

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 5th September 2011

PRESENT Councillor C.H. Spruytenburg – Chairman (presiding)

Councillor	Mrs P.R. Cherrill	Councillor	Mrs C. Littley
"	T. Franks	"	R.C. McCulloch
"	P.J. Hudson	"	Mrs A.M. Pirouet
"	D.J. Lacey		

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors V.M. Abraham, A.K. Bacon and Ms J.E. Bramwell.

Mr T. Pilling – Chairman of the Elgiva Board of Management

Officer: Mr W. Richards, Town Clerk

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms R.K. Bhatti, Mrs C.M. Michael and Mrs G. Walker.

16. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Ms. Bramwell and Hudson declared a personal interest in agenda items 4 and 5 as members of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre. Councillor Bacon declared a personal interest in agenda items 4 and 5 as a regular user of the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre.

Councillor Spruytenburg declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as an allotment holder.

Councillors Abraham and Mrs Cherrill declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as members of the Elgiva Board of Management.

Councillor Mrs Littley declared a personal interest in agenda 4 as a member of the Chesham Environmental Group.

Councillor Lacey declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 6 as Chairman of the Pond Park Community Association and left the meeting during its discussion thereof.

Councillors Hudson and Mrs Pirouet declared a personal interest in agenda item 11 in light of their roles on the newly formed Chesham Festival and Jubilee Committee.

17. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 6th June 2011, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

18. **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 14th June and 26th July 2011. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

In respect of the minutes of the 14th June, Councillor Mrs Littley mentioned that she was aware that a bio-mass boiler had been installed at Elmtree School that may be of interest to the 'Green Team'. She offered to organise a site visit if requested and the Clerk agreed to pass this on. Councillor Ms Bramwell also asked about progress on the solar panel project since the government had imposed a deadline of April 2012 for organisations to claim an advantageous tariff. The Clerk advised that discussions had commenced and a meeting had been arranged with an engineer from Chiltern District Council who was involved with a similar project at the District Council offices.

Councillor Bacon asked whether the proposed sensor lighting system had been moved forward. The Clerk replied he was unsure but would get an update.

In respect of the minutes of the 26th July, Councillor Mrs Pirouet enquired as to whether the Centre Manager is delegated to open the pool at short notice outside the season if there is a period of fine weather as was the case in April. The Clerk replied that he was having such discussions with the Manager but clearly there were logistical issues in facilitating this that would be brought to a future Committee meeting.

19. **ALLOTMENTS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Allotments Group held on 21st June and 9th August 2011. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Councillor Mrs Pirouet advised that she had only undertaken one allotment inspection as the nominated Member during the last year when it had been agreed she should be involved with two. The Clerk agreed to check this out with the Parks and Premises Manager.

20. **CHESHAM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the Chesham Environmental Group meetings held on the 23rd June and 18th August 2011. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Members noted the positive news on the reduction of the amount of Himalayan Balsam and the recent cutting of Berkhamstead Field.

21. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Elgiva Board of Management held on 27th June 2011.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

As the Chairman of the Board of Management was in attendance, Members took the opportunity to ask Mr Pilling questions.

Councillor Ms Bramwell asked whether the publishing of the ‘What’s On’ brochure three times a year was necessary with the continuing popularity of the internet and particularly social network sites. Mr Pilling replied that the Board had looked at this but it was felt that the brochure remained the most effective advertising tool, going to 16,000 homes and being cheaper than a standard letter to deliver. Councillor Bacon concurred and said that the ‘What’s On’ was always referred to in his household after delivery.

Councillor Hudson stated that promotional tools were becoming very sophisticated nowadays in a competitive market and suggested that all the Council services might be due an examination in this area. Councillor Mrs Pirouet added that perhaps generic marketing could form part of the next service review.

Councillor Hudson then enquired whether the Elgiva offered an ‘early bird’ reduction for advanced bookings and family ticket rates. Mr Pilling confirmed that these early, reduced fees, bookings were done by arrangement with schools for the pantomime and family tickets were offered for most other shows.

Mr Pilling then went through the financial figures presented to Members and explained that it was proving tough for the Elgiva. However it appeared to be performing as well, if not, better than other theatres and that expenditure was continuing to be cut wherever it was possible to do so.

Councillor Bacon congratulated the staff and the Elgiva Board of Management for remaining in budget in a very difficult financial year in 2010/11 and the Chairman thanked Mr Pilling for his attendance.

Note: Councillor Ms Bramwell left the meeting at 8.47p.m.

22. **FRIENDS OF CHESHAM CEMETERY**

Members received the Minutes of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery meeting held on 21st July 2011. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

The Clerk reported that he had been approached by a commercial outlet abutting the cemetery asking whether the Council would be prepared to pay half the costs of increased fencing to deter excursions and criminal damage into its land from the cemetery side. The Committee, while sympathetic, did not feel it should contribute towards this because of the precedent it would set for other similar commercial and private residential requests.

23. **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.

It was agreed the figures reflected a difficult economic time for the Centre exacerbated by the poor summer weather.

It was

RESOLVED

that the financial position be noted.

Note: Councillor Lacey left the Chamber during discussion of the next agenda item.

24. **PLAY AREA STAGE III RE-DEVELOPMENT**

The Committee considered the recommendations of the Play Area Working Party

Following invitations to community groups to participate in developing a play-area in their area and receiving two positive expressions of interest, the Committee was advised that the Play Area Working Party was recommending that the Council proceed with working with Pond Park Community Association to develop Windsor Road Play Area in 2011/12 and, provisionally, Codmore Field in partnership with residents in 2012/13. Following this it was further proposed to investigate Co-op Field, Gordon Road play-area and Nashleigh Hill Recreation Ground in 2013/14.

It was

RESOLVED

that the proposals recommended by the Play Area Working Party be agreed.

25. **PROVISION OF FAIRS AND PUBLIC NOTIFICATION OF SUCH PUBLIC EVENTS**

The Committee was advised that Council officers were attempting to provide two fairs a year, in the spring and late summer. It was noted that the Council currently has a rolling contract with Stevens Fairs to provide these fairs. However the owner has had personal issues and has not been attending in September and has given the impression she is not likely to attend in future. With the problem of Stevens Fair providing a September fair, the Committee was informed that officers and Councillor Lacey have been approached by Smiths Fair to provide one at Nashleigh Hill Recreation Ground from September 2012. Members were reminded that the Council had experienced problems with Smiths Fairs previously but both the previous owners have passed away and the company is now run by their son and son-in-law. It was noted they are keen to return to Chesham and that the new owners have met with Councillor Lacey and officers, who were very impressed with copies of paperwork supplied in advance and glowing references from other councils, and were therefore minded to recommend the Council allow them to return.

Councillor Mrs Cherrill stated that, while she had no objections to a fair being on Nashleigh Hill Recreation Ground, she had received previous complaints from local residents in regard to noise from the fairground operators on weekend afternoons which she hoped could be addressed.

Councillor Hudson raised the matter of informing residents in advance of such events. The Clerk responded that this was attempted to be undertaken by a number of measures, including through posters provided by the companies themselves; use of the Council website and hand delivered letters where deemed necessary. In respect of the latter, he requested that Councillor Hudson and other Members supplied addresses where they believed residents should be given advanced notification so officers could act accordingly.

It was

RESOLVED

1. That the Committee agree to the proposal to offer one-year contracts to Stevens Fair and Smiths Fair to provide one fair each in 2012/13.
2. That Members supply officers with addresses they believe require advanced notification for public events so action can be taken accordingly.

26. **SKATEPARK IN LOWNDES PARK**

Members received and considered a report on the skatepark in Lowndes Park and were asked to consider whether the Committee ought to be planning to finance a new facility or look to retain and maintain the existing facility for the foreseeable future.

Members were of the view that the current, on-going, situation with the skatepark having a Noise Abatement notice on it and having to be locked at 8.00pm was

unsatisfactory. However doubts were expressed as to whether there were many feasible alternative locations in the park. Nonetheless there was a general consensus that the users of the facility in principle deserved more up-to-date and modern equipment and local residents less disturbance.

Councillor Bacon argued that the future of the skatepark had been debated many times and the cost of providing a new one in a different location would be very expensive. He opined that he was not necessarily against this option but did feel that it was important to know the exact costs of extensive major repairs such as welding before a realistic decision could be made. Members agreed with this and the Clerk was requested to obtain more definitive estimates in this matter.

The Committee was reminded that Chesham Youth Council had already undertaken some consultation with young people on possible new facilities and it was agreed that the Play Area Working Party, in liaison with the Youth Council, progress this and makes further recommendations to a future Committee. It was also agreed that local residents ought to be part of any on-going consultation.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Play Area Working Party (in partnership with Chesham Youth Council and local residents) look at the future of the existing skatepark and possible new skatepark in more detail in respect of maintenance, designs and costs and report back to a future Committee.

27. **ALCOHOL LICENCE FOR TOWN HALL**

A suggestion to license the Town Hall to enable hirers to sell alcohol and to save them the trouble of having to apply individually to Chiltern District Council and also to possibly encourage more bookings of the Town Hall was put before the Committee.

Members noted the high annual cost to obtain a licence and also the fact that hirers could apply to Chiltern District Council for a Temporary Events Notice to sell alcohol up to ten days in advance of the booking. They also noted officers' concerns that it may get a reputation as a 'party' venue and possibly be vulnerable to anti-social behaviour due to its proximity to the town centre. Accordingly it was agreed that this additional licence was not necessary but officers were asked to make it clearer to potential hirers of the facility that alcohol could not be sold without a Temporary Events Notice.

It was

RESOLVED

that no change to the current licence be made at present.

28. **REPLACEMENT OF FURNITURE AT TOWN HALL**

The Committee considered the report from officers recommending the replacement of the Town Hall Chamber tables on health and safety and aesthetic reasons.

Having been satisfied that such a purchase would come from savings carried over from the 2010/11 renewals and repairs budget and that the existing tables did constitute a health risk to both staff and the public when trying to move them, the Committee agreed to the recommendation. Members did request however that the tables that were being replaced, and which were not unstable, be donated to local organisations at no cost.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Council Chamber tables be replaced at a total cost £6,644.79 as outlined within the report.

29. **DIAMOND JUBILEE AND OTHER SUMMER 2012 EVENTS**

Councillor Mrs Pirouet briefly updated the Committee on the number of summer events planned in 2012 and the need for some sort of co-ordination in respect to these. These events included the Queen's Diamond Jubilee; events celebrating the 2012 London Olympics; Schools of Chesham Carnival and 100th anniversary of the open air pool. She informed the Committee that a Chesham Festival and Jubilee Committee had been set up which included Councillors Hudson, Shaw and herself. She further advised that it was proposed that the group become properly constituted to allow it to bid for external funding.

The Committee welcomed this development and asked to be kept abreast of further developments.

It was

RESOLVED

that the report be noted.

30. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.

CHAIRMAN