

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environment and Property Committee** of Buckingham Town Council held on **Monday 28th May 2012** in the Council Chamber, Cornwall's Meadow, Buckingham at 7:08pm following the Public Session.

Present: Cllr. T. Bloomfield
 Cllr. P. Collins
 Cllr. J. Harvey
 Cllr. D. Isham
 Cllr. R. Lehmann
 Cllr. A. Mahi
 Cllr. Ms. R. Newell Town Mayor
 Cllr. Mrs. L. O'Donoghue
 Cllr. M. Smith
 Cllr. R. Stuchbury

In attendance: Mr. C. P. Wayman Town Clerk
 Mr. L. Phillips Green Spaces Manager
 Mrs. K. McElligott

The Mayor took the chair for the start of the meeting.

71/12 Election of Chairman for 2012 – 2013

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Bloomfield, and **AGREED** unanimously that Cllr. M. Smith be Chairman for the forthcoming year.

Cllr. Smith took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

72/12 Election of Vice Chairman for 2012 – 2013

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Bloomfield, and **AGREED** unanimously that Cllr. D. Isham be Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year.

73/12 Burial Repayment

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report on a recent funeral where – unusually – water had gathered in the dug grave. There had also been a slight delay in cemetery access. Measures had since been put in place to deal with similar situations, but he felt it was appropriate to reimburse the grave preparation fee of £600. Members **AGREED**.

Mr. Wayman left the meeting.

74/12 Apologies for Absence

RESOLVED to receive and accept apologies for absence from Cllrs. H. Cadd, P. Hirons and W. Whyte, and for late arrival from Cllrs. Try and Collins.

75/12 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

76/12 Minutes

RESOLVED to receive the minutes of the Environment and Property Committee meeting held on Monday 19th March 2012 and approved at Full Council on the 8th May 2012.

77/12 Action Reports**338/11 Chandos Park path.**

Mr. Phillips reported that the path flooded after the recent heavy rain, and there was no point renewing the path until the flood problems was sorted out. Anglian Water had sent an inspector with a view to clearing their length of the pipe and rebuilding the river end outflow. Water had also been seen coming out of the gullies the other side of the gate and VAHT were being approached to clear their part of the drainage system.

839/09 Bourton Park

A start had been made on the management plan; the completed plan should be ready for the next meeting.

JULY AGENDA**983/09 Grave Digger**

Mr. Phillips would look into the cost of an appropriate course.

JULY AGENDA**695/09 Devolved Services**

This matter should be pushed forward if suitable terms could be agreed.

ACTION GSM

64/10 Cllr. Newell reported that plans, probably based on Cllr. Whyte's, needed to be drawn up and could be brought to the next meeting.

Cllr. Stuchbury noted that it was 6 months since the decision had been made, and the matter could therefore be raised again; he believed that it would cost less to move the memorial to the side of the Church where it would be less prone to repeated damage from vehicles, than to renovate the existing and pay repeated maintenance costs.

The Church would be approached for their response to the proposal.

ACTION GSM/CLLR. SMITH

66/10 Land Registry: TfB would be chased for a response.

211/11 Circular Walk.

Mr. Phillips said that underpinning was expensive: there were cheaper remedies available. BCC (and therefore their contractors) only warranted work for 12 months.

738/11 Moreton Road estate dog bins.

Mr. Phillips had spoken to the developers and AVDC, and dog bins would have to be provided by the Town Council.

741/11 Chandos Park lime trees.

There was no urgency about this, as long as the work was agreed before next winter.

ACTION SEPTEMBER AGENDA**78/12 Parks Policy Group**

To receive the minutes of the Parks Policy Group meeting held on the 20th March 2012 and agree any recommendations.

Members to agree to minute **880** That the Parks Policy group be wound up as the Parks Policy document has been fully reviewed and in future could be reviewed via the E&P agenda.

Members **AGREED** the recommendation and Parks Policy would be reviewed at alternate E&P meetings.

Minute **879** – Otter sculptures – recommendation to replace.

Members discussed whether this was an appropriate use for s106 funding and if the public should be invited to make suggestions when the costs were unknown. It could cost £thousands to replace the sculptures.

Cllr. Stuchbury proposed an amendment to the recommendation, to investigate costs of a new feature, and also to look at whether a competent woodworker could repair the damage.

Cllr. Collins joined the meeting.

It was suggested that an artist might have a suitable work which they would donate. It was agreed that contacts would be made with the art world to gain an estimate of costs.

ACTION GSM

Cllr. Try joined the meeting.

79/12 Buckingham Cemetery – New extension Footpaths

Mr. Phillips reported that the grass seed planted on the new extension was growing well; the old hedge had been rooted out and a new one planted. He proposed that BTC staff put in the base and edges for the paths as soon as possible and the contractors lay the surface.

Members asked if the new surface would be suitable for wheelchair access; Mr. Phillips confirmed that the Dept. for Transport Type 1 was a good standard for paths. It was recommended that the costs would be drawn from contingencies as the figures had not been available before the Precept was agreed. Members disagreed, feeling that the costs should be taken from revenue and the contingencies money left for unexpected matters of real need.

Members agreed to refer the recommendation to Full Council, and that an extract of the budget showing money available to cover the costs should be provided.

Recommendation: That Members agree to proceed with the works to extend the cemetery and the funds (£5,398.30) be taken from the Contingencies budget (125/4500).

80/12 (868/11) East Chapel, Buckingham Cemetery

Members discussed the letter from Cunningham Lindsey, and **AGREED** that costings be sought for the repair and brought to the Committee for decision. **ACTION GSM**

81/12 Garden of Remembrance, Buckingham Cemetery

The Inner Wheel Club of Buckingham had asked permission to plant an English Oak in the new Garden of Rest with a plaque to commemorate the Jubilee.

Members discussed whether an English Oak was the most suitable species, pointing out that a Holm Oak was evergreen, which was appropriate to a Garden of Remembrance, and drought-tolerant. Furthermore, the siting of the tree would determine the order of plot use. They would like further information on the effect of trees on the use of the burial ground, and on other types of oak and to review the proposed wording of the plaque. **ACTION GSM**

82/12 Bridge Street (Skate Park) play area

The AVDC Community Spaces Officer had asked for the Council's views on improving Bridge Street Play Area, and suggested that it might be moved to the Heartlands opposite Cornwall Meadow.

Members did not support the moving of the play area, pointing out that the land was covenanted for leisure purposes only and would revert to the owners if any other use was made of it. An additional play area in the Heartlands was supported. If the problem was the proximity of the skate park to the play area, other solutions could be found. **ACTION GSM**

83/12 (872.2) Fuel Poverty

Cllr. Harvey presented his report on the 12th March event, which included five recommendations for Town Council action.

The Chairman reported that Rutland and Norfolk had introduced schemes such as those described. Cllr. O'Donoghue said that her Housing Association had refused to consider these beneficial works.

Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Newell, that the Council accept all five recommendations while recognising that rolling all five out would take time and money which had not been budgeted for.

Recommendations:

1. That this Council does something to help the 250 households (or so) in Buckingham who are experiencing fuel poverty.
2. That this Council invites the local CAB to write a short article on how to tackle fuel poverty and about the support they offer. And then we publish this in our September edition of our newsletter to the town.
3. That the Town Clerk be asked to explore, given the parameters of the new Localism Act, whether we might be able to offer grants (directly or indirectly via a local grant making body) to local householders in fuel poverty to help them better insulate their homes and reduce their costs and report back in time to adjust the precept for next year.
4. That the Town Clerk be asked to write to several utility providers ('Big Six' plus the Cooperative Energy, plus several others) to ask them if they will sign up to the 'Buckingham Town Promise on Energy Supply'.
If they agree to this – the Council will then broadcast this information for local residents to see and therefore elect to switch supplies to them. The Buckingham Town Promise would be a commitment by the energy provider to limited range of postcodes that they will always provide gas or electricity at the lowest possible tariff to reduce costs to the customer.
5. That the Town Clerk be asked to write to Brackley Community and Bicester Leisure Centres (<http://www.buckinghamtoday.co.uk/news/solar-panels-on-the-way-for-bicester-leisure-centre-1-3566182>) for a copy of the proposals whereby they recently installed solar panels onto their roof so that the funding, benefits and other arrangements behind this initiative can be understood, and that this matter be reviewed at the earliest opportunity to consider a strategy on solar panels for the Community Centre; also that this totemic change be used as a vehicle to help local residents see the value of renewable energy sources as a way to tackle fuel poverty.

84/12 **CCTV Camera Provision**

Mr. Phillips had provided quotations and a recommendation for a 3G compatible system with re-deployable camera, software and training. The budget of £1000 would cover up to 3 moves per year, but siting would depend on availability of a suitable power supply. Permission would have to be sought where the Council had no convenient source. Members recommended purchase of a dummy camera for when the real one was moved.

Proposed by Cllr. Harvey, seconded by Cllr. Isham, and **AGREED** the officer recommendation with the amendment that it include "we also commit to evaluating the impact of the CCTV deployment (in partnership with residents and the police)".

85/12 **Council vehicle**

Mr. Phillips explained why the current leased vehicle could not be purchased. The lease expired at the end of June.

Members felt that the company would have other vehicles available for purchase, and that second-hand vehicles often had excellent manufacturer warranties and this should be investigated rather than purchase new.

Members **AGREED** the officer recommendation.

ACTION TOWN CLERK/GSM

86/12 **Bourton Park Play Area Designs**

Four designs for the new play area in Bourton Park were displayed at the meeting. The equipment was similar and responded to the consulted school pupils' desires;

graffiti removal from wooden equipment would mean sanding down, from metal or synthetic materials would be easier. The entrances had been moved to prevent dog walkers cutting through the play space and the woodland would be opened up somewhat for adventure play.

Members preferred the designs from Russell and Proludic, with the reservation that the tree house should have an open side for the best welfare of the children using the space. These two designs would be submitted to the school pupils and Youth Council for their comments. **ACTION GSM**

87/12 Buckingham Community Wildlife Project

To receive notes of the meeting held on 30th January 2012 and a verbal update from the Mayor.

Cllr. Newell reported that the Town Clerk and Green Spaces Manager had been in contact with AVDC re moving the fence in Maids Moreton Avenue. BCC (Mr. Grindall) would be kept advised of progress.

There was a problem with leakage from the pond at Railway Walk; Mr. Phillips said that the problem had been identified and remedial work could be carried out when the water level dropped a little.

ACTION GSM

88/12 Green Buckingham Group

To receive notes of the meetings held on 17th January 2012, 3rd April 2012 and 24th April 2012 (and 25th May circulated separately) and a verbal update from the Mayor.

Cllr. Newell reported that the University had offered land to the Transition Towns group for use as a herb garden. Transition Towns was being invited to join the Green Buckingham Group. Cllr. Stuchbury noted that land at North End was similarly being developed as a vegetable garden, and that two projects starting up so quickly was a good omen for the project.

The Mayor also reported that some 70 people had attended the recent Newt and Bat evening; a wildflower event was being planned for later in the year.

89/12 BTCV

To receive information about the change of name.
Noted.

90/12 News releases

None agreed.

91/12 Chair's Announcements

The Chairman suggested that the next meeting be held in Bourton Park, weather permitting, adjourning to the Chamber if necessary.

AGREED

92/12 Date of Next Meeting.

Monday 16th July 2012.

Meeting closed at: 8.15pm.

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