

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 28 April 2009, in the Salvation Army Rooms, Commercial Road, Shepton Mallet.

Present: Chairman - Councillor J.D. Bartlett.

Cllrs: Champion, Kinison, Lockey, Lovell, Marvin, Parham, Robinson and Shearn.

Mr Chris Reeves (MDC CCTV Officer). There were 12 members of the public and 1 member of the press in attendance.

The Chairman opened the meeting, welcomed the members of the public, persons providing presentations and Councillors. Emergency evacuation procedures were informed.

1./09 Apologies for Absence – Cllr Inchley, J. Marsh and T. Marsh.

2./09 Towns CCTV Systems – Mr Chris Reeves (Mendip District Council)

Mr Reeves provided a twenty minute presentation starting with an overview to Mendip CCTV which included "What is CCTV" covering areas of Public Space, controlled by the Data Protection Act and Human Rights Act. He considered that it was monitoring and not surveillance and gave history of the growth to the scope of the system covering firstly Frome/Shepton Mallet & Street in the 1990's, followed by Glastonbury & Wells from 2000 to 2003 and consolidation of the system from 2003 to 2008. He also provided supporting information to the Control Room starting in Oct 2003, the Mendip CCTV User Group, the Partnership Service Level Agreement between the "Five Towns" & MDC now renewed from 2008 to 2012, the MDC Scrutiny Review 2007 and the National CCTV Strategy Oct 2007.

He also presented Local Issues covering subjects of monitoring with some 21 hours a week funded by the "Five Towns", the reporting of incidents, the recording of images held for 14 days and their close working partnership with local Police & other enforcement Agencies. He also invited further involvement from community volunteers and requested anyone to come forward if of interest and that he also had a standing invitation to all Cllrs to visit by appointment.

Mr Reeves then provided Incident Statistics by Year as follows;

Year	Wells Control Room Totals	Year on Year % change	Incidents in Shepton Mallet
2003	21	N/a	3
2004	351	Base	98
2005	448	28%	73
2006	667	49%	109
2007	850	27%	114
2008	682	minus 25%	89

Quarterly Statistics were also issued to the "Five" Mendip Towns" via the Mendip CCTV User Group. The number of incident had reduced in number partly due to the credit crunch where the town centre was only busy on one main evening of the week compared with three evenings previously.

Mr Reeves informed that additional cameras cost around £20,000 each to install and then provided the Camera Location Criteria which required justifiable – crime "hot spot" – identified by Police. The required infrastructure included, advantage point with owners permissions, continuous power supplies, connectivity and consideration to heritage issues and also the environment with such matters as security, ambient lighting and also visibility issues such as trees, signs, etc. This criterion is also used to review & decide to remove cameras.

Mr Reeves then explained the resources currently in use which included staff, cameras and the following infrastructure required and the number of cameras by Mendip town's as;

As at 28/04/2009	Fixed	Deployable
Frome	12	0
Glastonbury	7	1
Shepton Mallet	10	1
Street	9	1
Wells	14	0
TOTALS	52	3(5)

The presentation was completed by information relating to possible future areas of development which were a responsive & flexible approach, Fixed cameras being deployed in public space were mainly funded by MDC from their capital budget and deployable cameras which he currently had five are being funded by the Crime Reduction Partnership. Mr Reeves then undertook a further 20 minute questions and answer session with those present which included matters of the type of incidents, the quality of images and the proposal to upgrade to Number Plate Recognition. To other questions he confirmed that the system was monitored for 21 hours per week, with recordings being kept for 21 days, and that even when the cameras were in auto and not being monitored the recordings could still be interrogated and images obtained if the camera had viewed the incident. He also confirmed that he worked with what ever numbers of volunteers were available and that there was a qualified person in charge of the control room along with a suggestion book. Should any of the volunteers have any unresolved issues they could make contact with him-self directly or go through the MDC complaints procedures. Mr Reeves also confirmed that all operatives had been previously CRB checked and also that currently CCTV was not used for petty crime matters such as littering or dog fouling.

The Chairman thanked Mr Reeves for the most informative and interesting presentation which was applauded by all at the meeting. Mr Reeves then left the meeting.

3./09 Minutes

The Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 22 April 2008 were considered for accuracy and content.

Resolve: Proposed by Mr Clive Pearson, seconded by Cllr John Parham, that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting of 22 April 2008 were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

4./09 Matters Arising – No matters were raised.

5./09 Chairman's Report

Year as Chairman

The Chairman informed that her year had been varied and interesting with visits to the other adjoining Town Councils to discuss strategies, policy and projects which affect us all and which had proved most useful.

Police

We have an open invitation to the Police at our full Council meetings. They provide us with update to progress and community initiatives and are always willing to answer questions from both Councillors and the Public. It is so important that we continue to work closely with the Police and other Authorities on matters of public safety and well being. A successful Community Action day was held in June 2008 which was organised and supported by both the Police and Town Council. Arrangement had now been made to meet with the new Sergeant on a monthly basis.

Public Transport

Our gratitude to Mr Clive Pearson for success in instigating and continue to support the additional Bus Service to cover the Ridgeway Estate and for all his support to Council on matters relating to public transport.

Regeneration Schemes

We have had several presentation from Mr Paul Tomlinson who is Mendips 'Conservation Project Officer' not only on the (THI) Townscape Heritage Initiative due to run until 2011, which will continue the previous good work of the successful HERs scheme. He has also carried out positive work to the project to repair the Market Cross, which now has funding in place and work will commence in this current year following which the Market Cross will be transferred into the care of the Town Council as trustees.

Allotments

The Town Council operates and manages 88 allotment plots on four sites within the Town, located at Hitchen Lane which we rent and Whitstone Road, along with two sites just off Allyn Saxon Drive, which the Town Council owns. The requirement and our waiting list for allotment gardens continues and we are striving to expand our allotment provision to satisfy the current requirement.

Planning Applications

The number of application considered this year is 110, a 50% decrease on the previous year. Of the total applications considered throughout the year only 6 of the recommendations (less than 5%) were not in accord with the District Council final decision. The Town Council remains concerned regarding the number of trees being felled especially within the Conservation Areas and also the outcome of enforcement to Planning and Conditions of Planning which is the function of the District Council. The majority of large developments previous provided with permission are nearing completion which included housing to the Tadley Acres Estate and the Bellway development off of Hitchen Lane. Dobbies are to open on the old Tesco site in June this year and an application for 20 new homes has been approved for land off of Maxwell Road.

Town Band Instruments

These have now been transferred to the safety custody and use of Whitstone College.

Collett Park

Day to day maintenance and improvements continue under the current contract which is programmed to operate until 2011. Additional play equipment has been installed for the senior youths under a project initiated by the Shepton Mallet Young Peoples Centre. The Young People have also completed a project to installation of Mosaics to the Park Shelter which was completed last year. CCTV has been piloted in Collett Park and following its success we now have a permanent facility. Saturday 14 June 2008 was our annual 'Collett Festival' which was again a resounding success and our thanks to Cllr Margaret Robinson for continued organisation of the event. This year's event will be held on Saturday 13 June from 11am until 5pm. A number of new trees have been planted within the park in the previous year and we have considerable interest to plant further memorial trees and installation of additional bench seating donated by families within the community in respect of their loved ones no longer with us.

Town Council Structure

This was reviewed in September and the Council now continues to operate with a structure of Full Council, supported by two committees (Planning and Service Delivery) and a Community Development Working Group.

The Cenotaph

The Charitable Trust has been renamed from the War Memorial to the Shepton Mallet Cenotaph Charity and a "caution" placed upon the land which the structure stands has been registered with the Land Registry for future protection. A project to undertake repairs and restoration work was tendered and commence in October 2008 and the final phase of the works to the bronze plaques have been recently completed, all funded by monies from a planning 106 agreement. The Town Council has now taken the lead in an enhancement project to the area around the Cenotaph, the design and specification works have just been tendered. The work which is expected to correct matters of highway kerbing, removal of tarmac to

expose the original plinth and to landscape the surrounding areas with both hard and soft landscape finishes is underway and due for completion in the next year period.

Christmas Lights

The Council has continued to work in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and the existing lighting scheme was completely refurbished in 2008. This now provides a different colour scheme using LED technology lighting which has a substantial reduction in electrical running costs and a much longer lifespan.

Waterloo Road Highway Safety

Following considerable work and lobbying additional illuminated warning signs, road lineage has been completed. The Town Council now fund a Speed Indicator Device which not only notifies speeding traffic but continues to monitor and record data to hopefully further support the Councils aspirations for a pedestrian crossing to support both the infants school and children's centre.

Lido

The Town Council has worked in partnership with both Somerset County Council and Mendip District Council to complete the resurfacing and enhancement of the Lido car park. The project was managed by the Town Council within a budget of £20,000 of which £15,000 was grant funded by Somerset County Council under their Local Initiatives Budget following the support and nomination by our County Councillor Margaret Robinson.

Supporting the Community

We have continued to supported groups, events and projects of all sizes within the community both by lobbying such as to the Shepton Mallet Football Club to their expansion aspirations and by way of continued financial support to valued organisations such as the CAB, TIC and Mendip Community Transport. Of the total sum of nearly £19,000 some £6,626 was provided to support the Town Centre CCTV system, £5,500 to support Heritage Schemes and £6,825 was made by way of grants to local organisations and clubs. We have lobbied to support designated areas of our Town such as the northern end of the Town Centre and enabled to keep the valued one hour free parking provision to the adjoining Great Ostry Car Park.

Future Projects

The Town Council along with partners of Mendip District Council and possibly partners from the private sector are progressing with aspirations for a Civic Hall and Town Council Offices for the Town. We hope that these will be brought forward with more defined plans so that a business case can be worked up which will then enable the practical and financial aspects to be reviewed in-depth before any further decision to progress are made.

The aspiration and work for an extension of the Strawberry Line into Cannards Grave will continue.

We are still pushing for the construction of a Pedestrian Crossing at Whitstone Community College, which will also provide traffic calming in that area.

We will be hosting a Civic Reception in July for our twinning partners Misburg for Germany during their visit to the Town which is hosted by our local Twinning Association.

The Town Council following tight budget restraints has kept the parish rate of Council Tax at an zero increase for the forthcoming year, so budgets are tight but we will strive to support the community in every way possible throughout the difficult economic climate that we are currently encountering.

The Chairman thanked all her fellow Councillors for their continued support and the hard work they do for the Town and not least the Town Clerk who had unfailingly supported her in the role as Chairman. Finally the Chairman confirmed that the current vacancy on the Town Council would be filled with a by-election on the 4 June 2009.

6./09 Financial Report – Audited Accounts April 2007 – March 2008 – The Chairman presented the audited Accounts, a copy of which had been supplied with the Agenda. No questions were raised regarding the Accounts or their supporting notes.

Resolve: That the Audited Financial Accounts (Appendix A) as attached to these Minutes for the Year Ending 31 March 2008 are noted.

7./09 Recreational Ground Trust Collett Park – Annual Report Year Ending 31 March 2009 – The report for the year ending 31 March 2009 was presented as required by Section 45 of the Charities Act 1993. No questions were put.

Resolve: That the Recreational Ground Trust Annual Report (Appendix B) as attached to these Minutes for the year ending 31 March 2009 be approved.

8./09 Shepton Mallet Cenotaph Charity – Annual Report Year Ending 31 March 2009 – The report for the year ending 31 March 2009 was presented as required by Section 45 of the Charities Act 1993. No questions were put.

Resolve: That the Shepton Mallet Cenotaph Charity Report (Appendix C) as attached to these Minutes for the year ending 31 March 2009 be approved.

9./09 Public Forum

Town Centre – Mr Will Dunscombe enquired if the Town Council considered it prudent not to put all the eggs in one basket by supporting just Mr Kevin Newton's proposals and considered that the Town Council should also look elsewhere. The matter was noted.

Crematorium – Mr Derek Warren enquired progress to the recent planning application. It was confirmed that matter would be coming to MDC Committee in June.

Waterloo Road Speed Indicator Devices – Cllr Lockey considered the devices were very small and located in the wrong place and too close to the school entrance. The matter was noted.

St Georges Day – Cllr Lockey confirmed that he had been congratulated by members of the public when he flew the St Georges Flag at the Flagpole but he would like to have seen further support by way of flying the St George Flag from Town Centre properties.

Guy Braga (MDC) – Cllr Shearn recorded thanks to Mr Guy Braga for his services to the Town in his post as Regeneration Officer and wished him all the best for the future as he was leaving the post at the month end. Guy summarised his experience and work in the Town, considering that the Town Centre was an asset to the Town but that the stakeholders and Council's should not get bogged down with specific Town Centre issues and should look more broadly, holistically and in a proactive manner. Big businesses in the Town should be used to drive the Town forward. He considered that the Town was a great place, in a wonderful setting and all should be encouraged to get back to and enjoying the countryside. The historical profile should be raised and the young people as well as the whole community should think big and bold. The Chairman thanked Guy for his work and stated that the matters would be taken onboard.

Public Transport – Mr Clive Pearson confirmed that although recent media coverage had been to cuts in services, the county of Somerset had come off very well with no cuts in mid-Somerset. The new timetable would be out on the 1st June and available from the TIC. All the services out of Wells would continue with no cuts, there were also no restrictions on Bus Passes and that these could also be used on services undertaken by Bakers Dolphin. The main change was positive in that the Ridgeway Estate service would now be undertaken by the Frome Minibus Service who would be using two new low entry vehicles with the same service schedule between Shepton Mallet and Street. There were now five Sunday services between Wells, Shepton Mallet and Frome with an additional four scheduled which would make a total of nine on that day. He further considered that the Town had a damned good bus service and requested support from the community to utilise the services. Finally he thanked the Chairman and the Town Council for their support. The Chairman reciprocated the gratitude which received the applause of all at the meeting.

Mr Pearson then responded to questions raised which included disabled access to public transport. Cllr Parham provided a further thank you to Mr Clive Pearson for his work to public transport in the Town but wished the meeting to be aware that free bus passes were provided by the District Council and were not wholly funded by central government. Some Councils did receive full funding by Central Government but this was not the case in respect of Mendip. The concessionary fares were currently costing Mendip District Council some £600,000 per annum which in plain terms related to 10% of Council Tax being expended for this purpose, so the free bus pass were indeed not free but paid for by the community partly through their local Council tax.

There being no other matters raised the Chairman then concluded Public Forum and thanked all members of the public for their attendance. The Chairman also expressed gratitude to Mr Mike Harris for making arrangements and setting out the hall for the meeting.

Cllr Shearn thanked the Chairman for successfully conducting this and indeed the main Council meetings throughout the year and requested consideration of a second term in office.

The meeting then closed at 8.20pm.

Chairman Cllr J.M. Marsh

Signature_____

_____/_____/2010