Vehicles – unregistered mopeds and scramblers.
- Traffic Enforcement – Speeding, Parking, Seatbelts, Mobile phones etc.
- Acquisitive Crime in Rural Areas – Burglary and other theft.

He explained that these priorities were set through public consultation at various events throughout the year.

Sgt Ellis concluded by explaining in a little more detail on the new policing structure with its 'Problem Solving Team' which was designed to be a more agile means in tackling the priority problems in the policing area with geographic officers allowing the police to retain local knowledge and community contacts.

The Mayor thanked him for his presentation and then Sgt Ellis proceeded to answer a number of crime and disorder/community safety questions from the members of public and Members in attendance.

6. CHESHAM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

Mr Phil Folly, Chairman of the Chesham Environmental Group, gave a verbal report on the Group's activities for 2016/17. Among the projects this year were:

- Ñ Coppicing and cutting back undergrowth in Meades Water Gardens.
- Ñ Monthly River Fly monitoring; River Chess flow monitoring; undertaking water vole surveys.
- Ñ Litter-pick Captains Wood and bridleways clearance.
- Ñ Assisting the Town Council with its new Devolved Services, most notably cutting back of hedge in Bellingdon Road spur and Cameron Road.
- Ñ Planting of daffodils in Cameron Road.
- Ñ Assistance offered to Chiltern Society in respect to its recent purchase and installation of bird boxes in Captain's Wood and Meades Water Gardens.
- Ñ Active involvement in 'Chesham in Bloom'

Mr Folly thanked his colleagues in the group and officers at the Town Council, particularly the new Parks and Premises Manager, Mr Paul Isom, and Chiltern District Council.

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

7. CHESHAM MUSEUM

Mr Nigel Brand from Chesham Museum briefly updated the meeting on its future. He reported that it was closing its doors on the 28th June and be vacating its current location in the Market Square in August.

He explained that conversations were on-going in respect to finding a new location and, in the meantime, the Museum would be promoting itself numerous walks and talks; a table on market

days and retaining its strong brand image. He concluded by saying he was confident that the Museum would survive, not least because of its committed number of volunteers.

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.

Mr Trevor Brawn from the Chesham and District Natural History Society asked whether the Council could be proactive on the need to save water, not least because of the effect abstraction was having on the River Chess. The Mayor replied that the Council had a strong environmental policy and therefore it would do what it could in this respect.

A concern was raised about the uncovering of an old culvert and the quantity of water present on the building site of the new development on the corner of Amersham Road and Moor Road and a question was raised on the planning application process thereof. The Mayor reminded the meeting that, unfortunately, the determining of planning applications was not a responsibility of the Town Council but rather Chiltern District Council.

A question was asked as to whether the number of direct trains from London to Chesham had been reduced. Councillor McCulloch, as the Council's representative on the Chesham and District Transport Users' Group, responded by saying that, while he was not aware of timetable changes per se, he was cognisant of the fact that ad hoc changes were made in favour of journeys to Amersham. He advised that the Group was remaining vigilant in this matter with a view to lodging a complaint to TfL.

9. PAST MAYOR'S BADGE

The Mayor reported that when Past Mayors' Badges were handed out this time last year, former Mayor, Mrs Alison Pirouet, was unable to receive hers. Accordingly, Councillor Brown invited Mrs Pirouet to receive hers at the meeting, which she duly did and gave thanks to Councillor Brown for facilitating.

10. TOWN MAYOR'S CLOSING REMARKS

Councillor Brown thanked all those present for their attendance. He also stated his appreciation of the Town Clerk, the Town Council's officers and his wife, Doreen, for their support during the year. He wished his Deputy, Councillor Miss Culverhouse, every future success in her likely role of Mayor in 2017/18.

11. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Town Mayor