

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

held on Monday 28th June 2010

PRESENT

Councillor	V.M. Abraham	Councillor	Mrs C.M. Michael
"	A.K. Bacon	"	F.G. Holly
"	Ms J.E. Bramwell	"	P.W. Yerrell
"	M.E. Brand		

Officers: Mr S. Pearson, Finance and Contracts Manager
Ms K. Graves, Policy and Projects Officer

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J.C. Fulford and M.W. Shaw.

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR ADMINISTRATIVE YEAR 2010/11**

The Mayor opened the meeting and called for nominations for Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee.

It was

RESOLVED

that Councillor V.M. Abraham be elected Chairman for the remainder of the Council year.

Note: Councillor Abraham took the chair.

Councillor Abraham called for nominations for Vice-Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee.

It was

RESOLVED

that Councillor M.E. Brand be elected Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Council year.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Yerrell declared a personal interest in agenda item 12 as a member of the

Pond Park Community Association.

3. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on the 22nd March 2010 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4. **TOWN CENTRE WORKING GROUP AND CHESHAM ACTION PARTNERSHIP**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Town Centre Working Group held on the 11th March and 10th June 2010 and the Minutes of the meeting of the Chesham Action Partnership held on the 13th April 2010.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Councillor Ms. Bramwell provided the background to Minute no 4(i) of the 10th June 2010 meeting, explaining that a member of the public had originally written to her expressing their concern that taxi drivers were leaving their engines running at the Broadway taxi rank, contributing to air pollution and suggesting a number of potential solutions to this.

Councillor Bacon expressed the view that the taxi drivers only keep their engines running during cold weather to benefit from the heaters and therefore they would contribute to air pollution problems during cold and foggy conditions.

It was

RESOLVED

1. that the original letter be circulated with the Minutes of this meeting.
2. that the member of the public be invited to attend the Council meeting of the 12th July 2010.

In relation to Minute no 4(ii) of the 11th March 2010 meeting, Councillor Brand said that the agreement between Buckinghamshire County Council and Chiltern District Council

for on-street parking ends in 2012, rather than 2010 as minuted. Since notice has been given, the District Council has been channelling all complaints to the County Council, but the County Council feels that it is not in a position to deal with these issues at this time. Councillor Brand said that as a consequence, complaints were not being dealt with, resulting in a very unsatisfactory situation. Councillor Bacon said that he has requested that civil enforcement areas are put on the agenda of a future Development Control Committee meeting and that he would like to see residents' parking provided for in Bellingdon Road.

Arising from Minute no 3(i) of the 10th June 2010 meeting, Councillor Brand said that St. Mary's Way underpass frequently floods because the drains are blocked and expressed the view that Buckinghamshire County Council should be urged to tackle the problem.

Councillor Brand referred to Minute no 3(iv) of the 10th June 2010 meeting and said that the grass cutting service provided by Buckinghamshire County Council is shambolic, with poor quality cutting and a number of verges not being cut. In Councillor Brand's view, Chiltern District Council and local Parish Councils had made a good job of the grass cutting and it is a retrograde step on the part of the County Council to take the work back in-house. Councillor Yerrell said that he had received a complaint from a resident regarding the poor quality of the mowing. Councillor Bacon concurred with Councillor Brand and said that before the District Council had taken on the contract, grass cutting had been the major issue for councillors during the summer months due to the large number of complaints received from the public. Councillor Bacon will raise the matter with the District Council's Scrutiny Committee.

In relation to Minute no 2(iii) of the 11th March 2010 meeting, the Chairman expressed his surprise that it was not possible to identify the owner of the Parsonage Lane wall, particularly as it is a relatively modern structure.

Arising from Minute no 4(i) of the 11th March 2010 meeting, the Committee noted the significant savings achieved by the District Council through the installation of LED lights at the Amersham multi-storey car park. The Policy and Projects Officer explained that LED lights were now being trialled in Star Yard Car Park, with a view to rolling them out across the district.

5. **DEVOLVED SERVICES UPDATE**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Report be noted.

6. **TOWN CHARITIES**

The Committee congratulated the Town Clerk on a most useful report. It was agreed that

whilst all the charities had been started in good faith, a number of them were now inactive.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Council withdraw its representation from the Devonshire, Cheney's and Milk Hall Charities.

7. **DIGITAL MAPPING UPDATE**

The Committee noted the considerable amount of work undertaken by the Administration Manager to date and wanted to place on record the Committee's thanks to Mrs Sharon McEwan for her voluntary work to assist the digitisation of the cemetery records. Councillor Brand queried whether there would be opportunities for other volunteers to assist with this work. Councillor Brand referred to the example of a cemetery in Warrington, where a similar mapping process had save the local authority a large quantity of money by enabling the community to develop a sense of ownership of the cemetery.

Councillor Brand referred to a system in operation at the County Council that is used to map highways information and asked whether the data from their system would be compatible with our in-house Pear Technology software, enabling information to be shared. The Policy and Projects Officer will investigate the compatibility of the two systems.

It was

RESOLVED

that the officers give a presentation on the uses of the mapping software at a future meeting of the Council.

8. **FINANCIAL REPORT – OUT-TURN 2009/2010**

The Chairman expressed his satisfaction with the expected 2010/2011 budget improvements as outlined in the report. Councillor Bacon said that it was important to stress that the possible budget savings in future years were only to be considered in the worst case scenario and that these are not services that the Council is looking to cut. Councillor Bacon noted that the budget projections assume a 2% precept increase, but that there are indications from central government that they are looking at a 0% council tax increase although it is not known whether this would extend to first tier councils. Councillor Bacon concluded that there are lots of unknown factors at this time, but the Finance Working Group would continue to keep the situation under review.

Councillor Brand asked how confident the officers were of delivering the expected

2010/2011 budget improvements. The Finance and Contracts Manager went through the likelihood of achieving each improvement in detail. The Finance and Contracts Manager explained that whilst a 1% pay increase has been budgeted for, the latest indications are that there will be a 0% pay award across the Council. The Finance and Contracts Officer also explained that he is currently looking to obtain a better rate of interest for the Council's savings. It was noted that the Parks and Premises staffing comes under the remit of the current Service Review and Councillor Brand said that the Policy and Resources Committee should send a strong message to say that it is expecting this saving in the Depot wages to be achieved.

It was

RESOLVED

that the report be noted and that the works not completed in 2009/2010 be carried over to 2010/2011.

9. **STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

It was agreed with the officer's recommendations that the Standing Orders be amended to refer to the public's right of complaint and to refer to the current Code of Conduct. Councillor Bacon proposed, and Councillor Bramwell seconded, that Standing Orders 26(c) and 26(d) be switched in order.

The Committee noted Standing Order 42(b) that any motion permanently to vary or revoke a Standing Order shall, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next Ordinary Meeting of the Council.

It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

1. that the Standing Orders be amended to refer to the public's right of complaint.
2. that the Standing Orders be amended to refer to the current Code of Conduct adopted in 2007.
3. that Standing Order 26(c) and 26(d) are switched in order.

10. **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.

11. **OUTSTANDING DEBTS**

The Finance and Contracts Manager explained that a monthly reporting system is now in operation at Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre, so that arrears are pursued promptly.

It was

RESOLVED

that the report be noted and that the gym arrears are written off.

12. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.10pm.

CHAIRMAN