

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
MONDAY 31ST JULY 2006 AT 7PM.**

PRESENT

Councillor J. Barnett
P. Collins (Mayor)
Mrs. P. Desorgher
D. R. Isham
H. Mordue (Chairman)
Ms. R. Newell
Mrs. P. Stevens
Mrs. C. Strain-Clark

For the Town Clerk Mrs K McElligott

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Ms. H. Saul, R. Stuchbury, Mr. M. Gadd, and Ms P Heath (Town Clerk). Cllr. Newell had indicated late arrival. Councillors wished Ms. Heath a speedy recovery.

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2006/286 DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda

2006/287 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Members accepted the minutes of the last meeting held on 12th June 2006, which were ratified at the Council meeting held on 17th July 2006.

2006/288 ACTION REPORTS AND UPDATES

A list had been circulated with the agenda.

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2006/289 (271) CEMETERY LODGE REFURBISHMENT

289.1 To receive quotations for flooring in Cemetery Lodge

The Chairman indicated that quotations had been received for carpets for the office, stairs and bedrooms; vinyl wood-effect flooring for the remaining downstairs areas and bathroom. One company had provided samples.

A comparison of quotations would be prepared and Cllrs. Stevens, Desorgher and Isham meet to recommend which to accept.

ACTION CLERICAL ASSISTANT/CLLRS. STEVENS/DESORGHER/ISHAM

2006/290 (272) OPERATION OF BRACKLEY ROAD CEMETERY

290.1 To receive an update on the Cemetery Management and recent complaints

The Chairman read out the main points of a letter received from the Contracts Manager of Wyevale Grounds Maintenance, agreeing various remedial works including a cut-and-collect mowing and weekly bin empty. A third strand of barbed wire was to be installed 'by the end of the month' i.e. July, but Mr. Lester had reported that day that he had been obliged to remove his stock from the adjoining field due to the inadequacy of the fence.

Members agreed that the contract needed careful monitoring.

Cllr. Stevens reported that one grave had been inadequately backfilled with rubble, not soil, and not turfed. Headstones should also be laid squarely on the grave space not askew.

290.2 To discuss outcome of meeting with Mr Webster reference voluntary help

Mr. Webster had volunteered to help with data input. He was proceeding with the setting up of a Friends group; a list of what work would be permitted and what not would need to be drawn up and agreed.

290.3 To draw up and agree the draft contract specification and agree the tender timetable for cemetery maintenance and burials.

Cllrs. Mordue, Isham and Stevens would meet to discuss the matter.

ACTION CLLRS. MORDUE/ISHAM/STEVENS

290.4 To receive details of the re-pointing of the cemetery gate pillars

Cllr. Isham had produced a written report which was circulated to Members at the meeting. His recommendation, supported by Cllrs. Desorgher and Stuchbury, was that the pillars be repaired with lime mortar and matching bricks, decayed bricks being replaced, and that Aspect Builders quotation be accepted, with further discussions with the firm to agree the details of the work to be carried out.

290.5 To receive preliminary details of friends scheme for Brackley Road

No information further to that in the action list was available.

2006/291 (273) REPORTS ON CHANDOS PARK

The hand/wash dryer in the men's toilet at Chandos Park had been vandalised beyond repair, and an identical unit was no longer available. Wallgate reported that a stainless steel surround would be necessary to cover the existing aperture, and

the replacement unit would be secured to this and use existing service connections, quoting £1710 + VAT for removal and replacement.

The Chairman noted that the information sheet supplied gave no dimensions of the proposed replacement unit; he also felt an alternative quotation should be obtained. Members also asked whether the damage was covered by insurance.

After discussion, Members decided to look for another quotation for the work. Mr. Jones would be asked to measure the hole to be covered; the Chairman would notify the office of an alternative supplier. The Clerk would be asked to check the insurance cover.

ACTION CHAIRMAN/CLERK/CARETAKER

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2006/292 (274) REPORTS ON BOURTON PARK

292.1 Signpost

It had been noted at the Events Committee meeting (Min.260.3) that a wooden fingerpost near the Car Park needed re-setting as it was leaning over.

Mr. Jones would be asked if it was something he could rectify.

292.2 Streetlamps

Lightfoot Bros. had quoted for replacing the damaged part of light #21; lamppost #20 just needed securing in the ground. Mr. Jones would be asked if he could do this.

The damaged part could be replaced; there would be a minimum order charge of £55 if ordered singly, but not if the order was delayed and consolidated with others at the wholesaler, with a likely delay of 4-6 weeks.

Members decided to delay as the light was not really necessary until the autumn.

2006/293 (276) WEEKLY SAFETY REPORTS ON PLAY AREAS

The reports were not available to the meeting.

2006/294 (277) BUCKINGHAM TOWN AUDIT

The latest Town Audit sheets were circulated at the meeting.

AVDC:

Cllr. Isham reported that the pavement dip by the substation at the side of the Grand Junction (p.1) had now been filled in and the paviers re-laid.

BCC:

Cllr. Desorgher still considered the pavement outside the Old Post Office to be dangerous (p2.).

Private Owners:

Cllr. Stevens offered to speak to the locksmith re paintwork.

It was reported that Davey Bros. Garage was again for sale.

The Clerk was asked to send a copy of *Living on the Edge* to all properties bordering the river in Well Street and Chandos Road, to advise residents of their responsibilities.

ACTION THE CLERK

2006/295 (278) UPDATE ON COMMUNITY PLAN INITIATIVES

As per Minute 278, Cllr. Barnett reported on behalf of the Community Plan. The funding had been authorised to improve the Riverside Walk and surroundings, and the *Advertiser* had been notified.

The Chairman offered congratulations to all concerned with the application.

Proposed by Cllr. Barnett, seconded by Cllr. Mordue, and **AGREED** that Mr. Gadd be formally released from his co-opted position now that Cllr. Barnett was a member of the Committee.

2006/296 (249) DISPUTED AVDC INVOICES

The Chairman outlined the position re the disputed invoices, pointing out that this Council was willing to pay for work carried out but not for work scheduled and invoiced but not done. If AVDC could provide proof that the disputed works had in fact been carried out, then this would be paid for.

Proposed by Cllr. Stevens, seconded by Cllr. Barnett, and **AGREED** that the invoices for work agreed to have been carried out should be paid.

The Chairman was thanked for his considerable efforts in bringing this matter to a conclusion.

2006/297 'A'BOARD

Chaps Barbers had written to request permission to retain the A board outside their premises as it was not obstructing pedestrians, and in fact prevented the visually impaired from walking into their glass bay window.

Members agreed that this particular board be permitted, provided it was positioned by their window, filling the gap between WH Smith's frontage and the lamppost, and the letter would indicate that the permission would remain under review.

The Clerk was asked to ascertain the planning authority's views on A board display in the Conservation Area.

ACTION THE CLERK

2006/298 (218.1) RISK ASSESSMENTS; FIRE SAFETY RISK ASSESSMENTS

The Fire Safety Risk Assessment must be in place by October 1st, and thus ratified by the Council on 4th September.

The Chairman offered to do the assessment if the Clerk could forward the checklist to him.

ACTION THE CLERK/THE CHAIRMAN

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2006/299 TRANSFER OF SERVICES FROM BCC

Members discussed the report of the meeting held on 19th June circulated with the agenda.

In general Members were in favour of taking on tasks such as those listed in Phase I, pointing out that 'Acting as eyes and ears reporting problems' was already covered by the Town Audit and by acting as a referral centre for reports by members of the public. Other tasks could be carried out if staff time was available. Cleaning signs could be a problem, as many were in need of repainting, and some had special reflective surfaces.

Members were vehemently against the return of the roundabouts to BCC if this meant loss of sponsorship revenue, unless BCC would recompense the Council for this loss. They preferred that roundabout sponsorship be taken out of the negotiations altogether.

Members would like to see detailed cost breakdowns of work to be undertaken on County's behalf, and – in light of the recently announced cost-cutting – guarantee of payment. If agreement on payment could be reached, Phase I work could be taken on on a trial basis; if the payment proved inadequate, the amount of work could be adjusted accordingly, or additional payment agreed.

2006/300 FRIENDS OF MAIDS MORETON AVENUE AND HOLLOWAY SPINNEY

The Friends had requested bridging finance to cover publicity etc. until the group was established and independent.

Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Stevens, and **AGREED** that up to £150 contribution could be made from the Horticulture budget.

2006/301 ADDITIONAL PLANTING SUGGESTIONS FOR ROUNDABOUTS

The Chairman outlined the suggestions made by the Contractor for improving the roundabouts. These included planting of bulbs and shrubs, and radical pruning to allow better regrowth, to be followed by regular maintenance.

It was felt that there was not enough emphasis on all-year round colour/growth. Cllr. Stevens would arrange for Prof. Stevens to view the roundabouts and offer suggestions for species to provide good displays at all seasons; the Contractor could then be asked to work to these suggestions. This could be brought to the 18th September meeting for agreement in time for autumn planting.

Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Barnett, and **AGREED** that up to £2000 be allocated to the improvement of the roundabouts to the Committee's specification.

SEPTEMBER AGENDA

Cllr. Newell arrived.

2006/302 (260) FOOTPATH BETWEEN CHANDOS ROAD AND STATION TERRACE

The BCC Rights of Way Officer had reported that there was no record of this being a public right of way and it was therefore a permissive footpath provided by the landowner.

Several Councillors reported this path as having been in regular use by the public before the University was in existence, and in their view the continuous previous use over-ruled the University's claim to ownership.

Members recommended that BALC/NALC be approached for their view of the legal position.

ACTION THE CLERK

2006/303 1960'S BUILDING FRONTAGE, MARKET HILL

The Community Plan had been looking at ways to improve the appearance of the shop frontages from Woolworths towards the King's Head. Planters with climbing plants had been rejected because of the obstruction of the footway, but plants hanging down the buildings from the roof had been suggested. The Community Plan was looking for support from the Town Council in approaching the owners of the premises.

Councillors noted that Woolworths was a considerably higher building than the Boots-Smarts block, and that the latter's upper storey comprised flats not in the shops' control. The problems of watering and maintenance of the planters was also raised, assuming access to the roof was feasible. Window boxes were suggested as a more practical alternative, especially if co-ordinated along the whole frontage. The costs would be borne by the owners.

Cllr. Newell handed a draft letter to the Clerk, and indicated that an artist's impression of the planted frontage was in preparation, which could be copied out with the letter.

Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Strain-Clark, and **RECOMMENDED** that this Council support an approach to the owners of the premises in Market Hill North to gauge their reaction to the suggestion of improving the appearance of the front elevation with planting.

2006/304 REMOVAL OF SHOPPING TROLLEYS

Cllr. Newell pointed out that supermarkets could be charged for the salvage of abandoned trolleys. Members felt that this was worth investigating. Cllr. Newell would look into the practice in Milton Keynes and Aylesbury and what charges might be levied.

ACTION CLLR. NEWELL

2006/305 CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

305.1 (270.2) Bus Shelter, Stratford Road

The foundations would have to be hand-dug due to the proximity of services, in particular a high-pressure gas main. This would raise the costs of installation.

Members felt that, as there was a street light opposite the proposed site, and there were few services after dark, there was no need for lighting in the shelter. This would reduce the overall cost.

2006/306 OFFICE PREMISES

Cllr. Isham declared an interest in any planning matters.

Although the item had been listed on the agenda as confidential, the Chairman felt that as the matter was now in the public domain and he was not discussing financial matters the representative of the press need not be excluded. There were no other members of the public present.

Following his meeting with the Council, the architect had noted the comments made, and planning permission was being sought for the extension of the offices.

Various temporary accommodation alternatives had been considered, but were either unavailable, not available during the day. Cemetery Lodge offered the best office accommodation, with meetings being held in the Community Centre Small Hall, or, possibly, in the Old Gaol. The office room in the Lodge was lockable, and if a tenant were found for the remainder the premises would be more secure.

Cllr. Strain-Clark asked if the Lodge office was accessible to the disabled, and if not, was this not contrary to the aims of open government? The Chairman accepted that ramps would have to be provided. It might be possible to display planning applications in the Old Gaol courtyard, which had disabled access via the shop, which opened for similar hours to the Council Office. Cllr. Barnett was also concerned that the distance of the Cemetery from the Town Centre made the Council less available to the public.

It was also suggested that the Well Street Centre may have suitable accommodation.

Members agreed no decision was necessary until the building schedule was known.

Meeting closed at 8.55pm

CHAIRMAN ...H Mordue..... DATE ...4th September 2006.....