

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD  
ON MONDAY 4<sup>th</sup> AUGUST 2008 at 7pm**

<b><u>PRESENT</u></b>	Councillor	T. Bloomfield Mrs. G. Collins P. Collins Mrs. P. Desorgher P. Hirons D. Isham R. Lehmann H. Mordue (Mayor) M. Smith (Chairman) R. Stuchbury M. Try W. Whyte
	Town Clerk	Ms. P. Heath MILCM
	Guest	Ms. S. Le BTCV Project Manager

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors A. Mahi, G. Loftus, Ms R. Newell, and Mrs. P. Stevens.

**578/2008 DECLARATION OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

Cllr. Hirons declared personal interest in agenda item 11.1 concerning S<sup>t</sup>. Peter & S<sup>t</sup>. Paul's Church.

**579/2008 RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Members approved the minutes of the last meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008, which had been ratified at the Council meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2008.

**580/2008 RECEIVE ACTION REPORTS AND UPDATES ON ITEMS NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA AS PER ATTACHED LIST**

Members noted the action list which had been circulated with the agenda and received reports on the following items:

380 Footpath Inspection - this was now being dealt with under the Town Audit and had been removed from the action list.

443 Cleaner Neighbourhood Act – an initial meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> August had to be rescheduled due to the County Show; once a new meeting date is offered Councillors Newell, Smith, Stevens, Stuchbury and Whyte would be contacted by telephone.

433.2 Cemetery extension – details of a consultant had been obtained and appointment was being sought to discuss consultancy fees.

433.2 Spoil heap levelling – Mrs. Stuchbury had been unable to provide a contact, but the Clerk had spoken to Grendon Prison who were looking at the feasibility of using their work force.

486 Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs) - Members had been circulated with the sign required in the town centre which contains the legally required text due to the new licensing laws; this had been checked and agreed by AVDC legal department. Following discussion, Members felt that AVDC should be invited to provide 5 signs for the Town Centre; if the invitation is declined then the Town Clerk and Chairman would order 3 signs, as circulated, with the Buckingham Town Council logo.

543 Bowls Club sprinkler - The Town Clerk explained that the Bowls Club had asked for the sprinkler heads to be replaced while they dealt with the electrics and the pipes. Members asked for a specialist report before any work was agreed.

528.3 Penstock repair - Cllr. Stuchbury, who had been working with the ground staff, explained the replacement component that was required. It was **AGREED** that Cllr. Hirons look at the brass assembly which had broken, with a view to making a replacement.

#### **ACTION CLLR. HIRONS**

544.2 Bourton Road car park - Members were informed that the Ground staff would be installing the speed humps within the next few days.

545 Badgers Way dog bin - The Chairman outlined the history of the dog bin on Badgers Way. Following discussion, it was agreed to move the bin from opposite the shop to a location adjacent to Willow Drive and Lime Avenue.

555 Public toilet cleaning - Members were informed that no company had responded to requests for “expression of interest” in a contract to clean Buckingham Public Toilets.

573 Fire Risk Assessments – these had now been completed at Cemetery Lodge and the Chapels, with only minor actions recommended. It was agreed that the Bowls and Tennis Clubs be asked to complete their own.

577.2 London Road seat - Members were pleased to note that a new seat had been installed.

### **581/2008 TO RECEIVE ITEMS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF CHANDOS PARK AND ITS FACILITIES**

The Town Clerk reported that the cover on the pump cupboard in Chandos Park had been reported as damaged; it was **AGREED** that the Ground staff be asked to repair the damaged cover

#### **ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

Members discussed the poor condition of the play area in Chandos Park, which was run down and in need of refurbishment, although it was noted that the annual safety report had not found the play area unsafe. It was felt that this should be a priority area for the spending of S106 monies, currently held by AVDC and due to the Town Council in respect of recent developments.

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Isham, and **AGREED** to commission a safety/play audit from RoSPA at a cost of £100 per play area.

#### **ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Isham, and **AGREED** to designate authority to the Chairman, Vice Chairman, the Mayor and the Town Clerk to make decisions, based on the advice of the AVDC Play Officer and RoSPA, concerning

the refurbishment, repair and maintenance of the Chandos Park play area in order to rectify errors raised in the safety report to be commissioned from RoSPA.

**ACTION CLLR. SMITH, CLLR. ISHAM, CLLR. MORDUE, THE TOWN CLERK**  
581.1/2008 To discuss request for painting of Chandos Park Pavilion

Members were unclear what items needed painting, as there are very limited areas that require external painting and the internal walls were the responsibility of the Bowls Club under their lease. The Town Clerk was asked to seek clarification before Members responded to the request for a £100 donation towards decorating costs.

**582/2008 TO RECEIVE ITEMS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF BOURTON PARK AND ITS FACILITIES**

The Town Clerk advised Members that she had received an email asking if there was a by-law requiring dogs in the parks to be on leads. Following discussion as to whether there was a problem with dogs being off the lead, during which several opposing views were expressed, it was **AGREED** to seek further information about the alleged problem.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

**583/2008 TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM THE PARKS POLICY GROUP**

There having been no meeting of the Parks Policy Group since the last Committee meeting, no report was available. Cllr Whyte expressed concern that comments made at the 16<sup>th</sup> June Meeting had not been fully reflected in the Minutes, despite these having been confirmed and ratified on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2008. The Town Clerk was requested to incorporate the update points into the Action list.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

*Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Isham and **AGREED** to suspend standing orders to allow Ms Susan Le, BTCV Wildlife Project Manager, to address the meeting.*

**584/2008 TO RECEIVE REPORT FROM BTCV WILDLIFE PROJECT MANAGER – SUSAN LE**

584.1 To receive feedback on the Community Meeting held on the 08/07/08 regarding Bourton Park & Heartlands Park; the way forward.

Ms. Le gave Members a detailed breakdown of the history of the project and the work being undertaken with schools and organisations in the town to promote wildlife and environment conservation. The Otter project is proving successful and it is hoped to be able to provide the data to the Town Council by the next meeting.

The latest initiative, following a public meeting on 8 July attended by over 30 residents, is to form a Friends of Bourton Park and the Heartlands. Members discussed the results of the consultation and the priority list compiled as a result. It was noted that there needed to be clearly defined responsibility and procedures for the work delegated to ensure that any BTCV project was in compliance with the Town Council's Parks Policy. Ms Le asked for a meeting to discuss the overlap

between the Parks Policy and the BTCV Priority List as BTCV does have some funding ring-fenced for projects that could be used to further these items.

584.2 To discuss potential practical conservation task programme

Ms. Le explained that she was keen to harness the enthusiasm of the volunteers and proposed undertaking 4 projects in Bourton Park and Heartlands over the next few months, the intention being to then review the effectiveness of the volunteers and decide on the forthcoming year's programme in December/January.

The 4 projects were rustic seating, wild flower seeding, bat and bird box making and installation, and wild hedge lying. Members discussed the proposed projects and gave agreement in principal subject to a meeting to discuss them in detail in respect of timing, location, the style of seating and strain of wild flower seeds. Policy regarding the wildlife paddocks was discussed as these are scheduled to be cut twice a year, in August/September when the seed heads had dropped, and in November just prior to Bonfire Night, with cuttings being left on the ground as grass collection had ceased during the contract management by AVDC

584.3 To discuss the objectives of Buckingham Community Wildlife Project and how it may overlap with objectives of BTC's Parks Policy, with opportunities for a new Friends group to help deliver/implement actions

It was felt that a meeting should be held to look at joint working to carry both BTCV and the Parks Policy forward.

*Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, seconded by Cllr. Isham and **AGREED** to reinstate standing orders.*

*Proposed by Cllr. Stuchbury, Seconded by Cllr. Isham and **AGREED** to move agenda item 20 - the c- option of Ms Le - to be heard next.*

**585/2008 TO DISCUSS AND RECOMMEND THE CO-OPTION OF MS SUSAN LE, BUCKINGHAM WILDLIFE PROJECT MANAGER, ON TO THE ENVIRONMENT & PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

Proposed by Cllr. Isham, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury and **AGREED** by 11 votes to 1 to co-opt Ms Susan Le, the BTCV Wildlife Project Officer, to the Environment and Property Committee, with immediate effect.

It was **AGREED** that the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Cllr. Whyte, Cllr. Stuchbury and Cllr. Hirons should meet with Susan Le to discuss the joint projects of Buckingham Town Council's Parks Policy and Friends of Bourton Park and Heartlands priority list. [Clerks note - the meeting is scheduled for 3pm on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> August]

*Cllr. Mordue left the meeting*

**586/2008 TO RECEIVE THE WEEKLY MAINTENANCE REPORT AND AGREE ACTION PROPOSED**

Members noted the weekly maintenance reports.

## **587/2008 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT ENHANCEMENT**

Cllr. Mrs. G. Collins reported that this had been overtaken following the decision to recommend an audit of play areas by RoSPA and AVDC.

## **588/2008 TO LOOK AT THE PROVISION OF PLANTS AND BULBS IN OPEN SPACES UNDER BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBILITY**

### 588.1 at S<sup>t</sup> Peter & S<sup>t</sup> Paul's Church

The Town Clerk had received a request from residents in Well Street for a bush such as a Holly or Berberis to be planted at the junction of Moat House wall and the Iron Railings, to prevent people accessing the garage roofs and back gardens of the residents. Following discussion Members decided that, due to possible root damage to the retaining wall, they could not support any planting in that area.

### 588.2 in Parks and Open Spaces

This had been discussed under Minute 584.2 above. Members agreed in principal that the meeting between Council representatives with Ms Le agree the details. It was suggested that Railway Walk be planted with countryside plants such as native bluebells and cowslips.

*Ms Le left the meeting*

## **589/2008 TO RECEIVE REPORT ON BRACKLEY ROAD CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION**

The Town Clerk reported that the number of burials had been higher than anticipated at Precept. There is an increasing tendency for families to arrange their own burial of ashes and not through an undertaker. The Town Clerk asked the Council to formulate a policy and procedure in respect of DIY burials as they require more administration time; this was agreed, with the Clerk preparing a draft for the next Committee meeting.

### **ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

#### To discuss the legal implications of the maintenance of the Cemetery in respect of kerb stone edged graves.

The Town Clerk explained the legal position of the Council as landowners in respect of those graves with kerb stones. When the right of burial deed is issued it acts as a form of lease in that the named person becomes responsible for maintaining the grave and all items on the grave. The Council can do nothing to the grave without the deed holders' permission unless it can prove a health and safety hazard. The Council's current policy is that when the grass is of a sufficient height to cover the kerb stones then the Town Council will give an order to cut the grass and arrange for the Friends of Brackley Road Cemetery to assist in the clearance of the long grass.

In response to comments made by a Member the Town Clerk further explained that self-sown trees are being removed from the Cemetery on a phased programme with this year being the final year.

Proposed by Cllr. Lehmann, seconded by Cllr. P. Collins, and **AGREED** by a vote of 6 to 4 to continue the current policy in respect of the kerbed graves.

It was also **AGREED** to seek professional advice from Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Managers on the removal of kerb stones in the old part of the cemetery, where grave deed rights were for 99 years or more.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

To discuss the provision of watering cans in the Cemetery

Following a discussion on the replacement of watering cans and the use of plastic bottles in the Cemetery, it was agreed that a formal notice be placed at the entrance to the Cemetery and by the extension water pipe, stating that, due to repeated losses, watering cans would no longer be replaced, that the provision of these and other tools were the responsibility of those tending graves, and that all plastic bottles were to be removed.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

It was **AGREED** to place water provision in the Cemetery on the next agenda

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

**590/2008 TO RECEIVE THE BUCKINGHAM TOWN AUDIT REPORT AND AGREE ANY ACTION PROPOSED**

Copies of the Town Audit had been circulated with the agenda. Town Council representatives who had attended the last Buckingham Partnership Meeting reported that comments had been made by both Principal Authorities concerning the continuing listing of items after reasons had been given why the fault would not be rectified. Members agreed that the Council would continue to list such items to remind the Principal Authorities that they need to budget for future repair/maintenance of the listed items.

Concern was expressed over some of the comments that had been made at the Partnership meeting. The Town Clerk was asked to expedite production of the minutes in order to clarify the position, and if necessary the Chairman would write to the Principal Authorities, with a copy to Members.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

The Town Clerk reported on the actions taken over the dumping of rubbish at the area to the rear of the former Bright Lights shop, locally known as the bunny run, a short cut between Overn Avenue and West Street. The Environmental Health Officer at AVDC would arrange for the area to be cleared of the rubbish.

**591/2008 TO RECEIVE REPORT ON WORK UNDERTAKEN UNDER THE BUCKS. COUNTY COUNCIL DEVOLVED SERVICES**

The Town Clerk reported on the work undertaken under Devolved Services. It was **AGREED** that a list of completed and proposed work would be circulated with the next agenda.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

Councillors commented on road signs which were hidden by trees and hedges. The Town Clerk explained that under devolved services the Council was responsible for the clearance. The ground staff did visual checks on Mondays, and any areas that Councillors considered were being missed should be reported to the Town Clerk.

**ACTION ALL COUNCILLORS**

In response to a question about the damage caused, the Town Clerk would establish the procedure used by AVDC when vehicles were parked on the verges they were cutting.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

**592/2008 TO RECEIVE DETAILS OF THE MAINTENANCE DE-SILTING FOR THE AREA OF RIVER BETWEEN FORD STREET & LONDON ROAD, AND THE AREA BEYOND BOURTON PARK**

A copy of the letter and map detailing the Environment Agency's project had been circulated with the agenda. The Town Clerk reported on the meeting with the Environment Agency (EA) concerning the ford at Buckingham, where the EA are undertaking silt clearance work. The Clerk had arranged a meeting with the operations team and the biodiversity Environmental Officer to see what work could be done at the ford and to request EA consent and assistance. The officers had explained that they would not give consent for the whole of the ford to be cleared back to base concrete, and to the full width of the road, as this would damage the natural habitat. The EA officers had agreed to reduce the bank silt encroachment, and make good the bank to form a level surface on the right hand side facing downstream. On the left hand side, they agreed that the brambles and nettles could be cleared back to the underlying silt base, and then be planted with suitable shrubs to give a continuing river edge cover. Details of a company specialising in water edge high alluvia soil seeds would be sent to the Town Clerk so that the bank could be reseeded to provide a visual enhancement. The County Council had been approached as this project would be carried out under devolved services, although concern had been expressed that this was not a priority and would use up a disproportionate amount of the designated budget. It was **AGREED** that the Town Clerk proceed with the project as described, keeping the Chairman informed as details were finalised.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

**593/2008 TO RECEIVE AND AGREE A POLICY ON THE CHARGING FOR RECOVERED SHOPPING TROLLEYS**

A hard copy of the emailed draft had been circulated prior to the meeting. Following discussion, the following amendments were agreed and the policy accepted.

**BUCKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL  
ABANDONED TROLLEY POLICY**

New line "the Town Council anticipates that stores will take responsibility for their trolleys"

1. Any trolley outside of the boundaries of the store or adjacent car park may be classed as abandoned.
2. All reports to the Town Council alleging that a trolley has been abandoned will be treated as follows:
  - 2.1 ~~the store~~ The Manager of the store owning the trolley will be contacted by telephone, ~~or email~~ followed up by standard letter, and advised that they have ~~24~~ 12 hours from the time of the call to recover their trolley;
  - 2.2 on the expiration of this time, Buckingham Town Council will recover the trolley and send written confirmation to the store advising them of this fact and advising them that a charge of £25 will be payable on its collection from the Town Council store.
3. If after ~~six~~ two weeks the trolley has not been recovered then it shall be disposed of at the discretion of the Town Council and without any further advice to the store.
4. The policy at paragraphs 2 and 3 above shall not apply if, in the opinion of the Town Clerk or designated officer of the Town Council, the trolley is causing or has the potential to represent a hazard or cause damage.

5. If paragraph 4 above is applicable, the Town Clerk or designated officer of the Town Council will take immediate steps to recover the trolley to the Town Council store and the policy at paragraphs 2.1 to 3 above shall apply.
6. If the recovery fee is not paid within 30 days the matter will be referred for legal action.

**594/2008 TO RECEIVE, DISCUSS AND AGREE FOR RECOMMENDATION THE REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT & PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

It was agreed to **RECOMMEND** to the Council the following terms of reference for the Environment & Property Committee –

DRAFT REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE

**1 Title**

The Standing Committee shall be known as the **Environment and Property Committee** or the **E&P Committee**, and hereinafter referred to as “the Committee”.

**2 Responsibilities**

The Committee is authorised by Buckingham Town Council (hereinafter referred to as “the Council”) to take responsibility for all matters described at items 3 and 4 below.

The Committee is authorised to progress all items within its delegated budget but any other proposed expenditure that has not already been authorised shall first be referred to the Council for approval.

**3 Environment**

Making recommendations to the Council following any investigation or review of any matter relating to the protection and improvement of Buckingham Town environment;  
Ensuring the proper maintenance of all street furniture owned by or supplied by the Council, and to recommend the purchase of additional or replacement street furniture where appropriate. In this context, “street furniture” includes waste bins, dog bins, seating and planters;

Managing all aspects of upkeep and maintenance of Brackley Road Cemetery, Chandos Park, Bourton Park, the Ken Tagg play area, Railway Walk, the Circular Walk, Church Hill, the green at Gawcott, the Town Council offices and any other land or property acquired by the Council;

Liaising with County and District Councils and other relevant agencies on the maintenance of items falling within their remit, including footpaths, pavements, cycle-ways, roads, waterways, horticultural and arboriculture works, play areas, play equipment and areas of open public space.

**4 Property**

Making recommendations to the Council following any investigation or review of any matter relating to the purchase, sale or disposal of land or property;

Obtaining such professional advice as deemed necessary to ensure the protection of the Council in respect of 4.1. above;

Analysing any compulsory purchase proposals and advise the Council accordingly;

Ensuring that any works carried out on the Council’s behalf are completed as specified, or otherwise completed to a satisfactory standard;

Taking forward any other matters concerning land or property as required by the Council.

**595/2008 TO RECEIVE A LETTER FROM THAMES VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES IN RESPECT OF FINDS DURING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG AT S<sup>T</sup>. PETER & S<sup>T</sup>. PAUL'S CHURCH**

Having first consulted with the Old Gaol Museum, it was **AGREED** to transfer ownership of the finds from S<sup>t</sup>. Peter & S<sup>t</sup>. Paul's Church to the Buckinghamshire County Museum archaeological department.

**596/2008 TO DISCUSS THE TOWN COUNCIL'S PROPERTY AND OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION POLICY, AGREE PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GROUP GUIDELINES.**

It was **AGREED** to set up a working party under the Vice Chairmen's leadership to draw up an acquisitions transfer policy document.

**ACTION CLLR. ISHAM, CLLR. P. COLLINS, CLLR. HIRONS, CLLR. WHYTE**

**597/2008 TO RECEIVE AND MONITOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND PROPERTY BUDGET, AND MAKE SUCH ADJUSTMENTS AS NECESSARY**

Copies of the budget had been circulated before the meeting. Members noted the figures as at July 2008 and asked that the following changes be made.

Proposed by Cllr. Whyte, seconded by Cllr. Stuchbury and **RECOMMENDED** that the payment under 4601/403 for the repair to the Cemetery Wall should be paid from contingencies.

Proposed by Cllr. Try, seconded by Cllr. Whyte and **AGREED** that the payment for the repairs to the safety surfacing in Bourton Park play area should come from 4601 (repairs and maintenance) and not 4106 (Play area repairs).

It was **AGREED** to place "to discuss and make a decision on the future use of the Cemetery Lodge" on the agenda for the next meeting.

**ACTION THE TOWN CLERK**

**598/2008 CHAIRMAN'S / MAYOR'S ITEMS FOR INFORMATION.**

SALTEX FAIR

Members **AGREED** that the Chairman, Cllr. G. Collins, and the Town Clerk could attend the Saltex Play and Leisure trade fair at Windsor on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2008.

Meeting closed at 10.03 pm

CHAIRMAN ..... DATE .....