

**MINUTES OF THE BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY
COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER ON
MONDAY 6th NOVEMBER 2006 AT 7.00PM**

Present	Councillor	J. Barnett	
		P. Collins	(Mayor)
		Mrs. P. Desorgher	
		D. Isham	
		G. Loftus	
		H. Mordue	(Chairman)
		R. Newell	
		Mrs. C. Strain-Clark	
		R. Stuchbury	

Clerk to the meeting	Mr. M. J. Skinner, Deputy Town Clerk
In Attendance	Ms. P. J. Heath, Town Clerk

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Councillors Mrs. P. Stevens and Mrs. H. Saul.

329/2006 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Cllr. Mrs. C. Strain-Clark declared a personal interest in item 6.1 “consider request to bury ashes outside a designated plot”.

330/2006 THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last Environment and Property meeting held on 18th September 2006 were ratified by Full Council on 23rd October 2006.

331/2006 ACTION REPORTS AND UPDATES AS PER ATTACHED LIST

The Town Clerk went through the action list that had been circulated with the agenda.

331.1 (274.1) Cllr Stuchbury noted that the waders had been purchased and agreed he would obtain the Allen Keys for the penstock as soon as possible.

ACTION CLLR. STUCHBURY

331.2 (304) Cllr. Newell had been unable to obtain any information about how other Local Councillors deal with abandoned with shopping trolleys.

331.3 (313.1) The Town Clerk would continue to investigate the RSJ Bollard at Bourton Park.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

331.4 (324) Cllr. Newell had not been able to find any policies on web sites relevant to the Cleaner Neighbourhoods and Environment Act. The Town Clerk agreed to contact DEFRA to see if they have a draft policy.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

332/2006 REPORT ON CEMETERY LODGE REFURBISHMENT

332.1 Short term let of rooms in the lodge and agree marketing strategy.

Members had a detailed discussion about the merits of renting the Cemetery Lodge for residential use. The main points made were:

- If the Council was unable to obtain other suitable premises to relocate the office staff during the rebuilding would planning consent be required for short term use of the property as staff office accommodation? However, it would be preferable for the staff to remain in a Town Centre location for ease of public access.
- The general view was that a two bedroom house in Buckingham would command a rent of £600 to £700 pcm.
- Rental of suitable office space would probably cost £1000 to £1200 pcm or about £10,000 a year.

The Town Clerk stated that she had obtained a verbal opinion from AVDC Planning that as office use was for short term only no planning consent was required. She would endeavour to obtain this in writing.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

332.2 Cemetery Lodge Carpets

The Town Clerk reported that a decision was still required on the carpets. The designated councillors had not met. Three quotes had been obtained, one with samples. Cllrs. Newell, Desorgher and Stevens would meet to make a final decision about choice of carpet.

ACTION CLLRS. NEWELL, DESORGHHER AND STEVENS

333/2006 REPORT ON OPERATION OF BRACKLEY ROAD CEMETERY

333.1 The Friends of Brackley Road Cemetery

This organisation had not yet advised the Council that they are legally constituted.

Cllr Isham arrived at 7.25pm during the following item.

333.2 Request to bury ashes outside a designated plot.

Members discussed Mrs. Bartlett's letter with a request to bury her son's ashes outside a designated plot under a Cedar of Lebanon tree opposite the family home. While the request was met with considerable sympathy there was concern there was a danger of setting a precedent in allowing this.

The Town Clerk advised that the burial would be outside a designated plot and that as the maps were not detailed enough it was unclear if the burial site would impinge on an existing grave. It is illegal to reuse graves that have a right of burial.

Following a discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Barnett, and **AGREED** by five votes to none against that this Committee recognises the very exceptional circumstances of this request and as a one-off decision will allow the burial subject to a written agreement; there will not be any kind of memorial or headstone and the ashes will be loose buried immediately below the turf.

334/2006 BASE TENDER DOCUMENT FOR CEMETERY MAINTENANCE

The Town Clerk thanked Cllr. Mrs. C. Strain-Clark for reading the document which had been circulated prior to meeting. In response to a question the Town Clerk explained that the Base Tender Document was a specification for the work to be carried out at the cemetery. Members discussed the length of the contract.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, and seconded by Cllr. Barnett, and **AGREED** that the contract should be for five years, with an appropriate break clause after three years.

335/2006 CHANDOS PARK

335.1 Bowls Club Lease

Members were informed that a draft lease had been prepared based on the one the Council has with the Tennis Club. Currently the Bowls Club has a licence on a year to year basis.

Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **AGREED** to accept the draft lease as circulated prior to the meeting..

A suggested rental figure of £2000 p.a. had been included in the lease.

Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **AGREED** to charge £2000 per year for 2007 – 2008 and 2008-2009 as per the circulated lease.

The lease is to be sent to the Bowls Club for agreement.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

335.2 Repair to Pavilion Roof

Six builders had been asked to quote for the work required. Only one quote had been received, details of which were circulated to members at the meeting. Members felt unable to proceed on the basis of having received only one quote. Members noted that Standing Orders required that if work was expected to cost over £500 then three quotes were required.

It was agreed to obtain at least one more quote and that the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Chairman be authorised to proceed with appointing contractors to carry out the necessary work.

Proposed by Cllr. Isham, and seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **AGREED** to give the Town Clerk designated authority upon receipt of further quotes to arrange the work to be carried out up to a value of £3500, in consultation with the Chairman.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

335.3 Repairs to Heater

The Town Clerk provided some background information. She had been informed that the heater was not working. John Collins (an electrical contractor) had been asked to investigate. He had waived his normal callout charge. After considerable time had been spent investigating it was found that a circuit breaker was faulty. This could be replaced at a cost of about £150. Members asked that he be thanked for his work.

Proposed by Cllr. Isham, and seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **AGREED** that Mr J Collins be asked to replace the circuit breaker at a cost of up to £150.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

335.4 Winter Work to Green and Letter from Chandos Park Bowls Club.

These items were taken together. Both the Town Clerk and the Chairman had contacted the Bowls Club. The meeting felt that the Bowls Club referring the matter to John Bercow MP was inappropriate and unhelpful.

Two quotes had been received by the Town Clerk, from Pure Turf and Avonmore. Members expressed concern that some of the work now required should have been carried out by the Club using equipment which had been purchased for the Club to their specification.

The Bowls Club had apparently instructed Avonmore to carry out the winter maintenance to the green, without the Council's authority, at their expense.

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that that the Bowls Club owed a total of £2700 made up of £900 for September 2005 to March 2006 plus £1800 for the current financial year.

The Chairman clarified that the two items (non payment of rent due and the work required to the green and the pavilion) were separate.

The Chairman reminded Members that:

- The Bowls Green and Clubhouse are Council assets. The Council has a duty to safeguard the value in that property.
- The Council has a duty to ensure that monies due are paid.
- Winter maintenance is our responsibility.

He was especially disappointed at the Club's current attitude, as in previous years they had said that they were very pleased with the winter maintenance work carried out by the Council.

The Council cannot accept responsibility for work the Club has commissioned.

The Town Clerk reported that she had received a phone call today from Roger Taylor of RTM, who supplied the lawn mower and accessories. He had said that the Club had booked a winter service, for which the Council would pay.

335.5 Work required to drainage ditches

Two quotations for work to the ditches had been received: Avonmore had quoted £15000 for the work; Sports Mark had submitted a quote that was not easy to understand, but if correctly

understood £12,000. The committee would look to include an amount in 2007/2008 budget request.

The Chairman agreed to write to the club inviting them to a meeting to discuss the difficulties.

ACTION CLLR MORDUE

335.6 Report on subsidence of the path adjacent to the Toilets.

The Town Clerk reported to the meeting that subsidence had been found at the above location. The path will need to be lifted or drainage installed. The Town Clerk was instructed to obtain advice and prices.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

336/2006 BOURTON PARK

It was reported that bollards had been installed at the entrance to Bourton Park adjacent to Jarman Close. The Town Clerk would contact Buckinghamshire County Council to obtain the keys.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

337/2006 WEEKLY PLAYGROUND SAFETY REPORTS

The Safety Surfacing was covered by algae. In view of the immediate risk the Town Clerk had instructed the contractor to clean this off, as required under Health and Safety rules.

337.1 Meadway Gate

Following the amendment to the recommendation at the Council Meeting it was proposed by Cllr Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr C Strain-Clark and AGREED unanimously to vire £800 from 4601 cemetery to cover this expense.

338/2006 REPORT ON BUCKINGAM TOWN AUDIT

Members agreed that a footway inspection was required. Cllrs. Isham and Desorgher would arrange the inspection with County Highways.

338.1 The Reporting Members

Members agreed to look at the distribution of the Audit between Councillors after the May 2007 election.

339/2006 COMMUNITY PLAN

Cllr. Barnett updated Members on progress. Contact had been made with Bucks.CC who had identified an appropriate consultant. A works specification was being prepared, and AVDC and the Environment Agency would be contacted to enable completion by next summer. The Town Clerk had met with Mr. Gadd and Mr. Godwin to discuss the financial procedure for the Circular Walk Project and the Town Clerk reported that a draft procedure had been prepared that covers the financial aspects which would be presented to the Finance and Administration Committee for agreement.

The Community Plan group would welcome additional Councillors attending meetings.

340/2006 WAR MEMORIAL

The Chairman had received a telephone call from Colin Armstrong of the Royal British Legion concerning the state of the War Memorial, the copper beech nearby, and that the flower pots had been stolen.

The Town Clerk reported that the tree is a Coronation Beech, and would require specialist treatment. The flower troughs that had been reported stolen had now been replaced; they had been used to damage vehicles in the area so had been removed by the church.

The Caretaker had been instructed to remove the chains, which will be painted as would the connecting rings. The war memorial would be cleaned by the caretaker prior to Remembrance Day. As agreed previously by the committee, the Deputy Clerk was updating the quotes received to replace the bollards, and specialist clean all the memorial and carry out maintenance work to the engraving, before submitting a grant request.

Cllr. Cadd (in a letter read to the meeting) suggested putting in a kerb. This had been rejected by Highways in the past.

Cllr. Newell asked why the Royal British Legion saw the Beech Tree as a problem.

ACTION DEPUTY CLERK

Cllrs. Newell and C. Strain-Clark left the meeting.

341/2006 BUS SHELTER

The Town Clerk reported that the shelter had been ordered and that a price for the etched Town Council logo into each end panel was being obtained.

342/2006 RESPONSE FROM BALC ON THE RIGHT OF WAY CHANDOS ROAD/STATION ROAD

BALC had advised that there was nothing that could be done.

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that there were two kinds of permitted access. Designated Rights of Way are established by long uninterrupted usage (at least 20 years). Permissive Rights of Access are with the permission of the landowner. Cllr. Collins suggested writing to the Ramblers Association to see what they advise.

343/2006 DETAILS OF CONTACT WITH WILLOWLAKE PROPERTIES LTD

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that David Hill, Managing Director of Willowlake Properties, had sent a message saying that he would be interested in talking to us. However, considerable difficulties had been experienced in making contact to arrange a meeting. The Town Clerk will continue to pursue the matter.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

344/2006 QUOTATIONS FOR TREE WORK – RAILWAY WALK.

A quote of £985 had been received from Bartlett Tree Experts, an approved tree specialist, for the work required by the Tree Analysis; further work would be required in 2008, 2009 and 2010, quoted at £560.

Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **AGREED** to accept the quote from Bartlett Tree Experts, and place remaining phases into the Budget request for 2007/2008.

345/2006 BREAK-IN AT MORETON ROAD STORE

The Town Clerk reported that the break-in happened on the day of the River Rinse. Some Town Council equipment had been taken including a strimmer, and the Caretaker's personal shopping. There was damage to the cage and following a stocktake by the Friends of Maids Moreton Avenue it was established about half their garden equipment such as shears had been stolen. The strimmer had been recovered and the police were investigating further. Members asked whether anything could be done to improve security. The Town Clerk explained that as there was no sign of a forced entry; there was a question whether the door had been left open by a BTCV member.

346/2006 PARKING IN STRATFORD ROAD LAY-BY

Following complaints from residents the Police and Buckinghamshire County Council had been contacted. The County Council would improve signage and markings to show that it was not a rest area.

347/2006 INVITATION TO THE AVDC 2006 DESIGN AWARDS

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that unfortunately the Cemetery Lodge refurbishment had not won an award. No members were able to represent the Council at the awards evening.

348/2006 UPDATE ON THE AGREEMENT WITH BCC FOR DEVOLVED SERVICES

The Town Clerk informed Members that the agreement - with some slight amendments from the document agreed at the Council meeting, minute number 2858 - had now been agreed and was ready to sign. BCC had queried the breakdown of the hourly recharge of £35 as Chesham only charged £19. The Members discussed the breakdown and how this had been calculated by the Town Clerk in the original recommendation at £25. It was established that in agreeing £35 Members had included the cost of the quad bike twice.

Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **RECOMMENDED** that this Council amends the resolution taken under minute no 2858, as per Standing Order no 12, due to additional information received by the Environment & Property Committee to show the hourly rate recharge to Bucks. County Council for devolved services is £25 per hour.

It was **AGREED** by the Mayor and Members present that due to the deadline of commencement of the devolved services this should be placed on the interim agenda.

349/2006 UPDATE ON BUDGETS FOR 2006/2007 & 2007/2008

It was noted that the main item of overspend was on professional fees for the extension, and it would be necessary to vire funds to cover this.

It was put to the Committee that this was the time when next year's budget was to be considered, and to do so it was necessary to identify items for which costings were needed.

Suggestions were made including:

- Adult exercise equipment in Bourton Park.
- Surfaces in some of the play areas.
- Toilets in Cornwall Meadow.
- More Dog Bins? No requests had been made.
- Bus Shelter in Mount Pleasant.
- Caretaker's equipment and tools.

The Chairman asked Members to contact the office if they wished anything to go on the wish list for consideration.

350/2006 CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS

350.1 Tree Survey

A letter had been received from AVDC offering to survey our 1165 trees for a sum of £3500. There was considerable surprise at the number of trees Members thought were on Town Council land, but the meeting felt this service might be useful.

350.2 Playground Equipment Seminar

A letter had been received from Record Playground Equipment inviting the Council to attend a seminar. No one was able to attend.

350.3 Illegal Entrance Rear of 55 Nelson Street

In response to a letter sent by the Town Clerk, the Council had been advised by the occupier that the house had been broken into and the panel of the Church fence had been damaged during the break-in. The occupier had been advised to contact their insurance company to arrange a replacement panel.

Furthermore the occupiers were parking an untaxed van on the Church green area. The van had been reported to the Police and to the DVLA.

In accordance with standing order 1(d) Members and the officiating clerk agreed to continue the meeting beyond 10pm.

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.

CHAIRMANH. Mordue..... DATE11th Dcember 2006