

**Minutes of The Annual Assembly for CHIPPENHAM held at The Town Hall, High Street, Chippenham on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017 at 6.30p.m.**

**PRESENT:** 13 members of the electorate of Chippenham, including 10 Town Councillors and 4 Officers from Chippenham Town Council.

Mike Davidson – Speaker and representing Neighbourhood Watch  
Michael Weeks – Resident and speaker representing the Street Pastors  
Simon Philpott - Resident and speaker representing Chippenham BID  
Doug Bachelor – Speaker representing Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust  
Sergeant Sean Brady – Wiltshire Police.

**Chairman of the meeting: Councillor Terry Gibson, Mayor of Chippenham**

**1. CHAIRMAN / TOWN MAYOR'S OPENING REMARKS**

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the purpose of the meeting, stating it is the opportunity to express opinions and raise questions on matters relating to the town. He also commented that it was an opportunity to hear from some of the local groups and organisations that do fabulous work for the benefit of the community. The Mayor confirmed that the theme of this year's meeting is Public and Community Safety and he welcomed a number of speakers who would be presenting.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Desna Allen and Nick Murry.

**3. MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL MEETING – Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

The minutes from the meeting held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016 were proposed by Councillor Peter Hutton, seconded by Councillor Mary Norton and approved as a correct record and signed on behalf of the meeting by the Mayor Councillor Terry Gibson.

**4. PRESENTATIONS**

The Mayor introduced the first speaker confirming that as Councillor Desna Allen had offered apologies, the presentation on the Town Council's annual highlights would be made by Councillor Andy Phillips (Deputy Leader).

(i) Chippenham Town Council

Councillor Andy Phillips's presentation described the range of the Town Council's services and facilities and elaborated on a number of highlights achieved in the past year including:

- Two family fun days had been held, one at John Coles Park and for the first time, one at Pewsham Park.
- Over 500 residents enjoyed a day of cultural events marking Commonwealth Day organised in conjunction with 9 Logistics Regiment.
- The Council has invested in a new pavement sweeper as well as new play equipment at Pewsham and John Coles Park.
- The toilets at Monkton Park were saved from closure following a decision by Wiltshire Council and the Town Council had agreed to re-open the toilet at Bath Road.
- The opening times of the Splashpad had changed following comments received from residents.
- The Museum's Robin Tanner exhibition was well received and resulted in a large archive. The Friends & Volunteers of the Museum had reached the finals of the

National Museum Award in recognition of their work assisting with the Unity & Loyalty exhibition.

- A new meeting room was added to the facilities at Stanley Park Sports Ground.
- The recently opened Neeld Community & Arts Centre in its first year since being refurbished, held 56 shows and sold over 5,000 tickets for a range of events including comedy, live music and ballet.

There were no questions with regards to Councillor Andy Phillips presentation on the work of Chippenham Town Council.

(ii) Wiltshire Neighbourhood Watch Association - Mr Michael Davidson

Michael Davidson gave an informative talk on the role of Neighbourhood Watch schemes stating that the aim is to improve Police and community liaison by providing effective communications via messaging systems to and from the police and volunteer members. The scheme helps to increase community safety and reduce the fear of crime and promotes good citizenship and greater public awareness.

There is currently greater working between the Police, the Police Commissioner and local authorities, although there is an intention to develop a strong Neighbourhood Watch scheme in Chippenham, as is the case within other county towns.

The Mayor thanked Mr Davidson for his presentation.

(iii) Chippenham Street Pastors – Mr Michael Weeks

Michael Weeks, the coordinator for Chippenham Street Pastors explained the nature of their work, stating that the volunteers were representing the local churches in the Chippenham area. They assisted in the town during the Saturday night time economy between 10.30pm and 4am offering care and support where required. The Street Pastors respond to distress calls and do not pre-judge individuals. They work in teams of 4 or 8 and currently have 28 volunteers.

Michael confirmed that the Street Pastors cannot operate in isolation and work collaboratively with Wiltshire Council, Chippenham Town Council and other community groups. A new partnership has recently been formed with the Chippenham BID and the Pubwatch scheme.

Michael concluded that Chippenham is a safe town with few incidents, demonstrated by the town attaining the Purple Flag award.

The Mayor thanked Mr Weeks for his presentation and for the valuable contribution the Street Pastors make.

(iv) Purple Flag – Councillor Peter Hutton

The Mayor introduced Councillor Peter Hutton who described what Purple Flag entailed: it is a national accreditation initiative managed by the Association of Town Centre Management and is the indicator and 'gold standard' for town centres at night. It aims to raise standards and improve the quality of Chippenham between the hours of 5pm and 5am.

Councillor Peter Hutton paid credit to the local businesses, pubs and clubs and also the Street Pastors who do sterling work during the busy Saturday nights. Mention was made of the Town's CCTV system which had recently been upgraded with new hi tech cameras and improved control room equipment, in addition to the installation of new safety railing alongside the section of the river between the town bridge and a public house.

Purple Flag is a continuous journey with all partners contributing towards ensuring Chippenham is a safe, clean, attractive and accessible town to visit.

There being no questions the Mayor thanked Councillor Peter Hutton for his presentation and introduced Simon Philpott as the next speaker.

(v) Chippenham Business Improvement District (BID) – Mr Simon Philpott

Simon Philpott described the work of the BID stating it is a non-profit distributing body governed by statute. It represents 380 local town businesses and was elected by them with the aim of improving the economy in the area it operates. Simon stated he is the BID Manager and reports directly to the Board that comprises of representatives from local businesses within the BID area.

It was stated that the Chippenham BID has a four-point strategy for improving the appeal and business environment of the town:

- Image, promotion, marketing & events
- Access and car parking
- Welcoming, safe & clean
- Backing business.

Simon confirmed that there was a lot of behind the scenes work to ensure the businesses are supported but accepted that the public facing events were proving popular and these (e.g. Christmas light switch-on, soap box derby, Easter activities etc.) helped increase footfall into the town and boost overall business.

The work of the Town Hosts was described together with a number of other initiatives including support given to the Street Pastors, local community groups and a night time taxi Marshall scheme.

A number of questions were directed to Simon Philpott including, are businesses obliged to be part of the BID and are there any facts and figures available on the BID's performance and year's operation. Simon responded stating that if a BID is formed in an area then all businesses within it have to be part of it: this is governed by statute (the Local Government Act 2004). Finally Simon confirmed that the BID's Annual Report is due to be published in July and this will have all necessary performance information in it.

The Mayor thanked Mr Philpott for his presentation and welcomed the next speaker, Mr Doug Batchelor.

(vi) Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust – Mr Doug Batchelor

Doug Batchelor described the work of the Bobby Van Trust which is a charity, set up in 1998 initially for victims of crime. Its role is now broader and the Trust works in partnership with the Wiltshire Police to provide a home security service for the elderly and vulnerable and disadvantaged people throughout the county.

The Bobby Van Trust operators go into domestic properties to undertake security checks. Doug confirmed that 80% of break-ins and theft occurs by persons accessing via the rear of a property. The Trust provides two vans and operatives who therefore fit extra locks on doors and windows and offer crime prevention advice on such topics as bogus callers. They also offer advice on fire safety and escape plans.

The Trust is about to launch a new online safety advice service on how individuals can protect themselves against online crime and they also work in collaboration with the Trussell Trust to help deliver food parcels to those living below the poverty line.

There being no questions the Mayor thanked Mr Batchelor for his presentation and welcomed the next and final speaker, Inspector Sean Brady. The Mayor also stated that a report on policing in the town had been prepared and was available from the table at the rear of the room.

(vii) Wiltshire Police – Sergeant Sean Brady

Sgt Brady introduced himself as the Acting Inspector as he is covering until a formal appointment is made. He confirmed that he is the Sector Deputy for Chippenham and Royal Wootton Bassett areas.

Mention was made that there is a strong and clear direction towards community policing teams, rather than the previous town teams. There are budget pressures and cuts but Sgt Brady emphasised that neighbourhood policing enables the force to maximise the policing and staffing model, within existing resources.

Finally reference was made to the Police's report prepared prior to the meeting which was available to attendees.

A question was asked on whether the town has a dedicated Sergeant and Sgt Brady confirmed that this position does indeed exist within the structure.

The Mayor thanked Sgt Brady for his presentation.

## **5. TOPICS AND QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC PREVIOUSLY NOTIFIED**

Adrian Jones (Interim Chief Executive – Chippenham Town Council) referred to a question and comment submitted by Mr Brian Wright representing the Wilts and Berks Canal Trust.

The question related to what progress is being made to make better use of the River Avon and its river/riverbank upstream of the Town Bridge and does the Town Council have a vision to improve and make better use of this area. The comment related to an invitation to all Chippenham Town Councillors to inspect and take a trip on the new Wilts & Berks Canal Trust boat at the forthcoming Chippenham Folk Festival on 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

Councillor Peter Hutton responded to the question stating that the Town Council does not own the land that borders the river upstream of the town bridge but does have plans to improve this area and broaden its appeal to residents, community groups and those visiting the town. The Town Council are working in a proactive manner with Chippenham BID and other local groups to provide new and exciting events in this area. The safety of the river has been improved via the provision of railings at a cost of £15,000 which the Town Council funded. Finally Councillor Peter Hutton stated that discussions are ongoing with Chippenham Angling Club to improve facilities to their members.

All Councillors noted the kind invite to view the new river boat.

## **6. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

There were no questions.

There being no further questions the Mayor thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Signed

Date