

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 3rd September 2007

PRESENT Councillor Mrs J.C. Fulford, Chairman (presiding)

Councillor	A.K. Bacon	Councillor	Mrs C. Littley
"	E.L. Bamford	"	Mrs C.M. Michael
"	M.Z. Bhatti	"	Mrs M. Molesworth
"	Ms J.E. Bramwell	"	Mrs A.M. Pirouet
"	D.J. Lacey		

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors V.M. Abraham, F.G. Holly, C.H. Spruytenburg, Mrs P.R. Wilkinson MBE and P.W. Yerrell.

Mr M. Rowan, New Friends of Lowndes Park and Mr T. Pilling, Elgiva Board of Management.

Officers: Mr. W. Richards, Town Clerk, Mr M. Barnes, Elgiva Manager, Mr S. Pearson, Finance and Contracts Manager.

19. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Member declared a personal interest in light of his representation on an outside body.

Councillor C.H. Spruytenburg – The Allotments Group.

Councillors E.L. Bamford and C.H. Spruytenburg advised that they were current allotment holders and therefore would be taking no part in the discussions pertaining to agenda item 9 – allotment rents and security.

Councillor Mrs Fulford declared a personal interest in the agenda item 7 – Swimming Pool and Moor Fitness update – as a regular swimmer at the Open Air Pool and in agenda item 12 – Bridleways Open to all Traffic - as member of Action for Bridleways of Chesham.

20. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 4 June 2007, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

21. **THE ALLOTMENTS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Allotments Group held on 25 June and 6 August 2007. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

22. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Elgiva Board of Management held on 9 July 2007. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

It was noted that the certain proposed representatives of the Best Value service review panel for community buildings had been omitted.

23. **THE ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Group held on 7 June 2007. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

24. **IMPRESS THE CHESS**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Impress the Chess Steering Group and Open Forum held on 14 June and 25 July 2007. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

25. **LOWNDES PARK LOTTERY UPDATE**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Michael Rowan, Chairman of the Lowndes Park Lottery Steering Group and of the New Friends of Lowndes Park. Mr Rowan gave a brief introduction and explained that, professionally, he was very involved with parks both as Director of Mile End Park and with organisations such as 'Green Space'.

Mr Rowan firstly discussed the Green Flag status bid. He expressed his disappointment that the 2007 bid had failed but opined that the failures cited are rectifiable and that the Committee should consider resubmitting a bid for 2008 after the New Friends of Lowndes Park had written a management plan by the end of November.

Members accepted that the intention to reapply for such status would enhance any lottery bid and it was

RESOLVED

that a resubmission of a Green Flag status bid for Lowndes Park for 2008 be agreed.

Mr Rowan then updated the Committee on developments in respect of a possible lottery bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to upgrade the park. He stated that, realistically, a bid would need to be submitted by the end of March 2008. In order to achieve this timetable, he opined that a Council position needed to be taken on two matters of possible contention, namely the restoration of the Avenue of Trees and the erection of a possible multi-purpose building within the park.

In respect of the Avenue of Trees, Mr Rowan advised that, in terms of consultation, the overwhelming view was that the re-introduction of a line of trees along the Rue de Houilles bridleway was not desired, a view supported by the Lowndes Park Lottery Steering Group. Moreover he did not believe that the dropping of this idea would adversely affect any lottery bid. Some Members questioned whether the consultation had been widespread enough and whether the decision should be deferred. Moreover the matter of the monies raised mainly by members of the Chesham Society for the restoration was raised.

Following a debate, it was agreed by the Committee that the matter had been in the public domain for long enough and there was a need to progress the bid. It was further accepted that the Chairman of Chesham Society should be approached to ascertain whether those who had previously donated might be willing to contribute their monies to another part of the park restoration.

The matter was put to the vote, and by six votes to two, it was

RESOLVED

that the recommendation to remove the restoration of the Avenue of Trees from any Heritage Lottery Fund bid be confirmed.

Councillor Lacey requested that his disappointment on the decision be recorded.

The Committee then discussed a possible building within the park. Mr Rowan advised that the Steering Group was of the view that such a facility should be capable of being flexible enough to provide a park ranger's office; a small outlet for catering; an information point and a small meeting room/classroom for environmental classes and business meetings. In order to progress this, the Steering Group felt it advantageous for a local architect to design an artist's impression to be put before the public and Members. One of the local architects had quoted a figure of £1,250 to undertake this and the Clerk advised that the Consortium's former Chairman had intimated that some monies from its revitalisation pot could be put forward to assist with the costs.

Members discussed this and, while agreeing with the concept, queried whether this 'artist's impression' commissioning could be opened up to other firms and groups. It was accepted this was possible but again the tight timescales were reiterated by officers and Members present who are on the Steering Group.

Councillor Bamford asked that the matter be referred to full Council for determination in accordance with standing orders and accordingly it was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

that the commissioning of an architect to devise an 'artist's impression' of the building for public consultation at a cost of no more than £1,250 be agreed.

Mr Rowan summed up by asking for the Committee's support the work of the Steering Group and it was

RESOLVED

that the continuation of the Steering Group devising a fully costed HLF bid to be brought before Council in early 2008, be supported.

The Chairman thanked Mr Rowan for his invaluable contributions and he left the meeting at 8.25pm.

26. **ELGIVA OPEN DAY**

The Committee received a report on the 2007 Elgiva Open Day.

Members welcomed the report and its explanation, both of the expenditure and the overall achievements of the event. Congratulations were offered to the Manager, Mark Barnes, and his staff for their efforts on the day and the Clerk was requested to write to the staff expressing the Committee's appreciation. Mr Trevor Pilling, Chairman of the Elgiva Board of Management, also added his congratulations on what he perceived as a highly successful day. In turn, the Manager offered his thanks to Mr Pilling who had been highly supportive and hard working throughout the event.

It was

RESOLVED

that the report be noted and support for the concept of future Elgiva Open Days to be organised at the Elgiva Manager's discretion be confirmed.

Mr Barnes and Mr Pilling left the meeting at 8.35pm

27. **OPEN AIR SWIMMING POOL AND MOOR FITNESS GYMNASIUM**

The Committee received an update from the Town Clerk and the Finance and Contracts Manager on the current position on the Moor Road leisure facilities. It was reported that swimming numbers were down from last year due almost entirely to what has proved to be the wettest summer on record but public feedback remained good. Moreover memberships for the new Moor Fitness gym had already reached the level of about 70% of what they were estimated to be for the previous gym located there. The Committee noted the indicative budget presented by the Finance and Contracts Manager.

The Committee also considered and approved other actions taken, and recommendations made, by officers in respect of the facility and it was

RESOLVED

- a) The current financial position be noted
- b) Officers be authorised to confirm the use of the facilities by the previous hirers listed in the report
- c) The officers continue discussions on the possibility of developing the downstairs changing rooms
- d) A public meeting be organised at the facility with a view to setting up a Friends group.

28. **YOUTH EVENT IN LOWNDES PARK**

The Clerk advised that the proposed format of the youth event to be held in Lowndes Park on the 15th September, which had previously been authorised by the Recreation and the Arts Committee, had changed. The day was now to be largely a rock music based event but would still finish at 7.00pm

The Town Clerk reported that, to date, officers still awaited the organisers' risk assessments but that, otherwise, the event would adhere to the conditions of the park's premises licence.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

the revised programme for the Young Persons event scheduled for the 15th September 2007 in Lowndes Park be noted and the event approved, subject to officers receiving the necessary paperwork and assurances on security.

Councillors Bamford and Spruytenburg left the Chamber for the discussion of the following item.

29. **ALLOTMENT RENTS AND SECURITY**

The matter of rental increases for the allotments and security at Cameron Road was considered by the Committee.

It was noted that the Allotments Best Value Service Review Committee had recommended a small increase in rents which officers had interpreted to mean between 10-20p per pole. However the Committee were of the view that the original rental increases proposed at the Recreation and the Arts Committee of the 27th November 2007 were fair, especially in light of the monies spent on the Cameron Road site last year.

In respect of security, the Committee rejected the concept of installing palisade security fencing around Cameron Road on grounds of cost but was keen to encourage allotment holders to plant hedges and bushes that may deter unauthorised incursions onto the allotment sites.

It was

RESOLVED

- a) that the allotment fees from October 2007 be confirmed as
Amersham Road £3.00 per pole: Asheridge Road £3.00 per pole:
Cameron Road £2.50 per pole.
- b) No security fencing be erected at Cameron Road at the present time.

30. **MARSTON JUNIOR FOOTBALL PITCH**

The Finance and Contracts Manager advised that the cost of pitch markings was currently not being covered by the hire fees for junior football.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

that the charge for the Marston Junior Football pitch (no pavilion) be revised to £45 with effect from 1st September 2007.

31. **CHRISTMAS DAY PARTY DAY FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

Members noted the actions taken to date by the Christmas Day Working Party.

A brief discussion took place on the role of an administrator and whether it was necessary to pay such a person. Councillor Mrs Wilkinson offered her services in this role in an unpaid capacity and the Committee noted her offer accordingly.

It was

RESOLVED

- a) the current position on the Christmas Day Party for older people be noted.
- b) that the Working Party be confirmed as an external, outside body.

Councillor Mrs Pirouet left the meeting at 8.45pm

32. **BRIDLEWAYS OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC**

The Committee noted that the orders for the lanes at Trapps Lane, Bunns Lane and Bottom Lane to be upgraded from bridleways to byways open to all traffic (BOATS) have now been made by Buckinghamshire County Council.

It was agreed that that the Council re-state its objections articulated at the Council meeting of the 30th April 2007 and, in addition, state its support for the arguments expressed by Action for Bridleways of Chesham. Moreover it was agreed that a Member representative should meet with the Rights of Way and Access Group Manager at Buckinghamshire County Council to discuss progressing a possible implementation of pre-emptive Traffic Regulation Orders for the byways.

It was

RESOLVED

- a) the Committee restate its position in objecting to the orders and call for a public inquiry
- b) Councillor Mrs Fulford be confirmed as the Council's representative to liaise with Buckinghamshire County Council in respect of possible implementation of pre-emptive Traffic Regulation Orders for the byways

33. **RECYCLING BY PARKS AND PREMISES TEAM**

The Committee noted and welcomed the Parks and Premises Manager's report on recycling by his team and the Clerk was asked to pass on the Committee's appreciation to Mr Ayres for his staff's efforts.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Parks and Premises team's approach to recycling be welcomed and that options to improve the recycling of plastics, bottles and tins in partnership with Chiltern District Council be further investigated.

34. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

The items presented on Information Sheet No. 9 were received and noted.

In respect of the item on lottery funding for the Medieval Day in Lowndes Park, the Committee congratulated the Clerk for securing £6,000 from the lottery Awards for All scheme to finance this event. The Committee also congratulated the Policy and Projects Officer for her hard work in helping to administrate such a successful event and also offered thanks to Councillors Mrs Pirouet and Mrs Wilkinson and the other Steering Group committee members.

In respect of the item on Chesham Culvert, the Committee expressed regret that the Environment Agency had failed to enmain the culvert for 2007/08 and sought clarification as to whether any funds were available for remedial works for this financial year.

Post Meeting Note: Discussions Chiltern District Council officers have had with the Environment Agency have intimated funds are available for required works this year, subject to costs.

35. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS**

It was moved by the Chairman and

RESOLVED

that the public and the Press be excluded from the following two items in accordance with the Public Bodies (Access to Meetings) Act 1960, as matters which are considered to be confidential are about to be discussed.

36. **FORMER GYMNASIUM AT CHESHAM OUTDOOR POOL**

The Committee considered the current position in respect of a possible 'without prejudice' final payment to the former owner of Strides Gymnasium at the Moor Road Swimming Pool and sports facilities for the period of operation between April 17th 2007 and June 12th 2007.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Clerk be authorised to proceed in connection with this matter in the terms expressed at the meeting.

37. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm.

CHAIRMAN

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