

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 4th June 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	"	Mrs G. Walker

IN ATTENDANCE

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

Mr C. Winslade and Ms J. Ritchie – Wheelhouse Veterinary Group (for agenda item 5 only).

Officer: Mr. W. Richards, Town Clerk

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Members declared personal interests in light of their representation on outside bodies.

Councillor Mrs M. Molesworth - Friends of Chesham Cemetery.

Councillor Mrs J.C. Fulford – Impress the Chess Steering Group.

Councillor C.H. Spruytenburg – The Allotments Group.

Councillors E.L. Bamford and C.H.Spruytenburg also advised that they were current allotment holders.

Councillor D.J. Lacey declared a personal interest in the agenda item 7 – Use of Lowndes Park and Marston Field for Community Activities – as a member of Pond Park Community Association. Councillors Ms J.E. Bramwell and Mrs P.R. Wilkinson declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 – Wheelhouse Veterinary Centre; Expansion to Car-Park – in light of them using the veterinary centre.

2. MINUTES

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 12 March 2007, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3. **THE ALLOTMENTS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the Open Meeting of the Allotments Group held on 12 April 2007. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

4. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Elgiva Board of Management held on 16 April and 21 May 2007. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

A query was raised as to the re-appointment of the Board members. The Clerk reported that the names were submitted and approved at the Annual Meeting of the Council but did advise that the current members would welcome any new nominations to join them as vacancies still existed on the Board.

5. **FRIENDS OF CHESHAM CEMETERY**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery held on 24 April 2007. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Councillor Lacey raised the matter of his apology being recorded when, in fact, he had been unaware of the meeting. It was agreed that he should be added to the official circulation list in future.

6. **WHEELHOUSE VETERINARY CENTRE; EXPANSION TO CAR-PARK**

The Chairman invited Mr Charles Winslade from Wheelhouse Veterinary Group to undertake a presentation on his proposals to extend the Wheelhouse veterinary

surgery's car-park in Amersham Road subject to the Council selling or leasing part of Meades Water Gardens to facilitate this. Before Mr Winslade embarked on his presentation, it was proposed and agreed that the Committee's discussion and determination of this request should be after the public and press had been excluded in light of the confidential nature of possible negotiations on selling land.

Mr Winslade outlined his proposal to extend his car-park to allow for two more parking bays and easier egress. He explained that parking was very tight in the existing provision and customers were reversing out into a busy road often in a distressed or tense frame of mind and he was fearful of a major accident. He advised that the extension, if agreed, would require an extra 8 metres in width and would result in the loss of three trees. He advised that he was cognisant of the recommendations of the 'Impress the Chess' Steering Group (which proposed an erection of a small hedge of a native species, a channel to stop run-off and grasscreting as opposed to concrete should the Council decide to sell or lease the land) and would be happy to implement them. He further advised he would be prepared to either buy or lease the land at a mutually agreed figure.

Mr Winslade then answered a number of questions from Members mainly pertaining to possibilities of other parking areas and possible future plans to expand. After these questions, the Chairman thanked Mr Winslade and Ms Ritchie for attending and informed them that the Committee's decision will be relayed to them in due course.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Committee's position be determined following the exclusion of the public and the press at this meeting.

7. **CHESHAM MEDIEVAL WEEKEND**

The Committee, in light of a lottery bid being unsuccessful, was asked to contribute up to £7,500 for an event, previously reported at the Policy and Resources Committee of 19th February 2007, through its annual contribution towards the festival, uncommitted revitalisation monies and the general reserve.

Members agreed this would be an important historical event worthy of celebration and it was

RESOLVED

that the Council underwrite the costs of the Medieval Weekend up to an amount of £7,500.

8. **FOCAL POINT FOR ALLOTMENTS SITE – CAMERON ROAD**

The Committee considered the request submitted by the Chairman of the Allotments Group requesting that plots 38A and 38B at Cameron Road be designated a community area. Members noted the Chairman's view, endorsed by the Allotments Group Committee, that a focal area will allow for the engendering of greater community spirit among allotment holders at Cameron Road and therefore, by implication, result in less people vacating their plots.

A debate took place on whether it was justified to take two plots out of commission when a waiting list existed and a view was expressed that the area in front of the Horticultural Society's hut was adequate for this purpose. However, the Committee agreed that the Allotments Group had done an excellent job in promoting the allotments over the last three years and were keen to support any proposal that would encourage a sense of community among tenants.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

that plots 38A and 38B at Cameron Road be designated as a community focal area to be utilised by the Allotments Group but at no cost to the Council.

9. **REQUESTS TO USE LOWNDES PARK AND MARSTON FIELD FOR COMMUNITY EVENTS**

The Clerk advised that two requests have been received to use the Council's open spaces within the last two weeks.

The first request was from the Pond Park Community Association which wishes to use Marston Field for a 6-a-side football competition. Councillor Lacey reported that the event will raise monies for the Community Association which is particularly important as it is a key partner in the development of the new pavilion at Marston Field. Councillor Lacey advised that over 30 teams had provisionally entered to date.

The second application was from a group working on the 'Rafe's Place' project. The Committee noted the group consists of many of the late Rafe Chiles' friends and family who are attempting to raise funds to rent/lease a facility in town to develop into a drop-in centre for young people. The Committee was informed that the group wish to use Lowndes Park on the 15th September to organise a large-scale acoustic concert predominantly for young people.

Both events were considered highly worthy of support and it was

RESOLVED

that both applicants be granted use of the Council's facilities at the fee of £100.

10. **BRIDLEWAYS OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC**

The Committee noted the current update on the proposed upgrading of public bridleways 28, 34 and 47 to bridleways open to all traffic (BOATS) and expressed disappointment that Buckinghamshire County Council remained reluctant to implement pre-emptive Traffic Regulation Orders for these bridleways.

Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED

that the Clerk be instructed to write to Buckinghamshire County Council strongly requesting that it reconsiders its position of not progressing the implementation of pre-emptive Traffic Regulation Orders for bridleways 28, 34 and 47.

11. **REGULATING ACTIVITIES ON CHESHAM MOOR**

The Town Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from a resident in Bois Moor Road who has expressed concern over what he has perceived as dangerous activities on the Moor. The activities he listed specifically were the playing of golf, the flying of model aircraft and the riding of miniature motorcycles, generally known as 'mini-motos'. The Committee was further advised that this correspondence has been copied into the Health and Safety Executive who subsequently contacted officers to ascertain what action is planned to be taken.

It was agreed by Members that the Council needed to be seen to be discouraging such activities through appropriate signage.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

That signage be ordered discouraging the participation of dangerous activities on The Moor following advice from the Health and Safety Executive on the appropriate wording.

12. **WOODLAND VIEW AND MARSTON FIELD PLAY-AREAS**

The Committee considered proposals to upgrade both Woodland View and Marston Field play areas.

In respect of Woodland View, it was reported that a new residents' association for Woodland View had been set up and is keen to raise monies to fully redevelop the play-area. It has had ambitious plans drawn up by play companies to completely re-equip the area but will require considerable external funding to finance such schemes. The officers' report therefore suggested that, to begin this re-equipping process, a small play area for the younger age group be installed on the site where the previous modular goal area was located. The cost of the scheme was confirmed as £8,544 and it was agreed by Members that the monies of £10,000 set aside in the 2008/09 budget for Woodland View play area be brought forward to this year's budget to finance the scheme.

In respect of Marston Field play area, Members noted the Parks and Premises Manager's concerns in regard to the proximity of overhanging trees. The view expressed was that it would be prudent for a qualified tree surgeon to examine the trees first to ensure there were no dangerous dead branches before the matter of investing in the play area was considered further.

Members then discussed the state of the play areas generally around the town. There was general consensus that many of the Council's sites required new investment and it was agreed that the previous play area audit undertaken by the Youth Council in 2003 and the one proposed for summer 2007 be submitted to a future Recreation and the Arts Committee meeting in this financial year so priorities could be assessed.

It was

RESOLVED

1. that the installation of the proposed play equipment for Woodland View be approved following the virement of monies for the play area from the 2008/09 budget.
2. that the Parks and Premises Manager contract a tree surgeon to undertake any necessary tree safety works pertaining to Marston Field play area.
3. that the Youth Council's play area audits be brought to a future Committee to consider the state of the town's facilities generally.

13. **SUPPORT FOR OUTDOOR FESTIVAL AT THE BURY**

Members received details on a week long series of music and drama events to be held in the grounds of The Bury during July. It was noted that the concerts and shows would include a number of local companies and that the organisers were seeking the Council's support for the event.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Council offer its support to the Open Air Summer Festival at The Bury and grant permission for the use of the town crest.

14. **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.

15. **DETERMINATION ON REQUEST TO SELL OR LEASE LAND TO WHEELHOUSE VETERINARY CENTRE**

The Committee considered its position in light of the presentation given by the proprietor of Wheelhouse Veterinary Centre during agenda item 5.

While the Committee expressed its appreciation of the work undertaken by the veterinary surgery, the prevailing view was that it would not be appropriate to sell or lease off Council land in an important, environmentally sensitive, open space that would result in the loss of trees. Moreover, Members were concerned that such a decision would be seen to be encouraging more car use when it was attempting to promote more environmentally friendly ways of travelling.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

that the Council do not agree to selling or leasing part of Meades Water Gardens to increase car-parking at the Wheelhouse Veterinary Centre in Amersham Road.

16. **OPERATION OF GYMNASIUM AT CHESHAM OUTDOOR POOL**

The Committee considered the current position in respect of the operation of Strides Gymnasium at the Moor Road Swimming Pool and sports facilities.

It was

RESOLVED

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

17. **RECARPETING OF THE ELGIVA FOYER**

The Committee considered the quotations for the re-carpeting of the Elgiva foyer. It was noted that the monies had been allocated from existing budgets and this work was a key target of last year's Best Value Performance Plan.

It was

RESOLVED

that the company First Floor Carpets be confirmed as the contractor to undertake the carpet and flooring work in the Elgiva Foyer at the cost of £9,920 plus VAT.

18. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 9.07 pm.

CHAIRMAN

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