

## CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 12 December 2005

**PRESENT** Councillor Mrs. P.R. Lindsley, Chairman (presiding)

Councillor	A.K. Bacon	Councillor	Mrs M. Molesworth
"	E.L. Bamford	"	Mrs. A.M. Pirouet
"	Mrs J.C. Fulford	"	C.H. Spruytenburg
"	D.J. Lacey	"	P. Woodburn

#### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Councillor Mrs. P.R. Wilkinson M.B.E.

**Representative of the Elgiva Board of Management:** Mr. A. Ogden

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

#### 39. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors A.K. Bacon, Mrs P.R. Lindsley, Mrs M. Molesworth, C.H. Spruytenburg and Mrs P.R. Wilkinson all declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 – Chesham Festival - as members of the Chesham Society.

#### 40. **MINUTES**

It was

#### **RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 17 October 2005, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

#### 41. **ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Environmental Group held on 8 September and 17 November 2005. It was

#### **RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

42. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Elgiva Board of Management held on 31 October 2005. It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

43. **RECRUITMENT OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

Arising out of Minute No. 9 of the meeting of the 31 October 2005, Councillor Mrs Wilkinson enquired as to whether any possible new Board Members had been approached by the Board's Chairman. The Town Clerk advised that he had yet to hear from the Chairman on this matter since the last Board meeting.

44. **FRIENDS OF CHESHAM CEMETERY**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery held on 25 October 2005. It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

45. **REVIEW OF ELGIVA BOX OFFICE AND MARKETING MANAGER'S POST**

Members considered the report on the current work undertaken by the Box Office and Marketing Manager at the Elgiva Theatre. It was noted that attendances had increased by over 2,500 since his appointment even though much of his time allocated to marketing was limited due to the amount of hours spent in the box-office. It was further noted that none of the savings from 2004/05, provisionally allocated to offset the salary, had been needed to be utilised.

In response to queries from Members, the Elgiva Manager stated that, while some time in the future it may be beneficial to consider the options for a dedicated marketing manager, he was currently only seeking endorsement for the comparatively new post of Box Office and Marketing Manager. Both the Chairman and the representative of the Elgiva Board of Management added their support for the officer and this general approval for the post was endorsed by the Committee.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the report be noted.

*Mr M. Barnes and Mr O. Ogden left the meeting at 7.50pm*

46. **WOODLAND VIEW YOUTH PLAY PROVISION**

The Committee received a progress report on the Woodland View play provision pertaining to planning permission, safety concerns and residents' comments.

It was noted that the revised plans for the fencing and associated ground works would result in planning permission not being required and it was further noted that the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents had no objections on safety grounds. The Committee was cognisant of the fact that two residents had objected but was of the view that the vast majority of residents in the Woodland View area would benefit from the new facility.

It was therefore

**RESOLVED**

that the revised design and quotation submitted by Wicksteed Leisure be accepted and the progression of the installation of the play equipment progress forthwith and that the colour scheme of the equipment be in accordance with those chosen by the local young people.

47. **CHESHAM FESTIVAL 2006**

The Town Clerk reported on the proposals to change the format of the biennial Chesham Festival. He advised that support for a summer Festival was not forthcoming and the Chesham Society had indicated that it would be prepared to take a lead in operating an enhanced Heritage Weekend event in the town in September 2006. The Town Clerk was keen to impress upon Members that such an event would not be the sole preserve of the Chesham Society and that a steering group would be set up to also include officers of both this Council and Chiltern District Council as well as representatives of the Consortium. The event was intended to attract visitors to Chesham and, in doing so, accorded with the objectives of the Chesham Community Vision.

While Members had no objections in principle to the concept, there was a general consensus that it would be unwise to definitely commit a sum of £1,250 to the event until further details were forthcoming. Accordingly, it was

**RESOLVED**

that £1,250 be provisionally allocated for this event in the 2006/07 estimates, subject to a future presentation and report to this Committee and that Councillor Mrs Pirouet be nominated as the Council's Member representative on the steering group.

48. **GREEN FLAG AWARD FOR LOWNDES PARK**

Members were advised that the Town Clerk had been approached by Chiltern District Council to see whether the Council would be prepared to apply for Green Flag award status for Lowndes Park. The award scheme, which began in 1996 and is administered by the Civic Trust, is a means of recognising and rewarding the best green spaces in the country. The Town Clerk advised that obtaining such status would assist with the possible Heritage Lottery Fund bid and, conversely, that with the work currently being undertaken by the consultants in preparing a management plan for the park should assist in achieving Green Flag status. Members noted the provisional offers of assistance from officers from Buckinghamshire County Council and Chiltern District Council and it was

**RESOLVED**

that the Committee agree to applying for a Green Flag Award for Lowndes Park after confirming administrative and professional support from the principal authorities.

49. **REVISED ESTIMATES 2005/06 AND DRAFT ESTIMATES 2006/07**

The Finance and Contract Manager presented his report on the revised estimates for 2005/06 and draft estimates for 2006/07.

In respect of the 2005/06 estimates, he advised that the summary showed a net overspend of nearly £19,000 when compared to the original budget (2005/06) against the annual projected (revised 2005/06) budget. He explained that this was due almost entirely to items carried over from 2004/05.

In respect of the 2006/07 estimates, the Finance and Contracts Manager advised that he was presenting a draft precept budget totalling £697,000 after the use of balances, which approximated to a 5% increase on the 2005/06 figure. He warned that the financial long-term situation was likely to be difficult and it would require robust financial management to keep precept rises within acceptable limits over the next three years.

Queries were raised by the Committee as to the lower than hoped for income figures for the Town Hall hirings and hoped this could be addressed through greater marketing to increase bookings. Members agreed that provision made for a 3% rise in inflation was too high in light of the current Retail Price Index and agreed that a figure of 2.5% was more realistic. It was accepted that possible other savings should be considered at the Policy and Resources Committee to ascertain whether the proposed precept could be further reduced.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that a budget based upon a 2.5% inflation rise and the prioritised list of schemes be presented for consideration at the Policy and Resources Committee of the 9 January 2006 in light of the recommendations made at this Committee.

50. **PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2006/07**

The Committee considered the proposals detailed in the report for fees and charges for 2006/07 as follows:

(a) **Allotments**

It was

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that no increase on the rental charges, as currently being levied, be made from 1 October 2006.

(b) **Cemetery**

The report was noted and it was

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the proposed scale of charges be amended to reflect a 2.5% rise from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006.

(c) **Housing**

The report was noted and it was

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the two properties continue to be let through Chiltern Hundreds Housing Association and the rent determined by the Association in line with their other properties.

(d) **Office Services**

It was

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that no increase be applied to these charges.

(e) **Temperance Hall**

It was

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the report be noted.

(f) **The Elgiva**

The Committee considered the proposed charges for The Elgiva. It was

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the proposed scale of charges be agreed, in consultation with the Elgiva Board of Management, and 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.

(g) **Town Hall**

Following consideration of the report, it was

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the proposed scale of charges be amended to reflect a 2.5% rise from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006.

(h) **Chesham Park Community College**

Following consideration of the report, it was

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that Officers agree the charges for use of the facilities if such opportunities arise.

(i) **Swimming Pool**

It was noted that for the second successive year the Association had shown a loss on its accounts. Following consideration of the report, it was

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

- (i) that the building rent be increased to £18,876 per annum with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 and fixed for a period of five years;
- (ii) that the CVSLA continue to be permitted to determine the pool charges;
- (iii) that the CVSLA Management fee payable from 1 April 2006 be agreed at £37,212, subject to agreement by the CVSLA.

(j) **Sports Pitches, Charter Fairs and Circuses, Film Fees, Donkey Derby/Schools of Chesham Carnival, Wayleaves**

Following consideration of the report, it was

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

- (i) that the proposed fees and charges for sports pitches, fun fairs and circuses for 2006/07 be approved;
- (ii) that the Clerk continue to be empowered to negotiate charges for the use of Lowndes Park by film companies;
- (iii) that a fee of £100 be charged for each use of the Council's Open Spaces by the Schools of Chesham Carnival and Donkey Derby;
- (iv) that a further report be submitted on the Council's Wayleaves.

(k) **Skottowes Pond Fish Management, Chesham District Model Boat Club and Sponsorship of Roundabout**

It was

**RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND**

that the Skottowes Pond fish management licence be increased to £350 with effect from 18<sup>th</sup> July 2006, subject to the agreement of the Tring Anglers and to be fixed for a period of three years; the model boat club position be noted and the roundabout sponsorship position be reconsidered once Buckinghamshire County Council had confirmed its position on current roundabout arrangements.

51. **INFORMATION ITEMS**

The items presented on Information Sheet No. 17 were received and noted.

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

It was

**RESOLVED**

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

53. **CHESS VALLEY SPORTS AND LEISURE ASSOCIATION (CVSLA) RENEWAL OF AGREEMENT WITH STRIDES**

Members considered the current negotiations between members of CVSLA and the owner of Strides gymnasium over the five-year review of the agreement between the two parties.

It was noted that there were a number of differences between CVSLA and Strides and the two meetings hosted by the Council officers had not, thus far, been able to resolve these.

In consideration of the enquiry from both CVSLA and Strides as to whether the Council would accede to its lease with CVSLA being altered to allow Strides to rent the gymnasium area, the Committee were of the view that, if such an agreement would not materially affect the management fee and both parties wished to progress this, then there was no objection in principle but the Council would need to take legal advice on this matter.

The Committee fully supported CVSLA's right to manage the facility and its aim of making the complex more accessible to the local community while increasing income. It also expressed its wish that the review be satisfactorily concluded by Strides and CVSLA by the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Town Clerk be instructed to write to the CVSLA Committee and the owner of Strides gymnasium expressing the views of the Committee.

54. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

CHAIRMAN