

**CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES of the meeting of the COMMUNITY, ASSETS, RECREATION AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2022

**PRESENT** Councillor J.E. MacBean – Chairman (Presiding)

Councillor E.A. Culverhouse  
" J.C. Fulford

Councillor P. Harding  
" R.S. Matthews

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr T. Marmo.

Officer: Mr W. Richards, Town Clerk

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P. Aslam, M. Ditta and C.A. Hood

49. **CHAIRMAN’S WELCOME**

Councillor MacBean welcomed Mr Tony Marmo as an observer to the meeting and advised Members he would be commencing in his role as Chief Executive Officer in mid-May.

50. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interests that were brought to the Chairman’s notice.

51. **MINUTES**

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Community, Assets, Recreation and Environment Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

52. **FRIENDS OF CHESHAM CEMETERY**

Members received the Minutes of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery meeting of the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

53. **IMPRESS THE CHESS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the Impress the Chess meeting of the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

54. **ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT UPDATE**

The Committee received an environment audit report update from the Policy and Projects Officer.

A brief discussion took place on the merits of the purchase of the bio chipper. While it was agreed it would be a welcome addition to the Parks and Premises team and the environment, particularly with bonfires no longer being acceptable, it was emphasised that not all fallen logs and branches should be chipped as they played an important part in assisting wildlife in terms of habitat.

It was also noted and welcomed that Bucks Community Energy were audited the Council's buildings in respect to energy options and this was particularly beneficial for the Elgiva which was still considering its boiler replacement options.

It was

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Report be noted.
2. That the purchase of the bio chipper be approved.

55. **SKOTTOWES POND SURVEY**

The Committee considered the report from the Policy and Projects Officer in respect to Skottowes Pond and conditions survey thereof.

It was reported that, after approaching four different companies, only one had submitted a proposal. The Committee also noted and welcomed the fact that the Council had obtained a £20,000 grant from the Community Board to cover the cost. It was accepted by the Committee that a comprehensive ecological, topographical and silt survey was integral to beginning the process of improving Skottowes Pond and it was

**RESOLVED**

that the quoting company be commissioned to carry out the survey, subject to an updated quote being deemed acceptable by officers.

56. **PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATION**

The Minutes of the two Jubilee Working Party meetings held since the last meeting of this Committee were considered by Members.

It was noted that the Working Party had agreed to organise a Council led street party in the High Street on the Thursday which is a Bank Holiday and to supplement it with live music and entertainment. It was reported that Councillor Aslam had already engaged with many of the High Street retailers who had offered support on the day.

The Committee was supportive of the concept and happy to endorse. However, questions were raised on the Augmented Reality trail and whether it offered value for money and requested further information in respect to this. It was also agreed that any information on paid entertainment should be detailed before being agreed.

Accordingly, it was

### **RESOLVED**

1. That the Committee approves the concept of a town centre celebration on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2022.
2. That the final budget be considered and agreed by the Town Clerk in liaison with the Chairman of the CARE and Finance Committee and the Jubilee Working Party.

#### 57. **PLAY AREA UPGRADE REPORT**

The Committee received the Minutes of the Play-Area Working Party meeting and a verbal update from Councillor Matthews following her meeting with a play equipment provider company. Councillor Matthews explained that the Working Party had agreed that the upgrading of Lowndes Park play equipment should be the priority and therefore she and officers had met, and were going to meet, with play equipment providers to ascertain what equipment could be installed and look at possible alternative locations within the park. Following this, it was proposed ideas and provisional costings be fed back to the Working Party for its comments and then to begin a consultation exercise.

While there was general agreement that Lowndes Park play provision required attention, the discussion centred on whether it would be preferable to look at the matter of complimentary facilities, such as a café, at the same time, before determining locations and type of equipment and whether more natural play facilities would be desirable. It was agreed that the Working Party consider this going forward at its next meeting. It was also accepted that it was premature to make a financial commitment to the scheme from the General Reserve until plans were more fully defined.

It was agreed that the multi-play piece of equipment in front of the current main play-area was in an unsafe condition and beyond repair financially and therefore should be removed. It was suggested that the removal be synchronised with communications on various media platforms for the reasons why and to inform the public that future provision was being investigated.

It was

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Committee notes the recommendations of the Play Area Working Party.
2. That the Multi Play Piece of Equipment referenced within the Report be removed on safety grounds and supplemented with information to the public in respect of this.

58. **VISIT CHESHAM AND VILLAGES' TOURISM WEBSITE**

The Policy and Project Officer's report advised that the Chesham Society and Chesham Connect, both town partners, had launched a regeneration initiative to create a specialist visitor website, to showcase and promote the tourism offering in Chesham and the surrounding villages. The website would aim to increase visitor numbers to the area, as well as encourage residents to explore what is on offer. The website would feature major events, hospitality, leisure, the countryside, accommodation and transport. Profile boxes would be used to put a spotlight on local heritage, people and places.

It was noted that the two groups were seeking match-funding from various avenues but were requesting £5,000 from the Council to help cover the costs of website updating and maintenance for the next five years.

In consideration of the request, Members had various concerns, notably as to who would ultimately own the domain name and how exactly it would benefit the town more than other tourism websites currently in existence. Moreover, Councillor Culverhouse opined that this may be better funded through the remaining 'Portas Fund' monies than directly by the Council.

The Chairman advised that she had viewed a comprehensive proposal from the Chesham Society and Chesham Connect and it would be instructive for Members if this was circulated to them by officers.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the full proposal for the project be circulated to the Committee Members, along with details of the remaining Portas Fund monies, with the request to be considered anew after this had been received.

59. **MEADES WATER GARDENS BOARDWALK**

The Committee was asked to consider the replacement of the boardwalk in Meades Water Gardens. Members were advised that the current boardwalk was made of redwood treated aggredeck. After 13 years of service, the boardwalk had started to fail and needed regular in-house repairs. It was noted that officers were recommending the installation of a new boardwalk be made from recycled plastic, which will be

significantly more durable than the existing, wooden boardwalk, following the latter being dismantled by the Parks and Premises team.

Officers reported that the costs for the purchase of a new boardwalk and the professional installation costs thereof were estimated to be in the region of £20,000. £5,000 had already been allocated from the Chilterns Conservation Board's 'Green Recovery Fund' for the project and an additional £5,000 of external funding was being sought elsewhere. Accordingly, the Council was being asked to contribute an amount up to £10,000 from the General Reserve to be committed as match-funding for this project.

A Member stated that the current boardwalk caused problems due to the boards being laid lengthways, meaning pram and bike wheels were occasionally getting stuck in between the boards. A question was also raised around whether the anti-slip surface would work in both directions since the current boardwalk was considered to only be anti-slip from one direction. Subject to these observations and questions been clarified satisfactorily, Members agreed to this request and it was

**RESOLVED**

that the Committee agrees in principle to provide half the cost of the Boardwalk, with any additional funding to come from other sources.

60. **WAR MEMORIAL RESTORATION**

In respect to the town's war memorial, Members were asked to consider a quote to undertake specialist restoration and protective treatments as sourced by local volunteers.

The Committee requested that its thanks be passed to those involved with the continued maintenance of the Unknown Soldier and it was happy to confirm payment of the costs of the quotation.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the quote by the specialist memorial conservator be accepted.

61. **VOLUNTEERS' DAY**

It was reported that the Manager of the Elgiva was keen to run a Volunteers' Day to try and recruit volunteers for the theatre but also to promote volunteering generally in September. The envisaged content would include: exhibition featuring activities, stands, demonstrations and workshops, live performance, videos of volunteer organisations to screen as a back drop or to support awards and a live online element to the event.

Members noted that such events had been successful elsewhere and it was

**RESOLVED**

that the Committee agrees to supporting an Elgiva Volunteers' Day in 2022.

62. **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.

63. **ZONE 9 CYCLING PROPOSAL**

The Committee considered a proposal from a specialist company to produce a Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Feasibility Study, submitted following approaches from members of the local Zone 9 Cycling Group who briefed this Committee back in April 2021. The Chairman reported that four special companies had been approached; two submissions had been received and the circulated document was the preferred bid. It was proposed that the presented proposal be accepted and, additionally, that the Council directly commission the consultants to reclaim the VAT. Moreover, as the proposal had already been allocated funds from the Community Board, it was further requested that the Council commit a figure of up to £12,000 as match-funding.

Having noted that such a feasibility study would play an important part in progressing both the Council's environmental ambitions and furthering the emerging Neighbourhood Plan, it was

**RESOLVED**

1. that the Council directly commission the recommended consultants to undertake the circulated Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Feasibility Study.
2. that a match-funding contribution from the General Reserve of up to £12,000 be agreed.

64. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.52pm

CHAIRMAN