

CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the RECREATION AND THE ARTS COMMITTEE

held on 19th January 2009

PRESENT Councillor Mrs J.C. Fulford – Chairman (presiding)

Councillor	A.K. Bacon	Councillor	Mrs C. Littley
"	E.L. Bamford	"	Mrs C.M. Michael
"	M.Z. Bhatti	"	Mrs M. Molesworth
"	Ms. J.E. Bramwell	"	Mrs A.M. Pirouet
"	D.J. Lacey	"	Mrs G. Walker

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillors N.L. Brown, F.G. Holly, C.H. Spruytenburg and P.W. Yerrell.

Officers: Mr. W. Richards, Town Clerk, Mr S. Pearson, Finance and Contracts Manager and Mr D. Essex, Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Manager.

58. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Holly declared a personal interest in agenda items 4, 6 and 10b as a member of the Friends of Moor Road Gym and Swim. Councillor Mrs Fulford declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 10b as a regular purchaser of a swimming season ticket for the open air pool.

Councillor Holly declared a personal interest in agenda item 4, as a member of the Allotments Group. Councillor Mrs Pirouet also declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as an allotment holder.

Councillor Mrs Fulford declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as a member of the 'Impress the Chess' Group and Environmental Group. Councillor Mrs Littley declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as a member of the 'Impress the Chess' Group.

Councillor Bamford declared a prejudicial interest in agenda item 7 as her son worked at the Elgiva during the pantomime season.

Councillor Mrs Littley declared a personal interest in agenda item 13 due to a friend's possible interest in the catering franchise at the Elgiva.

59. **MINUTES**

It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes of the meeting of the Recreation and the Arts Committee held on 24th November 2008, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

60. **FRIENDS OF MOOR ROAD**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Friends of Moor Road Gym and Swim Centre held on 11th November and 9th December 2008 and the A.G.M held on the 2nd December 2008. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

61. **IMPRESS THE CHESS**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Impress the Chess Group meeting held on 20th November 2008. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

62. **ELGIVA BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Elgiva Board of Management held on 15th December 2008. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

63. **ALLOTMENTS GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Allotments Group held on 16th December 2008. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

64. **ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

Members received the Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Group held on 20th November 2008. It was

RESOLVED

that the Minutes be noted.

65 **PLAY AREA UPDATE**

The Committee considered the summary of the Play-Area Working Party ‘walkabout’ as recorded by the representative of Proludic and a proposal from the same company to renovate the existing toddler area in Lowndes Park.

There was a general consensus from the Committee that the Lowndes Park play area should be the first play area to be upgraded but there were also reservations on the proposal and its perceived lack of detail. Members of the Working Party expressed the view that, before approving it in principle, they would like to visit other similar sites (particularly those with the loose fill impact absorption surface as proposed) and get further clarification from the Proludic representative at the next Working Party meeting scheduled for the 26th January 2009.

The Committee then discussed how best to prioritise play-areas across the rest of Chesham. The Clerk reiterated that he hoped this would be driven to some degree by local community groups themselves who would be proactive and help raise match-funding. While it was accepted that the matter should be progressed, it was agreed that the priority list ought to be given due and lengthy consideration, particularly as renovation would take place over a number of years.

It was therefore

RESOLVED

1. that the Play-Area Working Party give due consideration to the Produlic Play proposal for the renovation of the toddler area in Lowndes Park and make recommendations thereof as to its desirability to the Council meeting of the 23rd February 2009.
2. that the consultation process designed to help set a priority list for the town’s play-areas be commenced as recommended.

Councillor Brown left the meeting at 8.20pm

66. **CHESHAM MOOR GYM AND SWIM CENTRE UPDATE**

The officers’ report on the current financial situation at the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim facility and other matters pertaining to the leasing of gym equipment and re-surfacing of outdoor sports facilities was put before Members.

Following a query from Councillor Spruytenburg on the re-surfacing of the outdoor sports area, the Town Clerk advised that the Centre Manager and he were not satisfied with the quality of the work and had requested that the contractors re-visit with a view to making good.

It was

RESOLVED

1. that the financial position and other matters pertaining to the Chesham Moor Gym and Swim Centre be noted.
2. that the Council agree to enter into a three year, gym equipment, leasing agreement with *Physique* under the terms suggested.

Note: Councillor Bamford left the Chamber during consideration of the next agenda item.

67. **ELGIVA PANTOMIME**

The Committee considered the report on the 2008/09 pantomime. The report highlighted the fact that, in spite of the current economic downturn, the income for 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs' was only 2% down on last year's shows which in turn had increased income by nearly 30% from the 2006/07 pantomime. In light of this success, the Elgiva Manager was proposing to negotiate with Newpalm productions with a view to the company providing the pantomime again for 2009/10.

It was

RESOLVED

1. that the review of the 2008/09 pantomime be noted.
2. that the Manager be authorised to enter into negotiations to agree a contract to commission Newpalm Productions to perform 'Peter Pan' to be agreed by the Town Clerk and Finance and Contracts Manager.

68. **RESUBMISSION OF LOWNDES PARK LOTTERY BID**

Members were asked to decide whether the Council should re-submit a bid to the 'Parks for People' Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to renovate Lowndes Park.

While it was noted that the actual re-submission would be relatively simple, the lack of principal authority partnership funding would make the bid no stronger than before and the HLF case officer had suggested that the next bidding round would be even more competitive.

The Clerk reminded the Committee that, even if Members decided not to re-apply, the whole exercise had been positive since the initial £44,000 obtained from the lottery had allowed the Council to commission consultants to produce a comprehensive Conservation and Management Development Plan for the park. This, in turn, would help with smaller bids to other funding streams for Lowndes Park projects as and when they became available.

In light of the fact, it appeared that the Council would be unable to significantly strengthen its bid, it was

RESOLVED

that the Council did not submit a revised bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Parks for People' funding for the regeneration of Lowndes Park but seek other funding avenues for the park as they become available.

69. **PROVISION OF SALT BINS**

The Clerk reported that four requests for salt bins had been made by residents during the recent icy spell and, as Buckinghamshire County Council no longer provided salt bins upon request, the Council had been asked to finance these purchases.

While sympathetic, Members were of the view that it was not the Council's role to finance such purchases when they were previously supplied by Buckinghamshire County Council.

Councillor Ms Bramwell stated that the High Street had been exceptionally slippery during this period and opined that salting of the High Street should be a service to be devolved to the Council by Buckinghamshire County Council through its 'Getting Closer to Communities' initiative. The Clerk reported that he was in the process of setting up a meeting to review current devolvement of services with County Council officers and would raise the matter then.

It was

RESOLVED

that no salt bins be purchased on behalf of residents.

70. **CHESHAM CEMETERY – PURCHASE OF AN ASHES PLOT**

The Committee considered the request made by a resident of Chartridge to purchase a plot in the cemetery for single fees. His had referred to the fact that he was born in Chesham and lived in the parish for 33 years before moving to Chartridge some years ago.

The Committee was reminded that fees and charges for Chesham Cemetery clearly state that the fees apply to those residing in Chesham and, in all other cases, the sum will be doubled. It was also noted that two recent purchases of ashes plots were made in Chesham Cemetery also by parishioners of Chartridge and they were duly charged double fees.

Members did not wish to rescind the policy in this case and it was

RESOLVED

that the Council does not waive the double fees for this purchase due to the precedent it would set for future cases of this nature.

Note: Councillor Mrs Fulford left the Chamber during consideration of the next agenda item and Councillor Ms Bramwell took over the Chair.

71. **PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES FOR OPEN AIR POOL.**

Following the Council meeting held on the 12th January 2009, the Committee had been requested to consider the charges for family daily and family season tickets at the open air swimming pool and administration thereof. Officers had also sought determination on the matter of selling reduced price 2009 season tickets from mid July; the matter of replacing lost cards and clarification on the criteria for concessionary tickets.

In respect of family tickets, the Committee was of the view that such a ticket should not be restricted to four persons and also that a similar option be devised to accommodate single parents. In regard to reduced cards, it was agreed to sell them at 60% of the cost of a full season ticket to encourage customers to buy a season-long one. It was also agreed that a fee be charged to replace lost season tickets and that concession criteria be based on that used by Nexus Leisure at the Chesham Leisure Centre.

It was

RESOLVED

1. That a daily swim family ticket be set at £11.00 and a family season ticket be set at £230.00. These family tickets to be utilised by up to two parents and to be unrestricted in the number of children within the family.
2. That a single parent daily family ticket and a single parent family season ticket be introduced to be utilised by one parent and to be unrestricted in the number of children within the family. These prices to be confirmed by officers based on a proportion of the approved family ticket.
3. That the selling of reduced price 2009 season tickets be agreed from the 20th July at the 40% discount prices shown within the report.
4. That a £2 charge be made for the replacement of lost tickets.
5. That concessionary tickets be continued to be made available but based on Nexus Leisure's criteria as outlined within the report.
6. That any practical or logistical problems or concerns in implementing the above be brought back to Council.

Councillor Mrs Fulford returned to the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

72. **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 two items in accordance with the Public Bodies (Access to Meetings) Act 1960, as matters which are considered to be confidential are about to be discussed.

73. **CODMORE FIELD CAR-PARK RESURFACING**

The Committee welcomed the proposal to re-surface Codmore Field car-park and it was

RESOLVED

that the proposal to resurface part of Codmore Field car-park be approved and officers be authorised to issue tenders, select a contractor and place an order if the estimates do not exceed the budgets reported to Members and are approved by Chiltern District Council engineers.

Councillor Mrs Littley left the meeting at 8.50pm

74. **CATERING AT THE ELGIVA**

It was reported that the current catering concessionaire at the Elgiva had informed officers that he wished to cease trading at the theatre and pass on the contract to another interested party. Members were advised that the contract gave the concessionaire the authority to 'assign' the contract to another caterer but the Committee expressed its wish to see that it would be on exactly the same terms and conditions as taken on by the existing caterer. Moreover the issue of certain initial financial agreements made between the Council and the concessionaire, and possible repayments thereof, were raised.

Accordingly it was

RESOLVED

that a sub-committee be set up consisting of the Chairman of the Recreation and Arts Committee, Chairman of the Board of Management, Elgiva Manager and Town Clerk to discuss the terms of assigning the current catering contract and to consider all future catering at the Elgiva.

75. **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting closed at 9.01pm.

CHAIRMAN