



Regional market town awards presented at Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum AGM

SEPTEMBER 2009

REPORT COMPILED BY BETH WHITTAKER



Wotton under Edge Town Council Clerk Glenys Sykes (fourth from right) shows GMTF visitors around the town and Peter Godfrey, Forum Chair, presents the South West regional Action for Market Towns awards. Photos: Chris Howell

Almost 40 people representing rural towns from across the county attended the 2009 annual meeting of the Gloucestershire Market Towns Forum, hosted by Wotton-under-Edge Town Council.

The Mayor of Wotton, Cllr Paul Smith warmly welcomed the visitors who were taken on a tour of the town to learn more about its innovative and highly **cost-effective CCTV system**, the **'We Love Wotton'** event and the successful **community-run cinema**. *Read more? [Click here](#)*

Regional winners of the **Action for Market Towns Awards** – Stroud District Council's innovative 'On View' project to turn empty shops in **Dursley** into temporary art galleries, **Trowbridge** Town Council's 'activetrowbridge' youth initiative, the Old Railway Heritage Community Project in **Ilminster**, and Stur Quest community centre in **Sturminster Newton** – gave thought-provoking and inspiring presentations before receiving their awards. *Read more? [Click here](#).*

The formal **Annual General Meeting** (*[Click here](#)*) was followed by the ever-popular **information exchange** covered everything from employing a youth information officer in Cirencester to the costs of taking over responsibility for public conveniences in Winchcombe, to the success of the Art in the Garden project by Coleford Area Partnership. *Read more? [Click here](#)*

*To see who **attended** the AGM Networking meeting and to read the Minutes click [here](#)
To find out **more about GMTF** visit www.town2town.org.uk.*



Keeping a friendly eye on Wotton

Image quality impresses police

By using the latest wireless technology and the expertise of specialist digital surveillance consultants Redhand from Stonehouse, Wotton under Edge Town Council has saved itself considerable expense installing a new, effective CCTV system.

Software invented by Redhand's Jerry Spence, together with the flexibility offered by wireless technology, has meant that anti-social behaviour in Wotton has reduced considerably as a result..

During a tour of the town, visitors were told by Town Council clerk Glenys Sykes that nine cameras had been installed, some on listed buildings with consent, together with a relay point to ensure the cameras, which work wirelessly, could be placed in the most effective points.

"Working with us, Redhand identified the optimum places for the cameras which are motion-activated and send images wirelessly to a central computer. If the police are alerted to a situation which may have been captured on the CCTV system, they contact us to ask if they can view the images.

"The quality of the images is excellent; the police have been extremely impressed – and so are we. The property owners where the cameras are placed supply the power and are happy to do so, as they recognise the benefits. The cameras and their wireless units are very discreet and it was all installed without the need to dig up the town's streets to lay traditional cables!"

So impressed are the local constabulary with the CCTV system that the Area Inspector and one of the local police officers attended the meeting, happy to talk about how useful they are finding it.

For more information:

- Wotton-under-Edge Town Council <http://wotton-under-edge.com/>
- Redhand www.redhand.co.uk

Community Cinema goes 3D

'We Love Wotton' DVD shown

Visitors to the town were then invited into Wotton's community-run cinema, the Electric Picture House, which is celebrating its 4th birthday after welcoming 59,000 cinema-goers to 1,562 shows. Run by a bevy of enthusiastic volunteers, led by Jeff and Janet Walshe, the cinema also raises money for local charities (£5,000 donated so far) and uses photos supplied by local residents instead of the usual generic advertisements. The latest innovation is 3D which is coming soon.

A DVD showing highlights of the recent 'We Love Wotton' event held to celebrate what makes the town special, and to encourage 'shop and trade local' support was played on the full screen, and included comments by local people about why they love their town.

For more information:

- Electric Picture House <http://www.wottoneph.co.uk/>



Inspirational Market Town ideas across the Region

Four town initiatives celebrated

GMTF's Chairman, Peter Godfrey, and Gloucestershire First's Dan Judges are also Directors of the national Action for Market Towns organisation, so the Forum's AGM was chosen as a venue for presenting the four regional winners of the AMT's Market Towns Awards with their certificates. Each made a presentation about their initiatives which, while all very different, all celebrated effective partnership working.

- **The presentations are available to view on the GMTF website** www.town2town.org.uk under **Networking and What's On** or click [here](#).
- For more information about Action for Market Towns see: <http://towns.org.uk/>

The winners

Winner South West Market Town Award:

Activetrowbridge youth initiative (Overall South West Regional Award winner). This Trowbridge Town Council scheme provides hundreds of sports coaching events in local schools each week encouraging more children to become and stay active, while training 22 Apprentices with full cost recovery of its staff costs.

- **More information:** <http://www.activetrowbridge.co.uk/>

Business and Economy category:

On View Art project in Dursley is a pioneering initiative by Stroud District Council to convert vacant shops in Dursley into temporary art galleries, creating town centre vitality during the recession. It benefits surrounding businesses, landlords and local artists and is an inexpensive way to increase footfall and improve the streetscape.

- **More information:**
 - The PowerPoint presentation on the www.town2town.org.uk website includes **top tips for other towns** who might want to emulate this successful initiative.

Environment and Culture category:

Old Railway Heritage Community Project, Ilminster is an excellent example of joined up thinking and how a group of volunteers from Ilminster, Donyatt, Knowle St Giles and Chard have worked together on a heritage project linking their communities along part of NCN Route 33 (The Stop Line Way). The Heritage Lottery Fund awarded them a grant of £ 48,600 to enhance the 5-mile stretch of cycle track.

- **More information:** <http://www.somersetmarkettowns.co.uk/town/ilminster/96>

Partnership and Strategic Working category:

'What makes Stur so special' in Sturminster Newton demonstrates the strength of the continuing community-led regeneration within the town and the surrounding area. Achievements that have contributed to this are the relocation of the Museum into the town centre, the award of Best Food Town in Dorset 2008 and the adoption of the Town Design Statement.

- **More information:**
 - PowerPoint presentation at www.town2town.org.uk



**GLOUCESTERSHIRE MARKET TOWNS FORUM
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 24th 2009
Minutes**

Chair: Peter Godfrey

Attendance:

John Cordwell, Wotton-under-Edge	Barbara Cromwell, Tewkesbury
Insp Alistair Barby, Glos Police	Brian Tracey, Glos Police
Phil Bates, Redhand CCTV	Sally Millett, Nailsworth
Margaret Marshall, Nailsworth	June Cordwell, Wotton-under-Edge
Elizabeth Warren, Wotton-under-Edge	Maureen Seale, Lechlade
Zoe Harris, Ilminster	Carole Goodall, Ilminster
Vicky Hancock, Stroud District Council	Maggie Griffiths, Ilminster
Elin Tattersall, GRCC	Julie Wickham, Tetbury
Joe Cusack, Fairford	Jenny Hincks, Cirencester
Jane Williams, Sturminster Newton	Jackie Upton-King, Sturminster Newton
Valerie Smith, Wotton under Edge	Paul Smith, Wotton under Edge
Roger Brown, Cirencester Chamber of Commerce	Sue Creswick, Stroud Town
John Gerrard, Winchcombe	Sue Sturgeon, Winchcombe
Dee Horscroft, Trowbridge	Andrew Tubb, Cirencester
Janet Marrott, Coleford Area Partnership	Beth Whittaker, Viva Communications Ltd
Peter Godfrey (chair), Lechlade	Dan Judges, Gloucestershire First
Pearl Stokes, Churchdown Parish Council	Chris Howell, Coleford Town Council
Glenys Sykes, Wotton under Edge	

1. **Apologies:** Bob Watters, Roger George, Chuck Pavey, Peter Street, Sue Merrikin, Claire Edwards, John Ellis

2. **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 18th September 2008**
Accepted as a true record - proposed by Pearl Stokes – seconded by Chris Howell

3. **Chairperson's Report (Peter Godfrey)**

Peter opened the AGM by extending a warm welcome to everyone and thanked Wotton under Edge Town Council for its hospitality. He referred to the new GMTF Marketplace 2009 annual review which had just been published which included his report for 2009, and a lot more information about the Forum's activities over the past 12 months. A pdf of Marketplace is available on the Forum website www.town2town.org.uk

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4. Approval of Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2009:

A summary of the accounts can be seen at the back of the Marketplace Annual Review Newsletter.

- Janet Marrott proposed and Jenny Hincks seconded – motion carried following unanimous agreement from Forum.

5. Amendments to Memorandum and Articles of Association

Long and involved investigations over several years into whether the Forum could be registered as a charity have resulted in a recommendation that this course should not be progressed as, for tax purposes, the Forum is regarded as a charity anyway.

- Pearl Stokes proposed and Chris Howell seconded – motion carried following unanimous agreement from Forum.

6. Membership fees and Two-tier membership for GMTF

Membership fees will be held at the same level as three years ago.

A new two-tier membership has been developed to encourage Town Partnerships to become members, as full membership (open to Town Councils) would be unaffordable to Partnerships who have no powers to raise a precept. There will be a reduced level of benefits to Associate members.

- Chris Howell proposed and Jenny Hincks seconded – motion carried following unanimous agreement from Forum.

7. Confirmation of Appointment of Auditors

- Pearl Stokes proposed and Chris Howell seconded – motion carried following unanimous agreement from Forum.

8. Appointment of Forum Directors/Trustees

The following were co-opted:

- Bob Watters
- Janet Marrott

The following were nominated:

- Jenny Hincks (Cirencester)
- Andrew Lichnowski (Cirencester)
- Roger George (Stow on the Wold)

Peter reminded members communities that they have a right to nominate new Directors for co-option by the Board.

9. Close of Business

There being no further business the Annual General Meeting was closed.

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Information Exchange

Youth information officer in Cirencester *Cllr Jenny Hincks, Cirencester Town Council*

Cirencester Town Council is funding a new youth information officer to co-ordinate the Youth Town Council and develop a chill-out zone at Brewery Arts.

A busy time in Winchcombe *Sue Sturgeon, volunteer editor of Winchcombe Matters newsletter*

- A new website www.winchcombetowncouncil.co.uk has been launched by the Town Council
- The Council supported the Vitality, Viability and Vulnerability Study which looked at ways in which local businesses could be supported, resulting in a new leaflet, improved parking and signage. It also responded to the Regional Spatial Strategy and commissioned a housing needs survey with GRCC
- A Vision Statement has been produced
- The Town Council has taken over the public toilets from Tewkesbury Borough Council
- A sports and recreation foundation has been formed looking to set up a sports hub in the town
- The Council has also initiated a Greening Group to brighten up the town with planting schemes

Fabulous loos at Churchdown! *Cllr Pearl Stokes, Churchdown Parish Council*

- Having taken over responsibility for the public lavatories from Tewkesbury Borough Council, the Parish Council are 'flushed with success' after refurbishing the conveniences in the Parish Council buildings. Maintaining the facilities will cost the parish council £10K a year – and it is 'free to pee'!
- The support, through GMTF, which the Parish Council has received from Hannah Reynolds Associates was described as 'superb' by Cllr Pearl Stokes who encouraged all Forum member communities to take advantage of the 15-hours support service available

Art in the Garden *Janet Marrott, Coleford Partnership*

The Art in the Garden celebration was extended to two weeks this year and involved seven local primary schools, following last year's success. £2,500 was raised for charity. Plans for next year include a school sculpture trail.

Thanks to Forum Board member Bob Watters *John Gerrard, Winchcombe*

When a lady broke her arm on the streets of Winchcombe, the town council had to look again at its risk assessment procedures. John Gerrard (Winchcombe) turned to Bob Watters (Forum Vice Chair) for his knowledge and expertise and was full of praise for the help the town received.

Loss of rural services

Glenys Sykes, Wotton under Edge Town Council

There is growing evidence that rural town and parish councils are being expected to take on more services. Examples range from the fact that the Registrar of Births, Marriages and Deaths no longer visits Wotton on a weekly basis, to the loss of rural bus services to Tewkesbury Borough Council relinquishing responsibility for maintaining public loos in local towns. GMTF and GRCC needed to strengthen the voice of rural communities and monitor the services which are being withdrawn.

