

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 7th June 2010

PRESENT

Councillor	M.Z. Bhatti	Councillor	Mrs M. Molesworth
"	Mrs J.C. Fulford	"	Mrs A.M. Pirouet
"	Mrs C. Littley	"	C. H. Spruytenburg
"	Mrs C.M. Michael	"	Mrs G. Walker

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors V.M. Abraham and F.G. Holly

Mr P. Ashby, Ms N. Khan and Ms T. Coote – Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre

Miss T. Egan and Miss R. Pirouet – Chesham Youth Council

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E.L. Bamford, Ms J.E. Bramwell and D.J. Lacey.

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR ADMINISTRATIVE YEAR 2010/11**

The Deputy Mayor opened the meeting and called for nominations for Chairman of the Recreation and the Arts Committee.

It was

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs A.M. Pirouet be elected Chairman for the remainder of the Council year.

Note: Councillor Mrs Pirouet took the Chair

Councillor Mrs Pirouet called for nominations for Vice-Chairman of the Recreation and the Arts Committee.

It was

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs C. Littley be elected Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Council year.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Holly and Mrs Michael declared a personal interest in agenda items 5 and 7 as members of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre.

Councillors Mrs Fulford and Mrs Littley declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 as members of the Impress the Chess Group.

Councillor Holly and Mrs Walker declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 as members of the Allotments Group. Councillor Spruytenburg declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 as an allotment holder.

Councillor Mrs Fulford declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 as a member of the Environmental Group.

Councillor Holly declared a personal interest in agenda items 5 and 8 as a member of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery.

Councillor Abraham declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 as a member of the Elgiva Board of Management.

Councillor Mrs Pirouet declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 in light of her role as Chairman of the Neighbourhood Action Group.

3. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 1st March 2010, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

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

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre held on 23rd March and 27th April 2010. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

With members of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre in attendance, the Chairman requested that the Committee also consider agenda item 7 – Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre Update – at this juncture so any questions and queries could be directed at those Friends in attendance.

Following a query on the leak, the Centre Manager advised that it had been successfully blocked but water could no longer be taken from the spring-fed well until more extensive repairs had been undertaken which could be expensive. Both he and the Committee agreed it would be preferable to have the water fed from the well in future but costs for the repairs would need to be carefully considered.

A question was also asked about the provision of refreshments and how and where these were sourced. The Centre Manager explained that the food and drink was currently being bought through a major retail outlet and sold by staff at the centre in order to boost income over expenditure. Following observations from Members, he agreed to look at the feasibility both of sourcing supplies through the Elgiva café franchise and ensuring at least some of the stock was Fairtrade.

A question was asked about recycling. The Centre Manager said that the staff endeavours to recycle all materials where possible. However he advised that the waste and recycling centre officers had stated he needed a licence as a 'commercial' operation when he went to recycle a number of plastic bottles, which, he opined, was disappointing.

Mr Peter Ashby, Chairman of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre, was then asked if he wished to address the Committee. Mr Ashby highlighted the fact that in the three years that the Centre had been operated directly by the Council with support from the Friends, the deficit had decreased from £85,000 to £60,000 and he paid tribute to the hard work of both centre staff and his colleagues on the Friends for achieving this. He also explained that the budget deficit for this year had been set at £80,000 to reflect higher staffing and central administration costs and possible lower income if the weather is poor all summer.

Following a recommendation from the Friends, the Committee also agreed to the selling of reduced price season tickets half way through the swimming season if deemed appropriate by officers and the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre.

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Centre Manager and the Friends for their continuing efforts and their attendance this evening.

There being no further observations, it was

RESOLVED

1. that the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre update report be noted.
2. that the decision to sell reduced price season tickets be delegated to the Town Clerk after consultation with the Centre Manager and the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre.

5. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Elgiva Board of Management held on 15th March and 17th May 2010.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Arising out of Minute no 5 of the meeting held on the 15th March, Councillor Mrs Fulford expressed her hope that the Board had not totally dismissed the idea of hosting the Post Office in the theatre if the need arose. The Clerk responded by saying that while the Board had made no definitive decision on this, there was a general feeling the necessary permissions required to achieve this would be extremely difficult to obtain.

6. **FRIENDS OF CHESHAM CEMETERY**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery A.G.M. and group meeting held on 20th April 2010. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

7. **IMPRESS THE CHESS**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Impress the Chess Group held on 30th March and 25th May 2010. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Arising out of Minute no 3 (i) of the meeting held on the 25th May, Councillor Mrs Fulford informed the Committee that the Environment Agency had reduced Pow Wow's legal abstraction levels considerably which, she opined, was good news for the future water levels within the River Chess.

Councillor Mrs Littley reminded the Committee that the annual 'Impress the Chess Forum Walk' along the river was taking place on Tuesday 8th June.

8. **CHESHAM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the Chesham Environmental Group AGM held on the 22nd April 2010. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

9. **ALLOTMENTS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Allotments Group held on 30th March and 11th May 2010. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Arising out of Minute no 15 of the meeting held on the 30th March, Councillor Mrs Walker suggested that the main obstacle to the implementation of a compostable toilet at the Cameron Road site was the cost. Accordingly the Clerk was asked to investigate if such a facility could be built/dug through the Community Payback scheme or through funding from grant making bodies such as the Esmée Fairburn Foundation.

10. **CHESHAM YOUTH COUNCIL PRESENTATION ON CONSULTATION ON SKATEPARK**

The Committee received a presentation from Miss Taisha Egan and Miss Rebecca Pirouet in respect of the consultation undertaken by Chesham Youth Council.

Miss Egan and Miss Pirouet reported that they had been charged with consulting with skatepark users and other young people as to what sort of replacement equipment they would like to see in the skatepark area. They advised that they had received external funding from both Buckinghamshire County Council and Paradigm Housing to undertake this and, in light of the latter's support, undertook some more general consultation on young people's aspirations and requirements.

The Youth Council representatives informed the Committee that this consultation had taken place on the 24th April and, in order to encourage young people to participate, a street artist company and Bucks Community Action's i-Van had been hired in. Young people were asked their views on preferences for which skatepark design they preferred from a range offered. Over 30 comments were received and Miss Egan and Miss Pirouet said this would be useful information for when the Council decided to replace the equipment. Councillor Mrs Pirouet also advised that this work undertaken by the Youth Council had already won an award from the Freemasons' 'Community Projects' scheme and the group was through to the next round and possibly in line for a larger cash prize.

The Members offered their congratulations to Miss Egan and Miss Pirouet for their presentation and thanks to the Youth Council for its hard work.

Following on from the presentation, the Clerk advised that the company who installed the skatepark in 2001 had been invited down to ascertain how long a lifespan it felt the existing equipment had. The company had suggested another seven to eight years.

Councillor Mrs Walker asked whether it was possible to have the current skatepark open all hours. The Clerk reminded the Committee that it was subject to a noise abatement notice and various proposed solutions to deaden the noise had not been successful. Councillor Mrs Walker asked whether the acoustic willow bund idea could be re-examined and the Clerk said that he would look at it afresh and bring to a future Committee.

It was agreed that, in light of the Youth Council's excellent work, the skatepark should not be forgotten and the momentum maintained. Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

that a skatepark working party be formed to include representatives of the skatepark users; Chesham Youth Council; 'Rafe's Place' and officers and Members to look at other sites and report back on the way forward to redevelop the skatepark.

Note: In light of her earlier Declaration of Interest, Councillor Mrs Pirouet left the Chair for the consideration of the next item and Councillor Mrs Littley took the Chair.

11. **CEMETERY LOCKING UP TIMES**

The Committee considered feedback from the surveys and general consultation undertaken on the matter of locking-up of the cemetery gates.

While accepting that there was clearly a sizeable majority in favour of locking up the cemetery at night particularly from responses received from near-by residents, some Members did query what questions were posed by the local Police Community Support Officers and whether the fear and perception of anti-social behaviour was more of an issue than actual anti-social behaviour itself.

Councillor Mrs Pirouet advised that the residents of Sunnyside Road had been tentatively approached in respect of locking the cemetery themselves on a rota basis and it was agreed that this possible solution should be explored further. It was also agreed that the Friends of Chesham Cemetery and representatives of the police and Chiltern District Council's Community Safety team be part of this discussion. It was therefore

RESOLVED

that the current locking procedure be continued and a meeting on future locking procedures be arranged involving officers; the Chairman of the Recreation and the Arts Committee; representatives of Sunnyside Road residents and the Friends of Chesham Cemetery; the police and the Chiltern District Council Community Safety team and the outcome of this meeting be brought before the Council meeting on the 12th July 2010.

Note: Councillor Mrs Pirouet returned to the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

12. **FUTURE OF COUNCIL OWNED BUILDINGS**

The Committee considered the future of the Moor Pavilion and the St Mary's Mausoleum.

In respect to Moor Pavilion, it was noted that the facility had been used exclusively by Strides F.C. for a number of years and as a storage facility rather than a changing facility. However the building is in a parlous state and with the Council having a duty of care to the users, the Committee was advised that the Clerk had commissioned a chartered surveyor to report on the building. In considering the surveyor's report, it was noted that the building is not in a good condition and that the report highlighted that a 'do nothing' approach was not an option and concluded that 'from a health & safety point of view the building will need to be cleared, strengthened and repaired.'

The Clerk further advised that Strides F.C. had stated that while it does have limited funds available, it would not be able to finance any major refurbishments though it believes it may be able to fund a lock-up container to place on the concrete base if the existing pavilion is demolished by the Council.

The consensus from Members was that it would be unfair to leave the football club without a facility. Accordingly it was agreed estimates should be obtained for major repairs to make the pavilion fit for purpose and to demolish and install a lock-up container. Once these had been obtained, the matter of the most desirable option and the question of who should finance this should be re-considered by Council.

In respect to the Mausoleum, the Clerk advised that he had just heard from the Historic Buildings Officer at Chiltern District Council that the suggested repairs to the St Mary's Church Mausoleum as outlined in the circulated surveyor's report would need to be approved by the Oxford Ecclesiastic Diocese rather than Chiltern District Council.

Members were reminded that the responsibility to keep monuments and headstones safe in a closed churchyard lay with the local Council. However Members felt that it would still be worth attempting to trace existing members of the Lowndes family to seek a financial contribution to the upkeep from them as it is the Lowndes family members interred in the Mausoleum. Councillor Mrs Fulford proposed that the Council seek quotations to apply the minimum repairs required to make safe and a working party involving representatives of the Council and Friends of St Mary's be set up to look at the on-going maintenance of the churchyard. This was agreed.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

1. that estimates should be obtained for major repairs to make the Moor Pavilion fit for purpose and to demolish and install a lock-up container and, upon receipt of these, the matter of the most desirable option and the question of who should finance this should be re-considered by Council.

2. that the Council seek quotations to apply the minimum repairs required to make St Mary's Churchyard Mausoleum safe and a working party involving representatives of the Council and Friends of St Mary's be set up to look at the on-going maintenance of the churchyard.

13. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

CHAIRMAN

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