

MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES ON MONDAY 31ST JANUARY 2005 AT 7PM

PRESENT

Councillors P. Collins
Mrs. P. Desorgher
D. Isham
G. Loftus
H. Mordue (Chairman)
Ms. R. Newell
Mrs. H. Saul
R. Stuchbury (Mayor)

Town Clerk Ms. P. J. Heath

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Mrs. C. Strain-Clark

82/2005 DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda

83/2005 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Members received the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th December 2004 and ratified by the Council on 17th January 2005.

84/2005 ACTION REPORTS AND UPDATES

84.1 (71.1/2004) Update on the cost of Cast Iron Bollards

Members received details of the costing of the cast iron bollards that had been agreed by the Committee at the last meeting: Gregory of Cannock's Canterbury style cast iron bollard at a cost of £180 per bollard with a £290 cost for the logo (these prices are up to 31st March 2005).

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Isham, that this Council purchases and replaces the stone pillars around the War Memorial, at Church Hill, with the agreed cast iron bollards when the stone pillars can no longer be repaired by the Caretaker.

84.2 (71.2/2004) Update from the Play and Leisure Plan Group

Members were informed that the meeting of the Group was scheduled for 2nd February 2005.

84.3 (71.7/2004) Update on evidential use of Dark Alley

Members were informed that 5 notices of use concerning Dark Alley had been received; in order to apply to County Council for a definitive right of way at least 10 notices of use must be included.

84.4 (71.8/2004) Update on moving of the seat by Community Centre

Members were informed that there had been no communication from Budgens in response to the Town Council's letter. Members agreed to wait until the next E & P meeting before ordering the moving of the seat to allow Budgens Manager to respond.

84.5 (63/2004) Update on footpath Inspection – Cllr Isham/Cllr Desorgher

Cllr. Isham informed Members he had not yet arranged the wider inspection of the footpaths as detailed in minute number 63/2004.

84.6 (68.1/2004) Update on Community Plan Group - Waste Bins - Cllr Newell

Cllr. Newell was not present for this item so it was deferred.

84.7 (39/2004) Update on location of trees – Cllrs. Stuchbury/Stevens/Desorgher

Cllr. Stuchbury informed members that the 3 designated councillors had not yet met to agree the location of the Black Poplar trees as detailed in minute number 39/2004

85/2005 REPORT, IF REQUIRED, ON CEMETERY LODGE REFURBISHMENT

The Clerk reported that the Council were still awaiting authorisation from BALC to apply to the Public Loan Board for a loan to carry out the refurbishment.

86/2005 MEETING HELD WITH BUCKS CC RE TRANSFER OF SERVICES TO AGREE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED

Members discussed the notes of the meeting held with officers of County Council over the transfer of services. The comments made at Full Council were taken on board and Members asked that the additional information be obtained. Members were in agreement in principle to take on the additional services.

The Clerk informed Members that the District Council were looking into the generic charter but had not yet formed an opinion on transfer of services to Quality Parish Councils; the Town Clerk had been asked to assist the District Council with the generic charter.

87/2005 FUTURE MAINTENANCE OF THE ROUNDABOUTS AND ALLOCATION OF SPONSORS' MONEY FOR ENHANCEMENTS

Members discussed the decision taken at the Precept meeting to budget for £2000 profit on the sponsorship of the roundabouts. The Clerk explained the history behind the sponsorship money being used for the maintenance. Members discussed the maintenance and enhancement of the Roundabouts.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Isham, and **AGREED** to purchase enhanced planting on the roundabouts in 2005/2006 up to £2000 of flowering shrubs.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Isham, and **AGREED** to purchase spring bulbs in 2006/2007, amount to be agreed following the 2006/2007 precept meeting.

88/2005 TOWN AUDIT AND AGREE ANY PROGRAMME OF WORKS ARISING

Members were informed that the reports from the designated councillors had not been completed so this item was deferred.

89/2005 THE FUTURE OF VERNEY CLOSE ACQUISITION, IN VIEW OF THE LACK OF RESPONSE FROM BUCKS. CC

Members were informed that the Clerk had sought the current position from the Solicitors as to the sale document. Unfortunately despite having chased this, the Solicitors' secretary had informed the Clerk that evening that a document had been received and that the Solicitor had taken the file to review. It was **AGREED** that the Chairman and the Clerk monitor the situation and report either to the Committee or direct to the Council when the document arrives in the office.

90/2005 FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF THE CEMETRY AT BRACKLEY ROAD

Members were told that the Council had now taken over the management of the Cemetery, with the first funeral being that of Mr. Buckland. The Clerk had attended with the Contractor as the Council representative. The funeral had passed with no problems; it was **AGREED** that all Councillors should attend at least one funeral in order that they can be aware of the Council's responsibilities.

Members discussed the need for a uniform policy on all aspects of the Cemetery maintenance.

Members **AGREED** that the spoil from the Grave should be placed onto polythene in order that no residue is left on adjacent graves.

90.1 Membership of any professional body;

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Isham, and **AGREED** to pay for the Clerk to join ICCM, as an associate member.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Isham, and **RECOMMENDED** that the Council joins the Cemetery Managers Liaison Group a networking and support group for those officers and departments directly dealing with Cemetery Management.

90.2 Future training required by the office staff;

Members were informed of the training courses currently available and were given details of the professional qualification courses. Members felt that the Clerk should be sent on a suitable training course as soon as possible and that a professional qualification be considered in future years.

Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **AGREED** to send the Clerk on a two day "Introduction to Cemetery Management" course to be held in Wakefield in February 2005 at a cost of £355 plus travel and additional nights

accommodation prior to the commencement of the course. (Clerks note: the course at Wakefield is full; a second course will be run in May)

90.3 Purchase of software to run the management of burials, the set up of data and its input

Members discussed the computerising of the records. Currently AVDC use software which is part of their major GIS system and is not financially viable for the Council to use. The Clerk gave the Members details of two bespoke systems recommended by other Clerks – RBS and Edge designs. It was agreed that further details and, possible demonstrations, of these and any other systems be obtained prior to the next meeting to enable Members to discuss and agree any software system at that meeting.

ACTION THE CLERK

90.4 Purchase of suitable storage facility for the records

Members were informed that the records which are currently held by AVDC need to be transferred to Buckingham; the statutory record needs to be kept in a fireproof cabinet. Unfortunately the maps which are currently on hardboard about 4' by 5' are not up to date. The smaller version of the maps should be brought up to date and these could also be stored in the cabinet; the old maps could be stored in County Archives.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Saul, and **AGREED** that this Council should purchase a fireproof cabinet up to a cost of £500 from budget 4057/203; the Clerk with the Chairman were given designated authority to research, and purchase the cabinet.

ACTION THE CLERK

90.5 Programme of repair work for the boundary walls

Members discussed the boundary walls of the cemetery which require work from minor clean up and repair to some areas needing a rebuild. It was agreed that:-

- Phase one being the front wall and railings: the Caretaker being requested to clean down the walls, remove weeds and vegetation, clean the railings and repaint.
- Phase two would be the clearing and where necessary rebuilding of the boundary wall at the rear of Stowe Avenue properties
- Phase three being the clearing of the wall opposite
- Phase four being the middle wall that separates the old and new cemetery.

ACTION THE CLERK

90.6 Fencing of the additional piece of land and possible future uses

Members were given the history behind the additional piece of land to the left of the extension which had been left as field when the District Council had put the hedge in the wrong place.

It was **AGREED** to investigate the planting of a hedge on the correct line using a suitable hedgerow scheme, the grubbing out of a section of the current hedge to form an access point and the possibility of obtaining grant funding for the work.

ACTION THE CLERK

90.7 Information on the creation of a car park at Brackley Road Cemetery

Cllr Collins arrived during the following item.

The Clerk informed Members that with the knowledge of the Chairman the office had been investigating the possibility of creating a car park at the bottom of the Cemetery Extension. This would entail the purchasing of the stretch of land to the right of the extension from New College and the forming of an access road from Stowe Avenue. New College had indicated they would be willing to sell at the correct price; there was no indication of what this would be as no formal approach had been made. Permission would be required from the National Trust to cross their land between the road and the Cemetery. Preliminary talks with the Planning Department and Highways had indicated that with suitable landscaping and sympathetic road surface permission may be obtained from the District Council but Highways would not be willing to grant permission as they felt the vision splay would be inadequate.

Members **AGREED** to approach the National Trust to ascertain if they would give permission to cross their land and to formally approach New College to obtain an indication of what they think the land is worth.

ACTION THE CLERK

91/2005 TRANSFER OF GAWCOTT CREEN -VG92- TO GAWCOTT AND LENBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

Members were informed that the Clerk had been in contact with Gawcott & Lenborough Parish Council concerning the area of village green reference number VG92. The Clerk would establish the legal position concerning the transfer, before a joint recommendation was made to both Councils.

ACTION THE CLERK

92/2005 LETTER FROM IAN HOPCRAFT RE TREE WORK IN BOURTON PARK, CHANDOS PARK AND THE CEMETERY

Members discussed the letter from Mr Hopcraft, AVDC Tree Officer, which had been circulated with the agenda. Members noted his comments and asked that the maps and schedule of the trees be circulated to those members who wish to have a copy.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Saul, and **AGREED** to arrange for the felling and removal of the tree indicated in Mr Hopcraft's letter that is partially blocking the path up to a cost of £300.

ACTION THE CLERK

92/2005 To discuss the letter from Hill House re the removal of a lime tree

Members discussed the letter from the owners of Hill House concerning the damage being done to their property by the lime tree adjacent to the toilet block. Members asked that the letter be forwarded to our insurers for comment before any action could be taken.

ACTION THE CLERK

93/2005 BUCKINGHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE TRUSTEES RE THE BAY WINDOW IN THE CHAMBER

Cllr. D. Isham declared an interest as a member of the Community Centre Management Committee and Chairman of the Community Centre Trustees.

Members noted the comments made in the letter from the Chairman of the Community Centre Trustees concerning the replacement of the bay window. Members felt that the window should be repaired bearing in mind the intended work to the Council Chamber.

94/2005 REQUEST FROM ROTARY FOR SUGGESTED LOCATIONS TO PLACE A BENCH IN THE TOWN CENTRE

Members discussed the request by the Rotary Club for a seat to mark the organisation's centenary; Members suggested by Verney Close Red Cross Centre.

Members suggested that the Clerk should approach the District Council to discuss 2 plank benches in Moreton Avenue.

ACTION THE CLERK

95/2005 EXTENSION TO TOWN COUNCIL'S OFFICES (PLEASE NOTE SOME OF THIS ITEMS DISCUSSION MAY BE HELD UNDER 1(2) PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960)

The Chairman gave Members a brief history of the discussions with AVDC over the extension and the meeting held with AVDC in December. Members were informed that there had been no contact with AVDC's Architects Department since then concerning the production of the new plans. Members asked that the Chairman and the Clerk contact local architects to ascertain if any are willing to take on the project and obtain an estimate of their costs.

ACTION THE CLERK

96/2005 CURRENT BUDGET AND DISCUSS ANY ADJUSTMENTS AFTER 2005/2006 PRECEPT MEETING

Members noted the budget as agreed at the Precept meeting and agreed to review the current budget at the next meeting.

97/2005 CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

97.1 Horticultural Contract

The Chairman informed Members of the recent history of the horticultural contracts and explained that Mr. D. Stevens had reviewed the specification. Unfortunately it would be difficult to rewrite the specification and bill of quantities in its current state. AVDC employed a team for 2 years to rewrite all their contracts. The Chairman read a letter it was proposed to send out with the specification explaining that the Council require a 1 year tender and 3 years estimate based on the current specification. During the first year the specification would be rewritten in situ using Mr. Stevens' and the Contractors' expertise. The Contractor would then undertake the 3 year contract based on the revised specification from 1st April 2006.

Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Desorgher, and **AGREED** that the Council Horticultural contract be let on the following basis: 1 year tender and 3 years estimate based on the current specification. During the first year the specification would be rewritten in situ using Mr. Stevens' and the Contractors' expertise. The Contractor would then undertake the 3 year contract based on the revised specification from 1st April 2006.

97.2 Buckingham Community Wildlife Project

Cllr. Newell agreed to sit as the Town Council's representative on the Buckingham Community Wildlife Project Steering Group.

MEETING CLOSED 9.05PM

CHAIRMAN ...H. Mordue..... DATE7 March 2005