



Oundle Town Council

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Oundle Town Council - Annual Town Meeting 2008

Minutes of the meeting of the Annual Meeting of Oundle Town Council held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 30th April 2008 at the Queen Victoria Hall, West Street, Oundle.

Present:

Councillors: P King (Mayor), D Chapple (Deputy Mayor), D Campbell, V Chesser, C Cox (part of meeting), M Crick, C Elliot, L Johnson, N Oakes, G Radcliffe, J Round, T Rouse, G Storr and D Summers

Clerk: Debra Raper

Office Staff: Hanneke Soans and Paul Smith

Caretaker: Maxine Groves

Police: Sergeant Pete Chisholm

County & District Councillor: R Reichhold

District Councillors: D Bateman and P Stearn

East Northants Council Representatives: Jenny Smith and Karen Horner

Members of the public: 73 (approximately)

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm, with refreshments having been served from 7.00pm.

Welcome

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the Councillors of Oundle Town Council, members of the Oundle Town Council staff, District and County Councillors, Police and East Northamptonshire Council Planning and Planning Consultant.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Jeremy and Judy Rusher.

Minutes of the 2007 Annual Town Meeting

It was acknowledged that there were a few minor errors and some incorrectly stated names within the minutes. Following this acknowledgement it was proposed that the minutes be approved as an accurate record of the 2007 Annual Town Meeting.

Proposed Cllr Rouse **Seconded** Cllr Campbell

Town Mayor's Annual Report

Cllr P King delivered his report on his few months of activities and involvement as Town Major, a copy of which was tabled and appended to the master file.

Police Report

Cllr King welcomed Sergeant Chisholm to the meeting.

Sgt Chisholm confirmed he and his team cover 100 square miles which comprises 1 town (Oundle) and 44 villages. He explained the process of how the police priorities are agreed, from consultation with the public to agreement of the priorities at the Joint Action Group. He confirmed the current priorities as focusing on:

- Anti-social behaviour and damage in Oundle;
- Speeding in Stoke Doyle;
- Anti-social behaviour in Nassington.

Sgt Chisholm explained the assets Police had at their disposal via a video clip, and stated that these also included other agencies such as Trading Standards, Fire Service etc.

It was confirmed that crime figures were disappointing compared to previous year showing an increase of 13 dwelling burglaries; however 11 of these relating to one incident. Gwen Hayward (member of the public) asked if the culprit was caught.

Sgt Chisholm advised that there had been a 48% spike in criminal offences, with good results in offenders being prosecuted. He also stated that the crime figures show that thefts from motor vehicles were down 47%. The figures relating to anti-social behaviour show a decline from 13 offences per week last year to an average of 12 incidences per week this year. It was confirmed that there are spikes in activity during school holidays and this is being targeted.

A member of the public asked Sgt Chisholm to clarify if someone gets community service whether this is carried out in the local area. Sgt Chisholm confirmed that this was not always the case and that the local authority needs to request this through the probation service.

Mr Hals asked for clarification as to the duties of the Police, Community Police and Traffic Wardens, asking if the police can deal with parking issues.

Sgt Chisholm explained that due to de-criminalisation Police no longer have the power to deal with people on double yellow lines unless they are causing an obstruction, when they can police the matter.

There being no further questions, Cllr King thanked Sgt Chisholm for his report.

A view from new Councillors

Cllr Dorothy Summers thanked the public for electing her. She also thanked her fellow Councillors for the learning and experience she has had since being elected in May 2007. Cllr Summers stated that she found council life very different to corporate life and that the experience was teaching her patience and the value of discussions and well thought through deliberations and conclusions.

Cllr King thanked her for the insight and invited Cllr Chapple to provide the Finance Report.

Finance Report

Cllr Chapple provided an overview of the financial activity for 2007/08.

John Raper, a member of the public, asked for clarification as to what transfer from reserves actually meant.

Cllr Chapple explained that funds are reserved in order to ensure that project needs can be met and, as and when they are carried out, reserve funds get moved. This also included some Section 106 receipts.

Cllr Chapple confirmed that planned expenditure for 2008/09 is £358,540, which after deducting income, surplus and other funds equated to a precept of £192,000. An overview was provided of the planned expenditure.

Judith Finn, a representative from CHAT, stated that she would like to note a vote of thanks from the CHAT management Committee which without the support from Oundle Town Council would not have survived.

Cllr Chapple was thanked for an informative report by Cllr King who then invited Cllr Rouse to provide the Planning Report.

Planning Report

Cllr Rouse delivered his report, a copy of which was tabled and is appended to the master file. The number of planning applications considered was confirmed, together with the recommendations made by Oundle Town Council to East Northamptonshire Council. Details of some of the applications were expanded upon.

Cllr Rouse confirmed that the Council had been consulted on the Rural North Oundle Thrapston Plan (RNOTP) and that a copy of the Council response was available both at the meeting and from the Council offices.

Cllr Rouse also confirmed that the Council has and is continuing to be consulted on both the Herne Road/Ashton Road and Creed Road developments. He also confirmed that a parking and traffic survey was being planned for the existing infrastructure issues.

A representative from the Delivery Office of the Royal Mail asked if there were any plans to extend the Post Office within the town. Cllr Rouse confirmed that no such planning application had been received.

A member of the public asked what if anything is happening to the boarded up window that used to be Hewitts. Cllr Rouse confirmed that the Town Council objected to an application to replace the old shop front window to residential windows and that this application was rejected by East Northamptonshire Council. As such, the front at present has remained boarded up.

Mr Bob Briggs, a representative from Oundle School confirmed that Oundle School leased the property at The Wharf from Anglian Water and are not connected with the planning application as stated earlier. He confirmed that property developers had purchased the land and it was them that were looking at development.

Mr B Saxby (member of the public) asked if the traffic survey would take into account the additional vehicles that will come from the new developments. Cllr Rouse confirmed that Oundle Town Council will be looking at the existing problem and that Northamptonshire County Council will be looking at the impact the developments will have.

A member of the public asked for clarification as to when the analysis from the questionnaires completed at the recent public consultation at the Drill Hall with Twigden Homes would be available. Jenny Smith advised that the information had not yet been collated but it will be sent to Oundle Town Council as soon as possible.

A further question was raised regarding the independence of the analysis. Cllr King stated that he believed that it would be done professionally and independently and that Oundle Town Council would be happy to release the information to the public once received.

Strong reservations were voiced regarding NCC Highways ability to deal with traffic and parking issues and a question was raised regarding plans to develop new car parks. Cllr Bateman responded and stated that he had hopes for a mini-multi storey car park for the town linked to the X4 bus route to enable park and ride. He envisaged this being situated near the old gas site and advised that he is working with the County Council to obtain real time data regarding the bus stops and buses progress to progress this.

Further questions were postponed until after the update from Karen Horner and Jenny Smith (see next item).

East Northamptonshire Council and Herne Road/Ashton Road Working Party

Cllr King introduced Karen Horner and Jenny Smith who provided an update on the consultations and progress with the RNOTP and the developments planned for the town. Karen Horner confirmed that of the 610 houses planned for Oundle, 200 had already been built and that Oundle Policy 1 which covers infrastructure does not allow for developments until infrastructure issues are resolved.

Jenny Smith provided an overview of the working party looking at the developments planned for the town which included representatives from Oundle Under Threat, Oundle Town Council, District and County Council and the developers. Jenny Smith confirmed that five meetings have been held to date and that the information relating to this and the questionnaires completed will be made available.

Cllr King thanked Jenny Smith and Karen Horner for their input and invited Cllr Campbell to report on the Council's properties.

Properties Report

Cllr Campbell delivered his report, a copy of which was tabled and is appended to the master file.

It was stated that graffiti is a massive problem and a representative from Royal Mail stated that they were in the process of removing this from their property. Sgt Chisholm confirmed that an Environmental crime policy was being developed by the Police which would assist in the enforcement of graffiti removal.

There being no further questions, Cllr King thanked Cllr Campbell and invited Cllr Rouse to report on the Queen Victoria Hall.

Queen Victoria Hall Report

Cllr Rouse delivered his report, a copy of which was tabled and is appended to the master file, and also provided an overview of the refurbishment plans. Cllr Rouse confirmed that the potential dates for the work to start will be in January 2009.

A member of the public asked if the £400,000 cost included grants and funding that the Council may be able to receive. Cllr Rouse confirmed that various sources will be considered, including loans, grants, fundraising and that the figure mentioned was the anticipated overall cost of the project, not the amount that the Council would necessarily need to fund.

A question was raised from the floor regarding the effect on usage of the hall during the refurbishment and if plans exist to re-house users. Cllr Rouse confirmed that there were no plans yet as it is very early days; however all hirers will be advised and assisted where possible.

Cllr King confirmed that nothing was yet set in stone but Oundle Town Council must progress with the work and wherever possible the Council would work and liaise with all users.

Cllr King then closed this item by thanking Cllr Rouse and moved the meeting to the Communications & Liaison Report.

Communications & Liaison Report

Cllr Elliot provided an overview on the way the Council communicates with the town including the use of notice boards, the Oracle, the Town Guide and some of the initiatives in place including improved Information Technology and a new website.

A representative from the Tourist information Centre requested that when the Oundle Town Guide is reproduced that it includes the Town Trail and also that information regarding the Riverside Walks could be made available. Cllr Elliot and King confirmed that they would like to progress this and requested a further discussion after the meeting. They also confirmed that the Town Guide had just been sent to the publishers for the copy to be returned for signoff.

County Council Report

Cllr Rupert Reichhold provided an update on his work at County and District level relating to Oundle and advised that this had predominantly focused on Highways issues. Cllr Reichhold advised that work has been scheduled for the Milton Road verges and also that traffic and parking issues in Benefield Road were also being reviewed. He confirmed his County Councillors Empowerment Allowance was being allocated to Oundle to assist the funding of the parking

and traffic survey needed to ascertain the existing infrastructure issues. Cllr Reichhold closed his report by confirming that he was working with the County Council to ensure that Highways matters were resolved.

District Council Reports

Cllr Philip Stearn confirmed his position as Chairman of the Policy Resources Committee of the RNOTP and that the report is very strong in stating that infrastructure must be in place before further development. He stated that the remaining elements of his report could be found in the Oracle.

Cllr David Bateman wished to keep his report brief and referred the attendees to the Oracle. He stated that he would welcome contacts from the public and is also happy to clear up litter on a Sunday if anyone would like to work with him, to which some people responded positively.

Questions and Answers

John Kendry, resident of Glaphorn Road, asked Cllr Reichhold why traffic calming on Benefield Road was being reviewed but not in Glaphorn Road. Cllr Reichhold confirmed that he was happy to raise this with County and Highways.

Christine Simmons expressed her thanks to the Town Council for the flowers within the town over the past couple of years and confirmed she had money to donate from the old Oundle in Bloom fund towards future displays. She also offered a cheque from her husband and herself to thank the Council and town for being considerate during the disruption within St Osyths Lane Car Park during the build of their retirement home.

A representative from the Royal Mail confirmed that the Oundle Delivery Office will be closed in February 2009 and that a campaign was being launched at a national level to prevent this. He requested support from the town in their efforts.

A statement was made by a resident that he believed the Market Place and West Street should be made into a pedestrian area and also asked Cllr Bateman how many levels the proposed multi-storey car park would have. Cllr Reichhold responded that any alternations to enable a pedestrian area would be a matter for Highways and he would refer the matter to the County Council. Cllr Radcliffe stated that the Association of Trade and Commerce may have a view on this as it could impact on businesses within the town.

Mr B Saxby said that having seen the plans for major development he had reservations and requested that the infrastructure plans for the town were agreed before the developments went ahead. Cllr King confirmed that the Town Council's view was that Oundle needed to stay vibrant and grow but with an infrastructure that can accommodate that growth. He confirmed that the knowledge of the impact of developments was essential and that the Town Council was working hard to achieve this.

Cllr Philip Stearn concurred that the infrastructure must be suitable before any major building developments commence and that this is made very clear within the RNOTP documentation. He stated that his must be fought for by all concerned.

Propositions

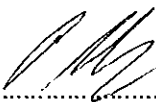
Milton Road Verges – Mrs Gwen Hayward

This item had been covered during the reports above and no further discussion took place.

Any Other Business

None

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Signed:.......... Dated:.....*28/4/09*.....

Following the meeting Mr Eric Reeves approached Cllr Chapple, Deputy Major to express thanks from the town for the work of Oundle Town Council.

A copy of the Powerpoint presentation used during the evening has been appended to the 2008 Annual Town meeting master file.