

**CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES of the meeting of the COMMUNITY, ASSETS, RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENT (CARE) COMMITTEE**

held on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022

**Councillors:**

Councillor Wilford Augustus  
Councillor Simon Booth  
Councillor Emily Culverhouse  
Councillor Majid Ditta

Councillor Justine Fulford  
Councillor Jane MacBean  
Councillor Rachael Matthews  
Councillor Nick Southworth

**In attendance:**

Mr Tony Marmo  
Mrs Emma Powley

Chief Executive Officer  
Interim Town Clerk

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR ADMINISTRATIVE YEAR 2022/23**

The meeting was opened and nominations for Chairman of the Community, Assets, Recreation and Environment Committee requested.

**RESOLVED:**

That Councillor MacBean be elected Chairman for the remainder of the Council year.

Councillor MacBean took the Chair and called for nominations for Vice-Chairman of the Community, Assets and Environment Committee

**RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Culverhouse be elected Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Council year.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Aslam and Harding.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**4. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Community, Assets, Recreation and Environment Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

**5. TO RECEIVE THE ACTION TRACKER OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS OF CARE**

The Committee received the action tracker noting progress made against each action.

**RESOLVED:**

That the action tracker be noted:

## **6. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE CHESHAM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP MEETING OF THE 21<sup>st</sup> APRIL 2022**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Chesham Environment Group held on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2022 were noted.

## **7. ECO AUDIT UPDATE**

The Committee received a report updating them on local environmental issues and progress with the Council's Eco-Audit Action Plan. It was noted that a bio-chipper had been purchased and was successfully being used to convert green waste.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the update be noted.

## **8. GYM AND SWIM DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

It was explained that the working party for the Gym and Swim Development had met on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022. The working party considered that a new independent 'Latent Demand' assessment should be undertaken at a cost of £3,950, subject to agreement of the CARE Committee. It was noted that the Council were on-track with their current spend and additional work was needed to investigate the full indicative costs of the proposed cycle hub and café. The internal refurbishment of the existing building had not yet been fully costed, but it was anticipated to be in the region of £1m to £1.5m with the total cost of the refurbishment including the proposed extension to be circa £3m.

The Committee discussed the Councils potential for applying to the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) who provide accessible, low-cost lending for local authorities to undertake capital projects subject to meeting certain criteria. It was noted that PWLB loans were unsecured and as the extension of the Gym and Swim was a community project, they would be more likely to qualify as loans were not granted for commercial projects. It was further noted that the Council should set a borrowing cap revenue repayment level as a % of the total expenditure of the Council.

### **RESOLVED:**

- i) That the minutes of the working party be agreed.
- ii) That the spend of £3,950 on a further 'Latent Demand' report to confirm the potential fitness membership uptake in an extended gym facility be approved.
- iii) That the spend of £3,000 on architectural services to complete the concept design of the cycle hub and café be approved.

## **9. LOWNDES PARK MANAGEMENT**

The Committee were asked to consider the maintenance of the grassed areas of Lowndes Park. It was noted that the management of areas of the park had been considered by this committee, with the aspiration to enhance habitat management in some areas.

The Committee discussed Western End of the Park and the potential feasibility of grazing in the upper park and commented on several areas of concern:

- a) the possibility of increased anti-social behaviour in the area

- b) the retrieval of 'wandering' cattle/livestock
- c) safety regarding electrification of fences

Regarding the Sovereign Coppice it was considered a necessity for a conversation to be had with Chesham Environmental Group to promote the maintenance and upkeep of the area to a wider population. Improvements would see the softening of edges of the plantation and creating a potential site for adding British bluebells and reducing the dominance and distribution of the planted daffodils in the area.

A request was made to explore the potential for an 'information board' to be erected near 'Prospect Mound' giving historical information about the mound and that when trees die, they be removed so as not to impinge on the view.

**RESOLVED:**

- i) That scrub-bashing/brush-cutting volunteer working parties are organised.
- ii) That opportunities for holding events in the Community Orchard be investigated.
- iii) That the cost of soil analysis is investigated.
- iv) That the principle of reducing the frequency of sections of the eastern slope is approved, with officers to investigate the type of machinery required.
- v) That officers create a draft planting plan for consideration by committee.

**10. SKOTTOWES POND SURVEY**

Members were provided with an update on the survey work to inform the regeneration of Skottowes Pond. The town council has been successful in a grant application for £20,000 to the Local Community Board for a contribution towards the regeneration of Skottowes Pond. It was noted that de-silting the pond would be costly but reconfiguration of the size and shape of the pond could reduce the silt into it.

At the Community, Assets, Recreation and Environment meeting held on the 11 April 2022, it was agreed that a company which had previously supplied a quote to conduct a comprehensive ecological, topographical and silt survey 'be commissioned to carry out the survey, subject to an updated quote being deemed acceptable by officers.' (Min no. 55). 8. An updated quote was accepted by officers and Stonbury have been commissioned to carry out the work. Officers have been going through a due diligence process and have recently received satisfactory health and safety documentation from Stonbury, as is required for new contractors. Officers are now liaising with Stonbury to determine the date for works to start.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the report be noted, and an update report be bought back to the CARE Committee in September 2022.

**11. PARKS AND PREMISES UPDATE**

The committee received a report on the latest position of the Parks and Premises work program and informed that new staff members had been recruited, resulting in a full complement but with additional training necessary for the newly appointed employees. A new ride-on mower has yet to be delivered which would be replacing an existing machine that was no longer repairable. Both issues have caused a delay to the schedule of works of the Parks and Premises Team.

The Committee discussed the options available to the parks and premises manager that would assist him and his team to catch up on the delays. They gave thanks to the Parks and Premises manager and his team for their sustained work during the difficult time.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That an offer of overtime payment for evening and weekend catch up work be made to the parks and premises team and once the work has been completed no further overtime be offered.

**12. PEDESTRIANISATION OF CHESHAM HIGH STREET – WORKING GROUP DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Chair elaborated on the report and noted that it was good practice for Terms or Reference to be agreed for all Council working groups. It was explained that the working group would feed into the CARE Committee any findings and/or information that may assist in progressing with the pedestrianisation of Chesham High Street.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the Terms of Reference be agreed.

**13. FORWARD PLAN OF THE CARE COMMITTEE**

The Committee discussed the items listed on the forward plan and agreed the following:

**5 September 2022:**

- a) The Lowndes Park Play Area update be included on the agenda as the consultation period of would have been completed.
- b) That the committee receive an update on the architectural services re the concept design of the cycle hub and café.

**3 October 2022:**

- a) That the Draft Annual Plan be considered prior to the Finance meeting on the 17 October 2022.

\*That the Committee on the 3 October 2022 be moved due the Conservative Party Conference

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

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the public and the press be now excluded in accordance with the public bodies (admission to meetings) act 1960, as amended by the local government act section 100, in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**15. PLAY AREA – ROSPA UPDATE**

The Committee discussed the report and the appendices.

**RESOLVED:**

- i. That the additional spend of up to £20,000 to following the RoSPA inspections of the play-areas be agreed.

## **16. UPDATE ON CYCLING & WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE FEASIBILITY STUDY**

The Committee noted the contents of the report

### **RESOLVED:**

- i. That the current position in respect to the Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Feasibility Study be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.27pm