

## **CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

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

held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014

**PRESENT** Councillor D.J. Lacey - Chairman (presiding)

Councillor	M. Fayyaz	Councillor	Mrs C.M. Michael
"	Mrs C. Littley	"	M.W. Shaw
"	R.C. McCulloch	"	C.H. Spruytenburg

#### **IN ATTENDANCE**

Councillors V.M. Abraham, A.K. Bacon and P.W. Yerrell  
Officer: Mr W. Richards, Town Clerk  
Mr T. Pilling – Chairman, Elgiva Board of Management

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss R.K. Bhatti, Mrs C.I. Boxer, T. Franks and Mrs A.M. Pirouet.

#### 43. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Spruytenburg declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7 as a Trustee of Chesham Museum.

Councillor McCulloch declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 7 as a member of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery.

Councillor Shaw declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8 as a Member of Buckinghamshire County Council.

#### 44. **MINUTES**

It was

#### **RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014, 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 21<sup>st</sup> January 2014.

It was

#### **RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

46. **ALLOTMENTS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Allotments Group held on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

47. **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 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

48. **PRESENTATION FROM CHAIRMAN OF THE ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT AND ELGIVA FINANCIAL UPDATE**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Trevor Pilling from the Elgiva Board of Management to give a brief update to Members on the current financial situation pertaining to the Elgiva Theatre and other initiatives being considered by the Board.

Mr Pilling referred Members to the monthly budgets for December and January, previously circulated, to show that the theatre was continuing to perform strongly. He reported that February also had had a successful month financially and it appeared that the deficit would be some £30,000 less than budgeted for, by the end of the financial year. He also advised that the live streaming of events, following the purchase of the new digital projector, was proving highly successful with 'War Horse' for example, beamed from the National Theatre selling out at both its 'live' and 'as live' showings.

In respect to the ring-fenced monies granted to the Board to utilise, Mr Pilling stated that his colleagues did not want to rush into spending it but would be allocated as and when important capital or revenue opportunities arose.

Mr Pilling then stated that the Board had asked the Committee to seriously reconsider its decision not to grant monies to provide the Elgiva staff for a social event to reward its efforts. He opined that the Elgiva only thrived because of its dedication of its employees who worked in a facility generally understaffed in comparison to other theatres. He emphasised that the proposal was not rewarding officers for simply doing their paid hours but the fact that they regularly came in at short notice, sometimes unpaid, to cover events when extra manpower was required. Therefore he opined that he did not see it as a precedent but a one-off goodwill gesture to recognise their efforts and raise morale.

Members again reiterated their appreciation of the staff at the Elgiva. Councillor Bacon stated that he personally knew how hard they worked and that they were a real asset to the Council. However he opined that he still believed that his original concerns raised at the last Recreation and Arts Committee, namely that committing public monies for such a 'reward' would not be well-received by the public in the current economic climate and that it may engender possible resentment from other Council departments, were still valid. Councillor Mrs Littley enquired whether an 'away day' could be arranged that incorporated both legitimate training and a social aspect for the staff which may be more acceptable. Councillor Yerrell suggested a small percentage of the Board's ring-fenced monies could be used to facilitate this.

After some debate, Councillor Lacey proposed that this be reconsidered at full Council. The Clerk reminded Members that standing orders stated that no decision could be reversed within six months '*save for a special resolution, the written notice whereof bears the names of at least five members of the Council*'. Therefore, to be discussed, and possibly have the decision reversed, at Council, such written notice in advance would be required. Having noted this, it was

**RESOLVED**

that, subject to the proper written notice being received in accordance with the Council's standing orders, the matter of committing monies to an Elgiva staff social event in recognition of the employees' efforts be reconsidered at full Council.

49. **CHESHAM MOOR GYM AND SWIM CENTRE UPDATE**

The Committee considered the Finance and Contracts Manager's report on the current financial situation at the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre facility.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the financial position be noted.

Councillor Yerrell noted that January 2014 had the highest ever income figure for that month and enquired whether the reason for such a commendable achievement was known. The Clerk replied that he suspected it was due to a combination of more astute marketing and the popularity of the new '£25 all-in' monthly membership scheme.

50. **WORLD WAR ONE COMMEMORATIONS**

The Committee received a report from the Clerk on events planned by, or with support from, the Council to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the First World War. To date, these included a proposed exhibition by the Friends of Chesham Cemetery; an appropriate planting scheme by the Parks and Premises team in the Red Lion Street flower-beds and possibly the ringing of the town bell if it is to be re-housed in the clock tower. In respect to the former, Councillor McCulloch

advised that the Friends now believed they had enough display material to host a meaningful First World War exhibition but the project was dependent on external funding being secured.

Members then discussed whether they wished to organise another event and potentially utilise the monies set aside by the Council for community events each year. The Chairman, Councillor Lacey, proposed that he, the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor, and representatives of the Chesham British Legion and Chesham Museum get together to consider an appropriate Chesham focussed event and report back to the Council. This was agreed.

It was therefore

**RESOLVED**

that the matter be discussed again following discussions with the British Legion and the Chesham Museum on the desirability and practicality of a partnership event marking the anniversary of the First World War.

51. **PARISH PATHS PARTNERSHIP**

The Committee was advised that Buckinghamshire County Council was, from April 2014, making available money from its Rights of Way Works budget in the form of a grant to Parish Councils who wish to employ their own contractors to undertake clearance of public rights of way in their parish.

The Clerk reported that he had subsequently had a meeting with a County Council Rights of Way officer and representatives of the Chiltern Society. The latter group have expressed its willingness to undertake this work on behalf of this Council as it has done for many other parishes. The Clerk explained that, to undertake this, the service would need to be devolved to the Council through an official agreement and officers would then commission the Chiltern Society to do the works following the monies being passed down from the County Council. It was noted that the Chiltern Society was well versed at doing such maintenance and has all the necessary liability insurance, risk assessments, etc. to satisfy the County Council.

Cognisant of the fact that there are strong indications that budgetary constraints on Buckinghamshire County Council would mean that maintenance works will be pared back to a minimum and with Members agreeing that the use of the Chiltern Society would mean a more proactive approach to clearance, it was

**RESOLVED**

that the Committee agrees to a devolved services agreement with Buckinghamshire County Council allowing the Chiltern Society to undertake public footpath and bridleway works in Chesham.

52. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.28pm.

CHAIRMAN

*Publication date 14.3.14*