

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 29th MAY 2007**

<u>PRESENT</u>	Councillor	T. Bloomfield Mrs. G. Collins P. Collins Mrs. P. Desorgher D. Isham G. Loftus A. Mahi H. Mordue P. Stevens R. Stuchbury M. Try W. Whyte
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Town Clerk Ms. P. Heath

The Mayor took the chair for the election of the Chairman.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors R. Newell and M. Smith.

408/2007 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Proposed by Cllr. Desorgher, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **AGREED** that Cllr. Isham be elected as Chairman of the Environment and Property Committee.

Cllr. Isham took over chairing the meeting.

409/2007 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Proposed by Cllr. Desorgher, seconded by Cllr. Collins, and **AGREED** that Cllr. Newell should be Vice Chairman of the Environment and Property Committee.

410/2007 DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no declarations of interest for items on the agenda

*Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury, and **AGREED** that item 8.1 on the agenda "presentation by Friends of Buckingham Cemetery" be heard next.*

*Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Isham, and **AGREED** that Standing Orders be suspended to enable Mr T. Webster to address the Committee.*

411/2007 RECEIVE A PRESENTATION BY THE FRIENDS OF BRACKLEY ROAD CEMETERY ON THE WORK OF THE GROUP AND SUGGESTIONS ON HOW THE FRIENDS COULD WORK WITH BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Paperwork from Mr. Webster, Chairman of the Friends of Brackley Road Cemetery, had been circulated with the agenda. Mr Webster explained about the history of the Friends and the current set-up of the group. The Friends have a constitution and insurance, a copy of which was circulated at the meeting; Mr Webster would provide a copy to the Clerk.

Ideas on how the Friends Group could work with the Town Council had been circulated with the paperwork and Members felt that the Group could be beneficial to the maintenance of the Cemetery subject to control on the work programme; this was further expanded at the meeting.

The Friends intend to publicise the work they do and it was confirmed that Buckingham Town Council would be given copies of all the publications, if possible prior to their release. The Friends Group is funded by donations and subscriptions.

Members thanked Mr Webster for attending. Mr Webster left the meeting.

*Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Isham, and **AGREED** to re-instate Standing Orders.*

Following a short discussion it was agreed to place on the next Committee agenda the Co-option of a representative from the Friends of Brackley Road Cemetery on to the Environment and Property Committee.

ACTION THE CLERK

412/2007 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Members accepted the minutes of the last meeting held on 10th April 2007, which were ratified at the Council meeting held on 14th May 2007.

413/2007 ACTION REPORTS AND UPDATES ON ITEMS NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

The Town Clerk explained the reasoning behind the Action List and how it worked for the benefit of new members.

313.1 – the Town Clerk explained the problems experienced in getting a suitable specification for quotation to install an RSJ in the car park entrance at Bourton Park. Cllr. Stuchbury handed the Town Clerk a specification, agreed with Cllr. Isham, at the meeting. The Town Clerk, having quickly read the document, explained that the specification was not detailed or specific enough for a quotation. A question was raised as to the suitability of Cllrs. Stuchbury and Isham to draw up the specification, the Member feeling that in view of the potential Health and Safety risk the specification should be drawn up by a qualified engineer. The Clerk was instructed to use the specification provided to install an RSJ post at the entrance to Bourton Park Car Park

ACTION THE CLERK

414/2007 REPORT ON CEMETERY LODGE

414.1 Receive an update on the carpeting of Cemetery Lodge

Cllr. Stevens reported that she had met with the representative from Allied Carpets on site to measure the building for the formal quotation. The representative explained that the stairs were such that a normal fit was not possible and that each stair would have to be covered individually; this would increase the price originally quoted by approximately £300. The use of laminated flooring was questioned by a Member. Cllr. Stevens explained that the Council had originally sought to carpet the main rooms of the building but had changed the specification to laminated flooring downstairs as they felt it would be better if the lodge was used as offices; it was noted that castor chairs should not be used on laminated flooring without protection from the chair skidding. Cllr. Stevens reported that during her visits to the lodge in March and April she had noticed several faults and had compiled a snagging list which she showed to the Mayor at the meeting. The Town Clerk explained that the project had been over seen by the Council employed Architect who had signed off the work at the end of 2006. The Clerk would contact the architect to discuss the points raised by Cllr. Stevens once the snagging list had been given to the office.

ACTION CLLR. STEVENS/THE TOWN CLERK

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Stevens, and **AGREED** to accept the increase in the quotation by Allied Carpets to £2895.

414.2 Receive response from HMRC re the VAT claw-back on the rental of the lodge

Members had been circulated with the agenda a copy of the original letter of request sent by the Town Clerk and the responses received from the VAT office. The Town Clerk explained the background; Members felt this should be considered in greater detail when discussing the item under confidential business on the proposed letting of the Lodge.

415/2007 REPORTS ON CHANDOS PARK

415.1 Rateable value review for the Chandos Park Pavilion & Bowling Green; discuss the financial implication arising from the revaluation

Members were informed of the result of the revaluation of the Pavilion and the Green by the valuation office. Although the overall rateable value had dropped the Council had a bill of £2,563 for the backdated rates and the current year. The Bowls Club had received a refund of the rates they had paid since 2005, but since the Town Council can not claim a charitable body discount or small business discount then the rates due since 2005 is higher than those paid by the Bowls Club. If the Bowls Club took over the paying of the rates they could claim the 50% charitable discount; this would depend on the agreement of the lease.

415.2 Letter from Mr. J. Bercow in respect of Chandos Park Play area

A copy of Mr Bercow's letter had been circulated with the agenda, Members noted his comments and that the play areas are checked weekly and the annual check has just been done. Members discussed the programme for phased replacement of old equipment over and above the Section 106 agreement money. It was agreed that a pictorial record of the equipment be compiled with pictures taken at regular intervals. It was confirmed that the Caretaker would be sanding down and painting the equipment in the summer/autumn period.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK/CARETAKER

415.3 Receive details of examples of management agreements/lease agreements for Bowls Clubs with local authorities.

The history of the lease and license was explained for the benefit of new members. Members discussed the examples of agreements used by other local authorities with bowls clubs. It was **AGREED** that a full discussion be held at the next Committee meeting on the future of the pavilion and a copy of all relevant papers from 2002 onwards be supplied before the meeting. The membership numbers and criteria should be requested from the Bowls Club. The Members noted that currently the Club has approximately 50 members.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

415.4 Receive and discuss the quotations received for the renewal of the footpath and agree the contract.

Members were informed that of the 3 companies asked to quote on the repair of the footpath in Chandos Park only 1 had responded. In response to a question it was explained that the specification for tender had been drawn up by the District Council's Engineer and agreed by the Committee; this item was deferred to enable a new Councillor to read the specification.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

415.5 To receive a report from Cllr. Mordue on his meeting with Mr. Taylor of Buckingham Town Football Club.

Cllr. Mordue reported on the meeting he had had with Mr. Taylor of Buckingham Town Football Club concerning the vandalism. Members noted the comments made by Mr. Taylor and agreed to ask again if the Football Club will allow for nets to be erected on their side of the fence to catch any stray balls from the Kick-wall which Mr Taylor claims are causing the problems. Members commented that the fence should be replaced with open mesh at a suitable height which would prevent the intermittent damage along its length; the fence is owned by AVDC. It was **AGREED** to obtain details of the type of nets that could be used behind the kick wall and cost.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

Members agreed that the following 2 items that were not on the agenda could be heard and discussed.

415.6 Chandos Park Toilets Locking Up

Cllr. Bloomfield declared a prejudicial interest and left the room.

Members were informed that Cllr. Bloomfield prior to the election had been locking up the toilets in Chandos Park every evening in return for an honorarium. Since the

election Mrs. Bloomfield has been undertaking the locking up. It was **AGREED** that Mrs. Bloomfield be thanked for her work and asked to continue until a new person could be found. It was **AGREED** to look at the cleaning of the Toilets in Chandos Park with a view of employing someone to clean and maintain the toilets on a daily basis.

415.7 Sprinkler System Bowls Green.

Members were informed that the sprinkler system at the Bowls Club had failed; the company commissioned to do the spring and autumn start up and drain down had quoted to repair the system. The Clerk explained for the benefit of new members the history behind the sprinkler system and the commissioning of a company to do the work. It was explained that without the sprinkler system the green can not be maintained.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Mordue, that a one-off payment is made to repair the sprinkler system on Chandos Bowling Green; this was defeated by 4 votes to 5.

The Chairman moved on to next business.

A point of order was raised by Cllr. Whyte that this item should be discussed further; the Chairman ruled that a proposition had been made, seconded and voted on with no amendments therefore no further discussion would be held.

416/2007 REPORTS ON BOURTON PARK

416.1 Discuss the mink population in Buckingham and the project to identify the numbers of mink in Bourton and Chandos Parks; to receive a verbal report on the cost of the monitoring and to agree if a grant for this should be applied for in the Council's name.

Copies of the paperwork concerning the project and mink rafts had been circulated with the agenda. Members were informed that the monitoring rafts would cost approximately £50. Cllr. Stuchbury explained the history of the project and the environmental benefit of the reduction in the number of mink in and around Buckingham. Buckingham Society had sent a letter of support to the Council for the project and offered to assist.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Stevens, and **AGREED** to apply for a grant up to £500 to purchase monitoring rafts and traps.

ACTION TOWN CLERK

417/2007 COUNCIL OFFICES EXTENSION/COUNCIL CHAMBER ALTERATION

417.1 Discuss and agree alterations to enable the staff to use the Council Chamber for office space

The Clerk explained that following comments made at the Full Council meeting on 14th May 2007, she had obtained costs to make the Chamber usable as office space. It would be approximately £1500 to install electrical points, telephone connection point cables and a wireless system as the desks would not be ideally situated for a wired connection; the staff had been waiting a decision by the Council on its meetings location before moving.

Members discussed the costs and whether it was practical to move all the staff into the Chamber. The Clerk explained the logistical problems that would be experienced by splitting the staff into 2 rooms, explaining that it was not practical with the current infrastructure. Members agreed that staff working environment was a priority and should be the first thing resolved by the new 'Town Council Premises Committee'. The Clerk would contact HSE re the location of the photocopier adjacent to staff members. Cllr. Try volunteered to advise about the moving of the phone points.

Proposed by Cllr. Mordue, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury and **AGREED** 11 votes to 0 that the Town Clerk is allowed to spend up to £500 to enable 1 member of staff to work in the Council Chamber.

An amendment proposed by Cllr. Collins, seconded by Cllr. Bloomfield, was defeated by 7 votes to 4 to move all 3 members of staff into the Chamber at a cost of £1500.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

*Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Mordue, and **AGREED** that as it appeared that the agenda might not be completed before 10 pm agenda item no 23, the allocation of Members to the Town Council Premises Committee, should be heard next.*

418/2007 AGREE MEMBERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE WHO WISH TO SIT ON THE TOWN COUNCIL PREMISES COMMITTEE.

It was **AGREED** that the following Members would form part of the Town Council Premises Committee: Cllrs. Isham, Stevens, Mordue, Stuchbury, Whyte.

419/2007 RECEIVE THE WEEKLY SAFETY REPORTS ON PLAY AREAS

There were no items to report from the weekly safety checks; details of the safety checks were explained for the benefit of new members.

420/2007 RECEIVE ANY REPORT FROM BUCKINGHAM TOWN AUDIT AND ANY ACTION REQUIRED

It was agreed to set up a working group to reassign the areas for the Town Audit – the working group to be Cllrs. Isham, Try, and Bloomfield.

ACTION CLLRS. ISHAM, TRY, BLOOMFIELD

421/2007 RECEIVE UPDATE ON THE COMMUNITY PLAN INITIATIVES

In the absence of any representative of the Community Plan Steering Group the Clerk explained about the signs, bins, seat, and dog bins being put in by the Community Plan on the circular walk.

A copy of the design of the bench, some of which would be on the Town Council property, was circulated at the meeting; it shows a black mesh seat with no arms and a

sloping base. The group are planning to put in 7 dog bins and 7 waste bins neither of which match the current street furniture used by the Town Council. There appears to be no provision in the Community Plan Budget for the emptying of the bins and as no request had been made of the Council there was no provision in the Council's budget for the emptying of the bins. The Clerk would establish from the Community Plan Group the provision for bin emptying and future maintenance.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

422/2007 RECEIVE REPORT ON THE WORK UNDER DEVOLVED SERVICES FROM BUCKS. COUNTY COUNCIL

The Clerk explained, for the benefit of new members, the history of devolved services and the working mechanisms. It was noted that the service was working well and appeared to be making a major difference in the Town.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Stevens, and **AGREED** to look at the man-hours being used on the current service, and those required should further services be devolved, as a basis for a discussion as to the employment of a second Caretaker at a core time of 12 hours.

423/2007 DISCUSS THE MOTION RAISED UNDER MINUTE N^{OS.} 2898 AND 2899 ON 5TH FEB. 2007 MINUTES, THE MOTION TO REVERSE 2899 ON 26TH MARCH 2007, AND THE COMMENTS MADE AT THE COUNCIL MEETING ON 14TH MAY 2007

Copies of the minutes relating to motions had been circulated with the agenda. It was confirmed that should the Town Council Premises Committee recommend and the Council agree to proceed with the extension then the provision of toilets would be included in the discussions with the architects.

424/2007 LETTER RECEIVED FROM SAM STUCHBURY

Cllr. Stuchbury declared a personal interest as a relative of the correspondent.

Members discussed the letter and points raised by Master Stuchbury. It was **AGREED** that the Council request the use of a Speed Indication Device on the Bourton Road; members of the Committee volunteered to man the instrument when installed. It was also **AGREED** to look at dog bin provision in the area and possibly use some of the 7 being purchased by the Community Plan Group. Members requested that "Beware Children" Signs should be installed by the County Council

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK/ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

425/2007 RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF AN ALARM CALL OUT ON 05.05.07 AT 21:50. AND REVIEW CALL OUT PROCEDURE

Members were notified of the false alarm call out. It was **AGREED** that the list of numbers supplied to the Police and the Alarm Service should be - the Caretaker, Cllr. Bloomfield, the Mayor, the Town Clerk, and Cllr. Stuchbury in that order.

ACTION THE TOWN CLERK

426/2007 DISCUSS THE REPLACEMENT OF A SEAT AT THE JUNCTION OF LONDON ROAD AND CHANDOS ROAD BY THE BUS STOP, THE CURRENT SEAT BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN INSTALLED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Proposed by Cllr. Bloomfield, seconded by Cllr. Try, and **AGREED** to purchase and install a seat at the junction of London Road and Chandos Road by the bus stop on London Road.

The Chairman deferred the rest of the meeting as the time was 9.58 pm. The Members and the presiding Clerk were not asked if they wish to continue. The following items will be heard at the start of the next Environment and Property Committee meeting.

- **MIN NO 324 – TO RECEIVE AND AGREE THE ENFORCEMENT POLICY IN RESPECT OF FIXED PENALTY NOTICES, ISSUED UNDER THE CLEANER NEIGHBOURHOOD ACT 2005. – COPY ATTACHED**
- **DISCUSS THE PURCHASE OF VERNEY CLOSE LAND FROM BUCKS. COUNTY COUNCIL**
- **DISCUSS THE CURRENT POSITION FOR 2007/2008 BUDGET**
- **CHAIRMAN'S ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

The following items will be heard under section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960 which excludes members of the Public due to the confidential and financial nature of the business to be discussed

- **TO DISCUSS AND AGREE A RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL OF THE LEVEL OF RENT REQUIRED IF THE LODGE IS LET AS A TIED COTTAGE FOR THE CEMETERY MANAGER**

Meeting closed at 9.58 pm.

CHAIRMAND R Isham..... DATE2/7/07.....