

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 18th December 2017

PRESENT Councillor Mrs J.E. MacBean – Chairman (presiding)

Councillor	M.Z. Bhatti MBE	Councillor	A.W. Franks
"	Miss E.A. Culverhouse	"	P.J. Hudson
"	M. Fayyaz	"	P.W. Yerrell

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor A.K. Bacon.

Officers: Mr W. Richards, Town Clerk.

Mr S. Pearson, Finance and Contracts Manager.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Q. Chaudhry.

42. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Yerrell declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 4a as a newly appointed member of the Elgiva Board of Management.

Councillor Bacon declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 as Chairman of the Chesham Arts Festival which hires the Elgiva Theatre. Councillor Hudson declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 9 as a new member of the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre.

It was noted that, as agreed, all previously stated Declaration of Interests remained unchanged from the first meeting of the administrative year.

43. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 30th October 2017, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

44. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Elgiva Board of Management held on the 23rd October 2017.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

45. **IMPRESS THE CHESS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Impress the Chess Group held on the 2nd November 2017.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Arising out of Minute No. 2, Councillor Mrs MacBean stated that she was pleased to announce that the developers' renovating Solar House had now agreed to change the name to Canada Mill House to reflect the historical resonance of the site.

46. **CHESHAM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Chesham Environmental Group held on the 23rd November 2017.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

47. **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.

Members congratulated the Manager and his team on their continued efforts and it was

RESOLVED

that the financial position and officers' update be noted.

48. **WEEDKILLING POLICY AND PROCEDURE IN CHESHAM**

The Committee considered the report compiled by officers in respect to weed killing in town and how this Council could try and eradicate the problem where possible. Councillor Mrs MacBean explained to Members that she had been liaising with the Parks and Premises Manager in respect to treating high visibility footpaths and major

thoroughfares in Chesham to complement the weed killing undertaken by Serco, on behalf of Chiltern District Council. She opined that Serco's efforts in this area was questionable and therefore she, and other District Council Members, were pressing for a commitment to an improved service in coming years. Councillor Bacon added that Serco's contract was expiring in the near future so he argued that it was imperative that the District Council ensures the weed killing contract be adhered to by whoever won a future contract.

In respect to the schedule proposed by the Parks and Premises Manager, this was broadly welcomed by Members. Councillor Yerrell stated that it was unfortunate the whole town could not be weeded as it had been in previous eras but it was accepted that, presently, it would be impracticable to undertake this and it was noted it would already be a large commitment in terms of working hours for the Parks and Premises team.

Various queries were raised on the individual paths proposed and it was highlighted that the Lowndes Avenue alleyway was actually the responsibility of a Housing Association.

Councillor Fayyaz also enquired whether the deep cleansing of roads could be re-instigated by Serco. Councillor Mrs MacBean replied that she understood Serco still did this but more on a reactive basis rather than a planned schedule.

In regard to finance, the Finance and Contracts Manager advised that the vehicle requested by the Parks and Premises Manager to make the weed killing practicable would be leased at a cost of £3,600 per annum. It was agreed that this be recommended to be added to the budget along with the additional cost of equipment.

It was

RESOLVED

that a the proposed weed killing proposals be welcomed and adopted and that the costs of a lease vehicle and equipment be recommended for approval by the Finance Committee scheduled to meet on the 8th January 2018.

49. **LOWNDES PARK GREEN FLAG COMPETITION**

The Committee considered a report from the Policy and Projects Officer recommending the Council did not enter the Green Flag judging for Lowndes Park for a fourth year.

It was noted that the first meeting of the Lowndes Park Working Group was held on the 11th December. The objective of this working group is to look broadly at all issues relating to the park and its management and this will inform the development of a new park management plan. Members were informed that it is a requirement to submit a park management plan as part of the Green Flag application and the deadline for applications is the 31st January 2018, so it will not be possible to have a new plan ready in time for this deadline. Accordingly officers were recommending

that entry to the Green Flag scheme is considered for 2019 when plans for the park are better developed.

The officers' recommendation was agreed and it was

RESOLVED

that Lowndes Park is not entered for Green Flag judging in 2018.

50. **REVISED ESTIMATES 2017/18 AND DRAFT ESTIMATES 2018/19**

The Finance and Contracts Manager's report on the revised estimates for 2017/18 and draft estimates for 2018/19 was considered by the Committee.

In respect of the 2017/18 estimates, the report showed that the final end-of-year figures were forecasted to be over budget by £88,663 compared to the original budget. However it was emphasised this was mainly due to considerable repairs and investments works which had had been undertaken to the Gym and Swim Centre and the Elgiva and which had been well-documented and duly considered and approved by the Finance Committee throughout the year.

In regard to the 2018/19 estimates, the Finance and Contracts Manager gave an overview of his proposed first draft budgets following a discussion with the Chairman of the Finance Committee and based on a 3% increase for an average Band 'D' property tax payer as recommended by the Finance Committee in November. He also highlighted the proposed £50k Investment Budget and the fact that £20k of it was presently unallocated to any particular project, which potentially could be utilised on any possible additional funding required for an extension to the Parking Review contribution and/or the cost of the weed killing policy (as discussed earlier).

The Chairman thanked the Finance and Contracts Manager and asked for general observations on this first draft.

The Clerk reported that the Parking Review Working Group was set to reconvene on the 3rd January so any financial implications could be fed into the rescheduled Finance Committee on the 8th January. The Committee agreed that the weed killing policy should be supported through the leasing of a vehicle and this too should be recommended to the Finance Committee for adoption.

Councillor Mrs MacBean added that she believed that some sort of figure should also be agreed for on-going architects' fees for possible extensions to the Elgiva and Gym and Swim Centre. It was agreed however that it was important a business plan was developed to ascertain additional usage.

Councillor Bacon asked what was the current situation with the possible 3G surface at the Gym and Swim Centre; the Multi Games Area (MUGA) in Lowndes Park and the Town Hall lift respectively. The Clerk advised that the 3G surface at the Gym and Swim could potentially be a bid to the investment budget but officers were waiting for the comments of the architect first. The MUGA would be considered by

the Lowndes Park Working Party but it appeared to be in a relatively robust condition structurally. The lift engineer had highlighted that the lift would need replacing in the future but officers had not got the impression there was an imminent risk of permanent breakdown.

It was generally accepted by the Committee that this first draft budget appeared to be reasonable with an acceptable precept rise.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

that the Estimates be presented for consideration at the Finance Committee of the 8th January 2018 in light of the observations made at this Committee with the recommendation that the financial implications of the weed killing policy and, potentially, an extension of the Parking Review be taken into account and further consideration be given to possible architect fees.

Note: Councillor Fayyaz left the meeting at 8.35pm

51. **PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES 2017/18**

The Committee considered the proposals detailed in the report for fees and charges for 2018/19.

The following was agreed:

(a) **Allotments**

It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

that a 10p per pole increase on all sites be applied from 1st October 2018.

(b) **Cemetery**

The Town Clerk advised that the Council had increased Cemetery fees significantly last year to increase the Council's revenue and potentially ring-fence monies for a new Cemetery in the future and therefore officers were proposing no increase next year.

Members also noted and welcomed the proposals for a new Memorial Rose and Shrubbery Garden and commended the Administration Manager for her efforts in this respect.

It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

that no increase on existing fees be applied from the 1st April 2018 and the new Memorial Rose and Shrubbery Garden and its proposed fees be welcomed and agreed.

(c) **Housing**

It was

RESOLVED

that the current rents be noted.

(d) **The Elgiva**

It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

1. That the hire and service charges be increased by 3% from the 1st April 2018 as per the attached schedule except if bookings have previously been confirmed.
2. That the Manager continues to be allowed flexibility and discretion in determining any charge where he believes it to be in the interest of the Theatre.
3. That the current caterer's one agreement be extended for a further twelve months on similar terms & conditions at a new fee proposed in the Report.

(e) **Town Hall**

It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

that the proposed scale of charges, reflecting no increase in room hire fees or other hire charges, be approved and that the Town Clerk continues to be delegated the determination of any ad hoc charges.

(f) **Sports Pitches and Pavilions, Film Fees, Wayleaves, Fairs and Circuses, Lowndes Park Catering**

It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

1. That no increases in Sports Pitches charges effective from the 1st August 2018 be agreed.
2. That the range of fees for fun fairs and circuses remain unchanged for 2018/2019 and that the Town Clerk be allowed to negotiate the charge within the range set.
3. That the Shelter on the Moor continues to be let at no charge to the Environmental Group.
4. That the Clerk continues to be empowered to negotiate charges for the use of Lowndes Park and other Council facilities by film companies.
5. That the fee of £100 for each use of the Council's Open Spaces be continued.
6. That the Lowndes Park Ice Cream concessionaire for Lowndes Park be offered the combined ice-cream and tea and coffee concession for Lowndes Park on a one year agreement for the fee proposed in the Report.
7. That last summer's coffee, tea and cake provider for Lowndes Park be not re-engaged in light of the recommendation above.
8. That a wayleave charge of £5 per annum for pedestrian access only and £50 per annum for vehicular/pedestrian access remain unchanged for 2018/19.
9. That the Clerk be empowered to negotiate charges for the use of the Moor Hardstanding for car-parking and the use of Skottowes Pond by the Model Boat Club.

(g) **Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre**

It was

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

that the following be agreed:

1. That the gym, swimming, general room hire charges and pool hire not be increased.
2. That the Manager be allowed flexibility and discretion in determining any charge where he believes it to be in the interest of the Centre.
2. That the Chiltern Natural Therapies Ltd rent be increased to £340 per month from the 1st April 2018.
3. That the Moor Football Pitch charges not be increased from the 1st August 2018.

52. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.47pm.

CHAIRMAN