

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environment Committee** of Buckingham Town Council held on **Monday 18th July 2016** in the Council Chamber, Cornwall's Meadow, Buckingham at 7.00pm.

Present:

Cllr. Ms. J. Bates	
Cllr. Mrs. M. Gateley	
Cllr. P. Hirons	
Cllr. A. Mahi	Mayor
Cllr. Ms. R. Newell	Chair
Cllr. M. Smith	
Cllr. Mrs. C. Strain-Clark	
Cllr. R. Stuchbury	

In attendance: Mr. L. Phillips Green Spaces Manager
Mrs. K. McElligott

231/16 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED to receive and accept apologies from Cllrs. T. Bloomfield, P. Collins, J. Harvey, D. Isham (Vice Chair) and Mrs. L. O'Donoghue.

232/16 Declarations of Interest

None at this point.

233/16 Minutes

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on Tuesday 31st May 2016, ratified at Full Council on the 27th June 2016.

234/16 Action Reports

Noted.

95/16; parking at church. The matter of the yew hedge was reported to be on the agenda for discussion at the imminent PCC meeting.

235/16 Budgets

Noted.

236/16 Lace Hill Community Centre

236.1 Three quotes each for goal posts, boot brushes and benches had been circulated.

Members agreed to quote B (goalposts), quote C (boot brushes) and quote A (benches).

In light of experience at other sports clubs, Members recommended notices about not tramping mud into the building, and showing courtesy to residents when parking.

236.2 The Deputy Town Clerk explained the siting of the signage. Members discussed the options circulated and agreed

- Arial font option 2 (all text in bold)
- Lace Hill to be separate words, in red
- 'Sports and Community Centre' to be below this and in black

- Town Council logo to be at the right hand end, and the text to be right-justified

It was also suggested that the phone number and email address be added to the principal sign, but this was felt to detract from the simplicity of the design, and these details would be available on the smaller signs and noticeboards anyway.

ACTION DTC

Mr. Jones left the meeting.

237/16 Tree Maintenance Software

Members agreed the recommendation to purchase system C. The Green Spaces Manager said that the mapping was good enough to identify individual trees, so metal tags would not be necessary. Once the base data (variety/size/condition) was established, the system would generate a list of trees due for attention or re-inspection, cutting out the need for an annual survey of all trees. The system was capable of expansion.

Cllr. Stuchbury suggested that the system be offered to other owners of trees in the town for a fee.

ACTION GSM

238/16 Community Flood Kits

The EA/BCC have identified Buckingham as a suitable community to receive a subsidised Flood Kit up to a value of £1500. The Town Council would be responsible for future renewal and replacement of items in the kit.

Members agreed to accept the offer, and the Chair and GSM would collaborate with the Flood Action Group over the exact contents and where it would be kept for immediate availability.

It was suggested that the funding have a separate budget heading so that renewal costs could be allocated.

ACTION CHAIR/GSM/FAG

239/16 Bourton and Chandos Parks

The Green Spaces Manager reported verbally as follows:

239.1 Chandos Park

The damaged weir had been removed entirely, and the bank improvements completed on time. Some further work, renewing grass areas and planting 3 patches of reeds, remained to be done.

Cllr. Hiron expressed concern at the undercutting of banks exposed by the lower water level; the GSM said that the EA were working with the university on this, and had proposed coppiced hazel as a remedy. He also confirmed that the University would be paying half the cost of the weir removal.

239.2 Bourton Park

A long section of the large paddock fence along the river needed to be replaced. This was planned for September, and the old rails and posts could be added to the Bonfire. The Community Service clients would do the work.

239.3 Burleys

The quality of work was not to standard and 3 rectification and 1 default notice had been served in the 3 months since they took over. If there was no improvement in this week's cut, consideration would be given to ending the contract, though this would require 3 months' notice. He was hoping to arrange a meeting with a director of the company. Litter was not being picked

up, even before mowing, areas were being missed altogether, cut grass was not being blown off paths, the wrong equipment was being used, operatives were not wearing hi-vis clothing when doing the bypass verges, and this unsatisfactory level of work could lead to the Devolved Services contract being withdrawn. Members asked why this firm had been chosen; the GSM said all tenders had been investigated in depth, and this company had been cheapest and came with good references.

239.4 Enterprise Team

It was unfortunate that the Team had lost 3 men early in the season, leading to BTC staff having to cover; this had delayed our regular tasks of weed-spraying, pressure washing the playgrounds, etc., though these were largely up-to-date now. The GSM had spoken to Mr. Letts about recruitment. A log was kept of hours when BTC had provided cover, and Enterprise were not paid for these.

240/16 Cemetery

The GSM reported that the footpath renewal was now complete, although a small area behind one of the chapels was not draining properly; this would be remedied.

One of the tarmac lorries had driven into a gate pillar rotating and displacing it on its base. The surveyor used for the chapels had looked at it and it would need rebuilding as the capstone, weighing approx. 1 tonne, would need to be carefully removed and the column dismantled and re-built. Members hoped that the bricks could be re-used so that the two pillars still matched. Witnesses to the collision had made statements and these had been supplied to the insurance company. Cllr. Strain-Clark reported that the Access Group were pleased with the new paths, but not the grass-cutting. The GSM said that he had found the last mowing particularly bad, with no litter-pick and trimmer cords left lying about.

The quad-bike had been stolen from the chapel by using bolt-cutters on the padlock. Tracks showed it had been taken through the hedge into the adjacent field and round to Stowe Avenue and eventually abandoned in the town. The police found some clear bootprints and were hopeful of getting some usable fingerprints. CCTV was also available from a private source. The lock barrel had been found, and it might be possible to replace it and mend the hot-wiring damage. None of the tools in the bike's box had been taken, or any of the other equipment in the chapel. The bike appeared to be largely undamaged, and would be kept in the (more secure) new unit on the Industrial Estate. As the police had not informed the GSM that they no longer needed the bike, BTC had had to pay £170 to the pound for three days parking and retrieval.

241/16 (95/15) Church

To receive a verbal update on the installation of a yew hedge
See 234/16, above.

242/16 Embleton Way Pavilion

The Scouts had asked for support in obtaining s106 funding.
Agreed.

243/16 Beds. and MK Healthcare Review

Cllr. Stuchbury felt that a letter should be sent, copied to appropriate entities, to agree a date for the public meeting. Buckingham users of the MK health services should have a chance to express their views. He would supply officer contact details.

ACTION CLLR. STUCHBURY

He noted that Cllr. B. Roberts was now Chairman of the relevant BCC Committee, and that he should be kept informed, as the Review would have to be considered by the Scrutiny Committee eventually.

The Mayor declared an interest during the following discussion as a member of the PPG.

244/16 Access Awareness

Cllr. Strain-Clark reported concerns from the Access Group about access to GP services. It appears that on-line booking of appointments takes precedence and older people, in particular, are kept waiting as long as 20 minutes for the phone to be answered, only to be told that there are no slots left. It was feared that the situation would not improve now that all three surgeries were under the same management.

Though it was felt that complaints should be made direct to the relevant surgery, it was agreed that a letter be written to Dr. Jonathan Pryse about plans to resolve this situation.

ACTION GREENSPACES MANAGER

245/16 BCWP

Cllr. Newell reported verbally on the meeting held earlier in the day:

- Mrs. Manning had used the free testing service Freshwater on samples from the pond at Railway Walk and two other sites. The reddish coloration in the pond had turned out to be an inoffensive sulphur bacteria bloom, from which the pond will recover. The other two contained phosphates and nitrates.
- Work is planned on the willows across the stream.
- Decayed owl boxes are being replaced with new ones.
- The disease-resistant elm has grown from 30cm at planting to 2.5m.
- The group is currently short of volunteers.
- Though the pond had been cleared of litter earlier in the year, it had built up again.
- There was a suggestion that the University intended to build residences at Station Road car park. It was hoped that the station platform could be restored (perhaps with a contribution from the developer of The Siding) and used to keep the link between the Railway and Scenic Walks. Cllr. Stuchbury pointed out that efforts were being made to connect the Tingewick Triangle site with the Scenic Walk to provide a safe link to the schools, and it would be a shame if the way was to be blocked by the new building. Members also pointed out the established use of the route across the car park from Station Road via the station to Station Terrace. The Rights of Way team would be contacted, and any work done would pre-empt any planning application proposals. The Planning Committee had already suggested

that the university be contacted with a view to their presenting their future building plans to the Council.

- Otters had been seen in Chandos Park, and fishermen at Hyde Lake had complained of otters taking fish.
- The head of the Green Man sculpture in Maids Moreton Avenue had rotted and the Buckingham Society wanted it replaced. The Chair noted that it was not in our section of the Avenue so was a matter for AVDC or BCC. Perhaps if a tree was due for felling a stump of suitable height could be left and sculpted.
- Mr. Orton had taken Mr. Farmer’s seat on the Group and said that he had reported the pine at the Church Street entrance to Hunter Street churchyard to AVDC.
- The Canal Society reported that the wet weather had led to everything getting overgrown; a group from Santander had cleared the path from the bypass, there had been two sets of ducks and ducklings and the new planting was doing well. There had also been working parties of young offenders from Oakhill, and helpers from the MacIntyre Centre.
- Hyde Lane Lake had proposed an oak beam footway.
- Paul Holton would be providing a written report, which would be circulated with the meeting minutes.
- The Buckingham Society was pursuing the extension of the Circular Walk through Clarence Park.
- Concerns about felling of trees around town; an appeal would be made for more Tree Wardens at the Buckingham Society Garden Party.
- Cllr. Stuchbury advised that he had submitted written questions to the AVDC Council meeting on Wednesday, one formulated by Mr. Finnis on the Clarence Park riverbank, and one on the implementation of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

246/16 News Releases

243/16 - Health Review; to express concern at the delay in settling a public meeting date. **ACTION GSM**

247/16 Chair’s Announcements

None.

248/16 Date of Next Meeting: Monday 5th September 2016.

Meeting closed at: 8.15pm.

Chairman..... Date.....