

**CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE**

held on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019

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

Councillor	M. Z. Bhatti MBE	Councillor	A.W. Franks
"	Q. Chaudhry	"	R.C. McCulloch
"	Miss E.A. Culverhouse	"	N. T. Southworth
"	M. Fayyaz	"	Mrs D. M. Varley

Officer: Mr W. Richards - Town Clerk

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P.J. Hudson and an apology for lateness was received from Councillor Mrs D.M. Varley.

54. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

55. **MINUTES**

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

56. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Elgiva Board of Management held on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

The Committee had a brief discussion on the current income figures and projected final reduced income figures for the end of the financial year. It was accepted that a number of factors, including an exceptionally hot summer and a change in the pantomime contract, had largely contributed to this slight reduction but Members expressed their hope that the new Manager's obvious enthusiasm and expertise would help address the fall in coming years.

57. **IMPRESS THE CHESS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Impress the Chess Group held on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the Minutes be noted.

58. **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.

59. **CONFIRMATION OF DEVOLVED SERVICES CONTRACT**

Details of the Devolved Services agreement proposed for the Council by Buckinghamshire County Council was considered by the Committee. It was noted that it was intended to be effective for one year from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 until the commencement of the new unitary authority in April 2020.

Members agreed that the Council should continue on this one-year basis with the hope and expectation that the new unitary authority would be willing to enter into a long-term contract. It was accepted that while there were few significant issues for this Council, a view was expressed that the proposed current one-year contract appeared to be proving a problem for smaller parish councils who had been using contractors for verge cutting.

Having noted that, within the report, the County Council had defined its responsibility for trees, a brief discussion ensued on the County Council's recent removal of these from highway verges and its apparent lack of consultation thereof with residents. The Committee were unanimous in its opinion that this was far from satisfactory and liaison with both residents and this Council on planned tree works would be highly beneficial in future.

It was

**RESOLVED**

that the 2019/20 Devolved Services Agreement, as presented, be agreed.

60. **CEMETERY CHAPEL AND POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE USAGE**

The matter of the current and future usage of the Cemetery Chapel was outlined in the Report produced by officers. It was reported that the Chapel has only been hired out nine times since 2014 and following a complaint in regards to its condition from the last hirer in February 2017, it had not been offered as a facility to the public. Officers were of the view that the future for the chapel, if only offering it for hire for funeral services, was not really sustainable, even if considerable investment was put into the facility. It was noted that general enquiries about hiring through funeral directors and/or the bereaved remained negligible and it seemed apparent that those interred at the cemetery preferred to have services at local churches or other faith places of worship.

The Committee was informed that an approach had been made by a local resident (who already runs a local business) to utilise the facility to create a hub for local youth projects within the community and using the chapel as the working space. She had suggested she would manage the space and the everyday 'inventory' and actions. Accordingly Members were asked whether they would agree, in principle, to the idea of the Chapel being used for alternative uses other than interment services.

Members had no objection in principle but stated they would like to see more detailed proposals before agreeing to a hire/letting and recommended that the Friends of Chesham Cemetery also consider this. They also expressed general opposition to the idea of the building becoming a residential property.

It was therefore

**RESOLVED**

that the principle of a change of use for the Cemetery Chapel be agreed but this be subject to a further report outlining the detailed plans of any prospective hirers.

61. **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.

*Note: Councillor Mrs Varley arrived at the meeting at 7.55pm*

62. **RESURFACING OF MULTI-COURT AT GYM AND SWIM CENTRE**

Members considered the Report from the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Manager outlining his recommendations to renovate the outdoor multi-sports court with

artificial grass and to re-tarmac the bespoke tennis courts. The Report and the Manager's supporting information highlighted that both areas were in need of resurfacing after some 9 years of operation, were getting potentially dangerous and the artificial grass should bring in more revenue due to its flexibility in usage.

With the Report referring to this project being included in the revised scheduled capital works programme previously put before the Finance Committee - though with a higher cost than provisionally budgeted for, it was

**RESOLVED**

that the quotation from Chiltern Sports Contractors, as presented, be agreed.

63. **UPDATE ON POSSIBLE CAPITAL WORKS AT ELGIVA AND GYM AND SWIM CENTRE**

The Mayor and the Town Clerk briefly updated the Committee on the work of the consultants pertaining to the possible capital works at the Elgiva and Gym and Swim Centre. Both projects remained under consideration though any progression of the latter was likely to be based on the less expansive ideas forthcoming from the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Manager as presented at the most recent Gym and Swim Extension Working Party meeting.

In respect to the Gym and Swim Centre, the Committee endorsed the Chairman of the Finance Committee's recommendation to seek exemption from VAT for the facility.

It was

**RESOLVED**

1. That the current position on possible capital works at the Elgiva and Gym and Swim Centre be noted.
2. That the recommended position on applying for VAT exemption at the Gym and Swim Centre be endorsed.

64. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.

CHAIRMAN