

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 8th June 2015

PRESENT

Councillor	N. L. Brown	Councillor	M.W. Shaw
"	M. Fayyaz	"	Mrs D. M. Varley
"	P. J. Hudson	"	B. R. Whitfield
"	D. J. Lacey	"	S. P. Willmoth
"	Mrs J.E. MacBean		

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors A.K. Bacon, R.C. McCulloch and P.W. Yerrell

Officer: Mr W. Richards, Town Clerk.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Q. Chaudhry and A. W. Franks.

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN FOR ADMINISTRATIVE YEAR 2015/16**

The Mayor opened the meeting and called for nominations for Chairman of the Recreation and the Arts Committee.

It was

RESOLVED

that Councillor D.J. Lacey be elected Chairman for the remainder of the Council year.

Note: Councillor Lacey took the Chair

Councillor Lacey called for nominations for Vice-Chairman of the Recreation and the Arts Committee.

It was

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs J. E. MacBean be elected Vice-Chairman for the remainder of the Council year.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor McCulloch declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items 5 and 7 as a member of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery.

Councillor Mrs MacBean declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 as a member of the Elgiva Board of Management; the Chesham Allotments Group and the Chesham Environmental Group.

Councillors Hudson and Willmoth declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda items 5 and 6 as members of the Friends of Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre.

Councillor Bacon declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 as a regular user of the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed that future agendas should reflect the wishes of Members not having to repeat these Declarations of Interests at future meetings and instead to only declare new ones.

3. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 9th March 2015, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4. **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 the 29th April 2015.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

5. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Elgiva Board of Management held on 13th April 2015.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

Members expressed continued satisfaction with the success of the live streaming but Councillor Yerrell enquired what the scenario would be if the projector broke down in respect to paying the promoters its share of ticket sales. The Clerk advised that he believed the liability would lay with the Council but was unsure whether this had been confirmed in any contractual agreement.

Councillor Yerrell also opined that he believed the current Elgiva pantomime produced 'in-house' was both a commercial and artistic success and queried therefore whether looking to pass it over to an outside professional company was necessary. The Clerk advised that the Manager was only entering into very preliminary discussions at this stage but was always mindful of examining the possibilities of increasing income significantly. Other Members agreed this was best left to the Manager with his excellent record of putting on high quality shows balanced against financial constraints.

6. **ALLOTMENTS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Allotments Group held on the 17th March 2015.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

7. **FRIENDS OF CHESHAM CEMETERY**

Members received the Minutes of the Friends of Chesham Cemetery A.G.M. and group meeting held on 14th April 2015. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

8. **CHESHAM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meetings of the Chesham Environmental Group A.G.M. and group meeting held on the 16th April 2015.

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

9. **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

RESOLVED

that the financial position be noted.

10. **CEMETERY GATES LOCK-UP UPDATE**

The Clerk suggested that Members reconsider the current locking up times of the Cemetery in light of recent anti-social behaviour incidents that had taken place and which had again elicited a great deal of interest on a local social media site. He advised he had also received a complaint via a telephone from a bereaved relative whose purchased grave had been damaged. Councillor Fayyaz added that he had received similar complaints as well.

Members discussed the situation and while accepting that incidents were upsetting for the individuals concerned, generally, agreed that anti-social behaviour appeared to be at an acceptably low level. It was noted that the Friends of Chesham Cemetery, the police, the Parks and Premises Manager and the Chiltern District Council Community Safety Manager were all of the view that there was no need to change the current policy of keeping the pedestrian access open all hours while locking the vehicular access at weekends and after 4.00pm.

The Committee generally agreed that the current system appeared to be working well and saving monies on paying for locking outside working hours.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

1. That the policy of keeping the pedestrian gates permanently unlocked at the cemetery be continued subject to there being no serious and sustained anti-social behaviour occurring within the facility.
2. That officers, in liaison with the Mayor and the Chairman of Recreation and the Arts Committee, be given delegated powers to revert to evening locking in the event of serious anti-social behaviour occurring.

11. **RESTORATION OF CHESHAM MOOR GYM AND SWIM CENTRE WELL**

Members considered the report from the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre Manager on the possibility of restoring the spring fed well that previously had provided much of the water for the Open Air Pool.

The Centre Manager reported that the well was decommissioned some eight years ago following a risk assessment. He advised that the subsequent use of mains water

to top the pool up had led to increasing problems with the depth of the water when backwashing the pool. He opined that by repairing the well, with its much larger inlet diameter for backwashes, health and safety would be less compromised as water top-up can occur much more quickly. Moreover he advised that abstracting water from the well, with its current Environment Agency licence, would save the Council monies each year and, having spring fed water in the pool was a definite attraction to be positively marketed, as well as adhering to the Council's Environmental Policy. It was also noted that the Centre Manager had provisionally linked the recent failures of the boilers with the hardness of the mains water.

While the Committee questioned whether the well water would be any less 'hard' as emanating from a chalky rock, there was general agreement that the restoration of the well would, subject to finance, be a welcome project to progress, for the reasons outlined by the Centre Manager.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

that the repair to the well, previously feeding the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre pool, be agreed in principle and officers be authorised to obtain three quotations to be presented at a future meeting of this Committee.

12. **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.

13. **ASHERIDGE ROAD ALLOTMENT FENCE**

The Committee was informed that it was proposed to replace the current Asheridge Road Allotment Site chain-link fencing, which had fallen into disrepair, with a new robust, galvanised steel fence and gates. It was noted that monies for this replacement had been earmarked within the Renewals and Repairs budget for 2015/16 and, in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, two quotations had been obtained.

Members agreed that this replacement was required and the new fencing ought to be a greater deterrent to low level, anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

that Clayton Fencing be agreed as the preferred contractor to undertake the replacement of the Asheridge Road allotment site at a cost of up to £9,400 plus VAT.

14. **PURCHASE OF GRASS-CUTTING EQUIPMENT**

The Committee considered the report from the Parks and Premises Manager seeking approval to purchase a ride-on mower and pedestrian brush-cutter as had been earmarked in the Renewals and Repairs budget for 2015/16. It was noted that in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, three quotations had been obtained.

Members agreed that, because the cheapest quotation for the ride-on mower was close to £17,000, and as the Council had not yet determined its position on the taking on of devolved services with its possible need for additional equipment, the purchase of the ride-on mower be deferred until budgets had been scrutinised by the Finance Working Party.

It was

RESOLVED

that the matter be considered anew following the recommendations of the Finance Working Party.

15. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

CHAIRMAN