

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup> MAY 2004 AT 7.40pm, following the Finance & Administration meeting.**

**PRESENT**

Councillor P. Collins  
Mrs. P. Desorgher  
D. R. Isham  
H Mordue  
Ms. R. Newell  
Ms. H. Saul  
Mrs C. Strain-Clark  
R. Stuchbury (Mayor)

In attendance Cllr. Mrs. P. Stevens

For the Town Clerk Mrs K. McElligott

The Mayor took the Chair for the initial part of the meeting.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Cllr. K. Liverseidge and the Town Clerk, Ms. P. Heath.

**2004/1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda

**2004/2 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Proposed by Cllr. Desorgher, seconded by Cllr. Newell, and voted unanimously that Cllr. Mordue be Chairman of this Committee.

*Cllr. Mordue took the Chair.*

**2004/3 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Proposed by Cllr. Strain-Clark, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and voted unanimously that Cllr. Desorgher be Vice-Chairman of this Committee.

**2004/4 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Members accepted the minutes of the last Administration Committee meeting and the last meeting of the Environment Committee - both held on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2004 - which were ratified at the Council meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2004.

**2004/5 ACTION REPORTS AND UPDATES**

5.1 (Admin 520) Cemetery Noticeboard

The noticeboard and post had been delivered and awaited installation.

5.2 Chandos Park – Proposed Handrail

Alternative quotations for the provision of a timber or a metal handrail had been received. The matter was deferred until the Town Clerk's return.

### 5.3 (Env.991.1) Riverside Walk signage

The Clerk reported that BCC had offered to supply and install up to a dozen 100mm waymarking posts with the appropriate marker discs provided suitable locations could be mapped for them. The Partnership had asked Mr. Grimsdale to survey the Walk and note the places where the Walk was inadequately signed.

### 5.4 (Env. 999) Response from the Walking Group

The Parish Paths Partnership has asked the Town Council to notify them of any work required to local paths; Members had declared inadequate knowledge of the path system and suggested the Buckingham & District Walking Group be contacted.

A response had been received with the contact details of their Footpath Secretary and an offer of further help if required.

### 5.5 (Env.997 and 1003) Parking Problems

Concern had been expressed over illegal parking and lack of enforcement at School Lane and other places in the town.

The AVDC Parking Operations Manager had responded that these areas had been identified to her officers for monitoring.

## **2004/6 HORTICULTURAL CONTRACT**

### 6.1 Buckingham Town Council

The Chairman reported that the Horticultural Contract had been typed and that the supplementary Bills of Quantity were being done at present. The Cemetery had been included but its eventual inclusion depended on a decision later in the meeting.

### 6.2 AVDC

AVDC had written indicating that they proposed to commence their new Contracts from 24<sup>th</sup> January 2005, not November 2004 as previously, thus necessitating an interim arrangement. They wished to know if the Town Council wanted to follow suit or keep to the November date.

Members decided to continue with AVDC until January 24<sup>th</sup> 2005 and then start the Town Council's own contracts.

The current state of maintenance of the Cemetery was criticised; complaints had been received both at the Town and District Council Offices.

## **2004/7 PARKS AND CEMETERY**

### 7.1 Bourton Park

The fenced wildlife areas of the park ("paddocks") have only pathways mown for the use of dog-walkers until mid-July, and then after the wild flowers have

seeded, the whole area is mown in time for the summer holidays.

Countryside Services have recommended that the pond system be maintained on a five-year rotation; one-fifth of the system should be de-silted and cleared of excess reed/weed growth each year; this area should not be adjacent to the previous year's area so as to facilitate the migration of wildlife. (See Environment Minute 920).

The paddock fencing requires some replacement of missing rails and to be weatherproofed; Members discussed the best method of doing this; the benches and sculptures also needed attention.

#### **ACTION THE MAYOR AND THE CHAIRMAN**

A log would be kept of maintenance work, with a system of regular cycles of maintenance.

#### **ACTION THE CLERK**

### 7.2 Chandos Park

Details of the Weekend in the Park, such as dates for access and clearance were not yet available.

A member of the public had complained about the Play Area gate squeaking: Denka would attend to this.

#### 7.2.1 Bowls Club

The Town Clerk had attended when the green was assessed for star-rating, but no report had been received as yet.

#### 7.2.2 Tennis Club

A suggestion had been made by the Club that improvements to the facilities be added to the Council's "wish list" for developer contributions on new developments. Members concurred, and pointed out that it was better for improvements to be made via the Town Council (as owners) than by the Club. It was also reported that the courts needed resurfacing, it being some years since they were last done, and that this should be co-ordinated with the installation of floodlights.

Cllr. Isham said that he was to attend a seminar on the subject of Developer Contributions on 27<sup>th</sup> May and the improvement of community facilities like the tennis club was a good idea. He also noted that the trigger for a contribution from a developer was 25 dwellings, plus the ability to demonstrate a need.

*Members agreed to take this agenda item next.*

### **2004/8 RECOMMENDATION FROM AVDC THAT THE TOWN COUNCIL BECOME THE BURIAL AUTHORITY**

Cllr. Liverseidge had sent his written views, which were circulated to the meeting. He advocated AVDC's retention of the Burial Authority role, and also that AVDC carry out the Grounds Maintenance so as not to have two separate contractors.

Members discussed the letter from AVDC which proposed that whoever managed the maintenance of the grounds should also include the grave-digging and associated work, and also be the Burial Authority. They proposed

1. That AVDC manage and administer the Cemetery on behalf of the Town Council including the burial process and all maintenance works with their own contractor, recharging to the Town Council all the maintenance work plus the staff costs for administering the burial process, or
2. That the Town Council do all this themselves with their own contractor.

Members discussed the proposals and decided that the Town Council had not the staff nor the facilities to carry out the Burial function.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Desorgher, and **AGREED** that the District Council remain the Burial Authority.

Members then discussed the maintenance of the Cemetery, noting that grave-digging was a separate issue. It was decided that the Cemetery should be included in the Council's horticultural contract; the tender price could then be compared with AVDC's recharge and a decision made. The postponement of the AVDC contract end date would allow this, as if the tenders went out in August, the decision could be made by November.

Proposed by Cllr. Collins, seconded by Cllr. Newell, and **AGREED** that this Council write to AVDC indicating that it was not willing to become the Burial Authority and that it was prepared to consider that the horticultural maintenance be carried out by AVDC and asking that they send costings for discussion.

*Members then returned to the earlier agenda item*

## **2004/7 PARKS AND CEMETERY**

### 7.3 Cemetery

David Rhodes Associates had been asked to prepare a Structural Survey and Tender Documents but these had not yet been received.

## **2004/9 PLAY AND LEISURE PLAN**

Cllr. Saul outlined the composition and work to date of the group involved for the benefit of Members who had not been on the Environment Committee.

A rolling program of maintenance and renewal had been proposed with input from the public on what they would like. Regular Safety Inspections were agreed.

Clarification of the ownership of the playground by the Otter Pool should be sought; it was reported that it was still owned by AVDC.

## **2004/10 TOWN AUDIT**

The Clerk reported that she had walked the town with Mr. Roberts of BCC to show him various items reported in the Audit; Mr. Roberts had reported back the same day with a schedule of works which could be done in the near future, and some which could be scheduled into next year's budget. The new paving would be carried through to the White Hart as originally planned, and various pavements would have new surfaces; kerbstones would be replaced and a drain put in to cure the puddle at the entrance to the Old Cattle Pens. BCC Traffic would be contacted about cleaning the signs, and Babbie about the lampposts in Well Street which needed painting.

Members noted that some of the new paving is uneven, and that the map sign listing the companies on the Industrial Park has gone.

### **ACTION THE CLERK**

Members were pleased to note that the Audit was proving successful and decided to continue with it in its present form, not extending it to include the estates.

## **2004/11 COMMITTEE REMIT AND STRUCTURE**

### 11.1 Community Centre matters

There had been debate over whether this was more properly Finance & Administration or Environment & Property business; it was agreed that matters to do with the Office were Administration, while matters to do with the building itself were Property. The Community Centre would therefore remain as the business of both Committees, as appropriate.

### 11.2 Parks and other Environmental Subjects (excluding events)

The Chairman asked the Vice-Chairman to take this aspect of the Committee's work as her particular remit; Cllr. Desorgher agreed. If possible the Agenda should be drawn up to group the environmental items separately from the property items.

## **2004/12 CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS**

### 12.1 Speed Limit Review

Cllr. Isham reported on his reply to the Countywide speed limit review sent to him as a District Councillor. He had advocated 40mph for the length of road past the houses of Gawcott Fields and 50mph for the remainder of the road into Gawcott; he agreed with 50mph on the Tingewick Road.

### 12.2 Community Centre

The Chairman notified Members of a meeting with AVDC on 26<sup>th</sup> May on the matter of developing the Community Centre; he hoped to be able to report on this at the next meeting.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm.

CHAIRMAN .....H. Mordue..... DATE 21st June 2004