

WINCHESTER TOWN FORUM

13 October 2005

Attendance:

Councillors:

Rees (Chairman) (P)

Bennetts (P)
Berry (P)
Beveridge (P)
Davies (P)
de Peyer (P)
Higgins
Hiscock (P)
Love (P)
Mather (P)

Maynard (P)
Mitchell (P)
Nelmes
Nunn (P)
Pearce (P)
Pines (P)
Saunders (P)
Tait (P)

409. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Nelmes.

410. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 9 June 2005, be approved and adopted.

411. **CITTASLOW**
(Report WTF59 refers)

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr Graeme Kidd as the Mayor of Ludlow and as a representative of Cittaslow UK.

Mr Kidd gave the Forum a presentation and distributed leaflets which explained the principles of the Cittaslow Movement and its relationship to Ludlow. Ludlow in South Shropshire was the first UK town to become a Cittaslow Member after interest in the movement had grown from the local Agenda 21 group and the Chamber of Trade.

Cittaslow had developed from the "Slow Food" movement in Italy which promoted regional cooking above what they considered to be the degrading effects of fast food. In 2005, Phase 2 of Cittaslow had begun which had seen towns across Germany, Norway, Japan and Spain becoming members.

The principles of Cittaslow were to develop a mindset that promoted quality, tradition and diversity in municipal organisations with the aim of creating a place where people wanted to live and where the quality of life was important to all. It was not, Mr Kidd explained, a blanket reaction against progress but to embrace technologies that enhanced life on a human scale. In practical terms, Mr Kidd stated that Cittaslow

had become a useful tool to bring together different parts of the local community together into partnerships that would work towards, and shared the aims of, Cittaslow. Cittaslow was an apolitical organisation that set out 60 self assessed goals as general aims, rather than specific targets.

The Chairman thanked Mr Kidd for his presentation and during debate, Members broadly welcomed the principles of Cittaslow and the positive effect that it could have at Winchester. Members also noted the relationship between the principles of Cittaslow and the Vision for Winchester document, considered later on this agenda. However, concerns were raised regarding association of the word "slow" and with Cittaslow's snail logo. Mr Kidd explained that the snail represented an animal which, although slow, made progress whilst living within itself.

Some Members were concerned about the suitability of Winchester to the Cittaslow scheme and a Member suggested that Cittaslow could be better suited to a smaller town in the District, such as Alesford. The Forum discussed differences between Winchester as a commuter, county-town with a population of approximately 40,000 and Ludlow. In response, Mr Kidd stated that the Cittaslow membership criteria only "usually" required towns not to be county towns.

Members also noted that although Ludlow had two large supermarkets, most of the shops in the town-centre were small independent traders that attracted its customers from a wide radius. These smaller shops also benefited from a number of festivals held in the town that generated repeat business. In response to concerns about affordable rents for small traders, Mr Kidd explained that themed markets were regularly held in the town square. A Member suggested that the Forum should receive information on the options available to the Council to influence retail rents and the probable lease arrangements at the Silverhill development.

The Forum also discussed the practical differences Cittaslow had brought Ludlow and Mr Kidd explained that whilst the Cittaslow was used on some municipal literature and at some point-of-sales, the principle benefit came from the way of thinking promoted by Cittaslow. As an example, he cited the after-school clubs run by local restaurants that taught children cooking skills. He added that the many of the town council's meetings involved members of the public and front-line staff which reflected the "bottom-up" philosophy of Cittaslow.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mrs Wood spoke in support of Cittaslow and commented on the need to improve kitchen waste recycling.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Forum agreed to visit Ludlow to further investigate the prospect of Cittaslow membership and to invite relevant Members and officers (such as the conservation officer). Members requested that, in advance of this visit, officers consider the practical and legal implications of membership.

RESOLVED:

That the Forum visit Ludlow to further investigate the prospect of Cittaslow membership.

412. **UPDATE ON TREE STRATEGY**
(Oral Report)

The Forum received a presentation from the Head of Environment. In summary, this explained that the Tree Survey Programme had progressed following the recent appointment of the Environment Officer. This Survey had concentrated on “high-risk” areas in the town (such as Council owned playgrounds) and that a wider survey of all the trees on Council owned land might need to be undertaken by consultants.

The Survey would identify those trees that required remedial work and would ultimately result in GIS database of the Council’s trees. The Forum also noted the costs of recent remedial works at Abbey Gardens, North Walls and other town centre locations. In response to Members’ comments, the Head of the Environment agreed to publicise the latest progress on the programme.

During discussion, the Director of Finance explained that the purchasing of hand-held GIS devices that would be used in Survey had been postponed as part of a wider, corporate review of mobile devices.

Members also noted the probable confusion caused by the different policies of the County and City Councils and the Highways Authority regarding trees and agreed that it would be beneficial to hold a Members’ Training Session on this and grounds maintenance issues.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted

413. **UPDATE ON EVENING ECONOMY ISSUES**
(Oral Report)

Following on from the public meeting held on the Evening Economy in May 2005, the City Centre Manager updated the Forum on the PubWatch Scheme. In summary, he explained that PubWatch was part of a crime reduction partnership to tackle the problems of underage and binge drinking and anti-social behaviour. To this end, the thirty pubs that were part of the scheme used radio links and CCTV to provide a quick and coordinated response to problems as they arose.

PubWatch had also undertaken a number of campaigns to raise local awareness, such as providing free soft-drinks to drivers and attending the Freshers’ Week Fair. PubWatch also provided Membership Packs to help advise bar staff.

The Chief Executive commented on the need to encourage businesses to help broaden the appeal of town during the 5-7pm period. He explained that these issues would be included in the Strategy for the Evening Economy which would be considered by a later meeting of the Forum. During debate, the City Centre Manager reported on a willingness from the local business community to develop an evening “café culture” in Winchester.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

414. **UPDATE ON THE VISION FOR WINCHESTER**
(Oral Report)

The Chief Executive distributed to Members a draft copy of the Vision for Winchester document, entitled "One Vision, One Place, Winchester Towards Our Future." He explained that responsibility for reviewing the document would rest with the Forum and invited Members' comment on the draft by email.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and any comment Members may have on the Draft Vision for Winchester document be directed to the Chief Executive.

415. **CARROLL YOUTH CENTRE – EMERGENCY GRANT REQUEST**
(Report CAB1133 refers)

Councillors Love, Rees and Tait declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item arising from their membership of the board of the Carroll Youth Centre and left the room during the consideration of the item. In the absence of Councillor Rees, Councillor Pearce, as Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The above item had not been notified for inclusion on the agenda within the statutory deadline. The Vice-Chairman agreed to accept the item onto the agenda as a matter requiring urgent consideration so as to note the recent decision of the Chief Executive to use delegated emergency powers to ensure that the charity could continue to operate.

During debate, the Head of Community Development explained that a new Centre Manager had been in post since August since which time there had been a number of positive actions and other indications to suggest that the prospects for the long-term success of the Centre were extremely encouraging. The Forum agreed with the decision to grant the request.

RESOLVED:

That the decision made under Section A.2 of the Scheme of Delegation to Officers as detailed in the report, be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30pm and concluded at 9.10pm.

Chairman