

**Minutes of a meeting of the Environment Committee of Buckingham Town Council held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020 at 7pm online, via Zoom.**

**Present:** Cllr. Mrs. M. Gateley Vice-Chair  
 Cllr. J. Harvey  
 Cllr. A. Mahi  
 Cllr. Ms. R. Newell Chair  
 Cllr. Mrs. L. O'Donoghue  
 Cllr. A. Ralph  
 Cllr. M. Smith  
 Cllr. Mrs. C. Strain-Clark  
 Cllr. R. Stuchbury

**In attendance:** Mr. L. Phillips Green Spaces Manager  
 Mr P Hodson Town Clerk  
 Mr. S. Prebble Bux and Oxen 4x4 Response Group  
 Mr. S. Avery-Sutton Bux and Oxen 4x4 Response Group

**PUBLIC SESSION**

A member of the public attended the Public Session to discuss the potential of a vortex hydro-electrical generator along Buckingham's stretch of the River Great Ouse. It was noted that a prefeasibility study, commissioned by the University of Buckingham, was completed in 2009 for an Archimedes screw at Tanlaw Mill. It was understood that the cost of the scheme was a contributing factor to the University abandoning the project. Cllr. Newell thanked the member of the public for attending the public session and giving Members an opportunity to reconsider the potential of hydroelectric power generation. Cllr. Newell explained the subject would be discussed further in agenda item 7 (Motion – Proposed by Cllr. Newell Energy Generation from Vortex Generators).

A resident spoke in the public session on the Buckingham Society's proposals for a path alongside the Moreton Road Play area. The Buckingham Society were pursuing the installation of a 2m wide fenced path to link Moreton Road development phase 1 & development phase 2, to allow dog walkers, cyclists (who are not allowed to access into the play area) and other pedestrians to access to both housing estates without needing to cross the Moreton Road (A413) twice.

It was noted that the proposed path is a natural extension to the footpath from Whitehead Way and would provide an extension of the safe route from Western Avenue to Twickenham Road (which has a zebra crossing in place). The zebra crossing provides an essential link into Maids Moreton and the Primary school in Avenue Road. The Buckingham Society had been informed by Buckinghamshire Council's Park's department that in event that a path is implemented, the applicant would be responsible for future maintenance and liability. The Buckingham Society hoped that Councillors would advocate for the scheme when it is discussed at a future meeting of the Community Board.

Cllr. Stuchbury asked the resident to forward him an email to investigate with Buckinghamshire Council officers why the scheme had not been supported.

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 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY 2010/CRIME AND DISORDER ACT, 1988: the decisions made during the course of the meeting were duly considered and it was decided that there were no resulting direct or indirect implications in respect of crime and disorder, or equalities considerations, other than those stated in the minutes.

Initial .....

**E/04/20**

*Members of the public left the meeting.*

**886/20 Apologies for Absence**

Members received apologies from Buckinghamshire Councillor Whyte.

**887/20 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**888/20 Minutes**

Members received and **AGREED** the minutes of the Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and received at Full Council on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020.

**889/20 Action Report**

Members received the updated Action Report and the following item were discussed: Healthcare Public Meeting – Cllr. Stuchbury reminded Members that a motion, agreed in 2018, for the Town Council to host a public meeting had not been implemented. Cllr. Stuchbury said it was disappointing that no report had been produced following the Health Service’s public consultation event in Buckingham Community Centre, titled ‘your health close to home’.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury for Councillors to canvass questions and concerns from residents to be presented to representatives of the Health Trust, Community Health and Swan Practice at a virtual meeting.

Members discussed whether it was an appropriate time to organise a meeting when healthcare representatives maybe have limited resources given the imminent roll out of the vaccination programme. It was **AGREED** there was merit in investigating any developments in the plans for the new Healthcare Centre at Lace Hill.

**ACTION TOWN CLERK**

Cllr. Stuchbury indicated that he would take a motion to a future meeting of Full Council.

320/20 (Cattle Pens Finger Posts) Cllr. Smith expressed disappointment that the action was outstanding from Spring 2017. The Estates Manager reported that prices were being pursued and the final finger post would be installed as soon as possible.

**890/20 Budgets**

Members received and noted the latest budget figures.

**890.1/20** Members received and noted the revised budget forecast 2020/21 (E/86/20).

The Town Clerk explained that the budget forecast for 2020/21 was being regularly reviewed. The updated forecast showed that there are a number of changes to the budget forecast, some caused by the Covid 19 restrictions. The changes include:

- Reduced outgoings due to Community Payback not being able to operate
- Reduced outgoings due to the social enterprise not being able to cut grass under the devolved services arrangement

**E/04/20**

- Delay to the new cemetery development
- Saving made by combining the two toilet maintenance contracts
- Reduced income from the Lace Hill Sports and Community Centre

**890.2/20** Members receive and discussed a written report (E/85/20) proposing the draft budget for 2021/22 and the revised draft five-year budget. Members **AGREED** the proposed five-year budget and revised ear-marked reserve, with any changes, to be included in the proposed budget for 2021/2022 be included in the draft precept for Full Council to consider at the Precept meeting in January 2021.

The Town Clerk explained that following a review of works required to Council assets, a number of schemes are proposed to be taken forwards during the next 2-3 financial years. It is therefore, proposed to add the following items to the ear-marked reserve, and to request the Resources Committee, to review the Reserves Policy in this light:

- An additional £42,158 for new cemetery development
- An additional £15,000 for play area replacement
- An additional £10,000 for additional depot equipment
- An additional £20,000 for Lace Hill Community and sports Centre repairs and maintenance
- £10,000 for Cemetery Lodge repairs
- £8,000 for Bowls Club Pavilion repairs
- £45,000 for making good and boundary works

**AGREED**

**891/20 Bux and Oxon 4x4 Response Group (BORG)**

Members **AGREED** to suspend the Standing Orders to allow Members of BORG to speak.

Members received and discussed a written report from the Town Clerk [*a draft Memorandum of Understanding had been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting*]

Mr Prebble explained the Bux Oxen Response Group (BORG) can provide support in areas of the Council's work including in supporting execution of the Emergency Flood Plan. BORG had a long standing arrangement with Buckinghamshire County Council which has continued to Buckinghamshire Council. They have recently agreed a similar arrangement with Aylesbury Town Council to the one being proposed which includes providing support for the use of emergency flood equipment at the Willows.

Members noted that the group offer a wide range of services, including

- Assistance in the evacuation of people affected by an incident.
- Assistance with the recovery of vehicles of all sizes in almost any situation.
- Assistance in the monitoring and response to weather related incidents
- Supporting Council staff to access difficult to reach areas in poor areas

Cllr Smith proposed reviewing Buckingham's Emergency Flood Plan to consider the need for additional refuge centres such as the Lace Hill Community Centre.

**AGREED**

**ACTION TOWN CLERK**

Members **AGREED** to reinstate standing orders

**E/04/20**

Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury and unanimously **AGREED** to enter into the proposed Memorandum Of Understanding with the Bux Oxen Response Group (BORG) and amend the Emergency Flood Action Plan to include BORG as described.

**ACTION TOWN CLERK**

**892/20 Motion – Proposed by Cllr. Newell**

*Energy Generation from Vortex Generators*

*Following the information from Andy Savage about the possibility of energy generation from vortex generators, that this Council investigates the potential of a feasibility study at appropriate sites in the Town Council's ownership and reports back to this committee.*

Cllr. O'Donoghue seconded the motion.

An amendment to the motion was suggested by the Town Clerk to remove the words 'Council's ownership'. Members voted unanimously in favour of the amended motion. A further vote was taken, which was also unanimous in favour of the substantive motion.

**ACTION TOWN CLERK/ESTATES MANAGER**

**893/20 Motion – Proposed by Cllr. Newell and seconded by Cllr. Gateley**

*The practice of land grabbing was raised at the recent Tree Wardens meeting, when we discussed the boundary garden fences along Maids Moreton Avenue, and again the fences that back onto the bridle way from Maids Moreton Playing Field down to the Stratford Road; so on both sides of Page Hill and elsewhere in Buckingham, residents erect new fences and hedges outside their boundaries, put in gateways where there is no access permitted, and dump garden refuse, grass and plant cuttings, and waste soil and debris outside their boundaries. We call on the Town Council to work with Buckinghamshire Council to protect public land for the benefit of all, and to stop illegal land grabs and dumps.*

Cllr. Newell spoke to the above motion, adding that the issue of land grabbing was discussed at the recent meeting of the Tree Wardens and was evident in various area across the town, including the Railway Walk Conservation Area.

Cllr. Stuchbury said it was the legal responsibility of Buckinghamshire Council to protect its land and Town Councillors could only report it as an enforcement issue.

Cllr. Harvey proposed issuing a press release on the legal implications of land grabbing. Cllr. O'Donoghue informed Members that Planning Committee would report the issues to Buckinghamshire Council's Enforcement Team. Cllr. Ahmed suggested a social media campaign on the issues surrounding flying tipping green waste, extending land boundaries and adding gates into garden fences that adjoin public land.

Members **AGREED** Cllr. Newell's motion and for the office to issue a press release, social media campaign and newsletter article on the issues surrounding flying tipping green waste, extending land boundaries and adding gates into garden fences that adjoin public land.

**ACTION TOWN CLERK**

**894/20 Motion – Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury and seconded by Cllr. Newell**

*In light of the fact the government is insisting that all footpath and rights-of-way are registered and recorded before 2026, I propose that the Town Council issue a press release highlighting the deadline, and ask interested parties to review the definitive*

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Initial .....

*public rights of way map held by Buckinghamshire Council and available online at <https://prow.buckscc.gov.uk/standardmap.aspx> to identify any rights of way, within the parish and of Buckingham and Stowe Landscape Gardens, that are not currently recorded. It seems logical to seek the partnership of the Buckingham Society and any other community groups who wish to take part.*

Cllr. Stuchbury spoke to the above motion stressing that it was important that all regularly used footpaths within the parish boundary, including those extending to neighbouring villages, are registered and recorded before 2026. Cllr Stuchbury said that he hoped the campaign would stimulate similar activity within neighbouring parish councils.

Members unanimously **AGREED** the motion

**ACTION TOWN CLERK/COMMUNICATIONS CLERK**

**895/20 HASC 7th January 2021**

Proposed by Cllr. Harvey, seconded by Cllr. Smith and unanimously **AGREED** to submit the following written question to the next meeting of the Buckinghamshire Council's Health and Social Care (HASC) Scrutiny Committee. *"Buckingham Town Council notes that "Two community hubs are being piloted in Marlow and Thame to help patients take greater control over their care and treatment and avoid hospital admissions" as part of plans to establish an ICS across Bucks*

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/integratedcare/integratedcaresystems/buckinghamshire-ics/our-current-projects/>

*Please can the HASC explain whether it will be one of the ISC priorities to establish something similar with the Buckingham Community Hospital within the next 5 years? And moreover, how will the introduction of the ICS across Bucks noticeably affect the lives of Buckingham people? And how will Buckingham people be able to have a say about all this?"*

**ACTION TOWN CLERK**

Members **AGREED** for either Cllr. Gateley or Harvey to represent the Town Council at the next meeting of the HASC on the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

**896/20 Tingewick Road Green Spaces**

The Town Clerk reported that discussions had been on hold because of national restrictions but a site meeting was arranged for the next day and hopefully there would be more to report at the next meeting. Members noted that this was now a standing item on Environment Committee's agenda.

**897/20 Access Awareness**

**897.1/20 Clarence Park Ramp**

The Town Clerk reported that Taylor Wimpy had acknowledged the issue and agreed to investigate and report back to the Town Council. Members **AGREED** to keep it under review on the Action Report.

**898/20 Climate Change Champion**

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Mahi and unanimously **AGREED** to nominate Cllrs. Newell, Gateley, Ralph and Ahmed to act as the Town Council's Climate Change Champions to help raise the profile of the planned online event and the Council's Climate Change Emergency Plan. **ACTION COMMITTEE CLERK**

**E/04/20**

**899/20 Reports from Affiliated Groups**

899.1/20 Members noted the minutes of the Buckingham Community Wildlife Project - 7<sup>th</sup> September 2020

899.2/20 Members noted the minutes of the Buckingham Tree Wardens meeting 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**900/20 Upper Ouse Natural Flood Management Project Update**

Members received a verbal update from the Town Clerk and Estates Manager. Members are invited to contact the River Thames Conservation Trust, should they wish, to share knowledge of any local landowners with riparian responsibility, using the contact details provided in the letter to councillors attached to this item.

**901/20 News Releases**

Members **AGREED** for the office to issue press releases on the following:  
Land Grabs (see minute 893/20)  
Footpaths and Right of Way (see minute 894/20)  
Online Climate Emergency meeting – once arrangements were in place.

**902/20 Chair's Announcements**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

**903/20 Date of Next Meeting:** Monday February 15th 2020.

**COMMITTEE IN PRIVATE SESSION**

*Exclusion of Public and Press*

**904/20 RECOMMENDED** In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, **RECOMMENDED** that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded. **AGREED**

**905/20 Brackley Road Cemetery - New Garden of Rest**

Members discussed and unanimously **AGREED** to allow the construction of the new garden of rest to proceed, with the ground works to be carried out by the Greenspaces team and then the Bitumen Macadam paths to be laid by a contractor. Members unanimously **AGREED** that the full cost of £18,691.52 for the project be transferred from the forecast underspends from budgets 253 4265 (£5,000) 201 3995 (£8,691.52) and 201 4068 (£5,000). **ACTION ESTATES MANAGER**

**906/20 Bridges in Bourton Park**

Members received a quote for repair work to four of the bridges in Bourton Park. Cllr. Gateley asked if the tropical hardwood was being obtained from a sustainable source. The Estates Manager explained the material had to be similar or same as the existing bridges but **AGREED** to investigate further and report back.

**ACTION ESTATES MANAGER**

**E/04/20**

It is recommended that members agree to recommend to Full Council to carry out the bridge repairs described, appointing GM Utilities to carry out the work.

It is recommended to recommend to Full Council that the ear-marked reserve 901 9050 Bridge Repairs be increased by £45,959.03 to £60,959 to enable the works to go ahead.

A vote was taken on the above report recommendations and the results were:

Favour: 9

Abstaining 1

**ACTION ESTATES MANAGER**

**907/20      New Cemetery**

The Town Clerk updated Members regarding ongoing negotiations.

**908/20      Cemetery Litter Bins**

Members **AGREED** to purchase seven litter bins from NBB Recycled Furniture at a cost of £1,152 with the budget to be taken from budget 253 44601 cemetery repairs & maintenance fund.

**ACTION ESTATES MANAGER**

Meeting closed at: 21.02

Chair

Date