

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 17th October 2011

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

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

IN ATTENDANCE

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

Officers: Mr W. Richards, Town Clerk
Mr S. Pearson, Finance and Contracts Manager

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs C.M. Michael and Mrs G. Walker.

31. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Hudson declared a personal interest in agenda items 4 and 5 as a member 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.

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 Impress the Chess Group.

Councillor Mrs Littley declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 as an allotment holder in Wey Lane.

Councillor McCulloch declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 as a member of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery.

32. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 5th September 2011, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

33. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Elgiva Board of Management held on 12th September 2011.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted

Arising out of minute no. 4, Councillor Brown queried whether an electronic display board would be viewed from the Elgiva. Councillor Mrs Cherrill clarified that such a display system would actually be located in the town centre and advertise all town events including shows at the Elgiva.

Arising out of minute no. 4, Councillor Yerrell enquired whether the quoted costs for the 'What's On' magazine was the net cost including advertising revenue. The Town Clerk confirmed that he understood that it was.

34. **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 13th September 2011. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

In respect of the minutes Councillor Hudson asked if the Council would relax its position on no debit or credit cards being used for transactions under £10 at the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre. The Clerk advised that he had already sanctioned this so that customers were not deterred from using the facility if they did not have enough cash.

35. **IMPRESS THE CHESS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Impress the Chess Group held on 20th September 2011.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

36. **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 noted that the swimming attendance and subsequent income had improved in the last month. Councillor Bacon asked that thanks be passed on to the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre staff for opening up longer hours during the recent heatwave.

It was

RESOLVED

that the financial position be noted.

37. **SOLAR HEATING AND ENERGY SAVING LIGHTING**

The Committee was asked to consider whether it wished to invest in solar power panels at one or more of its facilities.

Members were advised that for this to be worthwhile, the panels needed to be commissioned and installed by the end of March 2012 to take advantage of the government's feed-in tariff (FIT) guaranteed for 25 years. Estimates were presented to the Committee for the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre, Elgiva Theatre and the Town Hall outlining both installation costs and potential payback periods.

The Committee noted that, potentially, annual projected savings based on FIT and export return could be more lucrative if solar panelling was installed at the Elgiva and/or the Town Hall. However it was agreed that time constraints was an important factor and, as feasibility studies were much further advanced at the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre, it would make sense to proceed therefore with this facility, if the Council wished to progress the scheme.

Councillor Yerrell opined that, while a worthy ambition, it was too much of a risk in a time of financial pressures on Council budgets and, moreover, solar panelling was only likely to get cheaper. Councillor Brown questioned this view and suggested, on the contrary, this offer was very unlikely to be repeated and stated that it should be progressed, possibly with a loan since it was a very good time to borrow. In light of the time constraints, it was also agreed to suspend standing orders so the Council did not have to go through the time-consuming tendering process. However, Members did appreciate the considerable outlay required and therefore agreed that it should only proceed if agreed in principle by the Finance Working Party which was meeting the following day.

The proposal to proceed with solar panel heating at the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre, subject to approval from the Finance Working Party, was formally voted upon and **CARRIED** by 8 votes to nil with one abstention.

The Committee also considered motion sensor lighting. It was noted that no estimates had been received for the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre and therefore no decision on such installation should be made until these had been received. Councillor Mrs Littley did request that, in the interim, the timer system for Lowndes Park toilets' light could be adjusted if suitable.

It was

RESOLVED

1. That monies from the General Reserve be committed to finance a solar PV system at the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre on the understanding it would secure and benefit from the UK Government's Feed-in Tariff scheme, index linked over the next 25 years and that this be agreed by the Finance Working Party.
2. That Standing Orders be suspended to allow estimates for work to be considered and commissioned without going through the tendering process as stipulated in Financial Regulation 42(b).
3. That possible financing the installation of motion sensor lighting at one or more of its buildings be considered at a future meeting.

38. **WEY LANE ALLOTMENTS**

Members considered the letter received from the current owners proposing that the Council take over the management of its allotments in Wey Lane. It was noted that such an offer was based purely on planning permission being granted for a dwelling on the allotment site with the rest of the land being passed over for allotments.

Members were of the view that, since officers had no objections, it would be in the Council's and the public's interests to accept this offer though it was agreed that planning permission for such a dwelling was very unlikely to be forthcoming.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Council agree in principle to the management of the Wey Lane (George Piggin) allotments should planning permission for a dwelling on the site be granted.

39. **CEMETERY FENCING**

A proposal from the owner of a car lot to erect a wooden panel 2 metre high fence abutting an existing 0.5 metre high stone wall but inside the cemetery was put before the Committee.

The request was forthcoming because the owner had complained of incursions from the cemetery into his business and resultant anti-social behaviour. The Committee was advised that, because of a big drop between the cemetery and the company's property, a 2 metre fence erected on the owner's side would only come up to about 30cm higher than the existing wall and would be a relative waste of time and resources.

On the understanding that the owner would pay for the purchase, erection and maintenance and the fence be of a colour deemed suitable by the Committee, it was

RESOLVED

that the erection of the fence be agreed.

Note: Councillor Mrs Pirouet left the meeting at 9.05pm

40. **CYCLING IN TOWN CENTRE**

The Committee considered the report from officers in respect to cycling in the town centre.

While the general view expressed was that it would not be desirable to allow cycling down the High Street, it was accepted that improving cycling opportunities in the town generally should be re-examined and it was

RESOLVED

that Councillors Bacon, Lacey and Mrs Littley be appointed to a cycling working party to consider ways of improving cycling opportunities within the town centre and report back to a future committee.

41. **EXCLUSION OF THE 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.

42. **PARKS AND PREMISES DEPOT**

The Clerk reported that the roof of the main storage garage at the Parks and Premises garage, which was previously identified as containing asbestos, had recently cracked in the wind and thus was recently removed by a qualified asbestos contractor as it became apparent that there was a real danger of asbestos dust becoming prevalent. It was also noted that the two old greenhouses were in a parlous state and had been recommended for removal as well.

Some Members had recently visited the site and confirmed that the greenhouses were undoubtedly in need of demolition. The Committee noted the estimated cost of an equivalent size storage area and was advised by the Finance and Contracts Manager that this could be funded through the Renewals and Repairs budget.

It was agreed that such a replacement building was required as quickly as possible since equipment was being temporarily stored in largely unsuitable buildings or not

stored indoors at all. Accordingly it was agreed to suspend standing orders so the Council did not have to go through the usual tendering process for projects over £20,000 but that the Parks and Premises Manager, in liaison with the Town Clerk seek a minimum of three quotations for the building, and proceed with the lowest quotation subject to it being fit for purpose.

It was

RESOLVED

1. That the two greenhouses be demolished in-house and the aluminium be sold for scrap.
2. That quotations be sought for a new large steel building with power and a French drainage system to replace the storage garage and two greenhouses and officers commission the company providing the lowest price, subject to it being fit for purpose.
3. That Standing Orders be suspended to allow estimates for work to be considered and commissioned without going through the tendering process as stipulated in Financial Regulation 42(b).

43. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 9.17pm.

CHAIRMAN

Publication date 24.10.11