

**ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**  
**7th MAY 2009**

- \* Cllr. S.C. Pryde (Mayor)
- \* “ A.L. James (Deputy Mayor)
- \* “ Mrs. P.C. Brooks
- \* “ A.B. Clark
- \* “ J.F. Collier
- \* “ Mrs. R. Gadsby
- \* “ W.J. Pryor
- “ M. Reilly
- \* “ Mrs. S.A. Stavrou
- “ A.P. Watts
- \* “ Mrs. E.A. Webster

\* Denotes Members present.

In attendance: Acting Town Clerk, Senior Assistant to Acting Town Clerk, Recreation and Amenities Manager, Mr. Chris Hobbs (RCCE Field Officer) and Mr. Ian White (Senior Planner EFDC). Eighteen members of the public.

1158. **Welcome:** The Mayor welcomed those members of the public attending.
1159. **Introductions:** Members and Officers were introduced.
1160. **Apologies for Absence:** There were no apologies for absence.
1161. **Town Plan:** The Mayor introduced Chris Hobbs, Rural Community Council of Essex Field Officer, who explained the purpose of producing a Town Plan stating;
- It is a document compiled by residents setting out their vision for the Town
  - Everyone in the community has the opportunity for input
  - A Steering Committee comprising members of the public will be formed to take the proposal forward
  - The initial task is a Town wide consultation
  - From the consultation problems will be identified and action plans formed
  - The Town Plan Consultation could take 18 months to complete
  - On completion the Action Plan will feed into a regional data base.

Following the presentation questions were invited;

B. Davies, WANAP – asked if there were any examples of success.

C. Hobbs replied that many successful plans have been completed in the County including Leigh on Sea and Witham.

B. Davies, WANAP – asked that in view of recent indications of public spending cuts will this affect the proposal?

C. Hobbs – replied that although funding is not as plentiful Awards for All support the project and other similar grant aid is available.

C. Sumner, Waltham Abbey Historical Society – asked does the concept overlap Town Partnerships?

C. Hobbs – replied no, it invites involvement.

Rev. Martin Webster - asked how do we get more people involved?

C. Hobbs – replied that we ensure the project is non confrontational.

Waltham Abbey Residents Association – How long have Town Plans been in existence?

C. Hobbs – advised that the Government introduced the scheme in 2000.

Waltham Abbey Residents Association – WARA stated that Waltham Abbey is under threat of Gypsy and Traveller sites being introduced, can this be included in the Plan?

C. Hobbs – advised that the Plan can cover any subject.

Mrs. F. Pymont – Waltham Abbey Floral Society – stated that in 2012 the eyes of the world will be upon the Town at the Olympic White Water Canoe Course, if the consultation takes 18 months the Town will not be presenting a very good image.

C. Hobbs – replied that if the project started now consultation could be completed by September this year.

Nationwide Building Society – suggested placing the consultation documents in shops and offices and they will distribute to customers.

C. Hobbs – advised smaller communities get better results because the steering groups are prepared to go around door knocking.

There being no other questions the Mayor thanked Chris Hobbs for his attendance and invited him to stay for the remainder of the meeting.

1162. **Annual Report:** Cllr. Mrs. Stavrou, Leader of Council, gave the Annual Report, copies of which were available to those present.

1163. **Public Questions:** The Mayor invited questions from the public;

Nationwide Building Society – asked if anything can be done about the number of empty premises there are within the Town?

The Mayor replied that the Town Council will be writing to shop chains inviting them to view empty premises. This issue will also be an integral part of the Town Plan.

Rev. M. Webster – suggested that we should encourage shops that encompass internet sales.

Cllr. Clark – went on to say that the Town Council had already co-opted a local shopkeeper to the Development and Environment Committee and discussions were taking place regarding further involvement from the retail business community.

Waltham Abbey Residents Association – asked if the Council had considered promoting a Sunday market?

The Mayor – advised not for general retail however the new Town Clerk has had success promoting a Farmers Market where she currently works and she will be tasked with promoting one here.

Waltham Abbey Residents Association – asked the Council to consider speciality markets such as a flower market etc.

Mrs. F. Pymont – referred to piles of rubbish, an abandoned car and other items in Darby Drive.

Cllr. Mrs. Stavrou – advised that the Town Council had identified this and action was being taken by Epping Forest District Council.

Nationwide Building Society – suggested that a visual display screen should be installed in the TIC to advertise the various attractions.

Mr. V. Copsey – suggested that local traders might wish to pay to advertise on a visual display screen.

Rev. M. Webster – advised that other Towns within the Epping Forest District Council area have benefited from regeneration schemes, could Waltham Abbey anticipate a similar scheme.

Cllr. Mrs. Stavrou - advised there are no further schemes planned at present.

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

**S.C. PRYDE - MAYOR**

