

## CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE held on 5 June 2006.

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

Councillor	A.K. Bacon	Councillor	C.H. Spruytenburg
"	E.L. Bamford	"	Mrs. M. Molesworth
"	M.Z. Bhatti	"	Mrs. A.M. Pirouet
"	M. Fayyaz	"	P. Woodburn
"	Mrs. J.C. Fulford	"	P.W. Yerrell

Officer: Mr. W. Richards, Town Clerk

An Apology for absence was received from Councillor D.J. Lacey.

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest that were brought to the Chairman's notice.

2. **MINUTES**

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2006, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3. **ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Group held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2006. It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

In respect of Minute No. 9, it was noted that the Clerk had written to the Environment Agency and not Nestlé in regard to current abstraction clarification.

In respect of Minute No. 11 (c), Members were advised that the shrubs had been removed around the new Lowndes Park public conveniences as a security measure but the Chesham Society had subsequently suggested a sensitive planting programme that the Parks and Premises Manager was currently considering.

4. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Elgiva Board of Management held on 13<sup>th</sup> March and 15<sup>th</sup> May 2006. It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

In respect of Minute No. 8.4 of the meeting of the 15<sup>th</sup> May, Councillor Bacon opined that it would be advantageous to remind the Board that the Council had previously discussed and discounted the idea of seeking Trust status.

In respect of Minute No.8.5 of the meeting of the 15<sup>th</sup> May, Members agreed that it would be acceptable to offer free tickets to sponsors but not to a level that may engender bad publicity in regard to the public being unable to attend sell-out shows.

A brief discussion ensued on the attendance of the Board of Management at the Committee meetings. It was agreed that the Chairman should be invited to the next Committee and the Clerk was asked to clarify how often the terms and references stated the Board should attend.

*(Note. Para 7 of the Board's Constitution, Roles and Responsibilities states that: 'The Board members shall meet with the Recreation and the Arts Committee at least once within a financial year.')*

5. **IMPRESS THE CHESS STEERING GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Impress the Chess Steering Group held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2006. It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

In respect of Minute No. 3, Councillor Mrs Fulford expressed her concern that the previous Recreation and the Arts Committee had agreed to negotiate further on the possible purchase of a small part of the Meades Water Gardens for parking by the adjacent veterinary surgery. The Clerk further advised that the Steering Group would now be applying to the Onyx Environment Trust for the bulk of the monies to improve Meades Water Gardens.

6. **ALLOTMENT GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Allotment Group held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2006 and the open meeting held on the 27<sup>th</sup> April. It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

In respect of the meeting of the 27<sup>th</sup> April, the matter of the need for retaining walls at the top of Cameron Road was raised. Councillor Mrs Pirouet advised that railway sleepers were currently being considered as effective barriers to possible land slippage.

7. **FRIENDS OF CHESHAM CEMETERY**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2006. It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

8. **CHESHAM IN BLOOM – FRONT GARDENS COMPETITION**

The Committee was informed that the Chesham in Bloom organisers were asking Members to be judges of any ward nomination for a 'Best Front Garden' competition and to forward one nomination per ward, if possible directly to the Chesham in Bloom organisers.

It was clarified that Members could nominate gardens but only if they had obtained the consent of the owners of the property and, to ensure that a number of nominations were received, the Committee was requested to be proactive on this matter. It was noted that nominations needed to be submitted by the 16<sup>th</sup> June and it was

**RESOLVED**

that the Committee agree to support the front gardens initiative in the manner proposed by the Chesham in Bloom Working Group.

9. **APPROVAL OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS FOR THE ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members were advised that, during the 2006/07 year, four Members have left the Board for personal reasons. The Clerk reported that the Chairman of the Board of Management, along with other Members, has been trying to actively recruit new Members.

It was noted that since the last Recreation and the Arts Committee, two new potential members have been approached and have attended meetings. Both Bernard Carey and Peter Fletcher have many years experience working both in the arts and business.

The Committee considered the Curriculum Vitae of both potential Board members and welcomed their applications to join.

Accordingly it was

**RESOLVED**

that Bernard Cary and Peter Fletcher be approved as new Elgiva Board of Management Members.

10. **REPAIRS TO ST. MARY'S CHURCH PIER**

A request from a representative of the Buildings Committee of St. Mary's Church asking for assistance with repairs to the works done to the pier at the entrance of the Church adjoining the public footway was considered by the Committee. It was noted that the Buildings Committee felt it had to commission the works as the pier constituted a health and safety issue.

Members were reminded that responsibility for churchyard maintenance falls on the Council, since the Parish Church had previously served a written request on the Council to take over the maintenance of the grounds in accordance with the legislation pertaining to the Local Government Act 1972.

A discussion took place on what area actually constituted the closed churchyard but Members agreed that a financial contribution from the cemetery walls budget towards the works would be appropriate and, in noting that the total cost of repair was £2,000, it was

**RESOLVED**

that an amount of up to £1,000 be allocated from the Cemetery Walls Renewals and Repairs Budget and be used as a contribution to the St Mary's Building Committee for the repairs undertaken to the pier in St. Mary's Closed Churchyard.

11. **AGREEMENT WITH CHESHAM PARK COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

The Clerk presented to the Committee a report that recommended the Council serve its necessary twelve-month notice to quit to Chesham Park Community College in regard to the hiring of its outdoor facilities. The Clerk advised that no hirings of the pitches and the hard courts to the public had taken place and that, effectively, the lease was only allowing the Council to subsidise Chesham Stags Rugby Club who currently paid less to the Council in rent than the Council paid to the school. The Clerk further advised both the school's bursar and the rugby club were provisionally in agreement with the suggestion that the Council withdraw from the tripartite agreement. However the Committee was informed that the bursar had stated that ideally it should not have a negative impact on the school's income and that the rugby club had requested some financial assistance during its three-year notice period required with the current agreement.

Members agreed that it would be prudent to withdraw from the arrangement and instructed the Clerk to serve the necessary twelve-month notice letter upon the school. However the Committee felt it would be unfair to the rugby club for the Council to withdraw its support unilaterally with immediate effect and agreed with the officers' suggestions that two thirds of the difference in the annual rental fee owed by the rugby club be paid to the club as a section 137 contribution in 2007/08 and one third be paid in 2008/09.

It was therefore

**RESOLVED**

that the Committee agree to serve notice on Chesham Park Community College on its intention to withdraw from its lease and agree to a diminishing level of financial support to the rugby club over a three year period.

12. **SAFETY OF CEMETERY MEMORIALS**

The Committee considered the report from the Parks and Premises Manager on the current situation in regard to making memorials and headstones safe within the cemetery and St Mary's Closed Churchyard.

Members were reminded that it had been previously agreed that memorials would be tested as to their rigidity using a calibrated pressure testing device and failed memorials would not be laid flat, but would have temporary wooden posts and metal banding fixed to hold the memorial in place for one year. This would allow the Council sufficient time to contact the owner of the Deed of Grant and inform them of the problem and allow time for the necessary repairs to be carried out. It was reported that a high number of Deed of Grant owners had been contacted and many memorials have been repaired but, conversely, a relatively large number of owners could not be traced and some owners could not afford the repairs.

Accepting that the Council had a duty of care to make the memorials permanently safe, the Committee considered two options from the Parks and Premises Manager, namely laying the memorials flat or staking and banding them with a metal, non corrosive post. The Parks and Premises Manager recommended the latter option as it was deemed to be less disrespectful for the deceased.

Councillor Mrs Molesworth stated that she was not aware that the Friends of Chesham Cemetery had been consulted upon the matter but the Clerk replied that it was his understanding that it had been and had expressed no objections. The Committee was minded to support the Parks and Premises Manager's recommendation, subject to the Chairman of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery confirming the group had no major objections, but expressed its hope that its implementation would not be too onerous on the Parks and Premises officers.

Members also recommended that advanced publicity on the works be disseminated as widely as possible.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Committee approve the proposal to permanently stake and band unsafe memorials in the cemetery and St Mary's Closed Churchyard and that the officers be authorised to purchase the materials from the allocated budget.

13. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 9.17 pm.

CHAIRMAN

*Publication date 16.06.06*