

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 2nd June 2014

PRESENT

Councillor	Miss R.K. Bhatti	Councillor	R.C. McCulloch
"	M. Fayyaz	"	Mrs C.M. Michael
"	D.J. Lacey	"	Mrs A.M. Pirouet
"	P.J. Hudson	"	M.W. Shaw
"	Mrs C. Littley	"	C.H. Spruytenburg

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors V.M. Abraham, A.K. Bacon and P.W. Yerrell

Officer: Mr W. Richards, Town Clerk.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor T. Franks. An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Mrs C. Littley.

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR ADMINISTRATIVE YEAR 2014/15**

The Mayor opened the meeting and called for nominations for Chairman of the Recreation and the Arts Committee.

It was

RESOLVED

that Councillor D.J. Lacey be elected Chairman for the remainder of the Council year.

Note: Councillor Lacey took the Chair

Councillor Lacey called for nominations for Vice-Chairman of the Recreation and the Arts Committee.

It was

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs C. Littley be elected Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Council year.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Councillor Abraham declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 as a member of the Elgiva Board of Management.

Councillor Hudson declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items 5 & 6 as a member of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre. Councillor Bacon and Spruytenburg declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 & 6 as regular users of the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre.

Councillor Mrs Pirouet declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 as her husband was on the branch Committee of the local Royal British Legion and Royal Navy Association.

Councillor Spruytenburg declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 as a Trustee of Chesham Museum.

3. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 10th March 2014, 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/River Chess Association meeting held on 26th February 2014.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Arising out of Minutes, Councillor Bacon congratulated the Impress the Chess Group and the River Chess Association on its continued fight against abstraction and its effect on the River Chess. He opined that the Environment Agency seemed to be content with the fact that effects appeared negligible on a catchment-wide basis and overlooked the obvious negative impact on the River Chess itself in Chesham. Accordingly he recommended that the Council continues to press this point and it was

RESOLVED

that the Policy and Projects Officer be requested to write a letter to the Environment Agency supporting the concerns expressed by the Impress the Chess Group and the River Chess Association.

Note: Councillor Mrs Littley arrived at the meeting at 7.50pm

5. **FRIENDS OF CHESHAM MOOR GYM AND SWIM CENTRE**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre held on the 26th February, 26th March and 30th April 2014.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

6. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Elgiva Board of Management held on 10th March and 28th April 2014.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

7. **ALLOTMENTS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Allotments Group held on the 18th March 2014.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

8. **FRIENDS OF CHESHAM CEMETERY**

Members received the Minutes of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery A.G.M. and group meeting held on 15th April 2014. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

9. **CHESHAM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Chesham Environmental Group A.G.M. and group meeting held on the 24th April 2014.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

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. The Clerk further advised that he had recently attended the very positive and well-attended Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre A.G.M. and was pleased to report that new volunteers had been recruited to the Committee.

It was

RESOLVED

that the financial position be noted.

11. **STOP THE DROP CAMPAIGN**

The Committee was informed that the anti-litter working party had met on a number of occasions to develop a campaign that has been called 'Stop the Drop' which was officially launched on the 19th May 2014. It was further noted that the working party has received support and guidance from Chiltern District Council's Waste Management team and the local 'Green Schools' co-ordinator.

Councillor Spruytenburg, as Chairman of the Working Party, then advised that the launch had gone well but urged his fellow Members to be proactive in the facilitating of the putting up of anti-littering posters. He stated that he had been particularly shocked by the statistics on littering from vehicles. Councillor Fayyaz added that he had been particularly impressed with the involvement of the schools to date.

Members also agreed that it would be prudent to lobby Thames Valley Police to attempt to provide the local Community Support Officers (PCSOs) with enforcement powers to impose on-the-spot fines for littering to back up the campaign.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

1. That a budget of £500 is made available for the production of roadside signs aimed at deterring littering by motorists.
2. That the Committee agrees to a letter being sent to Thames Valley Police and Chiltern District Council to urge that PCSOs are empowered to issue on-the-spot penalty charge notices for littering.

12. **PLAY AREA REDEVELOPMENT AND USE OF FORMER SKATEPARK AREA**

An update on the proposed 2014/15 play-area repair schedule was given by the Town Clerk. He reported that a third quotation has been received very recently from a play-area repair company, which was utilised by several principal authorities, and which had proved very much cheaper than the two quotations previously circulated to Members. The Clerk recommended that the Committee contract this company, as self-evidently, the Parks and Premises Manager could undertake many more repairs, and remain in budget, by their use. This was agreed by the Committee once the Clerk had assured Members that positive references for the company had already been received.

Members then considered the renovation of existing play-areas for 2015/16 and beyond. Members noted that that residents around Codmore Field had recently formed a Botley Road Community Association in order to try and raise funds for the upgrade of the play-area in Codmore Field. He also explained that, while the Friends of Nashleigh Hill Recreation Ground had been relatively inactive in recent months, there was an intention to revive fund-raising efforts for that play-area as well. Councillor Bacon advised that, while Co-op Field play-area had been shut for some time, this renovation could not be rushed until there was local residents' agreement on where a new play-area should be sited. Councillor Yerrell said he applauded the idea of having the community lead on setting the priorities for redevelopment, but expressed concern that this may slow the process down to an unacceptable level. The Clerk reminded Members that any new renovation would not happen for at least twelve months and there was therefore time for the community associations to develop before a decision was needed on the next play-area to be upgraded. Councillor Spruytenburg queried the need to re-site the Codmore Field play-area. Other Members explained this was a local community led proposal and it would be appropriate to wait until this proposal was more fully developed before a decision upon a final location was required.

The Committee noted and welcomed the news that the Waterside Community Association would be paying for any repairs required for Bois Moor Road play-area in future and that Paradigm Housing would be taking back Hodds Wood Road play-area and removing the equipment as proposed in the Play-Area Strategy.

Finally Members discussed the use of the former skatepark area. It was unanimously agreed that the concrete area and surrounding bund should remain and be used as an area predominantly for the under sevens to learn to ride a bike and partake in small games.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

1. That the company RPM Play Ltd be approved as the contractor to instigate up to £20,000 worth of play-area repairs in 2014/15.

2. That developments in respect to Codmore Field and Nashleigh Hill be noted.
3. That developments in respect to Bois Moor Road and Hodds Wood play-areas be noted.
4. That the former skatepark area surface and associated bund remain and be used as an area, predominantly, for the under sevens.

13. **WORLD WAR ONE CENTENARY COMMEMORATIONS**

Members received a report on the plans for the centenary commemorations over the weekend of the 2nd and 3rd August, in partnership with local community groups.

Councillor Mrs Pirouet enquired as to whether the proposed service and bell-ringing on the Sunday could be moved to the Monday evening, which, she opined, would be more atmospheric and be of course, on the exact date war was declared. She also asked why RAFA seemed reluctant to insure the event when she was under the impression that insurance cover for such events had been granted to all branches nationally. Councillor Lacey replied that he would put both questions to the partnership meeting overseeing events scheduled for next Monday.

The Committee was happy to approve the requested funding and it was

RESOLVED

that the draft programme for the World War One Centenary events be noted and £500 earmarked for community celebration events for 2014/15 be released to support this event.

Note: Councillor Miss Bhatti left the meeting at 8.20pm

14. **RIVER CHESH POLLUTION**

The Committee considered a request from the River Chess Association to lobby Thames Water to cease its on-going pollution of the River Chess.

Members were informed that high groundwater levels caused by the wet winter weather of 2013-14 have resulted in freshwater infiltrating Chesham's sewerage network, including the Chesham Sewage Treatment Works (STW). This has exceeded the capacity of the STW, resulting in approximately 20% of effluent entering the plant at any time being released directly into the River Chess with only partial screening. It was reported that this continual release of sewage into the River Chess downstream of Blackwell Hall Lane had taken place since early February 2014 and was currently on-going. This was an un-consented pollution event, which the Environment Agency was monitoring. It was further reported that despite significant lobbying on the part of the River Chess Association, no action appeared to have been taken by Thames Water to resolve the problem.

Members unanimously agreed that this was an unacceptable situation and solutions were required. Councillor McCulloch advised that he had attended a recent presentation from Thames Water on this matter and opined that it appeared the company operated on a business model based on cost/benefit analysis and feared therefore there was little will on Thames Water's behalf to invest significant infrastructure monies to resolve the problem. Councillor Yerrell proposed that developers be approached for funding through Section 106 agreements to finance necessary infrastructure upgrades to the sewerage system and to undertake any investigations required to analyse the problem. Other Members agreed that it may be beneficial to try this approach but the solution ought to come directly from Thames Water. Councillor McCulloch added that, not only was a short term solution required by the water company during this period of high water levels, but also a long-term vision to deal with the growth of the town. This was agreed by Members and it was further agreed, as proposed by Councillor Lacey, that a representative of Thames Water be invited to the next Recreation and the Arts Committee. Councillor Bacon also suggested that these concerns needed to be reiterated at any future Delivery Development Plan Document consultation and/or public enquiry. Councillor Mrs Pirouet proposed that other town and parish councils locally also be approached to put pressure on Thames Water as the problem was catchment-wide.

It was

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee agrees that letters be written to Thames Water and the Environment Agency urging a rapid solution be implemented to stop the on-going sewage pollution of the River Chess from Chesham Sewage Treatment Works and to request a production of a fully funded plan to increase the capacity of the works to allow for the planned future development of the town.
2. That a representative of Thames Water be invited to the next meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee.

15. **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.

16. **RESURFACING OF MOOR HARDSTANDING**

The Committee was informed that it was proposed to upgrade both the main Moor Hardstanding/car-park and the Lower Moor car-park in 2014 with monies for both in the Renewals and Repairs budget for this financial year. The Clerk advised it was

proposed to undertake Lower Moor first during the football 'closed' season with the main Moor hardstanding later in the year when there would be fewer visitors to the Open Air pool.

Members noted the quotation received to undertake the necessary upgrades for Lower Moor and also noted a further quotation was expected imminently. While a concern was raised by one Member whether the proposed specification would offer a long-term solution, it was agreed that significant repairs needed to be enacted and it was

RESOLVED

that the renovation of Lower Moor Car-park as outlined within the report be agreed and the decision on the final selection of the contractor be delegated to the Town Clerk in liaison with the Chairman of the Recreation and the Arts Committee.

17. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.

CHAIRMAN