

Minutes of the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** of Buckingham held in Buckingham Community Centre on Wednesday 25th March 2009 at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllr. Howard Mordue – Town Mayor
14 Town Councillors
Andrew Grant – Chief Executive AVDC
Tracey Aldworth – Assistant Chief Executive AVDC
Richard Harrington – Aylesbury Vale Advantage
Ian Reed - BCC
Andy Jones – Thames Valley Police
Parishioners of Buckingham

Also present: Anne Wilson - Town Clerk

1. Apologies for absence

RESOLVED to note apologies were received from John Bercow MP, Councillor Netta Glover – Chairman AVDC, Chris Williams BCC and John Cartwright AVDC.

2. To receive and approve the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 26th March 2008

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 26th March 2009

3. To receive a report by the Mayor of Buckingham and the Chairmen of the different Committees on the work of Buckingham Town Council

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and then gave the following report to the meeting:

The planning committee with the guidance of Cllr Whyte produced after consultation with local groups, the Buckingham Plan which will be incorporated into the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan.

Car parking continues to be a major issue and the council has had discussions primarily to increase the provision of parking places but also to try and keep free parking in the town.

The Town won the Michaelis Cup in the Best Kept Village competition organised by the County Council together with the Sword of Excellence for the highest number of points of any entrant.

During the year we welcomed three new members of staff Anne Wilson as Town Clerk, Chris Wayman as Assistant Town Clerk and Craig Calder as Part Time Groundsman. Also the Buckingham has a new Town Crier Russell Cross and a Town Jester Sam Cross (not related) who paid for his costume himself and has attended several local charity functions.

Last month saw the launch of the Buckingham Bag to help reduce the need for plastic bags. Over 1000 free bags were given away within two weeks.

A major development will be the establishment of Public Toilets in Cornwall's Meadow, extended council offices and a community room once agreement is reached on variation of a right of access with Willowlake Properties.

Although the Environment agency has decided not to go ahead with the flood alleviation scheme north of Buckingham, the Town Council continues to have regular meetings to raise the need of Buckingham to have a proper long term scheme,

The Chairman of the standing committees gave brief presentations on the work of their committees over the last twelve months

4. To receive a presentation from a representatives on their work in 2008/2009

4.1 Buckinghamshire County Council

Ian Reed from Buckinghamshire County Council gave a presentation on the work done by BCC in the town over the last year.

4.2 Aylesbury Vale District Council

Andrew Grant Chief Executive of Aylesbury Vale District Council highlighted the work carried out by AVDC in Buckingham including the proposed bid for funding for flood affected houses.

4.3 Thames Valley Police

Andy Jones of Thames Valley gave a broad overview of the crime figure for the past year and highlighted significant changes.

4.3.1 Neighbourhood Action Group

Cllr. Mike Smith introduced the Buckingham Neighbourhood Action Group explaining that they meet in the town to discuss areas of concern and discuss potential solutions. They work with Thames Valley Police to help improve the policing in the town.

5 To receive a presentation from The Buckingham Partnership on their work in 2008/2009

Andrew Grant as Chairman of the Buckingham Partnership gave an overview of the work of the partnership.

5.1 Buckingham Business Club

John Riches of the Buckingham Business Club gave a short speech indicating the progress made by the group on key topics.

5.2 Buckingham Economic Group

Cllr. Mike Smith highlighted the work of the Economic Group including contributing to the Buckingham Plan and the Buckingham Bag launch

5.3 British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

Susan Le explained that she would be leaving post soon, however, a replacement would soon be in place. She recounted a long list of events which BTCV along with the various friends of groups had undertaken in the past year.

5.4 Aylesbury Vale Advantage

Richard Harrington gave a PowerPoint presentation on the aims and objectives of AVA and how they are looking to work in the town. AVA were looking to spend £100,000 on

surveys/investigations for identifying long term work in the town with possibly £1m of further investment.

6. Presentation of the 'Friend of Buckingham' awards

The Mayor presented the Friend of Buckingham awards to:

Mary and Theodore Conner for their work with adults and disabled children in teaching them horse riding.

Deidre and Mike Hall for their charity work whilst landlords of the New Inn public house.

7. To receive reports by recipients of 2008/2009 grants over £1000

Buckingham Citizens Advice Bureau attended the meeting and gave a presentation of how their grant was spent.

8. Questions from the Residents of Buckingham

The following questions were submitted and written answers were to be supplied after the meeting:

Was there a snow clearance plan for Buckingham in place at the beginning of February 2009? If YES then what was it; why was it not implemented; have the contractors been penalised? If NO why not; is there one now; what is it?

The toilets in Moreton Road have an alarm siren fitted. Has this ever served a useful purpose? Is it possible to modify this alarm so that it is automatically cancelled if the 'disabled' door is opened?

In this town centre there are many lengths of roof guttering choked with grass or otherwise defective. Not only does this mean that the associated properties (probably listed) are in danger of deterioration, but passers-by may get wetter than need be on rainy days. Can the Council and Buckingham Society persuade the landlords to correct this? Note that in Castle Street, opposite Villiers, one pavement level gully has been filled in and at roof level a budliah bush is threatening to topple a parapet to the street below.

Runoff of rainwater from Market Hill (North side) generally flows over the lowered kerb opposite The Whale and streams down the path past Jardines to the pedestrian crossing. Can the AVDC roads engineer be asked to try diverting this flow along the roadway to a gully cover?

By the University, below the swoosh, The Circular Walk crosses a footbridge and loops back under the bridge along the river bank. At the start of the narrows (site of a water-wheel?) the path has been badly mauled by flood waters. Can this be repaired please?

One of the recommendations of the environment of The Town Plan was that there should be improved signage around the town. Has any progress been made in the last two years towards indicators to the parish church? Few visitors to Buckingham will be able to find their way without asking as the church gradually becomes invisible as you get closer to the town centre.

Can the light in Stratford Fields which has been out for 9 months be fixed and why has nothing been done sooner?

Could community police hand out fines to the offenders, and go into schools to teach older children to have respect for Buckingham. Can takeaway firms encourage their customers to put litter in bins – maybe a poster saying they could be fined?

Is anything being done to help Buckingham Athletic Football Club update their clubhouse especially the back which is an eyesore and attracts vandals, graffiti etc. Could they have a grant?

Do we need another betting shop in Buckingham especially in the recession?

On a Wednesday morning I volunteer to help in a shop for 3 hours. I need to park in long stay and I find that I have to arrive early to secure a place in long stay. The alternative sometimes is to park in short stay and then leave the shop within 2 hours. I have noticed on many occasions that people park in long stay in the mornings and are leaving well before 10am, presumably not wishing to obtain a parking ticket in short stay. If everyone had to obtain a ticket whether long or short stay this might alleviate the problem. Unfortunately, the answer to Buckingham's parking problem will not be solved by jiggling the current spaces but providing more additional parking.

What do the council see as the reason for the failure of the Market Hill development to date and how are they planning to overcome this?

Is the Town Council happy with the quality of the Christmas Lights?

Has anything been permanently done to deal with the rat problem by the river?

A further question was submitted by a non-resident and as a result was not addressed.

9. Mayors points for information

There were no further points for information.