

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 19th March 2012

PRESENT Councillor Mrs P.R. Cherrill – Vice-Chairman (presiding)

Councillor	T. Franks	Councillor	Mrs C. Littley
"	P.J. Hudson	"	Mrs C.M. Michael
"	D.J. Lacey		

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors: V.M. Abraham, A.K. Bacon and P.W. Yerrell.

Officers: Mr W. Richards, Town Clerk
Mr D. Essex, Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre Manager

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R.C. McCulloch, Mrs A.M. Pirouet, C.H. Spruytenburg and Mrs G. Walker.

66. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Hudson and Mrs Michael declared a personal interest in agenda items 4 and 5 as members of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre. Councillor Bacon declared a personal interest in agenda items 4 and 5 as a regular user of the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre.

Councillors Abraham and Mrs Cherrill declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as members of the Elgiva Board of Management.

Councillor Mrs Littley declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as a member of the Allotments Group.

67. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 21st November 2011, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

68. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Elgiva Board of Management held on 30th January 2012.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted

In respect to Minute No. 7, Councillor Mrs Littley suggested that any signage advertises the bar as well as a theatre, cinema and café.

Members congratulated the staff in regard to the continued improving figures, particularly in respect to the Pantomime.

69. **FRIENDS OF CHESHAM CEMETERY**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery held on 7th February 2012.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Arising out of Minute No. 5, Councillor Bacon enquired as to what the 'wildflower project' day consisted of. The Clerk replied that he believed it was simply a site visit to the Cemetery to ascertain whether there may be a further area suitable for another wildflower area.

70. **CHESHAM ALLOTMENTS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Allotments Group held on 21st February 2012. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

71. **FRIENDS OF CHESHAM MOOR GYM AND SWIM CENTRE**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre held on 21st February 2012. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Arising out of Minute No. 3, the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre Manager advised that, to date, around 60 tickets had been purchased to facilitate April swimming. He advised that, as a pool hire and aqua aerobics had also been provisionally booked for this time, the original predicted break-even sales would be

lower than originally stated and he was relatively confident April swimming would take place.

72. **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 and other matters.

The Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre Manager explained that the officers were intending to buy the gym equipment now that the lease agreement was at an end and enter into another service agreement with the existing company. He emphasised that this would produce a saving of £7,800 for the first year and £10,600 in the following years if the equipment was kept longer.

Councillor Abraham advised that he had obtained an annual service estimate from a local private gym which was roughly half the cost of the proposed service agreement for the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre and enquired whether a better deal could be obtained. The Manager opined that such service agreement contracts were based on variables such as age of equipment, availability of parts and speed of repair and stated that he believed the excellent service he had received from the current company justified the price.

Members were of the view that it was important to have a reliable and trusted service contract and, having noted the annual savings, supported the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre Manager's proposal.

It was

RESOLVED

1. that the financial position be noted.
2. that the gym equipment be purchased at a cost of £2,700 and the officers be delegated to negotiate a suitable service contract at £6,000 or less.

73. **PLAY-AREA STAGE IV REDEVELOPMENT**

The Committee considered the proposals from the Play Area Working Party.

Members noted from the minutes of the last working party meeting that Chiltern District Council was planning to install Parkour play equipment at the Co-op Field. However the Clerk reported that, subsequent to the meeting, the Chiltern District Council officer had advised that she is now considering locating the equipment to the Youth Centre. Councillor Bacon confirmed this, saying that he had met the officer and had been made aware of the likely residents' opposition to it being sited in Co-op Field on grounds of possible anti-social behaviour. Councillor Bacon also reported that it was also considered to be too hilly and too isolated from the rest of the town.

It was accepted that if it was located at the Youth Centre, then clearly it was not a project the Council could have any involvement with. However Members expressed

the view that the equipment should be encouraged to be located in Chesham itself and an alternative offered if the Youth Centre proved to be an unsuitable venue. The Committee accepted that there may well be issues in respect to residents' objections so it was agreed that the Council should only offer agreement in principle to it being located in the Co-op Field and subject to robust consultation if it was deemed a suitable location by Chiltern District Council.

Councillor Franks opined that such equipment, by its very nature, led to injuries and enquired whether the Council may expose itself to civil damages claims if located on its land. The Clerk replied that such claims usually were only successful if such equipment was in a state of disrepair.

In respect to the other recommendations from the working party, it was agreed that Gordon Road be the next play-area to be developed and that any monies remaining be committed to a skatepark upgrade.

It was

RESOLVED

1. that the Committee agree in principle to the location of a Parkour facility at the bottom of Co-op Field subject to there being a proper consultation exercise with both local residents and young people.
2. that Gordon Road play-area be confirmed as the next site to be re-developed in 2012/13.
3. that any excess funds from the allocated £20,000 be committed to new equipment in the skatepark.

74. **LOWNDES PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Members considered the updated Lowndes Park Management Plan.

While congratulating officers and Friends of Lowndes Park on its production, Councillor Yerrell noted its size and stated that he hoped the recommendations of the Green Flag judges were not putting too much of a burden on staff.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Lowndes Park Management Plan, as presented, be endorsed and adopted.

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

It was moved by the Chairman and

RESOLVED

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

The Vice-Chairman, at this juncture, reminded Members that they were about to go into closed session and that decisions taken should not be relayed via mobile phones to social media sites. She opined that, in her view, mobile phones should not be used at all at meetings. The Clerk then clarified that there was no legislation or anything within the Council's Standing Orders forbidding their use in meetings but it may be considered discourteous by other Members if in constant use.

76. **CHESHAM MARKET**

The Committee received an update on the state of Chesham Market and a request that excess rental obtained be put in an account to be held by the market co-operative for the following year to cover any loss of significant income or to invest in new infrastructure such as stall canopies.

Members expressed their satisfaction that the market was doing so well with the new co-operative and were happy to accede to this request. Councillor Bacon also suggested that the Council write back to Chiltern District Council to express its support for the idea of purchasing new stall canopies or other infrastructure improvements.

It was

RESOLVED

that the surplus income generated (June 2011 to May 2012) by the Chesham Market co-operative be held in an account for the following year.

77. **POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF LOWNDES PARK LAND**

Members discussed whether they wished to agree to the principle of the sale of a small part of Lowndes Park and to agree to the commissioning of an independent land price evaluation. It was noted that the Council had received a similar request in 2009 and that there was general agreement then that this would not be in the Council's best interests.

The Committee remained of the same opinion that it would not be advisable to sell off land that may be of some use to the Council in the future and it was also not right to sell land bequeathed to the people of Chesham by the Lowndes family.

It was

RESOLVED

that no selling of part of the park be agreed.

78. **SECURITY AT DEPOT**

It was

RESOLVED

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

79. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

CHAIRMAN