



Oundle Town Council

The Courthouse • Mill Road • Oundle • Peterborough • PE8 4BW

Telephone: Oundle (01832) 272055

Fax: Oundle (01832) 272122 • EMail: admin@oundle.gov.net • www.oundle.gov.uk

Oundle Town Council – Annual Town Meeting 2009

Minutes of the meeting of the Annual Town Meeting of Oundle Town Council held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 28th April 2009 at Prince William School, Herne Road, Oundle.

Present:

Councillors: P King (Mayor) D Chapple (Deputy Mayor), D Campbell, V Chesser, M Crick, L Johnson, N Oakes, G Radcliffe, P Rose, J Round and G Storr.

Clerk: Debra Raper

Council Staff: Hanneke Soans, Paul Smith and Maxine Groves

Police: PCSO Tim Butters

County & District Councillor: Cllr R Reichhold

District Councillors: Cllr D Bateman and Cllr P Stearn

Northamptonshire County Council: John Robinson, Highways

Members of the public

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

Welcome

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed various housekeeping matters. The agenda was confirmed and members of Oundle Town Council, members of the Council staff, the District and County Councillors, Police, Northamptonshire County Council representatives were introduced.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Elliot. The absence of Cllrs Cox and Summers was noted.

Minutes of the 2008 Annual Town Meeting

The minutes of the meeting were reviewed and it was then proposed *'that the minutes of the meeting of the 2008 Annual Town Meeting are approved and accepted as an accurate record'*.

Proposed: Cllr King

Seconded: Cllr Campbell

Agreed Unanimously

Mayors Review

Cllr King provided an overview on three areas of focus since his term of office:

- Improving the service
- Engagement with the community
- Making difficult decisions

Areas such as Milton Road, the Market Place and the Queen Victoria Hall refurbishment plans were covered within the overview.

Financial Report

Cllr Radcliffe provided an overview of the Council's finances for the year ending 31 March 2008, together with an overview of the finances of the Queen Victoria Hall Trust for the year ending 31 March 2008. Cllr Radcliffe also confirmed the accounting process for the Queen Victoria Hall Trust and provided a summary of the way the transfer of funds between the Oundle Town Council and the Trust operates.

Copies of the un-audited accounts were available for members of the public.

Challenges Ahead

Cllr Chapple spoke about the challenges for the Council the year ahead. The areas discussed were as follows:

- Buildings of the Council. Cllr Chapple confirmed that the Council had a large portfolio with big challenges which included the Queen Victoria Hall with a large 16 week construction programme which will see the Hall radically transformed. He advised that the Drill Hall would be the next big challenge as it was in poor condition and needs high expenditure. Questions were being asked as to what should be done - refurbished or modernised and that there would possibly be a lot of work and consultation to develop the right way forward. Similarly, Cllr Chapple confirmed that the Cemetery Chapel, currently used for storage, was in a poor state and the Council, aware that this is located in a sensitive position, needed to consider the right thing to do with the building. He also confirmed that the Joan Strong and Courthouse will soon need attention. Cllr Chapple stated that a new Working party had been formed to devise a strategy.
- Rural North Oundle Thrapston Plan (RNOTP). Cllr Chapple confirmed that this had been a time consuming process with public examinations and consultations and that there was a challenge in shaping policy, enabling develop whilst ensuring infrastructure. He stated that there were at least 2 large future developments known and one more required.
- Communication/Website. Cllr Chapple confirmed that the Oracle had been developed to ensure a valuable communication channel and that this will continue alongside website development.
- Grant funding to local community and arts projects. The Council's desire to provide support whenever possible was stressed but it was confirmed that the budget for 2009/10 will be less than in previous years.



- Unexpected challenges. Cllr Chapple stated that these always arrive and that the need for pro-activity and forward planning were recognised. He stated that the Council was ready and flexible to address these issues through the hard work of the office staff and Councillors.
- Value and values. Cllr Chapple stated that as custodians of towns people money, the Council always tries to ensure spend is targeted and produces the best benefits. He confirmed that ensuring delivering value for money is at the heart of actions whilst maintaining core values and that this can be a difficult challenge. He summarised by stating that events such as the Annual Town Meeting enabled two way communication, enabling priorities to be understood, debate, consideration and decisions ultimately helping to deliver on value and values.

Questions from the Floor

The following questions and answered were raised:

Growth and Infrastructure

Concern was expressed by a number of residents regarding the over development of Oundle particularly in respect of the town's infrastructure which cannot handle growth and was felt to be at saturation point. As a result further housing development was questioned.

Cllr Stearn advised that the government has stipulated growth and this cannot be reduced although the RNOTP developed by ENC as the planning authority made it clear that infrastructure should be in place. He advised that this had been rejected by the Inspector with recommendations for amendments, including less strong words on infrastructure and more growth; however ENC were responding to this as they want to ensure infrastructure before growth. Cllr Stream confirmed that there was to be a meeting on Thursday at ENC offices to discuss Oundle.

A question was raised about the possibility of a roundabout on the A605 leading to Prince William School and where the analysis of questionnaires from Twigden Homes were to enable them to be accessed by the public. Cllr King confirmed that the analysis had been taken away by developers and would be located

At this juncture, Cllr Reichhold added his support to Cllr Stearn's comments and confirmed he fully endorsed the need for infrastructure and a by-pass from the A605 to the school.

Highways and Parking Issues

Issues were raised regarding parking concerns within the Market Place and why this wasn't enforceable. John Robinson, NCC confirmed that the lines were being refurbished via an ongoing programme to ensure compliance with new regulations and to enable enforcement. He confirmed he would follow this up to ensure action was taken.

Complaints were also raised about the poor state of the roads and the disruption caused due to poor pot hole repairs and when action will be taken to ensure the roads and pavements are in good repair, including a survey to assess the quality of them.

Cllr Riechhold advised that NCC is the Highway authority for all roads except trunk roads and that work is being prioritised in accordance with need, which is based on life and safety and

ZACH

by representations made by elected members. John Robinson, NCC Highways advised that he was unable to confirm when all the roads in Oundle will be resurfaced as in reality this won't happen. He confirmed that the roads would be assessed and that this will determine the action to be taken although there were finite resources so the work has to be planned carefully and keeping roads safe will be the priority. He also stated that all defects must be reported.

John Robinson also advised that yearly inspections would be carried out on all roads and the work will be scheduled for the following year and whilst he could not comment on the quality of work or work ethic he would investigate this

Cllr King summarised and said that the message from Oundle was that the roads and pavements are not good enough and the work not up to standard and requested that this message be taken back to NCC.

Other matters

The question was raised as to why Oundle is not promoted more widely and why the natural facility of the river is not maximised. In this regard, additional seats and improvements to the Boardwalk were requested as well as additional dog bins.

The Council was asked to consider using existing facilities rather than spending tax payers money on community buildings. Cllr King advised that this would be taken into consideration when developing the vision for the future use of properties and facilities for the town.

Planning issues were raised regarding the sites identified within the RNOTP and how the decision was taken to include two extra sites in the latest RNOTP. Cllr Stearn advised that 100 more houses had been stipulated and that sites were developed on multiple criteria i.e. availability, flood plains, etc. and that the sites that best met planning criteria were then chosen.

Concerns were also expressed that housing developments are very 'bitty' and appear to be defined by developers with no overall town wide cohesive architectural plan being available. Cllr King responded by stating that Oundle Town Council was not the planning authority but did have a fairly vigorous process in place for ensuring architecture is sympathetic and met the needs of town but stressed that the Council could only comment not make any decision. Cllr Stearn confirmed that ENC do ask developers to change the mix and style of houses but that the design cannot be uniform.

It was noted that the Council website was not up to date. Cllr King advised that a new site was being developed and would be maintained.

Infrastructure issues arising from an increase in cars as a result of the developers was raised again. Cllr Stearn stated that ENC had done all they can and that the Planning Inspector will look closely at transport specifically within his review.

Cllr King summarised this section of the meeting by stating that the main concerns for the town residents are the state of roads, planning issues and planning for the future and requested that the District and County Councillors take these comments on board.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'ZAC' followed by a stylized flourish.

Discussion on Specific Issues

Cllr King introduced this session and asked the attendees to consider the following areas:

- The possibility of selling Cemetery Chapel and the Drill Hall;
- The possible removal of the bus shelters;
- If the entrance signs to the town should be changed.

Following some time considering these issues Cllr King thanked everyone for their energy and input and confirmed that the outputs from the groups would be collated and used by the Council when considering these challenges.

Any Other Business

None

Cllr King closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their attendance and advising that he had been privileged to serve as the Town's Mayor. He advised that the meeting would be followed by informal discussions and drinks.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.31pm.

Signed:..........

Dated:.....29 - 4 - 2010.....