

**CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE**

held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012

**PRESENT**

Councillor	Ms J. E. Bramwell	Councillor	D.J. Lacey
	Mrs P.R. Cherrill		Mrs C. Littley
"	T. Franks	"	R.C. McCulloch
"	P.J. Hudson	"	Mrs A.M. Pirouet
"	Mrs R. Juett	"	C.H. Spruytenburg

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Councillors V.M. Abraham, A.K. Bacon, M. Fayyaz and Mrs C. M. Michael.

Officer: Mr W. Richards, Town Clerk

Mr R. Comer - Chairman; Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre

Mr T. Pilling - Chairman; Elgiva Board of Management

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M.W. Shaw.

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR ADMINISTRATIVE YEAR 2012/13**

The 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 C.H. Spruytenburg be elected Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Council year.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Ms Bramwell, Hudson and Mrs Michael declared a personal interest in agenda items 5, 6 and 7 as members of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre. Councillors Bacon and Ms Bramwell declared a personal interest in agenda items 5, 6 and 7 as regular users of the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre.

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

Councillor McCulloch declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 as a member of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery.

Councillors Mrs Cherrill and Mrs Littley 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.

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

Councillors Abraham and Mrs Cherrill declared a personal interest in agenda item 5 as members of the Elgiva Board of Management.

3. **MINUTES**

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4. **IMPRESS THE CHESS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Impress the Chess Group held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

In respect of the minutes, Councillor Ms Bramwell advised that it was the group's intention to re-evaluate its terms and references in due course.

Councillor Mrs Cherrill congratulated all those involved with the pathway improvements along Duck Alley.

5 **ALLOTMENTS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Allotments Group held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

6. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Elgiva Board of Management held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

With the presentation of the Minutes, Mr Trevor Pilling, Chairman of the Elgiva Board of Management was invited to address the Committee in respect to the theatre's finances.

Mr Pilling advised that the theatre had had another good year coming some £6,000 under its original budget thanks to an exceptional final three months. He then gave an overview of the last five years, a period during which the Board had been properly established. He highlighted the fact that for four out of the five years, the Elgiva had come significantly under-budget (to the cumulative amount of around £25,000) despite increasingly challenging budgets set by the Council. He opined that this success was due predominantly to the astute management of the Theatre Manager and his hard-working team, coupled with support from the Board.

He further advised that this coming financial year would continue to be tough but figures to the end of May suggested that the theatre was currently on course to meet its targets.

7. **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 17<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

Councillor Hudson queried whether the Manager could continue selling the block of 10 tickets. The Town Clerk replied by saying he understood that the Committee had given the Manager, in consultation with himself, the powers to initiate such promotions to increase income. The Committee confirmed it was happy with such an arrangement.

Councillor Spruytenburg asked for an update on the solar power panels. Mr Roger. Comer, the Chairman of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre reported that a very gratifying payment of £580 had been made by the electricity company for the three winter months since its inception, and subject to the weather improving, this ought to be a lucrative income stream for the Council.

8. **FRIENDS OF CHESHAM CEMETERY**

Members received the Minutes of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery A.G.M. and group meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2012. It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

9. **CHESHAM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the Chesham Environmental Group AGM held on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2012

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

The Mayor took this opportunity to thank the Parks and Premises team for agreeing to make and erect benches for Berkhamstead Field following a request from the Environmental Group.

10. **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.

Councillor Ms Bramwell opined that the figures needed to be more than simply noted and that the Committee should perhaps be considering whether it could continue to justify what she viewed as a disproportionately high subsidy for the users of the facility. She also raised that the users of the pool, particularly, did not seem to reflect the demographics of the town and, indeed, many of the users were not from Chesham at all. Councillor Fayyaz added that he did not feel that those from the Muslim community were encouraged to attend and was aware of other swimming facilities where Muslim women swim sessions were popular and lucrative.

Councillor Bacon replied by saying that, while Chess Valley Sports and Leisure Association had managed the centre cheaply before it was wound up, it was apparent that there were several operational measures that needed to be addressed when the Council took it over, thereby putting pressures on the budget. He accepted that pricing should be constantly reviewed but warned that simply increasing fees and/or putting

an extra financial burden on those users outside of Chesham may actually deter people coming and threaten the future of a well-loved facility.

The Committee then briefly discussed the desirability of providing sessions that would entice the minority ethnic community. It was noted that the swimming pool at Amersham had made structural changes to make its pool more suitable for Muslim women such as darkening the windows to deter people looking through and the Committee accepted that, logistically, this may be difficult for the open air pool. However Councillor Mrs Juett suggested that a women's only session may be an attractive proposition to Muslim women and it was agreed that a further report on this, together with figures on how many people outside of the town use the facility, be subject to a further report at the next Recreation and the Arts Committee

It was

**RESOLVED**

1. That the financial position be noted.
2. That a further report be brought before this Committee giving information on usage of the facility by non-Chesham residents and possible ideas to attract different sections of the Chesham community.

*Note: Councillor Mrs Littley left the meeting at 8.35pm*

11. **PROPOSAL TO CHANGE CHEMICAL DOSING PROCEDURE FOR OPEN AIR POOL**

The Committee considered a report prepared by the officers and the Chairman of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre in regard to the installation of an ionising generator as a new way of disinfecting the pool.

It was noted that the Centre currently uses traditional chlorination techniques for the open air pool in the form of chlorine powder. Such chemical treatment is required to kill micro-organisms, including bacteria, protozoa and viruses that occur naturally in recreational waters. The cost of such chlorination is around £4,000 per annum. The officers were suggesting a new disinfection using copper/silver ion generation. It was reported that a two electrode system generator for the 80,000 imperial gallon open air pool would be £5,000 excluding vat. The installation has been estimated between £1,750 - £2,250 excluding vat. It is estimated that the electrodes should last between 2 to 4 years, dependent on how the pool is used and replacement electrodes are £125 at present. Members were advised that this system would reduce the pool's chlorine down to 0.5ppm (parts per million) and give the Council a saving of approximately 70% on the £4,000 spent on chlorine currently; approximately £2,800 every year. Moreover, the heavily reduced use of chlorine was much more environmentally friendly and accorded with the Council's Environmental Policy.

The Committee generally welcomed the proposal. Councillor Bacon queried whether the system could be absolutely defined as safe as, technologically, it was

comparatively new and untested. Mr Comer stated that it had been operating successfully in the United States for many years and the proposed system had now obtained the government regulated safety certification in the U.K. He therefore stated he had no concerns and pointed out that many major leisure industry providers such as Centerparcs were actively looking at installing such systems.

In light of the report and Mr Comer's additional comments, the Committee agreed to support the proposal and it was

**RESOLVED**

that the Council proceed with the purchasing and installing an ionising generator for the open air pool at a cost not to exceed £7,500.

12. **ELGIVA PROJECTS AND FINANCIAL UPDATE**

The Committee was asked to approve major redecoration works to the foyer and toilets at the Elgiva, totalling £10,500, to be funded from the Renewals and Repairs budget. It was accepted by the Committee that it was important to keep the theatre looking fresh and modern to attract customers and the upgrade was agreed.

Members then noted and welcomed the proposal to launch an Elgiva Supporters Club (to be called the 'Elgiva Elite') designed to increase income while offering benefits to loyal customers.

Finally Mr Pilling re-iterated the excellent end-of-year financial figures for the theatre which came in well under budget.

It was

**RESOLVED**

1. That the foyer renovations be noted and approved.
2. That the 'Elgiva Elite' membership scheme be noted and approved.
3. That the financial position be noted and the Elgiva staff be congratulated on its financial out-turn.

13. **POLICY ON PRIVATE FITNESS CLASSES OPERATING IN COUNCIL'S PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

Members considered whether they wished to devise a policy on use of the Council's parks and open spaces for fitness classes in light of the proliferation of such activities in the last twelve months.

It was agreed that, due to the difficulties in monitoring and auditing these classes, it would be sensible to keep to the current informal procedure of requesting that the class organisers make a donation to the Friends of Lowndes Park. However it was

agreed that this policy should be reviewed in a year's time to see if the number had grown significantly enough to possibly provide the Council with a significant income stream from a share of the income and/or hire fees.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Committee agree to officers continuing with their current policy of seeing public liability insurance certificates; risk assessments and instructors' professional training certificates and then seeking donations to the Friends of Lowndes Park for commercial exercise classes but this be reviewed in twelve months time.

14. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.50pm.

CHAIRMAN

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