

## CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

**HELD ON THURSDAY 10<sup>th</sup> MAY 2018**

**PRESENT** Councillor Miss E.A. Culverhouse, Town Mayor (presiding)

Councillor	A.K. Bacon	Councillor	M. Fayyaz
"	M.Z. Bhatti M.B.E.	"	Mrs J.E. MacBean
"	N.L. Brown	"	R.C. McCulloch
"	Q. Chaudhry	"	N. T. Southworth

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

In Attendance:

PCSO Mike Shepherd - Thames Valley Police.  
39 members of the public, including representatives from outside organisations.

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

The Town Mayor, Councillor Miss Emily Culverhouse, welcomed everyone present to the Annual Town Meeting.

The Town Mayor then gave a brief outline of the Town Council's achievements and actions during the administrative year 2017/18. These included:

- Working in partnership with the Chesham Renaissance Community Interest Company (CRCIC) to help develop a comprehensive Masterplan for the town and specifically development of the Town Centre.
- Completion of the first stage of the Parking Review where parking permits were issued for the town centre residents in September.
- Consolidation and improvement of the Council's Devolved Services programme; the taking on the grass-cutting service from the County Council now in its third year combined with last year's decision to take back the gritting and snow clearance of the High St and Market Sq.
- Introduction of the innovative Wildflower Verges project to encourage a diversity of fauna and flora along some roadsides and open spaces.
- Active involvement with 'Chesham in Bloom' first entry into the national competition and an almost unprecedented Silver Gilt award as a first time entrant.
- Redevelopment of Codmore Pavilion thanks to a £10,000 grant from the Lottery.
- Implementation of a Memorial Rose Garden and Memorial Shrubbery purchase scheme in the Cemetery to provide an ashes scattering service.
- The Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre again increasing its income despite significant periods of being closed during the installation of new boilers.
- Implementation of new website and box office ticketing system at the Elgiva Theatre. The Mayor also thanked retiring Manager, Mark Barnes and Deputy Manager, Moira Little, for their efforts over the last 10 years and welcomed new Manager, David Cooper.
- Continuation of the successful Town Partner Scheme who had helped with delivering a number of community projects and events.

Looking ahead, she highlighted the challenges potentially faced by the Unitary Authority currently being proposed and urged people to respond to the consultation being undertaken on this by the government.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Town Councillors A.W. Franks, M.W. Shaw and F.S. Wilson.

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

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2017 were agreed and signed by the Town Mayor as a true record.

## **4. POLICING IN CHESHAM 2017/18 REPORT**

PCSO Michael Shepherd gave a brief overview of policing in Chesham for the last administrative year.

He began by explaining that, unfortunately, the Thames Valley Police's Sergeant for Chesham was unable to attend tonight's meeting which was why he (PCSO Shepherd) was attending even though he was based in Amersham. However PCSO Shepherd added he had worked in Chesham for several years so was familiar with many of the town's limited crime and anti-social issues.

Specifically for Chesham, PCSO Shepherd reported that burglary of dwellings was down by 7% since the turn of the year. Violence against the person (which covered a wide range of crimes) had risen by 24% but the more serious crimes listed as violence with injury had fallen by 12%. Domestic violence based incidents, by contrast, were up by 40% though this, PCSO Shepherd opined, was likely to be due to more people willing to report such a crime. He also reported that theft from motor vehicles had risen very significantly (43%) and reminded those present of the importance of keeping bags and laptops out of view as well as advising on the 'tool marking' events the police were planning for Chesham to reduce thefts of tools from vans.

In respect to other policing matters, PCSO Shepherd advised that speeding and traffic related offences had been focussed upon and enforcement has been taking place in Chesham and will continue throughout the coming year. Numerous drivers had been issued with fixed penalty tickets, vehicles seized for insurance offences and persons had been summoned to court. At the start of the year, PCSOs conducted enforcement at a local school after numerous complaints regarding parking. After restrictions were imposed, officers issued multiple tickets to parents whilst also educating them about the impact their vehicles could have on the safety of the students. PC Kevin Flint has been helping the community speed watch set up in Chesham and surrounding Villages and it has been noted that there has been proactive deployment of the speed devices and they have had successful results. The Chesham Neighbourhood team had just completed their 3 year accreditation/ refresher for the use of 'speed guns' so there would be more officers out and about with hand held devices educating and prosecuting drivers for speeding offences. He also reported that a further operation will be taking place in June working with the DVLA in order to target untaxed vehicles in Chesham.

PCSO Shepherd then reported that drug dealing had been identified as one of the top priorities for Chiltern. Over the past few months, numerous stop searches, arrests and prosecutions have been completed. Much intelligence had been gained to help target the main offenders, groups

and locations in Chesham. He added that, whilst the Police continue to target Chesham's perceived drugs problem, it is also suspected that offenders travel from out of the area in order to commit drug offences in this town. The Neighbourhood Team was working closely with its intelligence department, other policing areas and outside forces such as Hertfordshire. Recent intelligence suggested that a person in Chesham was drug dealing from his home address. On 4<sup>th</sup> April a warrant was executed under the Misuse of Drugs Act which may lessen the drug dealing problem.

The Mayor thanked PSCO Shepherd for his presentation and invited those in attendance to ask questions and make observations.

Councillor Bhatti queried whether the recent spate of knife related crimes seen recently in London was becoming a matter of concern in Chesham. PSCO Shepherd replied that, while such serious matters would never be taken lightly, he was not aware of any significant knife related attacks in the town.

There being no further questions, the Mayor thanked PSCO Shepherd again and he duly left the meeting.

## **5. CHESHAM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Mr Phil Folly, Chairman of the Chesham Environmental Group, gave a verbal report on the Group's activities for 2017/18. He stated that the group had mainly continued with the projects reported at the Annual Town Meeting last year, most notably:

- 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 Devolved Services.
- Ñ Active involvement in 'Chesham in Bloom'

Mr Folly did report that one new major project had been the clearing of rubbish of Vale Brook Culvert near Topps Tiles and he had been grateful for the support of Wickes in providing bags. He also advised that group's website was back up and running with a new logo after being corrupted and the group now had a presence on Facebook and Instagram.

He thanked his colleagues in the group and officers at the Town Council, particularly the Parks and Premises Manager, Mr Paul Isom, and Chesham Town Council staff generally.

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

## **6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Mayor invited questions and comments from the public on matters in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Town.

Mr Tony Molesworth, from the aforementioned Chesham Renaissance Community Interest Company (CRCIC) updated the meeting on the development of the Masterplan for the town. He explained that the public's response to the consultation undertaken by CRCIC had been

hugely encouraging and the company was now working hard to find a delivery partner to help realise, some, or all of the plans. Following a query in respect to how the Masterplan may fit into the Chiltern & South Bucks Local Plan, Mr Molesworth reminded the meeting that the Masterplan was much more than just about housing and focussed significantly on infrastructure. He opined that the importance of infrastructure should not be under-estimated and this was a message the CRCIC was consistently relaying to the District Council as the Local Plan progressed.

Kate Hutchinson reminded representatives of many groups present at the meeting of the existence of the Chesham Connect online events calendar and that it was an excellent organ for advertising community events across the town, a sentiment the Mayor said she totally concurred with.

## **7. MAYORAL AWARDS SCHEME**

The Mayor gave details of the twelfth Mayoral Awards scheme. She offered her thanks to the Council's Policy and Projects Officer and the judging committee for its hard work and thanked the sponsors, the Chiltern Chamber.

The Mayor then read out the achievements of the nominees.

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

- ¶ *Business Award* – **Wickes** in recognition of its efforts in developing a new garden area in Fullers Close for the Birchwood Scope Home which specialises in residential care for people with physical disabilities and sensory impairment.
- *The People's Award* – **Mr Cliff Davies** for his significant efforts in supporting a number of local causes and charities by providing complimentary printing as well as volunteering for many non-profit making groups, particularly Chesham Stags Rugby Club.

(The Mayor also presented a number of local residents with special certificates of recognition for the help they provided in assisting stranded drivers during the winter snowfalls.)

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

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

Councillor Miss Culverhouse thanked all those present for their attendance. She also stated her appreciation of the Town Clerk, the Town Council's officers and those who had acted as her escorts during the year. She wished her Deputy, Councillor Mrs MacBean every future success in her likely role of Mayor in 2018/19.

## **9. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

Town Mayor