

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 17th February 2020

PRESENT Councillor Mrs J.E. MacBean – Chairman (Presiding)

Councillor	M. Z. Bhatti MBE	Councillor	P.J. Hudson
"	Miss E.A. Culverhouse	"	R.C. McCulloch
"	M. Fayyaz	"	N. T. Southworth
"	A.W. Franks	"	Mrs D. M. Varley

Officers: Mr W. Richards - Town Clerk
Mr D. Cooper - Elgiva Theatre Manager
Mr D. Essex - Gym and Swim Centre Manager

In attendance: Councillors A.K. Bacon and N.L. Brown.
Ms K. Holt – Sustainable Chesham

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Q. Chaudhry.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that, as agreed, all previously stated Declaration of Interests remained unchanged from the first meeting of the administrative year or reported subsequently.

44. MINUTES

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 2nd December 2019, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

45. IMPRESS THE CHESS GROUP

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Impress the Chess Group held on the 7th November 2019.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Arising from Min 3 (iv), a discussion took place on gulley clearing and, particularly the recent ponding in Hivings Hill. Councillor Mrs MacBean advised that she would

be having a meeting with the appropriate officer at Transport for Bucks shortly to get a clearer picture on gully clearances generally within the town and should, therefore, be able to advise fellow Members accordingly.

Arising from Minute No. 5, it was noted that a second discharge of sewage into the River Chess took place after this meeting had taken place.

46. **CHESHAM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the Chesham Environmental Group meeting of the 21st November 2019.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

47. **ALLOTMENTS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Allotments Group held on the 10th December 2019 and 28th January 2020.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

48. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Elgiva Board of Management held on the 20th January 2020.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

49. **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 which was duly noted. Members were also apprised that an appropriate software package was still being researched to provide a membership system compatible with the new financial software.

The Chairman then suggested that this compiling of the report was unduly onerous on officers and proposed that it be no longer a standing agenda item. She highlighted that up-to-date figures were presented to the Finance Committee and there was also a Gym

and Swim Working Group who met on an ad hoc basis to scrutinise various aspects of the centre including income and expenditure. While Members had no objection to this proposal, it was agreed that the figures should be presented at least once a year to this Committee as it was the body which had overall responsibility for the facility

It was

RESOLVED

1. That the financial position be noted.
2. That the Financial Update report no longer be a standing agenda item.

50. **CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE**

The Chairman, Councillor Mrs MacBean, welcomed Ms Kate Holt from Sustainable Chesham to the meeting.

The Committee firstly considered the officers' report on current initiatives being undertaken and any further actions required. The following were discussed in some detail:

- **Air Quality** – The Committee noted the Air Quality Monitor had now been installed at the Town Hall.
- **Communi-tree Project** – Some 15 trees planted with another 20 planned within the next few weeks. It was noted that Buckinghamshire County Council had planted more trees as well and Councillor Bacon stated that he hoped that the new unitary council would take a more proactive line in replacing trees it felled on health and safety grounds. He also asked whether some trees were planned to be planted in Broad Street and Berkhamstead Road where air quality was poorest. Councillor Mrs MacBean advised that some residents had registered an initial interest but this has not been followed through as yet as this would take time in ensuring the right sort of tree. Ms Holt asked whether any target figures were being proposed. Councillor Mrs MacBean replied that this was difficult to set as the scheme was largely reliant on volunteers.
- **Possible Purchase of Bio Chopper** – It was reported that the Parks and Premises Manager was investigating purchasing a chopping machine which would drastically reduce the amount of green waste requiring to be burnt by his team. The Committee was, in principle, supportive of such a device being added to the team's equipment. However, as the chopper was relatively expensive to purchase, it was agreed that the Parks and Premises Manager should be requested to bring forward a business plan which would also show the opportunities for income generation through renting out to other parish councils.
- **Carbon Audit** – The Clerk advised the carbon audit of the Council's facilities would commence on Thursday 20th February. It was also noted that officers had been part of a 'webinar' on town and parish councils' potential roles in tackling climate change. Accordingly, officers, in liaison with Sustainable Chesham, were

requested to provide further details on a possible environmental planning workshop as undertaken by other town councils to be possibly hosted by this Council.

- **Community Energy Switch Proposal** – Sustainable Chesham to work with officers to devise a formal proposal to the Committee following the carbon audit.
- **Cleaner, Greener Chilterns Campaign** – Members were encouraged take the Chiltern Society’s pledge to improve their local environment.

Members then discussed Sustainable Chesham’s request for the Council to change the name of the Committee to reflect the environment. After some discussion, it was agreed to recommend to the Council that the Committee change its name to ‘Community, Assets and the Environment’ and its terms of reference be amended accordingly.

It was

RESOLVED

1. That further details on a possible action planning workshop on carbon reduction and biodiversity enhancement to be held in Chesham be brought before this Committee for further consideration.
2. That the Parks and Premises Manager be requested to devise a business plan pertaining to the possible purchase of a Bio-Chopper.

and

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

that the Committee change its name to ‘Community, Assets and the Environment’ and its terms of reference be amended accordingly.

Note: Councillor Hudson and Ms Holt left the meeting at 8.35pm.

51. **CEMETERY CHAPEL REPAIRS AND UPGRADES**

The matter of the state of the Cemetery Chapel was outlined in the Report produced by officers. As requested at the last Recreation and the Arts Committee, a Schedule of Works survey was undertaken by a local surveyor with attached costings to make the building suitable for commercial hire.

The Committee noted the considerable costs outlined within the survey so it was agreed no immediate works be undertaken. However, it was agreed that the Chapel was a building of considerable heritage value, so the Friends of Chesham Cemetery were requested to look at the possibility of securing significant grant funding from various bodies to try and implement some of the works suggested.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

that the Chapel's Schedule of Works required to bring the building to a standard to be hired out be noted and no major works be undertaken at this time but that the Friends of Chesham Cemetery be requested to investigate the possibility of securing external funding for renewal and upgrading.

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

It was moved by the Chairman and

RESOLVED

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

53. **UPDATE ON POSSIBLE CAPITAL WORKS AT ELGIVA AND GYM AND SWIM CENTRE**

The Chairman welcomed both Facility Managers to the meeting and referred Members to the report pertaining to the possible extensions of both facilities.

In respect to the next steps for the Elgiva, the Theatre Manager expanded on his view that it was essential that a proper consultation process took place now on the proposed plans for the redesign of the building, particularly with existing and potential new hirers. He advised that he could undertake and oversee this next stage but would require additional resources in terms of staff cover to allow him to do this. It was also noted that the architect was required to make slight revisions to the plans for the public to consider which would require additional funding also. This was agreed by Committee.

The Gym and Swim Manager advised that he, the Clerk and the architect had met in respect to a revision to the original plan at the centre which would now result in a redeveloped gym being relocated at the tennis court side of the building. The architect had suggested this was eminently feasible and had quoted to prepare drawings and plans to that effect. The proposal and fees quoted were also approved by the Committee.

Members were also advised that the works to improve the Women's Changing Rooms as previously agreed by this Committee, and the Finance Committee, were likely to greatly exceed the £10,000 initially set aside for the works. The Manager suggested that it may be advisable not to replace the cubicles at this stage therefore but instead to instigate repairs to the showers, piping, extractor fan and ceiling tiles to try and reduce the excessive steam which was causing concern in that area. This was agreed by Members and, with the need to try and undertake this as soon as possible, it was agreed that the final works be approved and signed off by officers in liaison with the Chairman of this Committee.

It was

RESOLVED

1. That the Theatre Manager's proposal to undertake the consultation process for the Elgiva extension and the requested additional funds as outlined in the report to facilitate this be agreed.
2. That the architect currently engaged on both projects be requested to undertake works on behalf of the Elgiva as outlined in the report and as per items 1-5 as listed in his submission brief at the fixed fee quoted.
3. That the architect currently engaged on both projects be requested to undertake works on behalf of the Gym and Swim Centre as outlined in the report and as per items A as listed in his submission brief at the fixed fee quoted.
4. That works within the Women's Changing Rooms at the Gym and Swim Centre be approved and signed off by officers in liaison with the Chairman of this Committee.

54. **POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF LOWNDES PARK LAND**

Members discussed whether they wished to agree to the principle of the sale of a small part of Lowndes Park It was noted that the Council had received similar requests in 2009 and 2012 and that there was general agreement then that this would not be in the Council's best interests.

The Committee remained of the same opinion that it would not be advisable to sell off land that may be of some use to the Council in the future and it was also not right to sell land bequeathed to the people of Chesham by the Lowndes family. However, there was agreement that it would be reasonable to ascertain whether the person requesting the purchase would be interested in leasing the strip of land.

It was

RESOLVED

that no selling of part of the park be agreed but the persons requesting the purchase be approached as to their interest in leasing the requested piece of land.

55. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.

CHAIRMAN