

A Meeting of the Town Council was held at the Memorial Hall, Lechlade on Monday 3rd September 2007 starting at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Jones  
Cllr Cawsey  
Cllr Gillard  
Cllr Gould  
Cllr Lambert  
Cllr Mannell  
Cllr Sullivan

CDC Cllr Palmer attended later

4 members of the public

- 1 Apologies for Absence  
Cllr Dover, Cllr Maskell, Cllr Mrs Seale, Cllr Mrs Wilson and CDC Cllr Mrs Carter.
  
- 3 Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting  
These were approved and signed, with the substitution of St John's for St Lawrence bridge under item 11.
  
- 4 Declarations of Interest  
There were no declarations of interest.
  
- 5 Matters Arising from Minutes of Previous Meeting
  - a) Cemetery  
The Clerk reported that the Vicar had written to the Bursar of New College about the purchase of land for the extension of the cemetery. The Bursar's reply stated that the land was subject to a tenancy agreement and the Council would be expected to pay compensation. However, the Clerk referred to Defra restrictions on use of the land. The College would also expect the Council to pay for the College's legal and surveyor's fees. The Clerk would ask Mr Clarke to provide up-to-date land prices. The Council authorised the Clerk to pursue this matter. The Vicar should be thanked for his assistance.

- b) **Dog Bin**  
This was now in place and was being used. SITA had been contacted and would be emptying the bin.
  
- c) **New Footbridge**  
Cllr Gillard reported that he had attended group meetings with Cllr Jones and the final version of the feasibility study was expected very soon. Cllr Whistler stated that the business community supported the new footbridge but were very concerned that other improvements such as the changes to the Market Place should be implemented as soon as possible to encourage visitors to come across the river into the town and use local businesses. The generally unkempt appearance of the town was discussed. Litter was a problem, particularly cigarette ends resulting from the ban on smoking in pubs etc. The riverside area was a particular concern. Swindon had closed the toilet block. The Clerk had not yet received a copy of the new proposals for management of this site. The Council had been asked to provide a letter of support for the URTH Project and Councillors requested that this should be done.
  
- d) **Bledisloe Cup**  
The Clerk reported that Lechlade was in the final round and judging had recently been completed. There were only two large villages in the final round. Cllr Jones would be attending the presentations on 29 September.
  
- e) **Public Inquiry**  
The inspector had decided that there is an established right of way around the lake. County would need to reissue the notice due to an error on the original notice. Cllr Sullivan reported that it was now possible to walk the entire length of the footpath unhindered. The Chairman thanked all who had attended the inquiry.
  
- f) **GMTF**  
The Clerk reported that all market towns belonging to GMTF are now members of Action for Market Towns under a group scheme. This will give us access to the national website and other resources.

- g) Lights - Faringdon Road

There had been no response to the letter to County. CDC were willing to assist with funding providing County replied promptly. As a significant number of people live at St John's Priory Park, it was felt that County should not treat this as a low priority.
- h) Lighting Saving

GCC had written to all towns and parishes asking them to identify lights that could be switched off between certain hours to save money. Concern was expressed about vandalism and pedestrian safety. Some areas of the town had requested extra lights rather than a reduction. More financial details were needed, particularly as there would be costs attached to new switching arrangements etc. Cllr Lambert mentioned that a reduction in light pollution would be welcomed by some residents.
- i) Lechlade 2000+

The group was consulting in an attempt to widen representation and develop further suggestions for improving the town's amenities. It has no decision-making powers but generates ideas for recommendation to the Town Council. CDC and GCC no longer send representatives and the CDC Market Towns Officer post had been made redundant. It was generally agreed that this was a very useful forum and should be supported, but there was no clear understanding within the town of its purpose and achievements. It was suggested that meetings should be devoted to specific topics. It would then be possible for specialist officers to show an interest.

## 6 Meetings Attended

Cllr Jones had met with Gloucestershire Highways in July to discuss the Market Place. The GCC approach had been fairly negative and they had produced prohibitive costings. Cllr Whistler said that this work was essential for the town and had been given top priority in the Healthcheck. CDC had supported the changes before alterations to their budget structure. A group including Cllrs Jones, Lambert and Whistler would meet to pursue this matter.

Cllr Jones had attended a meeting of the Footbridge Committee with Halcrow. He had met with Mr King to look at funding for the Youth Building. There had been a change of command at RAF Fairford.

Cllr Cawsey had participated in the litter picking, and had attended meetings of Lechlade 2000+ and the Riverside group.

Cllr Gillard had attended meetings of the Footbridge Committee and Lechlade 2000+.

Cllr Whistler had attended meetings of the Fairford and Lechlade Business Club. He reported that he now chairs that group with the aim of encouraging the businesses of the two towns to work together.

Cllr Mannell had met Martin Cobden to discuss the URTH Project and a possible heritage centre to promote local history, archaeology, crafts etc. This is not liable to go ahead for lack of matched funding.

Cllr Sullivan had attended the Bowmoor public inquiry. He had also attended the East Cotswold Strategic Partnership. The Water Park cannot assist with funding for the country park, so a wish list would be compiled and presented directly to the developers. There was a concern that local people were being excluded from large areas.

Cllr Lambert had also attended the ECSP to pursue the possibility of a cycle track linking Fairford and Lechlade.

Cllr Jones stated that he would be attending a meeting at RAF Fairford on 6 September to discuss the base's actions during the recent flooding and pollution at the lock. He would be meeting with the EA Flood Risk team on 19 September in Fairford with other representatives from Lechlade.

## 7 Flooding and Emergency Plan

Forward planning was required to cope with any future flooding and also to cover other types of emergency. The Clerk had received a letter from GCC stating that although they are not the responsible body they are willing to provide sandbags and sand to communities if they can identify suitable storage

facilities. It would not be possible to store filled sandbags. A fairly central location was needed and distribution arrangements would need to be drawn up. Other assistance would also be needed, such as help with furniture removal and emergency accommodation. Fairford had already begun work on this. CDC Cllr Palmer reported that CDC were drawing up plans and he felt that Fairford would be willing to share their ideas. CDC is collecting information from affected residents about the practical help required and this should be available shortly. Cllr Jones asked Cllr Cawsey to organise a group to look into these matters and Cllrs Lambert and Mannell and CDC Cllr Palmer volunteered to join this group. Representatives other than councillors should also be involved.

Mr Newell was granted permission as a member of the public to speak to this item and he then stressed the need for flood prevention measures, particularly drainage ditches to direct water away from houses. He was also concerned about the effect of new building development. Cllr Jones stated that these issues would be taken up with the EA at the forthcoming meeting. Mr Lever endorsed these comments.

Cllr Jones mentioned that problems had also arisen at the Bryworth Lane junction and outside the garden centre. Downington Ditch is shown on statutory maps as a critical watercourse to be managed by the EA. Cllr Lambert said that the ditch is not kept clear of vegetation, neither are the ditches at Butler's Court and The Wern. Garden waste is being deposited in the Seven Stiles ditches.

8 Library

GCC is consulting on library services and the Chairman urged as many people as possible to complete a questionnaire as it was important to retain and improve library services. Cllr Mrs Wilson would be taking this forward and library services would be discussed at the next meeting. The consultation period ends on 5th November.

9 Speed Limits and Signage

A letter had been sent requesting Gloucestershire Highways to extend the speed limit to a point west of Bryworth Lane. There had been no response to a

previous request. CDC Cllr Palmer stated that he and Cllr Mrs Carter had met with Highways on this issue.

Cllr Gillard urged the Council to make a decision on the offer from the Heritage Trust to fund one of two entry signs to the town. The Trust was willing to make up to £750 available for a suitable entrance sign to be placed at the northern approach to the town. Cllr Gillard further stated that it was thought that if two entrance signs were purchased at the same time then the cost would be reduced to £500 for each. The £500 which had been donated by Charles Church had been for improvements at the western approach to the town. The Clerk pointed out that permission was needed from Highways before a sign could be erected on an A class road and that the Council had never agreed to the £500 being spent on a sign. Cllr Jones expressed concern that the Trust had set a deadline that the Council was unable to meet. It would also be necessary to obtain the total cost of a sign, including installation. The Chairman felt that the speed limit and the sign should be discussed as one issue. CDC Cllr Palmer pointed out that the police must be involved in extending speed limits. Cllr Mannell proposed and Cllr Whistler seconded proposals for the need for two signs and the acceptance of the offer by the Trust. The Chairman said that votes could be taken on these two proposals, but in principle only. Both were passed nem con.

10 GCC Councillor

The GCC Councillor was not present at the meeting.

11 CDC Councillor

Cllr Palmer reported that some people were putting plastic bags, pots etc in the green wheelie bins with their garden waste. Sunhill were turning this away and additional landfill charges were being incurred. There was a worry that Sunhill might permanently refuse to accept green waste if this continues.

The Cotswold Leisure Centre would be closed until at least February 2008 as a result of the flooding. £632,500 was available for the most vulnerable victims of the flooding. 1,150 door-to-door surveys had identified the most vulnerable, and a maximum of £2,000 was available per household. Ideas for future practical help were welcomed.

Tetrapak are sponsoring plastics collection and CDC Councillors are trying to

get this facility added to the Lechlade recycling site. Cllr Palmer said that he would pass concerns about the unsightly state of the site to CDC.

The 1,500 least well used post offices in the country will be lost. Lechlade will be safe as there are no other post office services available within 3 miles. A group is looking at ambulance response times. The Lechlade/Fairford/Tetbury area has the worse response times, whereas Cheltenham and Gloucester get the most support. The ambulance service is using the services of the First Responders, who are non-officially funded volunteers. However, the air ambulance does provide us with a good service.

No update was available on the decriminalisation of car parking. Lechlade has been allocated two Community Support Officers, who will patrol the town on one random night each week. Highways would review the unacceptable positioning of the bin in the roadway outside Londis. Cllr Palmer undertook to follow up the unsightly appearance of the Marina, particularly as this will impact on the new footbridge. His attention was also drawn to part of the Convent wall which has remained unrepaired.

Cllr Palmer was asked for his positive and full support for the new footbridge, Market Square etc. Cllr Whistler expressed concern that the poor behaviour of some youths on the south side of the river was creating negative publicity for the new footbridge.

## 12 Planning Applications and Decision Notices

Objections had been put forward to applications for patios at The Wern. The Clerk had attempted to speak to the CDC Planning Officer concerned, but he was off sick. He had spoken to another Planning Officer, who had stated that although CDC as the planning authority had withdrawn 'permitted development' in this area, they did not have to inform the residents that this was the case. However, owing to the misunderstandings that had arisen, the Enforcement Officer will inform all the dwellings of the situation. CDC are also concerned about retrospective applications.

Mr Newell mentioned the excessive number of signs, lights etc which had been installed at Claydon Pike. He asked for the Council's support in opposing this 'urbanisation' and Cllr Jones said that this should be taken up with Highways. At this point Cllr Whistler commented that the sign on

Burford Road indicating the free long-term car park had been removed.

13 Correspondence

Copies of relevant letters had been circulated. The Clerk referred to the revised Model Code of Conduct and said that if this was not adopted it would in any case be applied automatically. The Chairman suggested that if letters addressed to individual councillors and not marked Private & Confidential are received in the office the Clerk should open these and deal with them appropriately to minimise delays.

As the Trust Deed stated that the Meadow is for the benefit of the people of Lechlade, Mr Lever asked for a volunteer to be appointed to represent the Council's views to the Trust. This would be discussed at the next meeting.

14 Alcohol along the riverside

There is a particular problem on the south side of the river. The Clerk stated that if the area is made a restricted alcohol area, the police would then have added powers of immediate action, ie they could remove the alcohol. However, this demands an increased police presence. Alcohol consumption would be restricted, not banned. The CDC Safety Committee would be considering this at their next meeting in the light of experience in Cirencester. Cllr Gillard pointed out that the exact area needed to be defined.

15 Christmas Lights

Cllr Cawsey mentioned the Big Band Night on 29th September. A profit of £1,337 had been made at the Pimms 'n Jazz fundraising event and most of this would be spent on transformers for the new lights.

16 Matters Outstanding

Cllr Whistler referred to the disgraceful and potentially unsafe state of the children's play area. This would be discussed at the next meeting. Cllr Mannell said that the filter for traffic turning right into Thames Street was still not working satisfactorily.

17 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 1st October 2007.