

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 17th December 2018

PRESENT Councillor Mrs J.E. MacBean – Chairman (Presiding)

Councillor	M. Z. Bhatti MBE	Councillor	A.W. Franks
"	Q. Chaudhry	"	P.J. Hudson
"	Miss E.A. Culverhouse	"	R.C. McCulloch
"	M. Fayyaz		

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor A.K. Bacon.

Officer: Mr W. Richards - Town Clerk

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N. T. Southworth and Mrs D.M. Varley.

42. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Fayyaz declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7 due to his connection with Chesham Rising Stars Cricket Club.

Councillor Bacon declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8 as a Member of the Chesham Arts Festival.

It was noted that, as agreed, all previously stated Declaration of Interests remained unchanged from the first meeting of the administrative year or reported subsequently.

43. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 29th October 2018, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

44. **IMPRESS THE CHESS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Impress the Chess Group held on the 18th October and 6th December 2018.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

45. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Elgiva Board of Management held on the 19th November 2018.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

46. **CHESHAM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Chesham Environmental Group meeting held on the 23rd November 2018.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

47. **ALLOTMENTS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the Allotments Group held on the 4th December 2018.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

48. **CHESHAM MOOR GYM AND SWIM CENTRE UPDATE**

The Committee considered the officers' report on the current financial situation at the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre facility.

It was

RESOLVED

that the financial position be noted.

Note: Councillor Miss Culverhouse arrived at the meeting at 8.05pm

49. **TOWN SURVEY**

The Committee considered the report on, and analysis of, the responses to the Town Survey.

Members were pleased to note satisfaction levels were generally up and the overall rating for the Council and overall perception of value for money have improved compared to the previous surveys with over 70% of respondents rating the Council 'good' or 'excellent'. Councillor Hudson also highlighted that the overwhelming majority of residents wished to see the Council continue to undertake devolved services, such as verge cutting which, he opined, had been a great success and the right decision for the Council to take on.

While the response rate of 5.2% remained well above the national average for such surveys, it was noted that this return rate was significantly lower than for the two previous surveys (even with a heavily promoted on-line response option) and therefore, when the next one was scheduled, it was agreed that the timings and distribution (including provision of a possible 'reply paid' envelope as before) would need to be reconsidered.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Report be noted.

50. **REVISED FORECASTS 2018/19 AND DRAFT BUDGET 2019/20**

The Finance and Contracts Manager's report on the revised forecasts for 2018/19 and draft budgets for 2019/20 was considered by the Committee.

In respect of the 2018/19 forecast, members were advised that some £60,140 may have to be taken from the Reserves to reflect the consultants' fees and financial software package not originally budgeted for.

In regard to the 2019/20 draft budget, the Finance and Contracts Manager's report gave an overview of his proposed first draft budgets following the meeting with the Finance Committee and based on a 2.5% increase for an average Band 'D' property tax payer as recommended by that Committee.

Members raised no general comments or queries on the overall budget. However the following specific observations were raised.

It was noted that no monies were being set aside for a possible contribution to the 4G pitch at Chiltern Hills Academy. While Members agreed it would be an important and much needed facility for the town, it should be funded from other sources.

The provision of community cricket nets was raised. While the Clerk confirmed that this scheme was added to the list of community projects and agreed by the Finance Committee in July 2017, questions were asked on where these would be located and how they would be maintained. The Clerk reported that he was trying to set up a

meeting with the representatives of the cricket team who had proposed this originally through Councillor Fayyaz to advance the project and to clarify the questions raised.

Councillor Bacon advised that he was aware that no provision had been made for a possible repair to the leak under the paviors at the Gym and Swim Centre and enquired if this was to be funded. The Chairman replied that she believed that this ought to be best determined by the Manager and, ideally, funded through his own devolved maintenance budget if required.

The question of air conditioning was raised and whether provision had been made for additional air conditioning in the Town Hall. The Clerk stated that the whole matter of air conditioning was largely dependent on whether the major upgrade of the Elgiva was agreed but it was his intention to get a specialist company to quote for the installation of air conditioning at both the Elgiva and Town Hall when a decision was made on the former.

Officers were also requested to determine a more exact approximation on the life of the Town Hall lift as it was noted its total replacement would be considerable in terms of finance.

It was agreed that was generally accepted by the Committee that this first draft budget appeared to be reasonable with an acceptable precept rise.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

that the Budgets be presented for consideration at the Finance Committee of the 7th January 2019 in light of the observations made at this Committee.

51. **PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2019/20**

The Committee considered the proposals detailed in the report for fees and charges for 2019/20.

The following was agreed:

(a) **Allotments**

It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

that a 10p per pole increase on all sites be applied from 1st October 2019.

(b) **Cemetery**

It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

that no increase on existing fees be applied from the 1st April 2019.

(c) **Housing**

It was

RESOLVED

that the current rents be noted.

(d) **The Elgiva**

It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

1. That the hire and service charges be increased from the 1st April 2019 as per the attached schedule except if bookings have previously been confirmed.
2. That the Manager continues to be allowed flexibility and discretion in determining any charge where he believes it to be in the interest of the Theatre.
3. That the current caterer's one agreement be extended for a further twelve months on similar terms & conditions at the fee proposed in the Report and on the understanding that the concessionaire provides card payment facilities.
4. That carers' be allowed free access to the Elgiva when on such duties from April 1st 2019 following the implementation of a registration scheme.

(e) **Town Hall**

It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

that the proposed scale of charges, reflecting no increase in room hire fees or other hire charges, be approved and that the Town Clerk continues to be delegated the determination of any ad hoc charges.

(f) **Sports Pitches and Pavilions, Film Fees, Wayleaves, Fairs and Circuses, Lowndes Park Catering**

It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

1. That no increases in Sports Pitches charges effective from the 1st August 2019 be agreed.
2. That the range of fees for fun fairs and circuses remain unchanged for 2019/2020 and that the Town Clerk be allowed to negotiate the charge within the range set.
3. That the Shelter on the Moor continues to be let at no charge to the Environmental Group.
4. That the Clerk continues to be empowered to negotiate charges for the use of Lowndes Park and other Council facilities by film companies.
5. That the fee of £100 for each use of the Council's Open Spaces be continued.
6. That the current agreement for the Lowndes Park ice cream and tea and coffee concession for Lowndes Park be extended for one year on the same terms and conditions.
7. That a wayleave charge of £5 per annum for pedestrian access only and £50 per annum for vehicular/pedestrian access remain unchanged for 2019/20.
8. That the Clerk be empowered to negotiate charges for the use of the Moor Hardstanding for car-parking and the use of Skottowes Pond by the Model Boat Club.

(g) Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre

It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

that the following be agreed:

1. That the gym, swimming, general room hire charges and pool hire as per the attached schedule be agreed.
2. That the Manager be allowed flexibility and discretion in determining any charge where he believes it to be in the interest of the Centre.
2. That the Chiltern Natural Therapies Ltd rent be increased to £350 per month from the 1st April 2019.
3. That the Moor Football Pitch charges not be increased from the 1st August 2019.

52. CHESHAM MOOR GYM AND SWIM CENTRE

The Chairman raised the matter of the Finance Committee proposing to recommend not to progress a possible extension scheme to the Council following a presentation to it by the Business Plan consultants. She opined that she believed this to be premature and other options in respect to the refiguring of the building could be considered. Accordingly it was agreed that the Gym and Swim Working Party, with appropriate officers, be reconvened in the New Year to revisit this and, at this

junction, the Committee expresses its view that the proposed enlargement of the building be continue to be scrutinised rather than dismissed.

It was

RESOLVED

that the views of the Committee be made known to full Council.

53. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

CHAIRMAN