

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 17th January 2011

PRESENT Councillor Mrs A.M. Pirouet - Chairman (presiding)

Councillor	Ms. J.E. Bramwell	Councillor	Mrs C.M. Michael
"	Mrs J.C. Fulford	"	Mrs M. Molesworth
"	D.J. Lacey	"	C.H. Spruytenburg
"	Mrs C. Littley	"	Mrs G. Walker

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors A.K. Bacon and F.G. Holly.

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

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

49. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Holly and Mrs Michael declared a personal interest in agenda items 4, 5 and 13 as members of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre.

Councillors Bacon and Ms Bramwell declared a personal interest in agenda items 4, 5 and 13 as gym members of the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre. Councillor Mrs Fulford declared a personal interest in agenda items 4, 5 and 13 as a user of the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre.

Councillors Holly and Mrs Walker declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as members of the Allotments Group. Councillor Spruytenburg declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as allotment holder.

Councillors Mrs Fulford and Mrs Littley declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as members of the Environmental Group.

Councillor Holly declared a personal interest in agenda items 4, 7 and 8 as a member of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery.

50. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 15th November 2010, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

51. **CHESHAM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Group held on 18th November 2010. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

In respect of minute no. 6, Councillor Bacon welcomed the news that it was now recognised by both the Chilterns Conservation and Landscape Officer and the Chalk Grassland Officer of Chilterns AONB that Berkhamstead Field was an important wildflower site and he expressed his wish to see the field now cultivated accordingly. A brief discussion then ensued as to how the Council should be undertaking any cutting and baling. Councillor Mrs Pirouet advised that she had been in discussions with local farmers but the area the Council owned was too small in itself to be economically worthwhile for a farmer. She opined it needed to be coordinated with the cutting of the adjoining fields to be profitable. Members discussed whether the Council should be paying a contractor to cut the field or charging them, as suggested by Councillor Mrs Walker, due to the current market value of hay bales. Eventually it was decided that further information on the cutting regimes in respect of timing and intensity was required and the Council should speak directly to the Chilterns Conservation and Landscape Officer and the Chalk Grassland Officer to ascertain this before agreeing to have it cultivated.

52. **IMPRESS THE CHESS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Impress the Chess Group held on the 30th November 2010. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

53. **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 10th December 2010.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

54. **ALLOTMENTS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Allotments Group held on 14th December 2010. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

55. **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 pertinent information.

It was noted that the funding from Buck Sports 'Make a Splash' initiative was ceasing in March of this year so the opening of the pool for April could not be subsidised. However the Committee did agree to keep the pool open from the Mayor's event celebrating the Royal Wedding on Friday 29th April rather than close it again for one day on the 30th April.

It was

RESOLVED

that the financial position pertaining to the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre and that the proposal to increase the swimming season to include April was now not viable and had been discounted, be noted.

56. **ELGIVA PANTOMIME**

The Committee received the report from the Elgiva Manager who was also in attendance. In addressing the Committee, the Manager stated much how he regretted that the pantomime had fallen so short of its income target which, he opined, was largely due to a combination of the current economic climate and the adverse weather conditions which had been prevalent through much of its run. However he highlighted that by putting on the show 'in-house', the theatre had made more than £9,000 than if it had used a professional company as had been the case in previous years.

Members congratulated all concerned with 'Robin Hood' which was agreed by those who had seen it to be a great artistic success and an excellent family show. Having noted that other theatres across the country had experienced similar or bigger drops in attendances with their seasonal shows, the Committee endorsed the Manager's request to stage an in-house production of 'Beauty and the Beast' next year.

It was

RESOLVED

that the 2010/11 Pantomime figures be noted and that the Committee support the principle of offering an 'in-house' pantomime next season subject to there being no major objections from the Elgiva Board of Management.

57. **LOCKING OF CEMETERY GATES**

An update on the trial of leaving the Cemetery gates permanently unlocked was put before the Committee.

Members were pleased to note that no incidents of anti-social behaviour had been reported by either the police or the local Neighbourhood Watch and Residents Association groups during the four months to date and accordingly it was

RESOLVED

that the trial period of keeping the pedestrian gates permanently unlocked at the cemetery be continued for another twelve months but

the Mayor and the Chairman of Recreation and the Arts Committee be given delegated powers to revert to evening locking in the event of serious anti-social behaviour occurring.

58. **MUSLIM OUT-OF-HOURS BURIALS**

The Committee was asked to agree a policy to allow out-of-hours burials to be facilitated by the Mosque Committee itself.

While there was unanimous agreement that this was a laudable idea, some concern was raised as to health and safety compliance. The Clerk responded by saying that he was much more comfortable with the concept, particularly in respect of safety, now that he was aware that Reading Borough Council provided a similar service and he advised that it was his intention to visit Reading with representatives of the Mosque Committee to gather further information before implementing the procedure. Moreover he advised that officers would be insisting on specialised training for the nominated Mosque Committee burial operatives from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management before such interments commenced.

Following a query from another Member, the Clerk also advised that similar requests from any other faiths would also be accommodated where at all possible.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Committee agree to allow the Mosque Committee to facilitate its own weekend and Bank Holiday interments subject to the conditions outlined within the report being adhered to.

59. **FUTURE OF ST MARY'S CHURCHYARD MAUSOLEUM**

Members considered the works required to make the Mausoleum temporarily safe whilst further quotations were sought to renovate the facility. It was agreed that the Council had a duty of care to ensure the building was safe for both the public and any contractors and therefore further agreed that the Council's surveyor should be instructed to implement these works at a cost of £2,420.

The Committee also accepted it would be an appropriate time to convene a working party to look at all maintenance matters pertaining to St Mary's Churchyard and that this working party should consist of church representatives, officers and Members.

It was

RESOLVED

1. That up to £2,420 is earmarked from the Renewals and Repairs budget to instigate make-safe procedures for the Mausoleum.
2. That Councillors Mrs Littley and Mrs Molesworth be nominated for the working party to be set up to look at maintenance issues within St Mary's closed churchyard.

60. **QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS**

Councillor Mrs Pirouet suggested to the Committee that, while the Queen's Jubilee celebrations were some 18 months away, it would be prudent to start planning early so the Council and/or other local bodies were in a position to bid for funding.

Members accepted that Councillor Mrs Pirouet's rationale was sensible but considered it a little premature since the Schools of Chesham Carnival Committee had yet to respond to her overtures about possibly running a joint event. Accordingly it was agreed that Councillor Mrs Pirouet report back to a future Committee once the Carnival Committee had determined its position.

It was

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs Pirouet liaises with the Schools of Chesham Carnival Committee on its plans for summer 2012 and report back to a future Committee.

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

It was moved by the Chairman and

RESOLVED

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

62. **CHESHAM MOOR GYM AND SWIM CENTRE BOILERS**

The Centre Manager and the Town Clerk updated the Committee on the on-going problems the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre had experienced with its boilers since their purchase and installation in April 2009. Officers advised that the main issues had been the failure of the heat exchanger units. While these units were under warranty, the Clerk explained that the company who installed the boilers had taken the position that the problems had occurred because of an imbalance in the chemical make-up in the pool and therefore not covered by the warranty. Because of an outstanding bill, the company did not seem to be prepared to undertake further remedial works and officers expressed their concerns that both boilers may not be fully operational because of this impasse when the pool was due to open at the end of April.

Members agreed that the matter needed to be resolved though some Members questioned whether the company had offered an appropriate level of after sales service and whether it was satisfactory that it had not warned officers of the high corrosive acid levels before installation. However it was noted that the Manager intended to both change the chemicals he used and use an external company to monitor chemical levels so this dispute over corrosion should not arise in the future. To move the matter forward it was agreed that it would be appropriate to pay the outstanding bill and pay for a new heat exchanger but the company be requested, as a gesture of goodwill, to supply the unit at cost; undertake its agreed remedial works at no charge and extend the warranty

on the boilers so the original five year warranty was valid from the date the new heat exchanger is installed.

It was

RESOLVED

1. That the outstanding bill to the company in question is paid and a new heat exchanger be purchased and installed subject to the company agreeing to the conditions stated by the Committee.
2. A contract with an external company to monitor the chemical balance of the pool water on a monthly basis, as outlined in the report, be entered into.

63. **CATERING CONTRACT AT THE ELGIVA**

The Committee considered the request from the current catering concessionaire at the Elgiva to enter into a three year agreement in her own right having been assigned the balance of the previous concessionaire's three year agreement in March 2009.

Members agreed that she was offering an excellent service but Councillor Mrs Michael opined that, as it was proposed that the amount paid to the Council would drop in real terms in years two and three, it would not be unreasonable for the Council to have greater scrutiny of the business's turnover before confirming the proposed contract. This was accepted by Members and officers were requested to bring a more detailed financial report to the Council meeting on the 28th February 2011.

It was

RESOLVED

that the concessionaire be requested to provide details of her turnover before the proposed contract be confirmed at the next Council meeting.

64. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

CHAIRMAN