

Minutes of a meeting of the Environment and Property Committee of Buckingham Town Council held on Tuesday 26th May 2009 in Room MB1 in the Masons Building, University of Buckingham, Hunter Street, Buckingham.

Present: Cllr. M Smith – in the Chair

Cllr. Mrs G Collins
Cllr. P Collins
Cllr. P Hirons
Cllr. D Isham
Cllr. G Loftus
Cllr. A Mahi
Cllr. H. Mordue
Cllr. Mrs P Stevens
Cllr. R Stuchbury
Cllr. M Try
Cllr. W Whyte

In attendance: Anne Wilson Town Clerk

57/09 Election of Chairman

RESOLVED to elect Cllr. M Smith as Chairman of the Environment and Property Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

58/09 Election of Vice- Chairman

RESOLVED to elect Cllr. D Isham as Vice-Chairman of the Environment and Property Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

59/09 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED to note that apologies were received from Cllr. Ms R Newell, Cllr. T Bloomfield, Cllr. Mrs P Desorgher, Cllr. R. Lehmann and Cllr. H Cadd.

Cllr. Mordue left the meeting at this point to attend a review meeting of the Freedom Parade.

60/09 Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED that the following declarations be received:

Cllr. W Whyte – agenda item 20 – War Memorial as he had done some consultancy for the RBL and agenda item 21 The Old Gaol as he is a Trustee

Cllr. M Smith – agenda item 21 The Old Gaol as he is a Trustee

61/09 Minutes

RESOLVED to confirm the minutes of the Environment and Property Committee meeting held on Monday 6th April 2009 and approved at Full Council on the 11th May 2009.

62/09 Action Report

RESOLVED that members noted the Action Report and in particular as follows:

- 661 – Chandos Park Path – new specification - The Town Clerk and Cllr. Smith would bring this up at their meeting with Julie Brandon on the morning after this meeting
- 565.3, 551 and 661 - as above although members agreed that the fence had to be in a good condition with the finances in place to maintain it from AVDC before the town Council would consider taking over the fence
- 663 – Penstock Members noted that the river levels had dropped. Cllr. Stuchbury, Cllr. Hirons and the maintenance staff would meet one weekend to look at it and report back to the next meeting of this committee
- 601.1 & 2 – The Town Clerk reported that the paperwork was now all in place to have inmates from Springhill Prison carrying out work in the cemetery. Due to the restructure of the cemetery grounds maintenance contract they would start by painting the fences. Funds for the works would come out of the cemetery budget. Walky-talkies were required and they would be funded jointly out of the cemetery and events budgets as they could also be used at events
- 569 – Parks Policy Group – a meeting had been arranged at 5.30 p.m. on Thursday 4th June where all the items listed on the Action Report would be discussed
- 627 – Ken Tagg – The Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk had arranged a meeting on the 2nd June with Gates the contractors on site to discuss the works
- 634 – Ford Street – A letter of permission was being awaited from the Environment Agency with regard to the self-seeding willow and a list of suggested suitable planting for that area
- 669 – Railway Walk – The Town Clerk reported that the notice board would be moved when the better weather arrived
- 672 – Roundabouts – The Town Clerk would follow this up
- 675 – Community Payback Scheme – The Town Clerk would follow this up. She informed members that this could be a town wide initiative and did not need constant supervision by the Town Council as the Probation Service sent supervisors with the groups that came out. She had had the training to work on a one to one basis within the scheme. It was usual for those doing community payback to carry out work that was not their usual trade.

- 676 – The Town Audit – Cllr. Smith announced that Katharine would now be co-ordinating the Town Audit

63/09 Resignation of Susan Lee

Members accepted the resignation of Susan Lee as a co-opted member of the Committee and **RESOLVED** to co-opt Jane Craven, her replacement at the BTCV to the Committee in her place.

The Town Clerk confirmed that she had written a letter of thanks to Susan Lee as a token of appreciation from the Town Council for all her work in Buckingham.

64/09 Town Audit

Cllr. Mrs Stevens was no longer able to carry out her part of the Town Audit and members were asked to consider, before the next meeting, who could take over her area. Cllr. Whyte suggested that the areas were re-visited as he felt that there was some duplication

Members noted that Richard Harrington, Managing Director of Aylesbury Vale Advantage would be addressing Full Council on the 29th June and this was the opportunity to find out whether the £1m available could be spent on the matters such as improving the conservation area.

Cllr. Smith reported that at the Buckingham Partnership meeting it was agreed that several points would be presented to both BCC and AVDC a couple of weeks before each Partnership meeting to enable them to report back fully at the meeting however he stated that this did not let the two Councils off their legal obligations on the day to day works that they are responsible for.

PARKS AND PARKS POLICY

65/09 Parks Policy

RESOLVED that members noted that the Parks Policy group would be meeting on the 4th June at 5.30 p.m.

Chandos Park

- ***Play Area***

Members noted the paperwork with regard to the tenders received for the redevelopment of the play area in Chandos Park.

Members **RESOLVED** that community consultation on the proposals was essential and Town Clerk suggested that a couple of dates - one a weekday and the second a Saturday be made available for consultation. The groups that are specifically to be invited included the schools, nursery schools, the immediate neighbouring residents, access groups and youth groups although it was hoped that the Buckingham advertiser may be able to put an article to assist the consultation process.

- ***Bowls Club***

Members noted that the electricity supplier is paying for new electric meters to be installed in the bowls club which are being changed as a precaution. Members also noted the exchange of e mails with regard to the outstanding electricity consumption issue.

The drainage works had been carried out as planned. Cllr. Smith reported to members that the work had cost approximately £250 and the Town Council were awaiting receipts from the club before they are re-imbursed. Although the area looked muddy at the moment he hoped that the grass seed that was put on the area would grow as grass shortly.

Bourton Park

- ***Bourton Park Junior Play Area***

Members noted the response received from Monster Play Systems. Cllr. Smith reported that although the Council may have been carrying out a cost saving exercise at the time in only having a skim surface put over the site on the existing surface the Council would now have to look at it being totally replaced. In hindsight this was a false economy and he was also concerned that there appeared to only have been a verbal acceptance of the work at the time.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk obtain three quotes the relaying of the base under the safety surfacing and to replace the safety surfacing.

- ***Dog Litter Signs***

Cllr. Hirons stated that as a dog owner he would rather see additional dog bins rather than signs. Cllr. Whyte felt that there was only anecdotal evidence that additional bins were needed and that it would be beneficial to the town if more residents were fined for dog littering. Some of the requests received for signs and bins were on AVDC land and not the Town Councils.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk would:

- Write a press release with regard to the matter of dog littering in the town
- Obtain a map from AVDC showing the location and ownership of all the dog bins in the town
- Ask for dog bins and dog littering to be an item on the next Buckingham Partnership agenda

Members also noted that dog bins, litter bins and street furniture was to be looked as part of the Parks Policy plans.

66/09 Allotments

- ***Bourton Road Allotment Holders Society***

Members noted that the Town Clerk had written twice to the Allotment Holders Society but as yet had received no response. These letters were asking for the contact details of the land owner to look into the possibility of the Town Council purchasing the land from the owners to guarantee the long term provision of allotments in the town.

67/09 Cemetery

- ***Cemetery Rules and Regulations***

Members thanked the Deputy Town Clerk for his work on the rules and regulations and noted all the amendments in red.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk would make all the amendments discussed at the meeting and would place the item on Full Council for confirmation. The document would be made into three documents – rules and regulations, fees and organisations to help the bereaved.

- ***Update on the Cemetery***

Members noted the report and the proposals with regard to the changing in fees for the cemetery.

Cllr. Whyte stated that he did not think that the residents of Buckingham should be subsidising non-residents. He therefore proposed a 5% increase the board but accept the recommendation for non-residents as in the paper suggested.

Proposed by Cllr. P Collins, seconded by Cllr. Mahi that everyone be charged the same as per the non-residents rate in the proposals attached to the agenda.

Cllr. Stuchbury proposed one amendment – that that only the on- residents fees are amended in this fiscal year. There was no seconder to this amendment.

3 in favour and 5 against so the motion falls.

RESOLVED that there be:

- a 5% increase on the current charges for residents for interments and that the charges are reviewed in detail at precept
- that the non-residents fees be increased as recommended
- that memorials, additional inscriptions, search fees, deeds and use of chapel as per the report be accepted

8 in favour and 1 against so the motion is carried.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk put together a paper outlining the criteria for residents and non-residents for discussion at the next meeting of the Environment and Property Committee.

RESOLVED that the pre-purchase of ashes plots be suspended until new plots are made available in the cemetery and that the Deputy Town Clerk has suggested some new sites as infill in the existing part of the cemetery.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk look at the re-using of the plots in the cemetery in lien with possible government guidelines. It was acknowledged that this is a controversial subject. She explained that a full report on the cemetery following advice being obtained from consultants would be presented to the next meeting of this Committee.

- ***Institute of Cemetery and Cremation Management (ICCM) Conference***

Members noted the report from the Deputy Town Clerk on the ICCM Conference.

68/09 Trees

- ***Tree Survey***

Members noted that the Town Clerk had invited tenders for tree surveys to be carried out in the parks, Railway Walk and the cemetery.

69/09 Access to Property over Town Council Land

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk would liaise with the Chairman of this Committee with regard to a policy on Access to Property over Town Council Land. This could then be circulated to all properties where their boundary is next to Town Council land informing residents of the rules given that several properties access their property over Town Council land on a regular basis.

Cllr. Whyte stated that the originator of the concern of the Town Council was adjacent to Nelson Street and he was not sure if this land actually belonged to the Town Council.

70/09 Salt Bins

Members noted the information from Buckinghamshire County Council on the purchase of new salt bins and the re-filling of them.

RESOLVED that the salt bin at Mount Pleasant in Embleton Way be replaced.

71/09 S106 Monies

Members noted that Cllr. Smith and the Town Clerk were meeting with Julie Brandon the day after the meeting and S106 monies was an item on the agenda.

72/09 Delegated Budgets

RESOLVED that members were disappointed that none of the Buckingham Town Council bids were successful and that the Town Council would look at more robust schemes for next years bids.

73/09 Lease of Town Council Vehicle

RESOLVED that subject to the following being confirmed that approval be given at the Interim Council meeting due to be held on the 8th June to lease a vehicle from OVL Group of Watlington.

- A tow hitch can be fitted to the back of the vehicle
- That metallic plates will be fitted to each door – removable at night
- The VAT implications of a member of staff taking a vehicle home each evening
- Depending on the item above where the vehicle would be stored each evening and over night
- Is there an additional cost for all staff and Councillors (with clean licences) to be insured to drive the vehicle

FURTHER RESOLVED that the quad have the work necessary to be carried out on it and that it is kept serviced and usable by the Council

74/09 War Memorial

Colin Armstrong, Chairman of the Royal British Legion addressed the meeting before it began with regard to the possible refurbishment of the War Memorial. Cllr. Whyte had submitted a paper for members to consider outlining some of the background information for the proposed refurbishment.

RESOLVED that

- Buckingham Town Council will take the lead role in obtaining permissions from the County and District Councils
- The Town Council will assist the Royal British legion in supporting any funding application applications RBL make to third parties
- The Town Council will consider how it might support the project with financial assistance as the 2009 precept did not include for any works to the memorial

FURTHER RESOLVED that as the war memorial was paid for by subscription in 1924 it belongs to the borough in perpetuity and therefore the item should be placed on the agenda for the next Buckingham Partnership meeting for discussion.

The Town Clerk would write to Mr Armstrong and explain the situation.

75/09 Buckingham Old Gaol Signage

Cllr. Smith and Cllr. Whyte had met with David Cairney of Buckinghamshire CC to look carry out an audit of signage and its condition in terms of aesthetics and whether it needed refurbishment. David Cairney had not yet come back with the ideas he had promised in time for this meeting and therefore it was **RESOLVED** that the Town clerk would follow this up.

It was noted that the directional signage needed to be updated too but this would not necessarily be in the near future.

76/09 Litter Bins

It was noted that the request that had come in was for a bin not on Town Council land.

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk write to Mr Smith, who had asked for an additional bin in the town centre.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town Clerk write to AVDC asking for an updated list of the location of their bins and also the refurbishment programme and standards that they had in place for bins.

Members noted that the provision of bins in the parks fell into the remit of the Parks Policy Group and this would be addressed through their meetings.

77/09 BTCV Report

RESOLVED that Jane Craven be invited to the meeting of the parks Policy group due to be held on 4th June to explain to members the proposals as outlined in the report.

80/09 Play Around The Parishes - Summer 2009

Members noted that this scheme in Buckingham will be taking place at Grenville School this year.

81/09 Environment and Property Committee Budgets

RESOLVED that members noted that updated copies of the Environment and Property budgets will be circulated for the next meeting.

82/09 Chairman's Announcements

There were no Chairman's Announcements

83/09 Date of Next Meeting: Monday 13th July 2009

Members noted that both Cllr. Smith and Cllr. Isham will not be present at is meeting and a Chairman will need to elected from the floor.

84/09 COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION

Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED that In accordance with Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters. It is therefore **RESOLVED**, pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, that the public and press be excluded.

COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION

Environment and Property Committee

Tuesday 26th May 2009

85/09 Quotes for Chandos Park Play Area

Members had looked at the proposals for the play area in Chandos Park. These were seen as a starting point for ideas.