

Minutes of a meeting of the **Environment Committee** of Buckingham Town Council held on **Monday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018** in the Council Chamber, Cornwall's Meadow, Buckingham at 7pm.

**Present:**

Cllr. P. Collins	
Cllr. Mrs. M. Gateley	Chair
Cllr. J. Harvey	Town Mayor
Cllr. P. Hirons	
Cllr. D. Isham	
Cllr. A. Mahi	
Cllr. Ms. R. Newell	Vice-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
Mrs. N. Stockill	Committee Clerk
Miss C. Molyneux	Deputy Town Clerk

*The meeting was preceded by a Public Session in accordance with Standing Order 3.f.*

**PUBLIC SESSION**

Mr John Mellors and Mr Andrew Cooper of The Royal British Legion attended the public session to propose a fundraising initiative to purchase a WW1 commemorative bench. Mr Mellors drew members' attention to discussion on social media over the removal of street furniture from outside Gyre and Gimble's coffee shop, Cornwalls Meadow.

**558/18 Apologies for Absence**

Members received and accepted apologies from District Councillor T. Mills.

**559/18 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declaration of interest.

**560/18 Minutes**

Members received the minutes and confirm the recommendations therein of the Environment Committee meeting held on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2018.

**561/18 Action Report**

Members received the report and noted the updated information .

Finger posts – The Estates Manager is awaiting costs for the installation of the final finger post at the Cattle Pens.

Benches - The Estates Manager reported that the Landlord had been contacted a replacement bench was on order. Members discussed and **AGREED** for the Estates Manager to working with the Royal British Legion and Landlords of Cornwalls Meadow to find a satisfactory way forward.

**ACTION ESTATES MANAGER**

*Members of the public left the chamber at 19.18*

Rights of Way – The Town Clerk confirmed that the Deputy Town Clerk was consulting on residents’ historical use of Railway Walk. Significant amounts of evidence were being compiled on the public’s use of the path for walks, cross country running and dog walking. Members **AGREED** to promote the consultation in the New Year. Cllr Harvey reminded Members that the Council were seeking Rights of Way across the Railway Walk and suggested contacting local historians for evidence of the public crossing from one platform to another. The Deputy Town Clerk explained that hard copies are available in the Tourist Information Centre to be completed by individuals.

Refill station – The Town Clerk confirmed that a decision on the Local Area Forum funding was imminent.

Homelessness Strategy – Cllr. Gateley advised members that the Housing Allocation Policy was out for public consultation closing 7<sup>th</sup> January 2019. Members discussed and **AGREED** for the consultation to be reviewed at the Interim meeting of Full Council. Cllr. Gateley **AGREED** that it was an important issue that the Council should not lose sight of.

Healthcare Meeting - The Town Clerk reported there will be a meeting in late January/February including the Health Trust.

**562/18 Grounds Maintenance Update**

Members received a verbal update on recruitment to the Grounds Maintenance team due to start in February 2019.

**563/18 Budgets**

563.1/18 Members received and noted the latest figures.

563.2/18 Members received and discussed proposed budgets for 2019/20.

Cllr. Stuchbury reminded members that any unspent earmarked reserves would be carried forward.

Cllr. Stuchbury asked if the Town Clerk was confident in his financial planning of the Environment precept budget to account for the new cemetery costs. The Town Clerk said there was sufficient money in the new budget for planning the new cemetery.

**564/18 Chandos Park Bowls Club**

Members received correspondence from The Chairman of Chandos Park Bowls Club. The Estates Manager explained that the Bowls Club was seeking additional space by extending their fence further into Chandos Park. Cllr. Hirons said there is no reason for them not to have a gazebo erected outside of the current fence during the summer playing season. Cllr. O’Donoghue noted a line of trees within the proposed fenced area.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury and seconded by Cllr Newell to **AGREE** in principle to the request and ask the Estates Manager for a report on the long term impact on park usage and any perceived benefit and negative impacts.

A vote was taken and the results were:

In favour: 4

Against: 7

Motion fell.

Cllr. Smith remarked there was no clear benefit to the Bowls Club for extending the fence. Cllr Harvey suggested joint working with the Tennis club to allow for more shared facilities.

Proposed by Cllr. Smith and seconded by Cllr. Hirons to respond respectfully declining the club's proposal for the following reasons: removal of parking for maintenance vehicles, no clear benefit to park users and potential loss of trees. Members were happy to consider allowing the additional spaces for gazebos should the club provide reasonable notice of their events.

A vote was taken and the results were:

In favour: 11

Abstention: 1

Motion carried

**ACTION ESTATES MANAGER**

#### **565/18 Access Awareness**

Members received a report from Cllr. Strain-Clark regarding the Buckingham Dementia Action Alliance. Cllr Strain Clark reminded Members that in 2017, the previous Town Clerk, Chris Wayman arranged for the Town Council to join the Dementia Action Alliance. The Town Council made the following statements:

1. The Town Council wish to promote awareness of dementia and to aid in people with dementia accessing the Town Council's services
2. There will be a need to review the services and obtain training to ensure that these outcomes are delivered.

The Council's Action Plan consists of these actions:

Action 1.

To encourage all staff and Councillors to become Dementia Friends

Description: The Town Council will encourage all staff and Councillors to become Dementia Friends, this will be done by requesting training to take place at a time which suits Councillors.

Action 2.

Raise the profile of dementia within the Town Council's newsletter

Description: There is an article being printed in Buckingham Town Matters for September. Councillors will also be doing further articles in the future.

Action 3.

To consider Dementia Friendliness in all decisions and services of the Council

Description: The Town Council will, when making a decision and planning its delivery of services, take into account those with dementia.

Proposed by Cllr. Strain-Clark, seconded by Cllr. Smith and **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the Council reaffirm their commitment to the **Dementia Action Alliance.**

**566/18 Upper Ouse Sub-catchment Group Update**

Members received a report from the Estates Manager regarding the Sub-catchment group's progress. The Estates Manager noted that although the Town Council would not have to commit financially at this time to the role the part-time officer may need office support and the use of a desk to help facilitate the role. An accurate salary cost is being sought by the Environment Agency this could be estimated at £5000 for the equivalent of one day per week.

Cllr. Harvey explained that if funding could be found then perhaps the Council could house someone or extend the contract of an existing officer to coordinate volunteer river wardens. It would be a short term contract in responses to public interest on the pollution incident.

Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Newell and unanimously **AGREED** that the Town Council will support the river warden scheme and the setting up of the Sub-catchment group.

*Cllr. Stuchbury was absent from the chamber during voting.*

**567/18 Bourton Park ponds and stream system**

Members received a question from Cllr. Ralph regarding the vegetation growth in the waterways adjacent to the otter sculptures in Bourton Park and in any other similar areas of the park.

The Estates Manager explained that the redevelopment of the waterways was being considered as part of the larger Management Plan for Bourton Park. The Estates Manager reported that the Environment Agency had 20 volunteer River Wardens that could be trained and assist in the redevelopment of the stream and pond's ecosystem. Members **AGREED** to issue a press release on the work of the Sub-catchment group and proposed work on the Bourton Park stream system.

**ACTION ESTATES MANAGER**

**568/18 Homelessness Strategy**

Members received a verbal update from Cllr. Gateley (minute 450/18)  
Discussed minute 561/18.

**569/18 Railway Walk Right of Way**

Members received a verbal report from the Town Clerk  
Discussed minute 561/18.

**570/18 Cattle Trough in Cattle Pens**

Members received a report regarding the cattle trough in the Cattle Pens. Members discussed and **AGREED** to support Mr Rogers's request to get the inscription re-engraved as the lettering had faded.

**571/18 Cemetery burial plots**

Members received a verbal update regarding the Tier 1 risk assessment. The Estates Manager informed members the assessment would determine if additional burials at Brackley Road cemetery could be 10m or 30m away from the stream. Depending on the results it may mean re-landscaping and then removing part of hedge to provide up to 50 graves spaces for 3 years. If burials are allowed up to 10m away from the stream more burial space would be available. A

further report will be brought to the next meeting with the results of the survey and recommendations.

### 572/18 **Proposal from Buckingham Utd.**

Members received a report and held a lengthy discussion on Buckingham United's proposal to take over the Football pitches at Lace Hill Sports and Community centre under a new 30-year lease.

Cllr. Stuchbury said Buckingham United's home games had experienced disruptions as a result of poor surface conditions forcing the cancellation of some fixtures. The Estates Manager confirmed the regrettable, poor condition of the football pitches was as a result of the summer's extreme weather conditions.

Cllr. Stuchbury endorsed the recommendation to lease both pitches to Buckingham United for 30 years.

Cllr. O'Donoghue spoke in favour of agreeing to the Town Council carrying out an 'Expressions of Interest' exercise for organisations interested in taking on a long-term lease for the pitches. Cllr. Harvey said the land was granted for use by the whole community as part of Lace Hill's Section 106 agreement and a 30 year lease would not fit with that.

Members **AGREED** to review the report recommendations individually and Cllr. Stuchbury called for a recorded vote for each.

A vote was taken on recommendation one: *'That members agree to the Town Council carrying out an 'Expressions Of Interest' exercise for organisations interested in taking on a long-term lease for the pitches'*. The results were:

In favour: Cllrs. Strain-Clark, Smith, Hirons, Harvey, O'Donoghue, Ralph, Stuchbury, Isham and Gateley

Against: Cllrs. Newell, P. Collins and Mahi

**ACTION ESTATES MANAGER**

A vote was take on recommendation two: *'That Members agree that legal advice be sought for the creation of the lease; the budget of £1200 for the legal advice to be added to the 2019/20 precept.'* The results were:

In favour: Cllr. Stuchbury

Against: Cllrs. Strain-Clark, Smith, Hirons, Harvey, O'Donoghue, Ralph, Isham, Gateley, Newell, P. Collins and Mahi

A vote was taken on the third recommendation: *'That members agree to consider a proposal for leasing the 2 pitches for 30 years at a future meeting, conditional on any lessee providing it is 'Fit and proper' to take on the Pitches, and that the lease amount is in the financial interest of the Town Council'* The results were:

In favour: Cllr. Stuchbury

Against: Cllrs. Strain-Clark, Smith, Hirons, Harvey, O'Donoghue, Ralph, Isham, Gateley, Newell, P. Collins and Mahi

### 573/18 **Lace Hill Community Centre**

#### 573.1/18 **Lace Hill play area gates**

Members received a report regarding the purchase of 2 gates for the play area at Lace Hill Sports and Community centre. Cllr. Harvey referred to Members' prior agreement to fence all future play areas in Buckingham. Members **AGREED** the

report recommendation that 2 sets of gates are installed and that £3338.83 is precepted for in the 2019/20 budget. **ACTION ESTATES MANAGER**

### **573.2/18 Lace Hill Coffee Bar**

Members received a written report from the Lace Hill Co-ordinator.

Cllr. P. Collins questioned the need for a staffed coffee bar within the Sports Centre's kitchen. Cllr O'Donoghue raised concern that it would remove hirers' ability to make their own refreshments within the kitchen. Cllr Harvey said the LHSCC had clearly researched the need for the coffee shop and could be the start of something that could raise funds for the Town Council over a longer period. Cllr. Mahi spoke in favour of installing a vending machine to dispense coffee and snacks. The Deputy Town Clerk explained that it would be a low key start and refreshments would only be available if the Coordinator was on site and available. Cllr. Newell spoke in favour of the proposal and was pleased to see that biodegradable and fair trade products were being suggested.

Cllr. O'Donoghue said she could not imagine there would be much use in the week and spoke against a trial period for one year. Cllr. Stuchbury suggested contacting the Lace Hill Residents Association to promote the facility.

Proposed by Cllr. Newell and seconded by Cllr. Harvey to accept the report recommendation to agree to phase one, including the additional one hour labour budget increase. To be treated as a pilot scheme for one year in order to recover initial set up costs and to allow the Council to be able to project a profit and loss income report, to enable a decision about phase two to be made in 12 months time.

A vote was taken and the results were:

In favour: 5

Against: 5

Abstentions: 2

The casting vote fell to the chair and Cllr. Gateley voted in favour of the report recommendation. **ACTION LHSCC COORDINATOR**

### **573.3/18 Tree Planting at Lace Hill**

Members received a written report from the Estates Manager

Members discussed and unanimously **AGREED** the report recommendation to proceed with the purchase of 280 saplings and supports, as determined by the Estates Manager using Company B taking the budgets from LHSCC Playing Fields (4050). **ACTION ESTATES MANAGER**

### **574/18 Devolved Services**

Members received a verbal report from the Town Clerk

The Committee had agreed at its previous meeting to accept the County Council's offer to continue to provide the urban transport devolved services, including grass verge cutting, for a further four years. Due to the subsequent unitary announcement, the County Council has now reduced this to one year for now, pending the new unitary council reviewing the overall devolution arrangements.

The Committee had agreed at its previous meeting to accept funding in 2019/20 for the Town Council to employ contractors to carry out minor highways works in addition to those provided by TfB. This offer has now been changed to providing the Town Council with funding during the remainder of 2018/19. It was suggested that the Council accept this funding and choose where the highways work takes place - to be circulated to members for comments. This could for example be used to resolve the church steps issue.

In favour: all  
Abstentions 2

#### **575/18 Town Centre Audit**

Members received a verbal request from Cllr. Isham to carrying out a town centre audit in conjunction with District and County Officers. Cllr. Stuchbury spoke in favour of an audit in cooperation with Buckingham's County Councillors. Cllr. Hirons said previous audits were detailed and time consuming but resulted in no action from the relevant authorities.

Proposed by Cllr. Smith, seconded by Cllr. Isham and unanimously **AGREED** to promote a 'fix my street' weekend on the 5-6<sup>th</sup> January 2019. Encouraging residents to use authorities' online tools to report defects and repairs around the town centre and parks. The results may also then influence the work programme put in place to use the County Council's minor highways funding.

**ACTION TOWN CLERK**

*Cllr Newell temporarily took the chair*

#### **576/18 Request for motion from Cllr. Hirons.**

That Buckingham Town Council uses its best endeavours to get a safe footpath link restored between the footpath from Heartlands (crossing the bridge) and the footpath along the river bank.

Proposed by Cllr. Hirons and seconded by Cllr. Isham for the Estates Manager to liaise with AVDC on rectifying the path.

A vote was taken and results were:

In favour: 10

Against: 1

Abstentions: 1

**Motion carried**

**ACTION ESTATES MANAGER**

*Cllr Gateley retook the chair*

#### **577/18 Request for the use of Council land for drone filming and photography.**

Members received a request for the use of a drone on Council land.

Cllr Stuchbury questioned privacy issues and any liabilities the Council may incur in allowing the request. The Estates Manager explained that all of the official documentation had been received and the photos could be used by the Town Council.

A vote was taken and the results were:

In favour: 10

Against: 1

Abstentions: 0

**ACTION ESTATES MANAGER**

**578/18 Buckingham Community Wildlife Project**

The Minutes were circulated at the meeting.

**579/18 News Releases**

Press releases on the following subjects were agreed: River wardens, Lace Hill Gates

**580/18 Chair's Announcements**

**581/18 Date of Next Meeting: Monday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

Meeting closed at: 21.43

Chair..... Date.....

