

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 16th January 2012

PRESENT Councillor C.H. Spruytenburg – Chairman (presiding)

Councillor	Ms R.K. Bhatti	Councillor	Mrs C. Littley
"	Mrs P.R. Cherrill	"	R.C. McCulloch
"	T. Franks	"	Mrs C.M. Michael
"	P.J. Hudson	"	Mrs A.M. Pirouet

IN ATTENDANCE

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

Officers: Mr W. Richards, Town Clerk
Mr M. Barnes, Elgiva Manager

Mr T. Pilling, Chairman of the Elgiva Board of Management

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D.J. Lacey and Mrs G. Walker.

54. **LOCAL PRODUCE MARKET AWARD**

After opening the meeting, the Chairman, Councillor Spruytenburg, invited Councillor Mrs Littley to give details on the national award won by the Local Produce Market organised jointly by the Council and Transition Town Chesham. Councillor Mrs Littley explained that Chesham Local Produce Market had officially been recognised as Britain's most environmentally-friendly market. The market entered the 'How Green Is Your Market?' competition run by the National Market Traders Federation, and had won both the Southern Region as well as the overall National prize.

The Committee commended Councillor Mrs Littley and the other organisers on gaining such a prestigious award and expressed delight in being presented with the two trophies on display.

55. **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 items 4 and 6 as members of the Elgiva Board of Management.

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

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

Councillors Hudson, Mrs Pirouet and Shaw declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 as members of the Chesham Events Group.

56. **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.

57. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Elgiva Board of Management held on 15th November 2011.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted

The Chairman, in noting the attendance of both the Elgiva Manager and the Chairman of the Elgiva Board of Management stated that he intended to consider the Minutes and consider agenda item 6 – Elgiva Pantomime – at the same time. This was agreed by the Committee.

Members first commented on the Minutes of the 15th November. Councillor Yerrell noted that the deficit for the theatre had remained at broadly the same level as when the Manager took over some 8 years which was, he opined, an excellent achievement.

Councillor Bacon then asked the Manager how much the loss of the Marketing Manager's position had affected him and his operation in the last year. The Manager replied that, since his background was in marketing, it had not been overly taxing for him to take on this additional role but, since he was covering the box-office as well, finding the time was proving somewhat problematic. He went on say that he was well aware of how important marketing was to generate new customers as well as retaining existing ones. He gave examples of recent marketing initiatives such as securing advertising on local buses; obtaining a leaflet rack in Sainsbury's and increasing press coverage to highlight what was being achieved but stated he was certainly open to new ideas and, indeed, was meeting with a new Board member with high-level marketing experience to discuss this shortly. He commented that he was aware that electronic marketing would become increasingly important but, citing how long the collating of e-mail addresses was taking, he stated that he would be reluctant to reduce 'paper' advertising at this juncture.

Members then considered the recent financial figures. Mr Pilling reported that the recent monthly figures had been greatly improved and he was relatively confident that, despite the economic climate, the theatre would come in under budget. The Manager concurred and stated that December's initial figures had been unexpectedly excellent.

Councillor Franks asked Mr Pilling if he had written to Chiltern District Council as yet requesting a financial contribution towards the theatre's operation bearing how many residents from Chiltern attended. Mr Pilling replied that he had every intention of doing so but was compiling the pertinent facts and figures first.

The Committee then considered the pantomime. There was uniform agreement that it had been a big success and the Manager and his team were congratulated both in the quality of the production and in achieving a net surplus improvement of over 27% on the 2010/11 pantomime. The Chairman asked whether a vote of thanks could be sent to the Elgiva staff which was duly agreed. The Chairman also stated his regret on the lack of Members in attendance on press night and opined it was important for Members to show their support.

In considering next year's pantomime, Councillor Spruytenburg enquired as to whether it would be helpful for the Manager to have permission in future to commission the in-house pantomime before January to aid promotion. The Manager replied that he was grateful for the suggestion but believed that the third week in January was sufficient time to prepare for the next show in December.

It was

RESOLVED

that the 2011/12 Pantomime figures be noted and that the Committee support the principle of offering an 'in-house' pantomime again next season at the suggested budget, subject to there being no major objections from the Elgiva Board of Management.

58. **CHESHAM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Chesham Environmental Group held on 17th November 2011.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Arising out of Minute No. 7, the Clerk advised he had been in discussions with the Chiltern Society in regard to the Council offering advice on maintenance once the Society took over the lease for Captain's Wood.

59. **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 2nd December 2011. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Councillor Spruytenburg advised that, subsequent to the meeting, the Chairman of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym & Swim, Mr Peter Ashby, had resigned for personal reasons. The Committee paid tribute to Mr Ashby's immense hard work and it was agreed a vote of thanks be passed to him on behalf of the Council.

In respect to the minutes, Councillor Bacon asked whether the proposal to try and get gym members to pay by direct debit had been progressed. Councillor Hudson replied that it appeared that bank charges to implement this were so high as to make it not viable.

60. **CHESHAM ALLOTMENTS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Allotments Group held on 13th December 2011. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

In respect to the minutes, Councillor Mrs Pirouet suggested it may be advantageous for a survey to be undertaken by the Allotments Group to ascertain the level of theft at the Asheridge Road site.

61. **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.

62. **GREEN FLAG ENTRY 2012**

The Committee was asked to consider whether it wished to enter Lowndes Park into the Green Flag Award to retain its status in the summer.

Members noted the very positive marks obtained from the judges in 2011 and therefore there was wide scale agreement to enter again this year.

Councillor Yerrell queried whether the judges' recommendations were having an undue influence on the management of the park and gave an example of how the upper park no longer catered for more formal recreation activities. However other Members suggested that a grass-cutting regime that favoured sustainability and wildlife was to be encouraged and was appreciated by the many dog-walkers and ramblers who walked across it.

The Chairman noted how important the Friends' Group was in securing the Green Flag award and it was agreed a vote of thanks be forwarded to its Chairman.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Council re-enter Lowndes Park for the Green Flag Award for 2012.

63. **IMPACT OF OAK PROCESSIONARY MOTHS ON TREES**

Members considered the report from the Policy and Projects Officer on the dangers emanating from the Oak Processionary Moth and the large possibility of it spreading to Chesham from its current breeding sites in West London. Having noted its potential significant effect on both flora and human health and DEFRA's recent decision to halt its eradication programme, it was

RESOLVED

that a letter be written to DEFRA and the local MP to request the reinstatement of a more effective Oak Processionary Moth eradication programme.

64. **SUMMER EVENTS IN CHESHAM**

As Chairman of the Chesham Events Group, Councillor Mrs Pirouet gave a brief breakdown of the many summer events planned to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee and the London Olympics as well as other proposed activities. These included:

- **Civic/Jubilee Service** - Sunday 3rd June, 10am to 11.30pm to include the Chesham British Legion and its Veterans Day parade.
- **'Big Lunch'** in the High Street.
- **Essex Road Street and Townfield Road Street Parties**
- **A Jubilee Tea Dance**
- **Jubilee/Olympics Fun Run** - organised by Chiltern Harriers.
- **Concert and fireworks in Lowndes Park** - including the lighting and preparation of a Beacon.
- **Jubilee Walking Route** - a new route was being launched by Walkers are Welcome to celebrate the Jubilee.

- **Chesham Moor Gym & Swim Centre Centennial Celebrations** - 5th May to include a number of indoor and outdoor activities.
- **‘More than Gold’** - two day event on 28th and 29th July in Lowndes Park organised by Churches Together to celebrate the Olympics.
- **Rafe’s Place** - young people’s music event in Lowndes Park with a Jubilee theme on the 15th September.

The Chairman congratulated Councillor Mrs Pirouet and the Events Group for pulling together such a diverse and exciting programme.

Councillor Mrs Cherrill queried whether there were any contingencies in place for wet weather. Councillor Mrs Pirouet replied that the Events Group was trying to keep costs to a minimum and therefore had discounted the idea of hiring marquees.

It was

RESOLVED

that the draft programme of events for summer 2012 be noted.

65. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

CHAIRMAN

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