

# Cheltenham Civic Society CIO – Executive Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held at 5p.m. on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 5 p.m. by Zoom

## Register

### Trustees:

Claire Attenborough (CA) (Treasurer)

Tess Beck (TB)

Andrew Booton (AB) (Chair)

Steve Bryson (SB)

Sarah Harvey (SH)

Mike Richardson (MR) (Secretary)

Peter Sayers (PS) (Vice Chair)

## Apologies

Hugh Curran (HC)

## 1. Introduction.

- a. **Planning Enforcement Officer.** Cheltenham Borough Council are trying to recruit a Planning Enforcement Officer, which is to be welcomed after a long period gapped.
- b. **Town Houses.** There are 8 Regency townhouses embedded into the rear of Cavendish House that are at risk of being lost if Cavendish House were to be redeveloped. Investigations are underway with CBC and the Georgian Group to understand options.
- c. **Cyber/Digital/Cultural Quarter.** The Chair represented CCS at a presentation for a proposed Cyber/Digital/Cultural Quarter, based around Cheltenham Minster and the Brewery. CBC has engaged consultants to deliver an outline proposal after gathering facts and opinions. The Planning Forum has provided detailed feedback and the next update from the consultants will be w/c 17 May.

## 2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January

The Minutes were **approved**.

## 3. Matters Arising

- a. **Finance.** CA confirmed she was content with the finances and that there were now no loose ends after the hand-over.
- b. **Campaigns.** See below.

#### 4. Updates.

- a. **HODs.** SH reported that ten offers for the HODs Week between 10-19 September events including visits to houses and walks have been received so far. A meeting on Wednesday 12 May should increase that number. Bookings will be online and the booking forms will be ready by the end of May. Tickets may be booked from 1st August. SH will include her telephone number in the policy. St Philip and St James will hold talks and children's activities, there will be a talk on Annase Gardens and the gardens will be open. Lesley Senty will be talking about her Wells book. SH will give NM a list of the offers received so far. **(SH)**

#### b. Comms and Campaigns.

AB said that we need to look at how we structure campaigns in the town. There appear to be three priorities:

- 1) **Town Centre Vision.** The Town Centre Vision has not reached fruition over the last four years and needs boosting. The Society can promote the vision by producing artists' impressions, photographs and encouraging people contribute their own ideas. We can also provide ideas of how to find money for improvements or develop cheaper options if necessary.
- 2) **Streets and Pavements.** In the last four years the High Street has deteriorated with poor paving, street clutter and vandalism. Cambray Place is a particular example with paving stones being replaced with blobs of tarmac. The High Street needs support as it recovers from Covid, the lockdown and the changes in retailing. Gloucestershire Civic Society have raised the issue of tarmac replacing paving stones across the county. Perhaps we can turn HC's article into a letter to our Council. **(PS/HC).**
- 3) **Recycling and Bins.** Gloucestershire Civic Society have produced a paper showing the wide variety of methods employed by different Local Authorities in the county to handle recycling. Some use Ubico, often with two or more bins. Bin storage is a problem for households who do not want to carry the bins through the house so leave them outside between collections rather than in their gardens. Cheltenham currently use 3 bins, perhaps two would be better. The Borough Chief Executive was formerly Managing Director of Ubico so may be a supporter to this suggestion.

A key part of our campaigns is getting the Councils' agreement to support the aims. AB will write to the newly (re)elected Councillors outlining our plans and pointing out there will be an element of Naming and Shaming because they are the guardians of the town. The Society, however, will always be a critical friend not a mudslinger. The What's App group must also be mindful that we are not mudslinging. We should set out our stall on What's App and Twitter. SB can then manage our tone and behaviour. Our purpose is to

inform debate. Our social media following has increased and supported us; we need to make our point clearly in a way that encourages action.

Are we linking in with County and Borough Councillors enough? Are they sent copies of 'Our Town'? As a follow up to AB's letter, could we get the Councillors together to outline our campaigns, explain our concerns and activities? Perhaps a presentation in July, talking about our key activities, stressing we are apolitical but still not seeing enough progress in Cheltenham.

A separate meeting could be held for Council Officers as they have different approaches and needs. The ideal place for these meetings would be the Council's premises.

- c. **Planning Forum.** PS reported that the Planning Forum are concentrating on how to measure performance - the responses made to selected planning applications, what happens to our comments and is there evidence that our views are noted and action taken. Methodology is central as we do need to understand how much notice the Borough Council and developers take of our comments. The Queen's Speech will include notice of a new Planning White Paper; an active response will be required. Our response to last year's Planning White Paper is on Civic Voice's Twitter feed.
  
  - d. **Civic Awards.** AB reported that we intend to arrange the Civic Awards ceremony when the country can fully emerge from lockdown. The event is likely to be in late July or early August in St Peter and St James church which will provide an opportunity to showcase the revamped building. A speaker may be invited subject to people's availability. **AB**
  
  - e. **Events.** AB reported that we are pleased to be able to plan events after lockdown. Gill James has offered to help run these but has been ill recently. It would be nice to have a Garden Party, giving members a chance to socialise with an update by AB signposting the events planned and encouraging members to get involved in them. **PS**  

Prior to lockdown were offered a visit to Cheltenham College archives and a Modern Architecture walk about. Perhaps we can arrange a walk about in the Minster area when the Borough Council's plans become public. We will need volunteers - there is a lot of historical material that is disappearing and nobody notices. TB will talk to NM. **TB**
5. **Branding Logo.** SB invited quotations from Artworks Design and the website designer. SH's husband designs graphics that work on social media etc in every circumstance. If it is possible to create an iconic image that covers the Society's name and what we do in various forms this would be ideal. The meeting agreed a budget of £250 for this with initial thoughts to be given by 20<sup>th</sup> May. We are coming out of lockdown and the Garden Party and the Civic Awards would be good opportunities to unveil a new logo. **SH**

**6. Any other Business.**

- a. Comms.** SB advised the meeting that he is behind with the website. The next Newsletter, due early in June, will be delayed for 2 or 3 weeks. He is asking for other material to include. **AB** will ask for permission to use the Borough Council's public material about the Minster developments. **PS and AB** will provide two or three articles. An article on The Elms development might be another article. Maybe we could explain how the Planning Forum selects the planning applications we look at. Feedback on the last Newsletter has been excellent and we would like to make this edition twelve pages if possible. Other contributions will be welcomed. TB suggested the Legend of Morsam as one possible item. **PS and SB**
- b. Opening to the Public.** At present we are not making arrangement for opening up Parmoor House and not taking bookings.
- c. Sharepoint.** CA reminded the trustees that we have a share point site, a repository for documents which are currently being held on individuals' computers. We set this up on our old Email address so need to set up again using the new Email address. We may also want to scan and keep material from Parmoor House. The system relies on Microsoft 365 Account which has a central calendar for events, a chat function for ourselves and storing documents centrally. CA has access to the system and has done some work with SB. PS commented that we need to cascade back- office training. **SB**

**7. Date of next meeting.** Set for Monday 21<sup>st</sup> June at 5 p.m. at Parmoor House. Agreed dates (all are Mondays) for future meetings of the Executive Committee during 2021 are:

**21 June**

**12 July**

**13 September**

**15 November**

MR 19.5.21